

The
Palimpsest

VOLUME 55

NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1974



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The Palimpsest

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L. Edward Purcell, Editor

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Cover: A beautiful colored vision of Liberty rising above the battle, one of the illustrations from the Society's collection of patriotic envelopes. See story p. 178.



The Meaning of the 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 record 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.

LETTERS FROM
THE PHILIPPINES:
THE 51st
IOWA VOLUNTEERS
AT WAR, 1898 - 1899

edited by

H. Roger Grant

Introduction

During the closing days of the Spanish-American War, John Hay, United States Ambassador to Great Britain, wrote Colonel Theodore Roosevelt the following commentary: "It has been a splendid little war; begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit, favored by that fortune which loves the brave." Even though American military units easily defeated Spanish land and sea forces in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines during the summer of 1898, Filipino nationalists soon turned that "splendid little war" into a nightmare for the United States. Unlike the Cubans who were granted their freedom, the Filipinos were denied their independence by the American government. Therefore, Filipino

patriots, commonly called Insurgents or *Insurrectos* and led by the young and resourceful General Emilio Aguinaldo, began armed action against American troops stationed near Manila on February 4, 1899. The action came two days before the Senate ratified the peace treaty with Spain.

These hostilities, known as the Philippine Insurrection, did not end until April 1902. However, the bloodiest fighting occurred in 1899. By November of that year, Americans captured all the chief Insurgent officers except Aguinaldo, who eluded his pursuers. Their spirit unbroken, the Insurgents then resorted exclusively to guerrilla warfare. Finally, in March 1901, the Americans took Aguinaldo prisoner, and Filipino resistance crumbled.

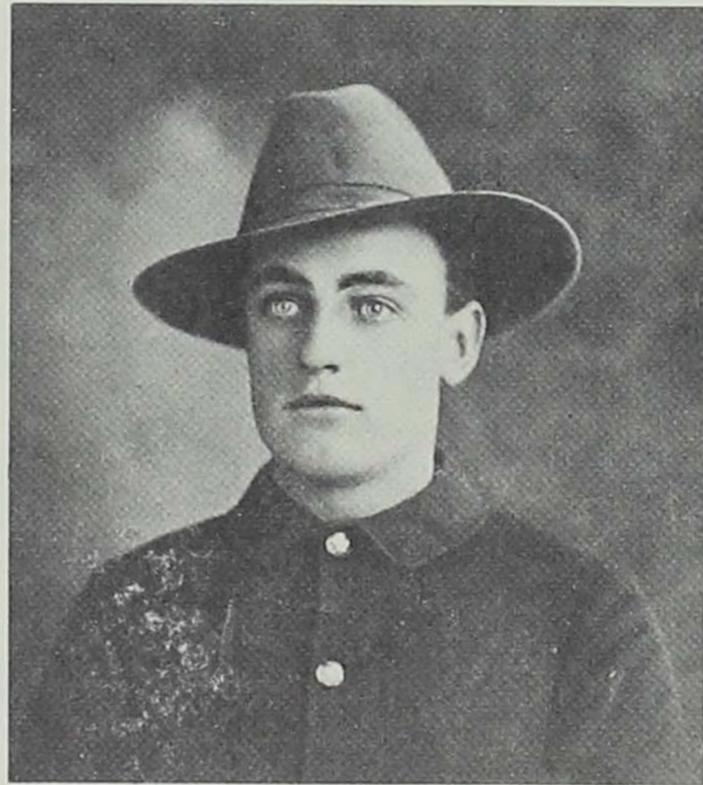
Tragically, the Insurrection resulted in more costly casualties than the Spanish-American War, with hundreds of Americans and thousands of Filipinos losing their lives. The conflict, moreover, triggered a bitter debate at home concerning the conduct of American involvement in the Islands. Although "Anti-imperialists," like William Jennings Bryan blasted the McKinley administration for retaining the Philippines, the "Expansionists" won, but not before the public learned of war atrocities committed by American troops involved in "pacification." Debate on the "Philippine Question" diminished after 1902. Hostilities ended and a permanent Philippine Commission, formed in 1901 and headed by William Howard Taft, began the slow process of political and eco-

conomic reforms for the Filipino people.

Iowa's involvement in the war began on April 26, 1898, one day after Congress approved President William McKinley's war message. On that date the War Department directed the captains of each company in Iowa's four national guard units to assemble their men locally and to proceed by train to Des Moines. Officials there, led by General James Rush Lincoln of Ames, hurriedly converted facilities at the state fairgrounds into a makeshift military base known as "Camp McKinley."

Within days after the War Department's call, more than 2000 Iowa guardsmen arrived in Des Moines; the 1st Regiment came from northeast Iowa, the 2nd Regiment from the southeast corner, the 3rd from southwest Iowa, and the 4th from the northwest portion of the Hawkeye state. (These four units were subsequently renumbered the 49th, 50th, 51st, and 52nd Iowa Volunteers, to continue the 48 regiments of Iowa volunteers in the Civil War.)

One of the soldiers who arrived at Camp McKinley was Henry L. Hackthorn. Born on November 4, 1877 in the Guthrie County community of Stuart, he left high school after three years to become a house painter and paper hanger, the trade of his father, George W. Hackthorn. Nine days after Congress declared war, young Hackthorn, then 20 and accompanied by a dozen Stuart men, joined Company E (headquartered in Shenandoah) of the 3rd Regiment of the Iowa National Guard.



Henry Hackthorn

The experiences of Private Henry L. Hackthorn of the 51st Iowa Volunteers during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection are told in detail in more than 100 letters that he wrote to family members between May 3, 1898 and October 29, 1899. A portion of these letters, owned by Hackthorn's niece, Mildred Middleton of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has been edited for publication. Spelling errors have been corrected and punctuation marks added for clarity and readability.

Henry Hackthorn's decision to join the Guard came as no surprise to family and friends. He came from a family of soldiers: his great-great grandfather served in the American Revolution, a great grandfather fought in the War of 1812, a great uncle saw action in the Mexican War, and his grandfather, father, and several other



Mess number 11 of the Iowa 51st at Camp Merriam, California in September 1898. Many of the photographs illustrating this article were taken by Henry Hackthorn and preserved with his letters. They are relatively rare examples of photos of the Philippine Insurrection.

relatives joined the Union Army during the Civil War. Young men throughout the country in 1898 rushed to the colors "To free Cuba" and "To Remember the Maine!" and Hackthorn probably did not want to be left behind.

Life for Henry Hackthorn and other members of the Iowa National Guard in Des Moines settled down to a comfortable routine after much initial fanfare. "The hardships of life at Camp McKinley," reported the *Des Moines Leader*, "exist chiefly in the imagination. Of course, the menu is not elaborate in any sense, and there are no cases of gout on record so far." Hackthorn seemed pleased with army life and certain about the future. In a letter to his mother, written on May 5, 1898, he said, "I received your letter yesterday and it finds me in very good health

and excellent spirits. I think there will be no danger of our having to go far as I think that the war is about over or they would send some of the troops to the front that they are holding here."

By early June, the Iowa soldiers abandoned Camp McKinley. The 49th and 50th Volunteers departed for Jacksonville, Florida, the 52nd left for Chickamauga, Georgia, and the 51st Iowa entrained for San Francisco, California and Camp Merritt. In his last letter sent from Des Moines, a serious and perhaps scared Hackthorn wrote his family, "I'll try and be right as near as possible under the circumstances and do my duty faithfully as a man and soldier and never do anything that would be a discredit to Iowa and Stuart or the U.S.A."

After a pleasant train trip ("At all the

different towns the people came out with flowers and gifts and in California they brought fruit"), the 51st Iowa Volunteers arrived in San Francisco on June 9, 1898. The Iowans stayed there for nearly five months. At Camp Merritt the green guardsmen were fashioned into reasonably well-trained soldiers. Spirits soared when word came that the unit would leave for the Philippines. A long-standing complaint of the Iowans, including Hackthorn, had been that it appeared that they would be forced to wait out the war on American soil.

Departure of the 51st Iowa Volunteers for Manila Bay on November 3, 1898 marked the first war-time movement of Iowa troops to the Orient. The voyage across the Pacific was largely uneventful for the 946 Iowans, the highlight being four days spent in the Hawaiian Islands. Then, on December 7, 1898, the *Pennsyl-*

vania steamed into Manila Bay. The 51st Iowa was one of the last volunteer units to reach the Philippines; most had arrived in July and August.

Although the Iowans were in Manila Bay, they did not land. This decision to remain on board ship came from the officers' uncertainty about the role of the troops. The August 1898 armistice with the Spanish produced an uneasy peace. Tensions mounted, not between Americans and Spaniards, but between Americans and the Filipino nationalists.

After Christmas, the 51st Iowa received orders to sail for Iloilo Harbor, located three hundred miles south of Manila on the large island of Panay. They remained there another month on standby patrol. Finally, the Iowans returned to Manila Bay and went ashore on February 5, 1899.

The Philippine Insurrection began the day before the 51st Iowa Volunteers landed after returning to Manila. On the night of February 4, 1899, according to the *Omaha World-Herald*, "Three Daring Insurgents Start[ed] the Combat by Seeking to Make a Dash Through Lines of Nebraska Troops." The coming of a full-scale conflict immediately resulted in a full mobilization of American forces. All troops stayed initially in the environs of Manila. Then in March, the Iowans, working closely with the 1st Nebraska, the 1st South Dakota, and several other units, became involved in the major military operation of the war, the "Northern Campaign." For nearly six months the 51st Iowa fought northwest of Manila. At first the object was Malolos, Aguinaldo's provisional capital. After Malolos fell on March 31, the Iowans and their comrades fought the retreating Filipinos in a northwesterly direction to-

Note on Sources

The leading popular accounts of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection are Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1931) and Frank Freidel, *The Splendid Little War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958). Also of value are James H. Blount, *The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912); James A. Le Roy, *The Americans in the Philippines*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1914) and John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1973). The writings of General Frederick Funston of Kansas are especially colorful and useful. See his "From Malolos to San Fernando," *Scribner's Magazine*, 50 (1911), 284-97 and *Memories of Two Wars: Cuban and Philippines Experiences* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911).

The only published works on the Iowans in the Philippines are Joseph I. Markey, *From Iowa to the Philippines: A History of Company M, Fifty-First Iowa Infantry Volunteers* (Red Oak: The Thomas D. Murphy Co., 1900) and Bruce E. Mahan, "The Fifty-First Iowa," *The Palimpsest*, 6 (1925), 177-222. Mildred Middleton of Cedar Rapids and Gus G. Stoy of Guthrie Center supplied material concerning the life of Henry L. Hackthorn.

ward the towns of Calumpit and San Fernando. They captured the latter community on May 6. Although most state volunteers left the San Fernando area for home by August, the 51st remained there until September. By that time, thousands of army regulars had arrived in the islands. The "Northern Campaign" left the Iowa unit with one killed, 41 wounded, and ten dead of disease.

Henry Hackthorn's letters for the battle period are revealing. He showed signs of a growing sympathy toward the Insurgent cause. Yet Hackthorn never blasted America's conduct of the war as so many of

his fellow soldiers did. For example, Nebraska trooper J. E. Fetterly said, "I do not approve of the course our government is pursuing with these people [Insurgents]. If all men are created equal they have some rights which ought to be respected. As for my-self, I marched into the battle to make them free—not to make them subjects." Hackthorn also expressed a common prejudice of volunteers—a strong dislike for regular army soldiers. In his opinion the state volunteers did most of the dirty and dangerous work of war. And he demonstrated the racist attitude of the American troops toward the Filipinos.

Cavite, P.I.
Feb. 8, 1899

Dear Mother—

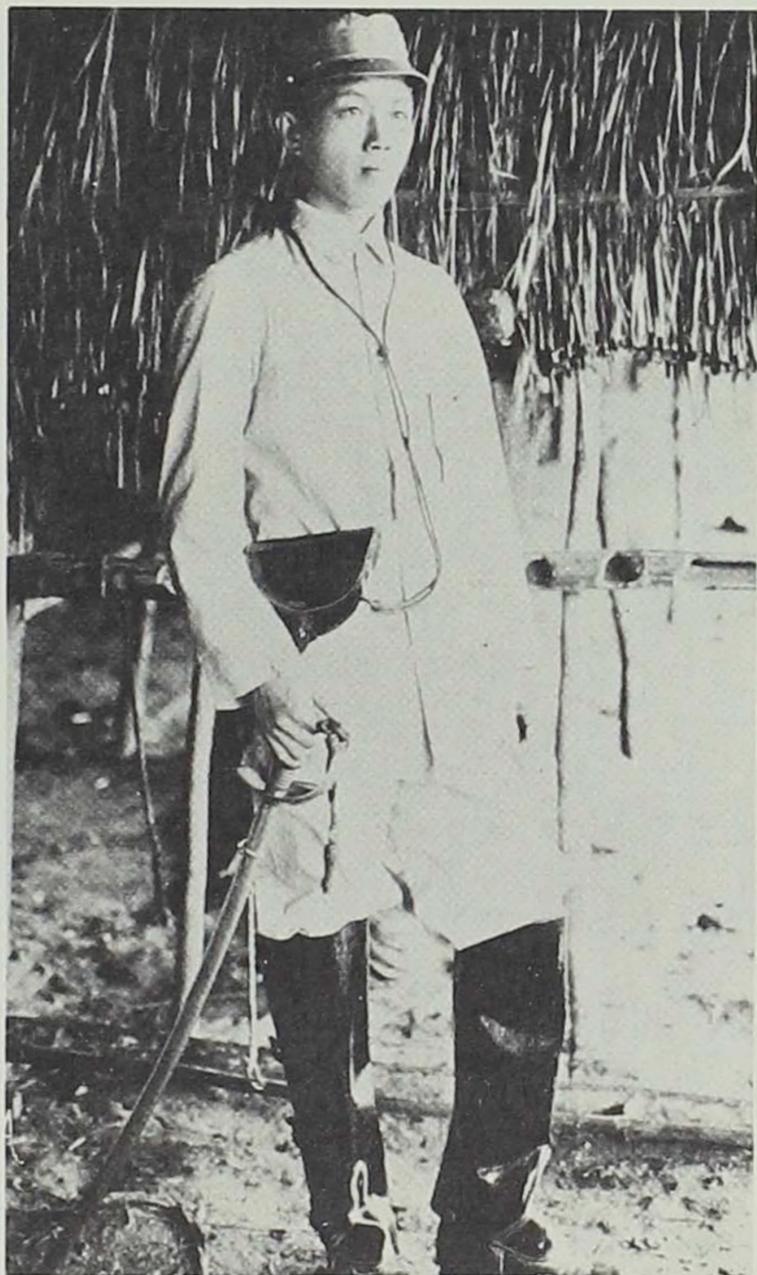
You must excuse haste as I have a great deal to do as the Col. has issued the following order—The insurgent chief at San Rogue (just about 500 yards from here but connected by a small artificial passage about 50 to 70 ft. wide), you are requested to be ready to lay down your arms before To-morrow 9:00 A.M. or we commence action against you. There is not much show of their doing so, so we will most likely have a battle before this time to-morrow. As you already know, I suppose, they have been fighting at Manila, Malate, Monolo and the loss on the insurgent side has been terrible. Thousands have been killed while the Americans have lost only few but one American is worth thousands of Niggers.

I was on guard last night in the Navy yard post No. 10, surrounded by Native boats between 1 & 3 A.M. in the night. I and the 1st relief man were sleeping when we were awakened by a rifle shot. We jumped up and heard a shout of halt and another rifle shot. This one came alarmingly near me, the bullet whistling quite close. Then another shot as No. 14 had got a native treed, but he got away as it was so dark. Nos. 9-10-11-12 had all three reliefs on the post all night so in case any trouble arose there would be twelve men to guard instead of 3 or 4 until help could arrive.

I am well and feel very good and not in the least disheartened before the battle which I think is sure to come on the morrow.

.....

Yours as Ever,
Henry



Emilio Aguinaldo (courtesy of the Mary Gladwin Collection of the University of Akron, Akron, Ohio).

Cavite, P.I.
Fort San Philippi
Mar. 4, 1899

Dear Mother:

I shall now endeavor to write at least a few lines as I am not on guard to-night.

We (the second Battalion) get guard duty about every other night now as the first are at Manila and the third at the outpost San Rogue; so we get one night's sleep out of 3 or rather 1 out of 2. The third night, we walk post and do guard duty. This is very hard and the men do not feel very much like doing anything at all so I do not get much time to write. I get so nervous when I do try to write that I am obliged to quit. But I shall try to finish this one at least.

The smallpox is raging here now and a great many of the Boys are sick. One fellow from Co. C. ([Edward C.] Vaughn was his name) died after only a few days sickness, and there are nearly a dozen sick



Inspecting cannon captured from the Insurrectos.

with it now but none are reported dangerous. There is one fellow in from Co. E. and 2 more go this eve so it is getting close to home. As for me I never felt better except a slight cold caused by sleeping on the ground while I was on guard. As for the smallpox, I do not care to have it. No thanks and I shall take every precaution against it but then it may catch me so I am prepared for the worst. But this is not a very desirable subject so I shall quit and talk of other things.

I am not on guard to-morrow and so I'll clean up my gun, Belt and shine my cartridges and the Brass on my Belt I'll also wash my leggins.

Admiral Dewey is the man we now have for a commander over all troops in the Philippines and a man who is "The Right man in the right place." I have seen him on several occasions. He is a short man rather heavy set and is a common every day man in every respect.

We have 450 native prisoners in the prison at Cavite to guard now. But the cavalry do this part so we are glad as we do more duty than we are supposed to do now.

As Ever,
Henry

Old Manila
Mar. 30, 1899

Dear Father:

.....
We are temporarily quartered in some old Spanish Barracks. Not that the Barracks are old but they were spanish. The Building is nice and we have nice Bamboo cots to sleep on.

The 2nd Battalion Co. E. C. L. M. now guard the Old or walled city of Manila and all the prisoners, new and old. The first Battalion are out Near the waterworks and the third except Cos. I & G are at the outpost at San Rogue. Co. I & G take our place at Cavite.

.....
I wish you could see how the officers go dressed when they go to the front. They dress just like the men and carry no sword nor anything to denote their rank as the insurgent sharp-shooters are picking off all the officers they can. In fact there are nearly as many officers Killed and wounded if not as many as there are privates so they are careful.

Truly Yours,
Henry L. Hackthorn

April 12, 1899
Manila

Dear Mother & All the rest—

Well the 51st Iowa, Cos. H. A. F. & D. excepted, leave for Malolos, the insurgent Capital and the place recently captured by American troops. We rec'd these orders to-day and the Boys are very jubilant over it, as this may enable the 51st Iowa to make the mark she has long been wanting to make—namely to be in a battle against a common enemy alike to flag and country.

I do not like the idea unless we do some thing Beside guard which has been about all we have been enabled to do. . . .

I think I shall bring a native fresco painter back to the states with me, and then I could coin the money. There are some of the finest ceilings in Manila in the world, and they are done by natives who don't look like they could paint a fence. My but they are fine.

Truly,
Henry

Right flank of Firing Line
 Malolos, P.I.
 April. 20, 1899

Father:

I am now experiencing some genuine soldiering on the firing line and can now tell what it is to hear a Bullet whistle from an enemy's gun. I was on outpost guard the first night we were here but did not have any cause to shoot. The next time I was on, there were 6 or 8 Filipinos who tried to slip up on the outpost, and so we were quickly put out as skirmishers and 6 shots from our Springfields soon put them to flight. No one was hurt, and the natives escaped as it was too dark to see them and the boys, as is generally the case after dark, shot high. Last night we went (that is Co. E. did) two miles northwest and relieved a co. of Nebraska [Volunteers] on the outpost in front of the natives outpost. A few compliments in shape of bullets were exchanged, and our boys had a few shots at some niggers; but none were hit thanks to the poor marksmanship of the fellows who did the shooting. . . .

I like this life very well now and if we did not have to go with very little clothing and other accommodations, it would be fine. . . .

The report from Headquarters to day is that Saturday there is to be a move made forward and two more towns on the railroad taken, so we may be in a scrap before this letter leaves Malolos. I hope so, as the whole Iowa Regt. is now at Malolos, the first time they have been together for quite a while. . . .

The Boys are all well from Stuart and all seem anxious for the fray which is about to open up here. . . .

Truly yours,
 Henry

"Before" Calumpit, P.I.
 May 2, 1899

Dear Mother,

I can drop you a few lines this time and more later on.

I am left in the rear. The regt. left this morning to join [General Henry] Lawton. There are about 15 or 20 of us. Some are sick, others have no shoes. I have had the diarrhea, and tho. I am all right now, I was so weak I was afraid to go for fear I would have to fall out and so I stayed here. . . .

Up to to-day we have had 3 or 4 engagements with the niggers. In the mix up Sunday there was a Corporal By the name of [George E.] Mariner shot through the arm. He was next man to me and only

3 or 4 ft. from me. I rolled over and stopped the blood with my handkerchief until we could get it done up better. I have the bullet. But I shall give it to him when we get back to town.

It is so dark I can't see any more so I'll stop.

Love to All,
"Dick"
[a family nickname]

San Fernando, P.I.
May 9, 1899

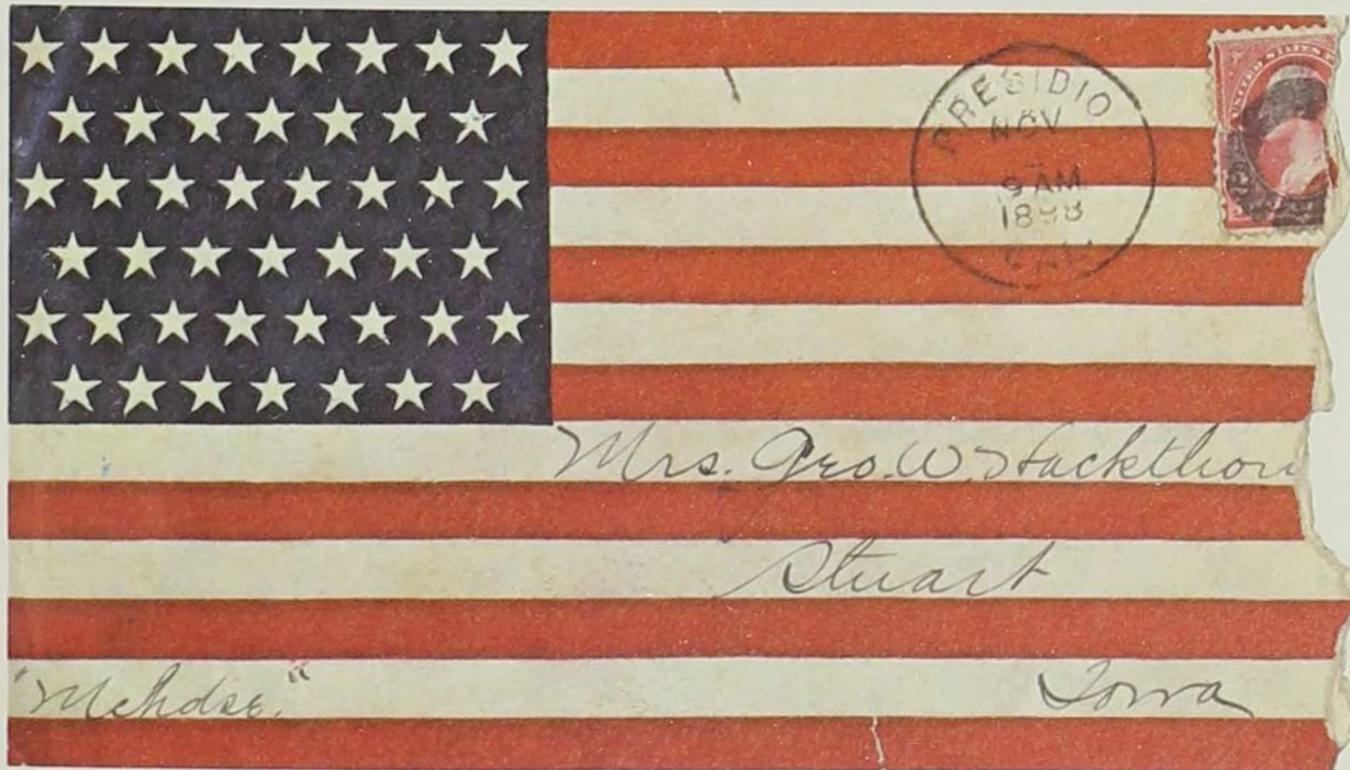
Dear Mother:

.....

The Boys of the 51st are now just in the place they have been wishing for. They have seen some active service and can say from experience that "war is hell" and that while water hurts no one, it is no fun to wade rivers and swamps and all the time the Bullets playing "Yankee Doodle" over your head and then lay in the sun and have the mud dry on and then comes the command "Forward," and every man starts as if no bullets were to be heard and walks from 40 to 300 yards under fire then the fun commences. We fire a while, move up a little, fire some more and keep going until finally the natives commence to retreat, and then a great many are immediately made "Good Filipinos" (dead).

.....

The 51st is reported as having been in 3 battles and 4 skirmishes up to date. But the Lord only knows when we will quit, as just as soon as they get a few more commissary supplies up here, they will



move forward and as there is about 60 miles more railroad to take and they send no regular soldiers out to help us. We will most likely be here the rest of our term of service. The Reg's. are in the city and the volunteers doing the fighting except the 14th & 22nd Regts.

Truly Yours,
"Dick"

San Fernando
May 15, 1899

Dear Folks:

.....

You say that the report is that the war is over. Well if you were here to see the entrenchments the natives have and could see how diligently they watch us and us them, you would not think it over.

You speak of our eating well, we did eat but our eating now is pretty slim—Canned corned Beef—Canned Tomatoes and Canned Baked beans and none of it very good.

.....

The Co. Cook enlisted at Frisco. He is an old regular army cook. The way we get our extras is the Gov't. has a sales Commissary, and they sell all kinds of canned fruits, canned sliced ham, ginger Ale, and jams; in fact everything, and they sell it for cost.

You speak of the Regulars helping us; well, they are nearly all in the City. The volunteers are doing the fighting and the Regs. are resting.

Small pox has ceased to exist here, and only two men were lost from Iowa Reg't. the only men lost since we left Frisco.

So I close.

Truly As Ever,
"Dick"

San Fernando
June 3, 1899

Dear Father,

I may not have time to finish this letter before I leave for the outpost (Co. E. is on outpost today), but I'll commence.

The South Dakota outpost was fired on this morning, and they had the whole Reg't. out with their things on ready to go out; Iowa Reg't. I mean. The officers of some of the commands get badly scared at a few shots. The other day the Iowa Outpost was fired upon all day and all night and we did not need a whole Reg't. out there.



A jungle outpost of Co. E, during the Northern Campaign.

E. Co. was support for the outpost that day. Lieut. Ross and Capt. Mount also Lieut. Williams got to picking them off sharpshooting and soon silenced them. Our out post is nearly $3/4$ of a mile from camp. But in a place where the niggers seem to be. . . .

The 51st to date has been in 9 engagements, 3 Battles, and 6 skirmishes some of which were quite warm. The reason for the death and wounded list being so small is that the niggers are such poor shots and fire upon the men so far away that they can't hit us only once in a great while. The Battle of Quinga [April 23-24, 1899] was as the Neb. Reg't. says the hottest fight they had had and they have seen nearly all of the fighting that has been done lately. Capt. Mount says that the Bullets were as thick there as they were at Shiloh. I know that I heard more there in a few minutes than I have heard in any of the other engagements.

The mode of fighting now is to fire a few rounds, then advance toward the enemy firing as we go. Keeping up a continual fire, this way the Insurgents cannot fire without exposing themselves which they won't do, and they soon leave in a hurry. It also kills the sound or rather drowns the sound of the Natives Guns . . . and gives men

who are a little uneasy more nerve. A few men in the Co. seem to be afraid but most of the men are calm and all right. . . .

Everything is quiet, and so I guess we will get a little rest for at least a day or so.

I guess that we are permanently located in San Fernando, and as to coming home there are no orders to that effect what ever. The Oregon reg't. was supposed to be ready to go aboard boat in a few days. But the Gov't through Gen. Otis has broken faith entirely with the Volunteers. The Neb. and Oregon Reg'ts. have done as much or more fighting than any other organizations on the Island, and after being relieved from the firing line to go into the City they decided to make an advance on the south line and instead of taking some of the Regular Reg'ts. (of which the City of Manila is full) they took the worn out and Broken up Oregon and Neb. Regts. back out and leave these Regulars in the City in idleness. Another thing—The 51st Iowa Regt. are out here on the line armed with Springfield rifles which are a very inferior rifle to the one which the insurgents use. The Mauser will shoot nearly 5 miles, of which 2 miles can be shot with very little elevation of the gun, and our rifle will not shoot that far. While they take 200 or 300 Krag Jorgensen rifles and arm Niggers and learn them to drill. So when any one says that we are to be home soon, tell them that I'll wager we are not home much if any before Christmas 1899.

As Ever Your Son,
Henry L. Hackthorn

San Fernando, P.I.
June 24, 1899

Dear Mother,

. Gen. Otis, the high muck [military governor of the Philippines], has deluded the soldier here by not published, as he should, certain orders sent him by McKinley and the war Dep't in general. The fact is that most of the soldiers or at least a great many would much rather the Gov't of the U.S. had made some form of Gov't. for these people and let them run it to suit themselves as long as they were able to keep peaceful. *But* as the niggers got in a hurry and made the break they did and for the reason that so many of our men have fallen by their deadly Mausers *etc.* We would kill all in sight if we could only receive the necessary orders. But then they say, Well, why do the volunteers want to come home so bad? Well! I can tell you. They have did all the fighting here except one fight on the south in which several Regular Regts. participated and in which

the 13th U.S. Regulars actually ran away throwing their guns and belts in their flight. "Why?" Because the firing was pretty strong and could not "*stand the jar*." The Colorado Vols. made a flank movement and came up where the 13th were and made a charge. This first dash making or rather gaining over 200 yards more ground than the 13th had taken, and a few minutes later they stormed the enemys works completely routing them (By they I mean the 1st Col. Vols.) I do not think, neither do any of the soldiers (a few excepted), that present administration is in any way responsible for the present unpleasant mess. The soldiers in general are anti-expansionists. But not the *Edward Atkinson kind* [Atkinson publicly supported Aguinaldo]. They do not Blame the U.S. Gov't. now for taking the Philippines. They blame the people who started it, namely "Filipinos". The anti-expansionists had better drop the subject when the Vol. Regts. get home as we can tell them some thing. Not that we blame the people [Insurgents] for taking as much territory as they can get, but because they have got some territory that is hard to manage, and these people can't tell when they are whipped and don't know a good thing when they see it.

You say you think McKinley could have prevented this war. Well as I am in a position to know just how this Filipino war started, I can say that no one man is to Blame. The Legislature is to Blame—Democrats, Republicans, and Pops. [Populists] alike. For had they hustled a little and got the peace business fixed up with Spain, then the Filipinos could have understood just what the people of the U.S. meant to do with them. But as it was, they were kept waiting and waiting until their patience (or good sense) gave out and a few days before the Peace Treaty was fixed they commenced the Ball to rolling. How were they to know that the U.S. meant Business and wanted to treat them right? It had been demonstrated in no writing or any thing, and so The natives were held with promise of wait a minute we'll fix it, *just wait*. "They waited." But then their patience wore out, and the clash came on the night of Feb. 4, 1899 when the U.S. started into *an endless war*.

.....

The people of the U.S. have a very mistaken idea as to the country here. Any one could make a good thing here if it were not for the natives. The "Isle of Luzon" is a "Garden of Eden" as far as the climate and Land is concerned.

.....

As Ever,
"Dick"



Co. E, led by a band, leaves San Fernando for Manila and, eventually, home in September 1899.

July 12th, 1899
San Fernando, P.I.

Dear sister Mabel:

. We hardly know the day of the week as all days are alike. No change what ever except that we do outpost duty every 4 days and reserve every 12 days.

Oh yes! It looks like it, we are the *only* Vol. organization on the firing line and no assurance as to when we get relieved although rumor has it that we may be started home Sept. 15. . . .

Truly Yours,
Henry

Sept. 3, 1899
San Fernando, P.I.

Dear Mother:

I am well and hearty as are most of the boys. We were relieved from the firing line this A.M. and do duty for two days in San Fernando, where we are to be relieved by the 4th Cavalry, and we go to Manila to do *no more* fighting unless Manila is attacked which is next to impossible. So there is no more danger from bullets for the 51 Iowa who have a good record here. . . .

We will sail from here for the states by the last of the month.

.

I close and I remain,

Yours Truly,
Henry L. Hackthorn

Epilogue

The undeclared war continued for nearly three years after Henry Hackthorn and his Iowa compatriots left for home. The 7000 fresh army regulars that replaced the Iowans and other state volunteers did not face the tough enemy resistance that the state units had encountered during the "Northern Campaign." Rather, Insurgents only occasionally sought combat, for they suffered from poor leadership, inadequate supplies, and sagging morale. With Aguinaldo's capture in 1901, the war for all purposes ended, and soon the American government "pensioned off" the great insurgent leader—payments that continued until his death in 1964.

After arriving home from the Philippines, Henry Hackthorn returned to house painting and paper hanging. In 1902, he married Cora Reaves of Stuart and joined the Stuart Exchange Bank as a cashier. When the bank closed in 1910, Hackthorn turned to a variety of jobs—house painting, insurance, and the sale of novelty items, tire pumps, and spraying equipment. In the early 1920s, he moved to Des Moines to work for the Luthe Wholesale Hardware Company as a bookkeeper. Hackthorn retired from the hardware business at the age of 78. Then, in August 1962, he became state adjutant of the United Spanish War Veterans of Iowa, a post he held until his death on February 9, 1968. □

PATRIOTIC ENVELOPES

by Joyce Giaquinta

An outpouring of patriotic sentiment has usually been one of the by-products of war. In the nineteenth century, some of the most colorful expressions of such feelings were special envelopes. Henry L. Hackthorn, for example, sent home his letters from the Philippines in bright reminders of the Spanish-American conflict. Probably the most elaborate patriotic envelopes were those used during the Civil War, and the State Historical Society has a large collection from that era.

The envelopes are decorated with battle scenes, camp scenes, political symbols, pictures of prominent people or events, and caricatures of the enemy. Most of the envelopes in the Society's collection were never mailed and so do not qualify in the philatelic sense as "covers." They lack the additional interest of postmark, stamp, and address, but are in excellent condition, having been spared a journey through the mail.

The envelopes were collected, apparently during the War, by two Curators of the Historical Society: Stephen Edison Paine and M. W. Davis. Both were nineteenth century Iowa City businessmen and long-time members of the Board of Curators. Paine was elected Recording Secretary of the Society in 1864 and was a Curator from 1868 until 1902. He was manager of the Close Linseed Oil Work in the 1870s and mayor of Iowa City. He died at age 90 in 1920. M. W. Davis was first elected to the Board in 1865 and served as Curator or Secretary until his death in 1911. He

is credited with preserving the collections of the Society during difficult days when members were few and the Society lacked a permanent location. Davis was a renowned collector and had one of the state's largest anthropological collections.

Both Paine and Davis gathered patriotic envelopes in large scrapbooks which were presented to the Society by their children in 1924 and 1928, respectively. The Paine collection contains 2400 envelopes, and the Davis book has 1080. The envelopes are arranged by subject or type.

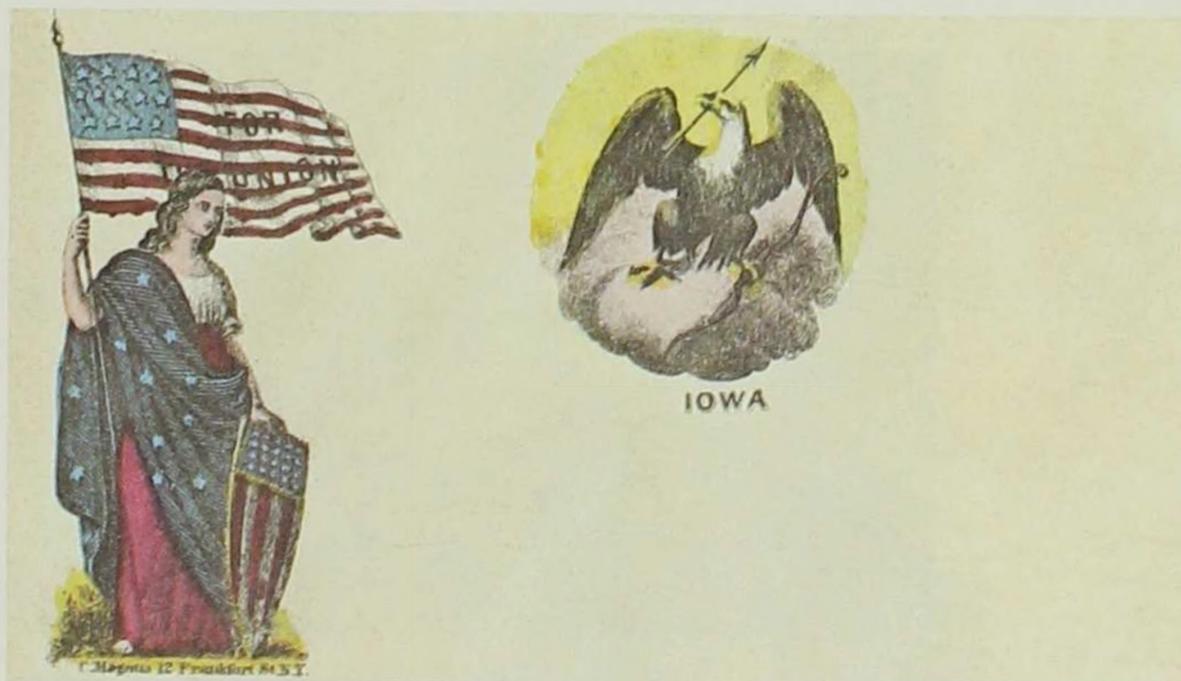
The pictures on the envelopes range from simple drawings or engravings to elaborate lithographed scenes in nearly full-color. They are tangible evidence of the wide range of emotions produced by the War. Generally, few things are more ephemeral than envelopes, but the patriotic covers of the Civil War period retain the fervor of wartime. For both North and South, envelopes were a method of expressing deep feelings and advertising sectional chauvinism.

Several eastern companies seem to have dominated the field of making patriotic envelopes; most notable were Charles Magnus of New York and the Magee Company of Philadelphia. The envelopes were sometimes issued in series, with several numbered versions of camplife, for example, or a series depicting states of the Union or the Confederacy. Some envelopes were high quality printing on expensive paper; others were crude and cheap by comparison. All of the envelopes, however, recapture through their pictures the atmosphere of the great conflict.

Following are examples of the patriotic envelopes in the collection of the State Historical Society of Iowa. □



The classic Columbia image, depicted here with somewhat droopy feathered crown, was used to express the concepts of union, power, and justice.



Iowa's contribution to a series of Civil War envelopes which showed each state seal alongside a standardized symbolic figure.



A full-color depiction of a Union Zouave, striding to victory over the trodden Stars and Bars of the South. This hand-colored litho also appeared in a monochrome (blue) version.

JEFF. DAVIS IN TWO CHARACTERS.



HE WANTS TO BE A KING.

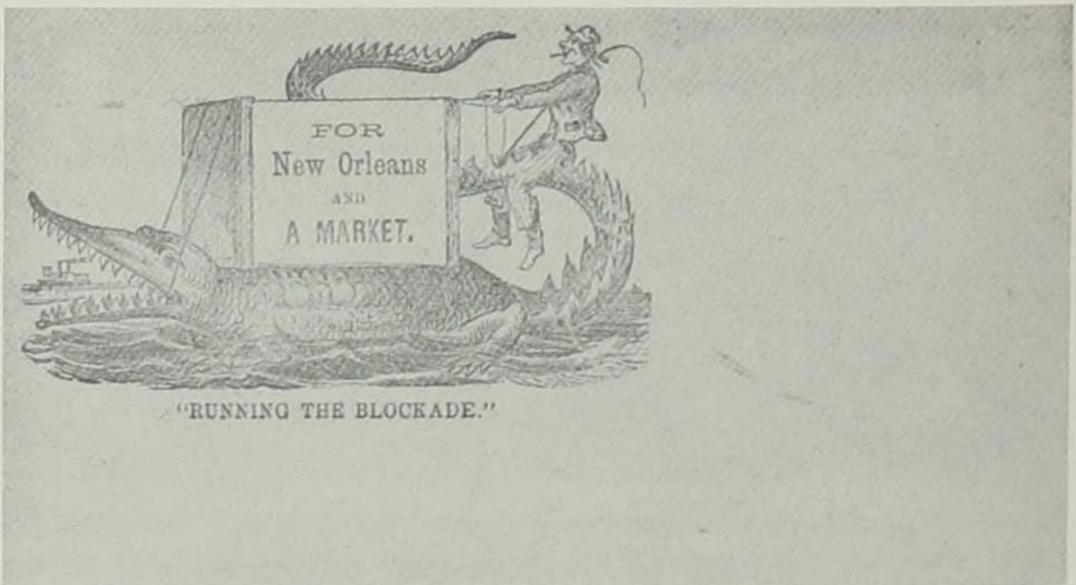
Confederate President Jefferson Davis, the object of northern hatred, was here derided in a clever animal caricature (turn the picture sideways).



Southern General P. G. T. Beauregard as a porker.

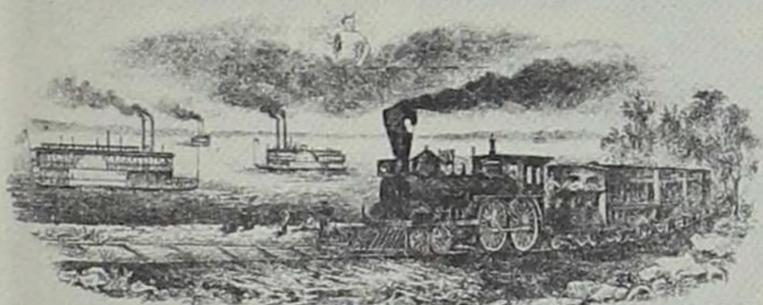
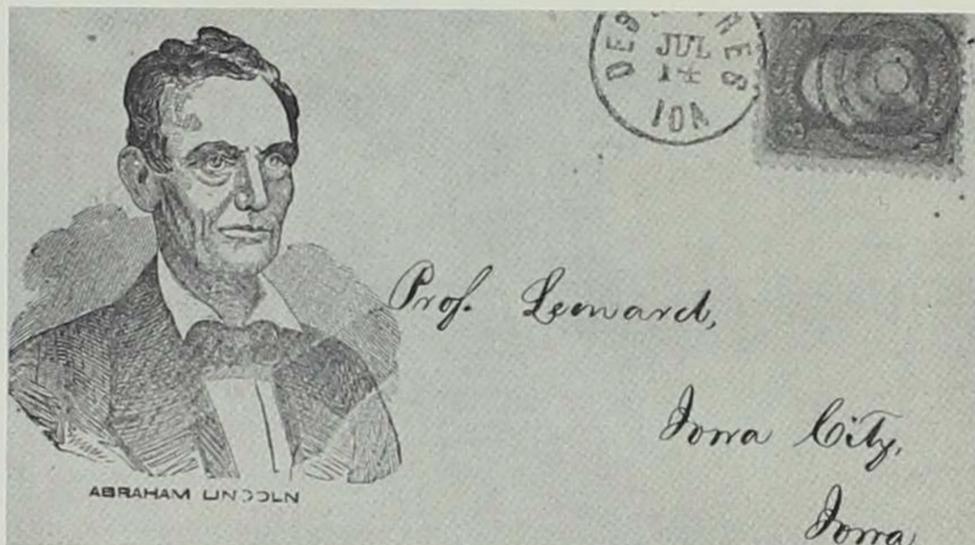


An early optimistic view of the War, printed before Winfield Scott's brief tenure as Northern Commander ended. The elephant symbol, often used as a euphemism for battle, was frequently employed on Civil War envelopes.



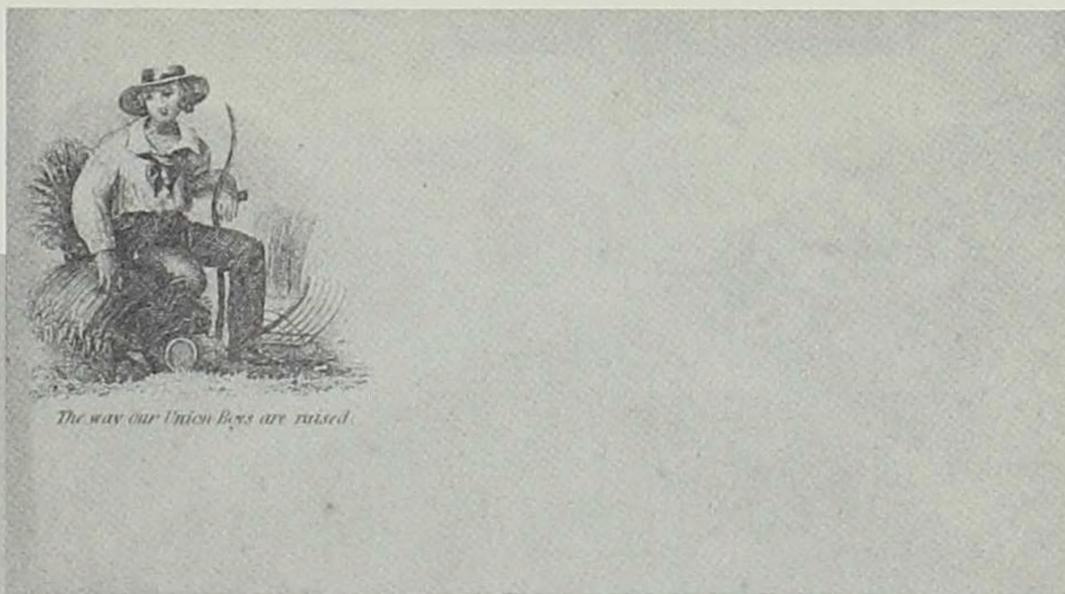
Taking the animal theme one step further, this Confederate envelope shows an evasion of the Union blockade of New Orleans through the swamps.

One of the few "covers" in the Paine collection, this envelope bearing President Lincoln's portrait was evidently mailed to Prof. Nathan R. Leonard, a math professor at The University of Iowa.



Charles Maguire 12 Franklin St. N.Y. *The FATHER of RIVERS*
belongs and must forever belong to the UNION.

The economic lifeline of the Mississippi was noted in this finely drawn engraving.



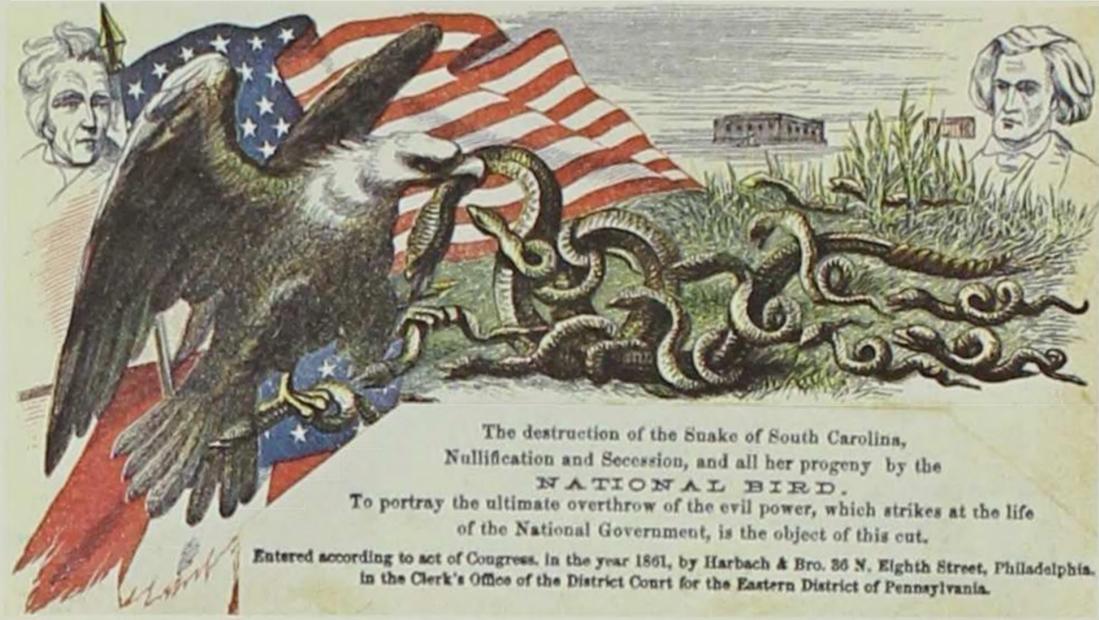
The way our Union Boys are raised.

A highly idealized depiction of the agricultural life. Clearly intended to connote the virtue of non-slave yeoman farming.



My only support—both boys gone to the war. I wonder if they would take me?

In a sentimental vein, this envelope used the image of motherhood to depict the home front.



Harkening back a generation to the pre-War struggle between Pres. Andrew Jackson and John Calhoun over nullification, this envelope has an unusual printed explanation of its symbolism.



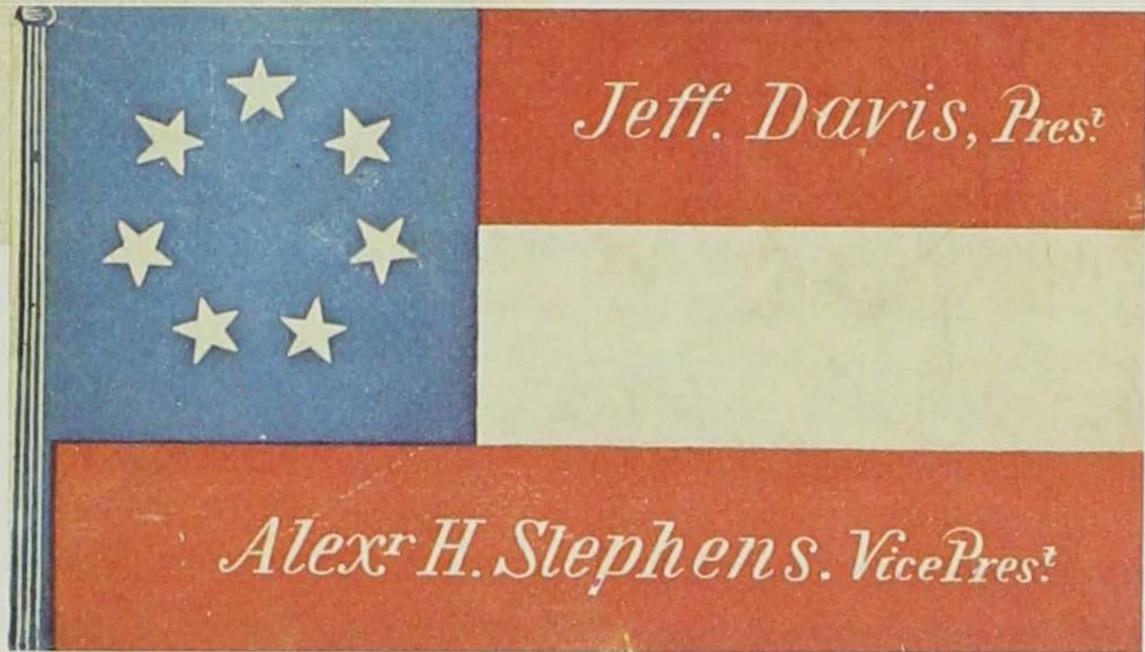
While a beatific angel gracefully claims a fallen hero, a loved one at home prays for his deliverance.



Camp scene number 19 from a series of 20 by Magnus.



Two envelopes from the Confederacy, proclaiming the South's leadership. The relatively few examples of Confederate envelopes in the Society's collection are more straightforward than many Northern covers, and rely less heavily on elaborate scenes or political caricature.



The eagle, ever the symbol of one nation.

TOWARD ADJOURNMENT: THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 65th GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1973

by Robert R. Dykstra
and Russell M. Ross

A "Bipartisan Accomplishment" the *Des Moines Register* called it, and that seems as good a phrase as any to sum up the record of an election-year legislative session that, with Republicans holding a mere 56 per cent margin in each chamber, gave the state's Republican governor between 59 and 72 per cent (depending on how one calculates it) of the legislation he had asked. Except for one replacement by special election—Senator Cliff Burroughs, Republican of Greene, for the deceased Vernon Kyhl—the composition and character of the assembly were the same: the youngest in a hundred years (with an average age of 45.2), more college graduates than usual, and relatively evenly balanced between parties. Only the continuously watchful television cameras, recording the action (and inaction) for weekly Educa-

tional TV summaries, were new. And so, consequently, was probably some of the eloquence.

Encouraged by the success of his 25-point legislative program in the first session of the Sixty-Fifth General Assembly, Governor Robert F. Ray, popular third-term liberal Republican from Des Moines, prepared an even more challenging agenda. Legislators convened on January 14, 1974, and a few days later, Ray presented them with a list of no less than 44 separate items that, he said, required enactment into law. The state's expected treasury surplus was an inviting prospect after the severe budget-cutting required of the 1971 General Assembly. Even though appropriations measures are normally avoided in second sessions under biennial budgeting procedures, almost a third of the Governor's proposals involved appropriations. With \$200 million as the working balance used in most calculations of the surplus, scores of spending proposals came from directions other than the Governor's Office. Ray asked only that appropriations be made with an eye to keeping half the expected surplus uncommitted. He also said he would like to see at least \$25 million of the surplus still in the treasury at the end of the 1977 biennium. His own program, Ray insisted, would stay well within these limits.

Apparently listed in no particular priority sequence, the governor's recommendations ranged over a dozen categories. Educational needs of one kind or another embraced five items on the list. Five others

had to do with local government and associated tax questions. Four items each primarily concerned welfare, recreation, liquor and alcoholism, transportation, and consumer affairs. Three related to health, three to the state's natural resources. Two concerned safety, two concerned law enforcement. Miscellaneous proposals, finally, included funds for two new state office buildings, legalization of public employee collective bargaining, broadened powers for the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, and revision of the state's industrial revenue bond law.

Few experienced political observers thought Governor Ray could make it come off. For one thing, all House members and half the members of the Senate faced June primary elections and had come to Des Moines hoping for as short a session as possible—and consequently a long period to campaign. “Overly ambitious” was a reaction to Ray's program many somewhat disconcerted legislators would have agreed with. As one of them phrased it, “That's more than we can chew in a short session.” His gastronomic metaphor might have been stretched to include difficulties the assembly's collective digestion would have with the many gubernatorial askings of a controversial nature. The initial prospects did not seem very favorable for a number of the Governor's more progressive proposals.

A further complication was a feeling by many legislators that the Governor was hindering the smooth passage of his own program by a “failure to communicate,” an

alleged tendency to express himself more fully to the press than to the General Assembly. A case in point was Ray's recommendation that the legislators repeal the sales tax on food and prescription drugs. Its inclusion as a priority item in his program came as something of a shock to both the Democrats, from whom he had borrowed the idea, and the Republicans, few of whom he had consulted in advance. His offer of an open office door to any assembly member interested in conferring did little to placate the wary or hostile.

An important feature of the Sixty-Fifth's second session was a noticeable inclination to divide more than usual along a liberal/conservative axis that crossed party lines. In Iowa, as outsiders have to be reminded constantly, the general ideological climate is a kind of sensible progressivism on social issues more akin to the model provided by Oregon than that of the “Bible belt” (whatever *that is*). What usually passes for political conservatism in Iowa is hardly more than fiscal conservatism, a low-expenditure set of mind that seems never to have hardened into a full-fledged doctrine. In early 1974, the immensity of the expected treasury surplus neutralized fiscal conservatism a good deal. Roll-call voting, freed from this constraint, divided more clearly between social progressives and social conservatives irrespective of party affiliation. An activist liberal bloc drawn from both Republicans and Democrats provided the crucial enthusiasm for much of the Governor's program—a bipartisan foundation that Ray, who thinks of

himself as a scrupulous party man, was somewhat reluctant to acknowledge.

It soon became common to view the Senate as the more liberal chamber, the House as the more conservative. This was, to a large extent, a reflection of the GOP legislative leadership's different levels of success. Lieutenant Governor Arthur Neu of Carroll presided in the Senate, assisted by the Republican majority leader, Clifton Lamborn of Maquoketa. These gentlemen, both of them Bob Ray loyalists, were able to work closely in guiding the Governor's program to success. In the House, on the other hand, Speaker Andrew Varley, Republican of Stuart, was frequently at odds with his majority leader, Edgar Holden of Davenport, perhaps the session's most influential GOP conservative. While leaving the rhetorical chores on the House floor to the outspoken conservative Harold ("Grumpy") Fischer, Ed Holden led a tenacious fight against Ray's program in the corridors and committee rooms. The course of the collective bargaining bill highlighted the differences between leadership in the two chambers. The Senate passed the bill relatively promptly and with a minimum of rancor, then agreed amiably to minor amendments added by the House. In the House, however, the often acrimonious debate consumed (in total) the better part of a week, and the bill's ultimate survival owed most to the excellent preparation and coordinated teamwork of the lower chamber's young liberal Democrats led by the assistant minority leader, Arthur A. Small of Iowa City.

As late as mid-April only three of Governor Ray's recommendations had been passed by both houses of the General

Assembly, and what could probably be considered his items of highest priority—creation of a Department of Transportation and partial sales tax repeal—were in trouble. Some legislators blamed the top leadership. "The Governor," said one Republican, "just slaps down a bill and says, 'Take it or we'll have nothing.' As a result, all we do is fight and nothing gets done." But this remark seems more properly a description of the gubernatorial communication problem rather than a hostility to compromise. The legislative log-jam was in fact mainly due to the sheer size of the committee task involved in processing Ray's agenda. The jam finally broke in May, unleashing a flow of requested bills that in most cases swept the opposition away.

When the air had cleared it could be seen that the Sixty-Fifth General Assembly had totally rejected only 12 of the Governor's 44 proposals. Half of these were hardly priority items, including, for instance, his requests for a cable television commission, private liquor outlets for small towns without state dispensaries, a tie-down requirement for mobile homes, and property tax breaks for persons improving their homes. Others, however, were of major import indeed. Not approved by the legislators were requests for a state housing authority, mandated no-fault insurance, a statewide land-use policy, and revision of the criminal code.

As noted at the outset of this report, whether Governor Ray's success score was 59 per cent or 72 per cent depends on how the score is calculated (the Governor himself was content with claiming "two-thirds"), since at least six of his recommendations were passed in forms so modi-



The State House in Des Moines.

fied that they can be counted either successes or failures. With respect to increasing Aid to Dependent Children by \$2.5 million, for example, the legislators instead substituted a \$1 million appropriation for foster care. They approved conservation funds but prohibited any of them from going for a requested resort lodge at Rathbun Lake. Instead of \$1.5 million for additional liquor warehousing, they approved only enough for a study of the question. In place of corrective legislation covering betting and Sunday liquor sales, they approved only a specification that

sporting events were not to be considered gambling. Instead of enacting a new constitutional amendment allowing "home rule" for cities (the legality of the current amendment being up for judicial review), the General Assembly simply postponed implementation of the Home Rule Act. Instead of \$5.5 million to buy land for an experimental coal mine, the assembly funded a less expensive "coal mine research project."

But, of the remaining 26 items on the Governor's list, all seem to have emerged relatively unscathed. Establishment of the

Department of Transportation was, by all accounts, one of the most far-reaching. The DOT bill, as it came to be called, did not, however, arrive on the Governor's desk in quite the form he had requested. Members of the House, angered by Ray's earlier veto of an act legalizing 65-foot double-bottom trucks, disregarded Speaker Varley's "not germane" ruling from the chair and managed to tack on the "long truck" measure as an amendment to the DOT bill. Ray then let it be known that he would veto the whole thing rather than allow the objectionable rider to pass into law, whereupon the Senate obligingly struck it from the bill. The House refused to accept this change, so a conference committee came up with a version that authorized the proposed DOT board to study the question of long trucks on the state's highways. Should this board recommend legalization, and the next assembly not reject that recommendation, long trucks would become legal despite gubernatorial opposition. Ray signed the DOT bill reluctantly, his disappointment obvious.

The Governor's sales tax repeal on food and prescription drugs proposal also returned to him in a form other than that he would have preferred. In January, when he sprang it on the General Assembly, he argued that the anticipated drop in tax revenues would be \$31 million per year, which a fat treasury could well afford. But in the end, the legislators went even further than the Governor's recommendation, increasing the number of things exempted,

altering the state income tax in a progressive direction especially helpful to low-income families, and changing the inheritance tax law in such a way as to mitigate discrimination against widows. These changes added something between \$7 million and \$12 million, depending on whose estimate is trusted, to Governor Ray's original calculation of the annual revenue loss, giving rise to dire predictions from some conservative spokesmen.

Another important measure that the Governor signed, he said, "with some reluctance" was the consumer credit bill. In his legislative message Ray called for a ceiling on credit interest rates, a 1973 State Supreme Court decision having invalidated the 18 per cent interest conventionally applied to revolving charge accounts and "closed-end" contracts. These had then reverted to the legal maximum of nine per cent, to the great satisfaction of Ray's populist attorney general, Richard Turner, and thousands of other Iowans, but to the great alarm of bankers and big retailers across the state. Ray urged the General Assembly to resolve the issue. It did so angrily, noisily, in the final—though certainly not the finest—hour of the session.

As approved by the Senate, the bill among other things set the annual revolving charge account ceiling at 18 per cent on the first \$500, with 15 per cent on the remainder. The Senators also raised the then current 12 per cent maximum on bank interest to 15 per cent. The proposed House version was deemed much

less favorable to lenders. It would have allowed 18 per cent only on the first \$100 of revolving accounts; it would have raised bank interest to only 13 per cent; it would have included much more in the way of consumer protection than the Senate bill, prohibiting, for instance, the use of household goods for collateral at small-loan companies.

The lobbyists were out in force on Saturday, May 4, as the debate in the House grew increasingly heated and partisan. Credit proved to be a question that, rhetorically at least, seemed to boil down to an attack on and defense of profits, free enterprise, and the nation's business community—conjuring up the shibboleths by which Democrats and Republicans have identified their ideological differences for the past half century. Party lines hardened.

What the Democrats were after, as debate continued into the evening, was a vote that would insist on the House version of the bill as against the more business-oriented Senate version. But at 10:30 p.m. the Senate abruptly adjourned, leaving the House to accept the Senate version or have no bill at all. In response to this choice, House Republicans sat back and refused to debate, having assured themselves of enough votes to override the Democrats' effort—including the votes of four social conservatives on the Democratic side. As midnight approached, the furious Democrats finally gave in to the Senate's bill, but not before vowing to employ the credit issue to exquisite advantage in the pending political campaign.

Then, suddenly, the closing ceremonies were at hand. Retiring Representatives spoke warmly, sometimes humorously. Brice Oakley, Republican of Clinton, led all in the singing of "God Bless America." Members exchanged handshakes and teen-aged pages wept. It was all over for another year. □

COMMENTARY

There has been quite a flurry of response to the "Idaho-Iowa" article by Peter Harstad and Michael Gibson published in the July/August number of *The Palimpsest*. One ex-Iowan, now teaching history in Ohio, writes that he has learned of a hearing test used for years by the New York City Police Department Candidates had to distinguish between "Idaho," "Iowa," and "Ohio." The following letter is from Peter L. Petersen, who grew up in Shelby County, Iowa and received a Ph.D. in history from The University of Iowa. He now teaches history at West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas.

Gentlemen:

I have just finished reading your article, "Idaho-Iowa," in *The Palimpsest*. I found it to be both enjoyable and enlightening. I appreciated the view of Merrill Sterler's hog lot. Some of my more chauvinistic Texas friends cannot understand why we displaced Iowans are so sentimental about hog lots and corn fields. I would also like to add the following footnote to your account of the many unusual relationships between Idaho and Iowa.

For a time in 1916, an alleged land scandal dominated the political scene in both states. In October 1916, James Pierce, editor of the *Iowa Homestead*, charged that Edwin T. Meredith, publisher of *Successful Farming* and the Democratic candidate for governor of Iowa, had participated in an Idaho irrigation project which had failed, costing "innocent Iowa investors" thousands of dollars. Accompanying the story in the *Homestead* was a picture of the tombstone of Elmer E. Snull, who allegedly had suffered a premature death because of the failure of the project and the loss of his investment.

What Pierce described as land fraud involved the creation in 1907 and subsequent collapse of the West End Twin Falls Irrigation Company. Originally the Cedar Creek Reservoir and Irrigation Company, the "West End project," as it was commonly called, intended to construct reservoirs and canals and sell water to individuals who entered land a few miles west of Buhl,

Idaho. Apparently many of the stockholders in the scheme were Iowans, some of them quite prominent, including John Riggs, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Gilbert S. Gilbertson, three-term State Treasurer. By 1909, Meredith owned approximately 60 per cent of the stock of the company. In 1910, he assumed the positions of Secretary and Treasurer and the company offices were moved from Salt Lake City to Des Moines. The company constructed some impounding dams and canals in 1909-1910 but then lapsed into inactivity because of a shortage of water. In April 1916, however, just before its contract with the state of Idaho was to expire, the company secured a six month extension on its project.

A Republican newspaper, the *Idaho Daily Statesman*, attempted to use the granting of the extension against the Democratic candidate for governor in that state, the incumbent Moses Alexander. Even before Pierce broke the story in Iowa, rumors had circulated that the failure of the project would be interjected into the gubernatorial campaigns in Iowa and Idaho in an attempt to embarrass the Democratic candidates in both states. Thus when the *Homestead* first published its account, the *Des Moines Register* was able to produce a letter from Governor Alexander absolving Meredith from the failure of the project and laying the blame on the overly optimistic water studies of Idaho's chief engineer. The *Register* also printed an affidavit signed by two sons of Elmer E. Snull in which they refuted Pierce's story of why their father died. Soon the *Register*, the *Homestead*, and the *Idaho Daily Statesman* were engaged in a bitter exchange of charges concerning Meredith, Alexander, and the West End project. At one point, the *Statesman* took note of prohibitionist Meredith's claim to be "the driest of the dries" and sarcastically dismissed the *Register's* defense of the Iowa publisher: "However, since none are so blind as they who do not want to see, the *Register* will probably go on trying to lay the blame for Mr. Meredith's pitiable Idaho

fiasco on Uncle Sam's broad shoulders and to make the people think that it is Mr. Meredith himself, instead of his Idaho land, which is 'the driest of the drys!' I suspect that about this time, both Meredith and Governor Alexander thought that the ties between Idaho and Iowa were a little too close!

There is a sequel to all of this. With the sharp increase in land prices during World War I, Meredith decided to reorganize the company and again try to sell Idaho land to individual farmers. The new firm was called the Idaho Farm Development Company. I suspect Meredith put around \$500,000 of his own money into the construction of additional irrigation facilities. But before he could sell any of the land, came the depression of 1920 and the collapse of land values. Meredith, who by then was Secretary of Agriculture in the Wilson Administration, hired some young salesmen to crisscross Iowa attempting to sell Idaho farms. When this failed to work, he turned the whole thing over to a promoter who promised to colonize it with "modern pioneers" from, of all places, Brooklyn. The journey of these neophyte farmers from New York to Idaho in their "Caravan de Luxe" was a major media event in the summer of 1921. But alas, upon their arrival the pioneers found not

a Garden of Eden but considerable sagebrush and some sand. Moreover, they found their land was separated from the nearest town—Buhl—by the deep Salmon River Canyon. Unlike Evel Knievel, these Argonauts found Idaho canyons not to their liking. The result was another controversy, this time involving, among others, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and *The Country Gentleman*. All this time, Meredith's investment in the project continued to mount. After unsuccessful efforts to interest both the Union Pacific Railroad and the Mormon Church in the project, it is little wonder that the Iowa publisher confided to a friend: "I might say . . . that of all the grief that has ever come to me, the grief that has come through ever having tried to put through an irrigation project is the greatest." I am not sure what happened to Meredith's land holdings in Idaho following his death in 1928, but several years ago when I mentioned Idaho to the publisher's grandson, Edwin T. Meredith III, he smiled slightly and said that he would rather talk about something else.

In closing I wish to compliment all of you at the Society for the fine work you have been doing for Iowa history. I am deeply appreciative and believe that many others share my sentiments.

Cordially yours,
Peter L. Petersen

CONTRIBUTORS:

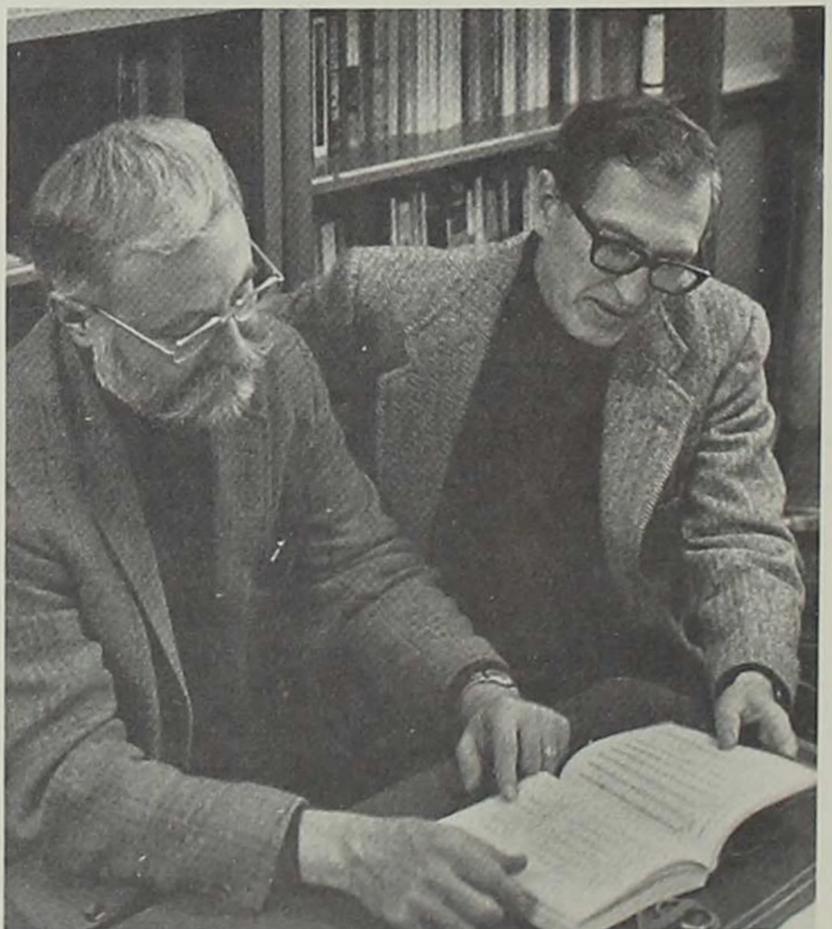
H. ROGER GRANT is originally from Albia, Iowa and now teaches history at The University of Akron in Ohio. He is a frequent contributor to historical magazines and journals, including *The Palimpsest* and *The Annals of Iowa*. He is currently co-editing an Iowa farm diary from the era of the Great Depression.

JOYCE GLAQUINTA is Manuscript Librarian for the Historical Society. Born in Alton, Illinois, she received a B.A. in history from The University of Illinois in 1963 and an M.A. in library science from The University of Iowa in 1969. She has been a librarian for the Society at intervals since 1964 and served as Head Librarian from 1971 until last September.



ROBERT R. DYKSTRA is Professor of History at The University of Iowa, where he received the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. Born in Ames, Iowa, he served as editor of *Civil War History* from 1962 to 1965. He is a contributor to scholarly journals and is perhaps best-known for his book, *The Cattle Towns*. His recent interests have been in political and social behavior. He was a Curator of the Society from 1973 to 1974.

RUSSELL M. ROSS is Professor and former Chairman of the Department of Political Science at The University of Iowa. Like his collaborator, he also received B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from the University. A former Executive Assistant to the Governor of Iowa, Ross has written extensively on Iowa government and public administration. From 1972 until 1974 he was a member of the Society's Board of Curators and was President of the Board from 1973 to 1974.



Dykstra

Ross

CARPENTER BIOGRAPHY FREE TO MEMBERS

Cyrus Clay Carpenter and Iowa Politics, 1854-1898 by Mildred Throne will be distributed free of charge to anyone joining the Society before March 15, 1975 for a two-year membership (cost: \$10). Non-members may purchase the book at \$8.00 per copy. Members may buy additional copies for \$6.40 (a 20 percent discount).

Neither the State Historical Society of Iowa nor the editor assumes any responsibility for statements of fact or opinion made by contributors.

The State Historical Society encourages submission of articles on the history of Iowa and the surrounding region which may be of interest to the general reading public. The originality and significance of an article, as well as the quality of an author's research and writing, will determine acceptance for publication. A brief biographical sketch should be submitted. All manuscripts must be double-spaced on at least medium weight paper. Ordinarily, the text of an article should not exceed twenty-five to thirty pages. As far as possible, citations should be worked into the body of the text. In this and other matters of form THE MLA STYLE SHEET is the standard guide. Black and white and colored illustrations are an integral part of THE PALIMPSEST. Any photographic illustrations should accompany the manuscript, preferably five-by-seven or eight-by-ten glossy prints (unmarked on either side) or color slides. Inquiries and correspondence should be sent to: Editor, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

THE CHRISTMAS BOOK

Edwin L. Sabin

In the days of the Christmas book (our Christmas book, gentle audience), Christmas books were reckoned one by one, not, as now, by the half-dozen and the dozen. It came upon the Sunday-school tree, from "teacher," or upon the home tree or in the home stocking, with inscriptions of Uncle, Aunt, Father, Mother. And it would be counted insignificant enough, I fear, arraigned to show cause and exposed in the bold white light of To-day. Its gold might seem tawdry, outshone by the tinsel.

"Snow-White or Rose-Red" (or was it "Rose-Red and Snow-White"?)—this was one "the Christmas book." A marvellous set of fairy-tales. Do you recall it? Or perchance a volume of the Grimms—or a "Children of the Frontier"—or a "Rollo" book—or another "Elsie book"—or a "Robinson Crusoe," or a "Swiss Family Robinson," or a "Green Mountain Boys," or a "Little Women," or an "Under the Lilacs," or—but if now your eye is kindling, if you smile, then do I know that a title is rushing to *your* lips, and that we are mutually certain, one of the other; and like old cronies over a pot of tea or a tankard of cider we may cluster closer and are fairly launched into confidences.

The Christmas book would not attract attention, from the eager mercurial throng, beside the Christmas books of the present: so lavish are they in their regalia, so unhesitant in their assertions. No artist is too high for expending his best upon their covers and pages, and the cunning of man and of machinery is strained to the utmost. The wonders of the universe, of science, and of nature, are put into fable; the greatest story-tellers are employed. In its wealth of text and pictures the Christmas book for the child surpasses the book for the adult. Proportions have been reversed. But in our loving ken, yours and mine, cronies all, still there remains, supreme, our "the Christmas book."

This bit of old-fashioned Yuletide nostalgia was extracted from a longer Christmas article which first was published in McBride's Magazine in December 1911. Sabin, whose boyhood was spent in Clinton, was a newspaper reporter in Des Moines, Davenport, and Clinton. Later, he distinguished himself both as a contributor to the country's leading literary magazines and as a nationally recognized author of dozens of adventure books for boys. He wrote several serious interpretations of the trans-Mississippi frontiers.—Philip D. Jordan.



The State Historical Society of Iowa is a Division of the Iowa State Historical Department, a state agency created by the Sixty-fifth General Assembly. Along with the Society, the Department includes a Division of Historical Museum and Archives (formerly Iowa Department of History and Archives) and a Division of Historic Preservation.