

# The **P**ALIMPSEST

OCTOBER 1926

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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

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials 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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## Seward and Douglas in Iowa

Never in the history of Iowa were conventions and campaigns more numerous than in 1860. Great men were sparring for the presidential nomination and election, and transcendent issues depended upon the contest. On one side was the Democratic party, looking to the past, weakened by many defeats and divided in council. In front of it moved the Republican party led on by James W. Grimes, James Harlan, Samuel J. Kirkwood, and John A. Kasson. Strong in the strength of its youth and in its supremacy in every department of political power it looked to the future for the solution of the dominant issues.

For the last time ante-bellum issues were to be led into the arena of debate and discussion. Compro-

[This story of an Iowa phase of national politics just before the Civil War is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST mainly from an article by Louis Pelzer published in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. VII, in April, 1909.—THE EDITOR]



mises of the past were to be settled by contests. Strained relations were to divide or to harden political ties, and passion was often to sever personal bonds. In brief the year 1860 was the preparation and the prelude for the final act of a drama which had been acted by a generation of statesmen. It is the rôle that Iowa played in this preparation which offers a study of strong political actors, motives, and changing scenes.

Partisan feeling ran high. Governor Kirkwood, in his inaugural address, blamed the Democrats for the "impending crisis" and boldly declared that while the people of the north utterly condemned the recent act of John Brown, they admired his disinterestedness of purpose and "the unflinching courage and calm cheerfulness with which he met the consequences of his failure." Such an official expression of sympathy for the raid on Harper's Ferry provoked severe Democratic condemnation. National issues dominated the political situation and the attention of the public was focused early upon the presidential campaign. Iowa delegates to the national Republican convention were selected on January 18th, while the Democrats of Iowa celebrated Washington's birthday by choosing delegates to attend their national party convention at Charleston, South Carolina, and vote as a unit for the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas.

As early as January 5th, the Tipton *Cedar Democrat* had named Stephen A. Douglas as a consistent,



unswerving, union-loving Democrat who ought to be President, though the *Le Claire Register* claimed the honor of having first printed the name of Douglas at the head of its editorial columns. In common with the policy of Democratic organs, R. H. Sylvester of the *Iowa City State Reporter* reposed his choice in the prospective nominee of the national convention to meet at Charleston on April 23, 1860. This man, everybody expected and the majority of the Democrats of Iowa hoped, would be Stephen Arnold Douglas of Illinois. A few seemed to favor James Buchanan or John C. Breckenridge, but in general harmony was counselled and acrimonious prejudice or abuse was deplored.

Expressions from Republicans as to presidential preferences were conspicuously absent in Iowa. Timidity, doubt, and a fear of creating a discordant discussion made Republican editors withhold the names of their favorites for the presidential race. Even Horace Greeley's early advocacy of Edward Bates roused a protest from the German Republicans of Davenport. A week before the meeting of the national convention in Chicago on May 16th the editor of the *Davenport Gazette* wrote: "We have advocated the claims of no man whose name has been mentioned in connection with this nomination, and we do not intend to do so at this late day. Not a name has been mentioned with any great prominence as a candidate for the nomination of the Chicago Convention, whom we would not heartily



and with our whole might support, if the choice of that body. All maintaining the same political principles, we regard this choice as a mere question of men and popularity."

In the Republican convention at Chicago the Iowa delegation was honored by important places in the organization and upon committees. Horace Greeley thought that the satisfactory character of the platform was due preëminently to John A. Kasson, "whose efforts to reconcile differences and secure the largest liberty of sentiment consistent with fidelity to Republican principles, were most effective and untiring. I think", he wrote, "no former platform ever reflected more fairly and fully the average convictions of a great National party."

The discordant Democratic national convention which met at Charleston in April adjourned after a large body of delegates from the South had withdrawn and the remainder had cast fifty-seven ballots in a futile effort to agree upon a presidential candidate. On June 18th the regular faction reconvened at Baltimore and nominated Douglas as the presidential standard-bearer, while about a week later the seceding Democrats unanimously selected John C. Breckenridge as the Southern hope. Meanwhile the Constitutional Union party had entered John Bell in the race for the Presidency.

Never had Iowa furnished a more brilliant and a more aggressive galaxy of speakers than in this campaign. James Harlan, who had been reëlected



Senator on January 14, 1860, was everywhere in demand; immense throngs listened to Governor Kirkwood; powerful speeches were delivered by Senator Grimes; editors often exchanged their editorial chairs for the stump; William Vandever and Samuel R. Curtis made long speaking tours; while the Republican candidates for presidential electors and scores of minor speakers did noble work for Lincoln and Hamlin.

Among the Democratic campaigners Ben M. Samuels and C. C. Cole were foremost in urging the election of Douglas; Lincoln Clark spoke frequently; LeGrand Byington bitterly assailed Kirkwood, Lincoln, and the Republicans generally; the candidates for State offices presented their claims, and the Reverend Henry Clay Dean — more deserving of the cap and bells than the cloth — perambulated the State from one end to the other. Neither the Breckenridge nor the Bell men seem to have conducted an aggressive campaign in Iowa and neither seemed to gather force as the day of election approached.

Never were ratification meetings, mass meetings, rallies, and joint discussions more numerous. Scores of Douglas clubs were formed while the "Wide Awake" clubs of the Republicans guarded the interests of Lincoln. Instances of personal violence were of common occurrence and personal abuse and vituperation were by-products of this campaign. But in all these features there is dis-



cernible a deeper appreciation of the grave and momentous issues of this contest.

A noteworthy event in the campaign was the speech of William H. Seward at Dubuque on September 21, 1860, in which he pleaded earnestly for the election of the man who four months before had defeated him for the nomination for the Presidency. Under Democratic rule, the speaker stated, the policy of the federal government had been to extend and fortify African slave labor in the United States. "Our policy," declared Mr. Seward, "stated as simply as I have stated that of our adversaries, is, *to circumscribe slavery, and to fortify and extend free labor or freedom.*"

The various compromises on the slavery question were then reviewed, free labor in Iowa was contrasted with slave labor, the claims of Douglas and Breckenridge were considered, and he argued that when a Territory is admitted as a State it shall, like Iowa, be left untrammelled and uncrippled by slave labor. "A strange feeling of surprise comes over me," he said, "that I should be here in the State of Iowa, the State redeemed in the compromise of 1820; a State peopled by freemen; that I should be here in such a State before such a people, imploring the citizens of the State of Iowa to maintain the cause of Freedom instead of the cause of Slavery."

Still more notable was the visit of Stephen A. Douglas to Iowa during which he spoke at Cedar Rapids and at Iowa City in the month of October.



The booming of cannon and the cheers from thousands of Democratic admirers greeted the "Little Giant" when he arrived at Iowa City in the forenoon of Tuesday, October 9, 1860. With him came also a group of Chicago Democrats who were escorted to the Crummey House where a reception was held in honor of the candidate. Augustus Caesar Dodge, Douglas's former colleague in the Senate, had also come to enjoy this gala day.

A large number of wagons, bearing hickory poles and Union colors, formed a conspicuous part of the grand procession from the station to the hotel, "perhaps the most attractive feature of which was a delegation of patriotic ladies from Richmond, clothed in honest 'hickory' and indicating by their presence and enthusiasm, a just appreciation of the man and the cause, to which they were doing honor." Music was furnished by three bands.

Stephen Arnold Douglas was in his forty-eighth year when he rose in the afternoon to address the Democracy of Iowa. Veteran and victor in a score of political contests, this campaign was the last time (as it proved) that he attempted to stem the tide of public opinion. He was weary and worn from months of speaking and was suffering from a hoarseness that hindered his speech. He had spoken ten times on the day before, which, he humorously remarked, had been one of his "leisure days".

With his wonted skill he at once gained the confidence of the large audience by complimenting the



intelligence and the greatness of Iowa, and by recounting his own share in bringing the State into the Union. Why could not all factions return to the doctrine of non-interference and non-intervention as all parties did in 1850, he urged. The Democratic platform stood for this and the Democratic party had fought both northern and southern fanaticism. "If you would banish the slavery question from the halls of Congress," he declared, "and leave the people to decide it, northern abolitionism would not last a week, and southern disunion would die in a day."

Northern Republicans, complained Douglas, were demanding that Congress prohibit slavery wherever people wanted it, while the Breckenridge men were insisting that Congress should maintain and protect it where the people did not want it. The Republicans wanted Congress to act for the North and the southern disunionists for the South. "Have you ever seen a Republican leader who did not say he preferred Breckenridge to Douglas?" demanded the speaker.

A voice here interrupted saying that the Southerners were not disunionists. "Why then did they secede at Charleston?" asked the speaker. "Not to defeat Lincoln but to defeat me; they are dividing the party for the benefit of Lincoln."

"They can't divide us here," assured a faithful Democrat. "We are all for Douglas."

The patriotism of the politician now showed itself,



when he denounced all threats of disunion. "I tell you people of Iowa to-day," rang his words, "that whoever is elected President, must be inaugurated, and after he is inaugurated he must be supported in the exercise of all his just powers. If after that he violates the Constitution, I would help punish him in obedience to it, by hanging him as a traitor to his country."

Cheers, applause, and shouts of approval punctuated this speech which found a warm response in Democratic hearts. His hoarseness increased but he continued. "This Union can not be dissolved without severing the ties that bind the heart of the daughter to the mother and the son to the father. This Union can not be dissolved without separating us from the graves of our ancestors. We are bound to the South as well as to the East, by the ties of commerce, of business, and of interest. We must follow, with our produce in all time to come, the course of the Mississippi River to the broad ocean. Hence, we can not permit this Union to be dissolved. It must be preserved. And how? Only by preserving inviolate the Constitution as our fathers made it."

Partisan newspaper accounts varied widely as to the character and reception of Douglas and his ideas in Iowa City. The Democratic *State Press* asserted that his welcome was "the largest and most enthusiastic political demonstration, ever witnessed in Iowa City, if not in the State." A Republican editor con-



sidered the crowd "very respectable being fully one half Republican", and estimated that four thousand people were in attendance; but other "competent judges", probably Democratic, thought that the throng numbered twelve or fifteen thousand. The Democrats were delighted over the "bold and logical" speech by "the foremost statesman of the country and the boldest champion of principles which can only be trampled under foot upon the ruins of a dismembered Republic." They were convinced that no man was dearer in the affections of the party than Douglas, the "Giant of the West".

But the Republicans viewed the Douglas rally in quite a different light. Under the caption, "Ye Little Giant", the editor of the *Iowa City Republican* wrote: "According to programme, the great 'Squatter' made his appearance in our City, on Tuesday. His coming on the cars from Davenport was announced by the firing of cannon, a condition we are told precedent to his consent to visit a town or city. He was welcomed at the Depot by some thousand men, women and children, and immediately thereafter fell into a mixed procession, which marched about town for an hour or more, fetching up at the Crummey House, on Washington Street. At two o'clock he was escorted to the Park, and delivered himself of a characteristic speech of about forty-four minutes. It abounded with sophistry, assertions unsupported by truth, egotism and brag. To hear him talk, a person unacquainted with



Douglas' political life, would think that he was the Maker of heaven and earth, and held the keys to the 'other place', whither he purposed consigning Breckenridge and all such as do not fall down and worship him. His speech was a medley of bold assertions and denunciations against all who refuse to shout hosannas to Douglas and 'my Great principle'. His speech fell far short of the public expectation, and disappointed many of his political friends. We heard from a number of sources, so far from making converts to his political creed, that his coming actually augmented the Republican ranks. Neither his appearance nor his speech met the measure of the people's expectation. This we knew would be the case, and from the first information of his coming, we have publicly and privately expressed our gratification at the promise of his visit to Iowa City. A Presidential Stumper always appears better in the distance." After mentioning some other efforts of the Democrats to instruct the "great unwashed", the reporter concluded that "if claptrap, gammon, and unexampled mendacity, would elect a man President, Douglas would be elected over the combined forces of the opposition."

Prophecies and forecasts — those volatile elements of all political campaigns — became more and more numerous. The October elections of other States gave moral stimulus to Republicanism in Iowa. But Democrats as well as Republicans were surprised at the magnitude and number of Repub-



lican majorities in the election of November 6, 1860. The Republican triumph was as complete as it was overwhelming. The popular vote in Iowa for President stood: Lincoln, 70,118; Douglas, 55,639; Breckenridge, 1,034, and Bell, 1,763. At the head of the State ticket Elijah Sells polled 70,706, a majority of 13,670 over J. M. Corse, for the office of Secretary of State. The remainder of the Republican ticket was elected by almost equally large majorities.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln the antebellum period of Iowa political history ends: decades of slavery agitation and compromises evolve into the issues of secession and union. The political historian must write "of arms and the man"—and the man is Lincoln, rather than Douglas; Kirkwood, rather than Jones; and Grimes, rather than Dodge. And no longer can the questions of the hour be settled by Chief Justice Taney in the Supreme Court, but rather by General Grant at Appomattox Court House.

LOUIS PELZER



## The Seventh Iowa State Fair

The autumn of 1860 found Iowans engaged in a vigorous political campaign. Republican newspapers carried a woodcut portrait of Abraham Lincoln at the top of the editorial page while Democratic sheets invariably flaunted a portrait of the "Little Giant". Indeed, William H. Seward himself, late aspirant for the presidential nomination, had spoken eloquently in behalf of his successful rival at a Republican rally in Dubuque, and Stephen A. Douglas had agreed to speak at Iowa City and Cedar Rapids in October. While the political campaign was perhaps the outstanding feature in Iowa during the fall of 1860, another event, the seventh annual Iowa State Fair, caught and held the attention of Iowans during the first week in October of that year.

The first and second fairs of the Iowa State Agricultural Society had been held at Fairfield in 1854 and 1855, the third and fourth at Muscatine in 1856 and 1857, and the fifth and sixth at Oskaloosa in 1858 and 1859. Iowa City, which until three years before had been the capital of the State, was selected as the place for the seventh annual exhibition, to be held from Tuesday, October 2nd, to Friday, October 5th.

The fair-ground was situated on a level tract of land on the west bank of the Iowa River, about a



mile southwest of the city, near the site of the present aviation field used by the transcontinental air mail. "No more charming location could have been chosen", wrote a local editor. "With the river winding through a rich bottom in front, and hills gracefully swelling in the rear of the enclosure, and the railroad, leading westward, in full view, the scene was little short of enchanting."

The enclosure covered an area of twenty-five acres with a substantial, tight board fence surrounding the whole. On the east side were the entrances for carriages and foot visitors together with the offices of the secretary and treasurer of the State Agricultural Society. On the south of the enclosure was an entrance gate for goods designed for exhibition, while an exit gate for carriages on the west made it possible to avoid confusion in handling the crowds. Inside the enclosure two large halls for the horticultural and fine arts departments, quarters for the president of the Society and awarding committees, pens for sheep and swine, stalls for horses and mules, and sheds for cattle indicated the care and thoroughness with which the local committee had "discharged their arduous duty of fitting up these grounds for the use of the State exhibition." Nearly in the center of the grounds was the race-track, elliptical in shape and a half mile in circumference. A judges' stand three decks high, located at the southeast inside corner of the track, furnished strategic accommodations for the band, the representa-



tives of the press, and judges and officers of the Society. Across the track south of the judges' stand an amphitheater afforded seats for some fifteen hundred or two thousand persons, provided too many of the occupants were not ladies "with crinoline of immoderate dimensions". Eating halls and refreshment stands were established in convenient locations, and wells furnished an abundance of water both for the stock and the visitors.

For several days before the date set for the opening of the exhibition the weather had been cool and cloudy, and on Sunday of fair week a heavy and continuous rain lasted throughout the day and night. All day Monday the clouds, heavily charged, hung over the earth "like a leaden curtain, awakening anxious fears in the minds of all who were entertaining high expectations respecting the Fair". Toward noon, however, the sky cleared, and the sun shone brightly over the busy scene inside and around the fair-ground. All day long exhibitors arrived with stock, but the state of the roads which, owing to the recent rain, were heavy and slippery delayed the arrival of many who were on their way to Iowa City with cattle, hogs, mules, and horses.

Early on Tuesday morning a long snake-like procession began to move from the city toward the fair-ground and its trail was visible from that time until late in the evening. At nine o'clock George G. Wright, the president of the State Agricultural Society, and other officers were escorted to the grounds



by the Iowa City Dragoons and by Hohman's Brass Band also mounted. The band dispensed "strains of delicious music" which "augmented the tide" already en route to the fair-ground. The dragoons presented a fine appearance, and upon their arrival within the enclosure performed several evolutions which "attracted general attention and commendation."

This first day of the fair was occupied by the officials in receiving entries, arranging articles for exhibition, and in committee work. Visitors "devoted themselves assiduously to the examination of the already well filled halls and the fine display of cattle and horses and farm machinery and the many other articles of merit and interest." At three o'clock Judge Wright delivered his presidential address from the judges' stand to a relatively small but appreciative audience. He pointed out the value and importance of State and county fairs to people in Iowa, traced briefly the history of the State Agricultural Society and its annual exhibition since 1854, and in conclusion appealed to his hearers for the preservation of order during the Fair. He extended a cordial welcome to citizens of other States who were present and hoped that such interchange of visits might "foster the spirit of union and fraternity." The address, which was delivered with much feeling and force, "was listened to with closest attention, and greeted with cordial applause." Secretary J. H. Wallace then addressed the committees



on premiums as to their duties and responsibilities. By six o'clock the crowd within the enclosure had departed, but outside the fair-ground people were busily engaged in testing the "Flying Horses" or in seeing how near to the skies the "Celestial Railroad" would carry them.

That evening a meeting was held in the courthouse for the discussion of topics of interest to agriculturalists, a feature of the Iowa State Fair which had been inaugurated in 1858. Judge Wright presided. The first topic for consideration was, "What breed of sheep are best adapted to Iowa". While those who spoke voiced a difference of opinion on this problem, all were agreed upon the damage inflicted upon sheep by dogs. William Duane Wilson offered the following resolution which was adopted unanimously:

*"Resolved*, that some action should be taken by our State Legislature to encourage the raising of sheep and wool in this State, by discouraging the breeding and keeping of dogs."

A second question "What breed of hogs is best adapted to Iowa" occupied the remainder of the evening session.

The second day of the Fair opened with a rush of visitors and many new entries. Hacks, omnibuses, buggies, wagons, and "every conceivable sort of vehicle" were brought into requisition to convey the crowd from the city to the fair-ground. "Never did the Sun behave more handsomely toward any Fair",



declared a local reporter. "The sky was stripped of every cloud, and the bracing air sent everybody's spirits to the uppermost attainable atmosphere."

Upon their arrival at the fair-ground visitors invariably pushed their way into the "Fine Arts" Hall or to "its plainer and more practical compeer of the Vegetable realm". At the south end of the former building "raised upon terrace and stone work" was a magnificent display of flowers with a fountain in the center "continually playing, sprinkling its moisture where most needed, and seemingly as charming to the continued throng, as some cool grotto or sibyl's cave."

Visitors to the "Fine Arts" Hall found many exhibits to arouse their interest and admiration. Hot house plants and cut flowers in profusion vied with paintings and ambrotypes in arresting the attention of the crowd. Two large paintings, made in Paris by George H. Yewell, especially called forth many expressions of appreciation. Architectural designs and drawings of Griswold College at Davenport, of the Cedar County Courthouse, and of two proposed high schools ranged alongside a display of lithographs and wood and copper engravings. The Davenport *Gazette* had on exhibit a file of its newspapers from 1841 to 1859. Chirographers displayed many samples of their skill and talent.

Among objects particularly admired by lady visitors were woolens, socks, mittens, embroidery, paper flowers, fancy knitting, bead work, calico dresses,



boxes ornamented with coral beads, shell work, and glass what-nots "all very handsome", crocheting, worsted chair seats, pictures in worsted, hair work, silk embroidered ottomans with leather work sides, wax fruit, wax flowers, and French tissue flowers, quilts of various patterns, home-made jeans and yarns, flannels, counterpanes, and a "full sett" each of oak and mahogany furniture. Some of the fancy work had been made by inmates of the Asylum for the Blind then located at Iowa City.

Men, doubtless, took greater interest in the display of farm machinery at the west end of the fair-ground. A novelty "in the way of a carriage plow" mounted upon three wheels two forward and one behind, a potato digger, corn planters, a horse rake, fanning mills, grist mills, horse-powers, and the five exhibits of combination reapers and mowers ("Kirby's, Ball's, Buckeye, McCormick's and Badger State") — all these were carefully examined and their merits discussed by crowds of men. An ingenious affair called Wheeler's water drawer, a device by which water could be raised from the deepest wells with great ease and the buckets emptied without so much as touching the hand, was shown in actual operation. Sherwood's grain binder to be attached to a reaper and using wire to bind bundles of grain was also a center of interest.

Nor was the display of products of the farm, orchard, and garden, although somewhat limited in quantity, any less attractive than other exhibits at



the Fair. Squashes, pumpkins, melons, potatoes, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, beets, beans, egg plant, and onions were conspicuous at frequent intervals in the exhibition hall for fruits, vegetables, and seeds. The showing of fruit was rather small, apples and grapes comprising practically the only varieties exhibited. But a very alluring display of bottles well filled with the juice of the grape graced this department, and the Cedar Rapids Eagle Brewery had sent a keg of "Amber Ale" to the Fair, which the committee on awards tasted to their entire satisfaction and pronounced "good". Sorghum products, preserved fruits, jellies, and pickles too made an attractive exhibit, "the very sight of them setting on edge the sweet tooth of the admiring passerby". Samples of "yeast bread" and cakes, crackers, butter, "salt-rising" bread, and brown bread established the skill and taste of busy Iowa housewives. The display of hard and soft soap and candles attracted considerable attention.

In the late afternoon of this second day of the fair marshals began to clear the grounds and by six o'clock nearly all except those who were officially connected with the exhibition or who lodged within the enclosure had departed. At the discussion meeting held at the courthouse that evening Judge Wright again presided. An extended discussion of the topic, "Fruits, and their adaption to the soil of Iowa" was brought to an end by LeGrand Byington of Iowa City who declared that more definite infor-



mation on fruit growing was demanded by Iowans. He and many others wanted to know "what to plant, when to plant, how to plant, and how to cultivate." He had utterly failed in his efforts, but wanted fruit and wanted to know how to grow it. Therefore he moved that the chair should appoint a committee of five to prepare for insertion in the Society's transactions, an essay upon these points. His motion was adopted unanimously.

The third day of the State Fair undoubtedly marked the peak of the exhibition both in attendance and interesting events. "The shower of the night before", said a reporter, "seemed to have no other perceptible effect than to wash the face of old Sol to a more intense brightness". Early in the morning, he added, "the tide of humanity began to set toward the fair grounds, and for hours every road leading to the city, was crowded with vehicles with men, women, and children."

From nine o'clock in the morning until one in the afternoon the time was occupied with the showing of stock. But the outstanding feature of the day and perhaps of the whole Fair occurred at half past one. Ten entries in the roadster class of thoroughbreds formed in a ring before the judges' stand. They were then driven twice around the race-track, once slowly and once at good speed. At the second round three stallions led the field, and they were awarded the track for a "trial of speed". These three animals were "Young Bashaw", a beautiful



five year old black; "Tom Hyer", a well-known winner that had been having "things his own way for some time" throughout the State; and "Dan Rice", a large bay horse and a good "goer". The trial was for five heats, best three in five.

A great crowd watched the event. Fully eight thousand people, it was estimated, crowded the amphitheater and the ropes around the track. After going up the home stretch part way, the three horses turned and came thundering past the judges' stand. Not being together, however, they were called back for a new start. This time they came up well-together and were given the word, "Go". Tom Hyer soon took the lead and finished the first half mile several lengths ahead. But on the second half mile Bashaw trotted beautifully and though he gained fast on Tom Hyer was beaten by a length. Time, 2:46. Dan Rice was then withdrawn leaving the other two to fight it out.

The two horses got a fine start in the second heat, rounded the turn, and speeded up the back stretch with Tom Hyer leading to near the end of the half mile. Bashaw soon passed his rival on the back stretch and trotted home ten to twelve lengths ahead, "amid tremendous cheers". Time 2:45.

In the third heat Tom led off at a tremendous gait, too rapid to hold, and at the first turn broke, and was passed by Bashaw. The latter trotted the whole mile without breaking once and came home six lengths ahead. Time, 2:44.



The fourth heat was a repetition of the third, Bashaw winning in 2:43, and Tom Hyer, the well-known favorite, met defeat.

A plowing match at four o'clock in the afternoon attracted eleven entries and a good attendance of practical men. Less interest, however, was displayed by the crowd in the efforts made "to speed the plow" as in efforts just previously made "to speed the horse".

The fourth and last day of the Fair opened very unpropitiously, as far as the weather was concerned. A dense fog hung over the country and a chilly wind added to the discomfort of visitors. The morning was occupied in awarding premiums and at one o'clock a grand procession of winning animals entered the show ring. With this exhibition the seventh annual Fair of the Iowa State Agricultural Society came to an end.

The Fair had been a thorough success. Hohman's Saxe Horn Band of seven pieces had enlivened the "routine of promenading, chatting and visiting" with "excellent music". The "Union Guards" of Columbus City, gaily bedecked in grey frock coats, white pants, and black hats with white plumes had paid a visit to the Fair, and exhibited their skill as a well-drilled organization. In company with the Union Guards and the German Artillery of Iowa City with their large cannon drawn by four prancing horses these volunteer soldiers gave a distinctive military touch to the show.



Toward the close of the Fair the issuance of spurious admission tickets by some person or persons unknown led to the arrest of several suspects; while the uncereemonious ejection from the enclosure of some young men who had attempted to sneak into the fair-ground by scaling the high board fence furnished the crowd with considerable amusement.

In a pecuniary way, too, the Fair was a success, the money receipts greatly exceeding those of previous meetings. Officers and promoters alike looked forward with confidence to the Fair of 1861, little realizing that within six months war clouds would gather which for four long years would interfere to a considerable extent with this apparently established institution.

BRUCE E. MAHAN



## The Campaign of 1883

The gubernatorial campaign of 1883 is remembered in Iowa as one of the most remarkable political contests in the history of the State. Three parties were in the field, each supporting a candidate of superior ability for the office of Governor. Buren R. Sherman, who had already served one term as Governor and who had the reputation of being one of the best debaters in the State, was the Republican nominee for reëlection. Judge L. G. Kinne, without a doubt one of the ablest Democratic leaders in Iowa, was the choice of his party; while James B. Weaver, a fluent and forcible speaker, gifted with superior oratorical powers, was the standard-bearer of the Greenback party.

Scarcely had the campaign opened when the *Iowa State Register*, the official organ of the Republican party, published a long editorial on July 8th, "throwing down the gauntlet to the opposition". On the following day Judge Kinne telegraphed to Governor Sherman, challenging him to a series of joint debates to be held "at any place or places" upon which the two might agree, and inviting the Governor to meet him in Des Moines to arrange a schedule of dates. The challenge was accepted and ten days later an announcement was issued that the two candidates would appear in joint debates at the



cities of Independence, Postville, Webster City, Cherokee, Atlantic, Osceola, Oskaloosa, Mount Pleasant, Cedar Rapids, Dewitt, and Des Moines.

This announcement was sufficient to assure political enthusiasts that every question at issue between the two major parties would be adequately discussed in public. It did not, however, take cognizance of the Greenback party. Consequently, on July 17th, E. H. Gillette, campaign manager for General Weaver, sent messages to Judge Kinne and to Governor Sherman asking that Mr. Weaver be allowed to participate in the joint debates. Judge Kinne gave his approval to the proposed plan, provided Governor Sherman should agree. The Republican camp, however, was not to be thus quietly invaded by a political foe. Governor Sherman would debate the issues of the major parties with Mr. Kinne, but he did not choose to defend himself against the assaults of candidates of minor parties. Accordingly, the request was denied, with the explanation that a triangular debate would consume an undue amount of time, thus making the meetings too long. Moreover, it was pointed out that no wide variances existed between the Republican and Greenback parties. Indeed, it was claimed that upon the saloon question, "which so many regard as the most vital issue of the campaign," there was a complete agreement in these two parties. This was a plausible and diplomatic position from the Republican viewpoint. It at once eliminated General Weaver



from the joint debate and attempted to magnify the similarities of the two parties rather than their differences.

But Mr. Gillette was not to be thus easily evaded by cunningly devised political strategy. He proceeded immediately to make a series of appointments for General Weaver to speak in the evenings of the same days and at the same places where the other candidates were to meet in the afternoon for joint debate. This gave the Greenback candidate the advantage of large audiences without the disadvantage of a time limit.

The announcement of the schedule of joint debates appeared almost six weeks before the time fixed for the first meeting. This gave the press ample opportunity to advertise the program and to stimulate public interest in the contest. At Independence, on Wednesday afternoon, August 29th, the triangular campaign was formally opened by the first joint debate as announced. The day was all that could have been asked, bright in the morning with light hazy clouds in the afternoon. Flags hung from many buildings and at an early hour teams from the surrounding country began to bring in large numbers of people, while passenger trains from Dubuque, Manchester, West Union, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, and other points were full to overflowing. By noon there were probably five thousand visitors, including many of the leading politicians of the State, waiting to attend the meeting.



Governor Sherman arrived by special train over the Illinois Central Railroad from Cedar Falls, where the day before he had reviewed the Second Brigade of the State militia. Republican headquarters were at the Turner House which was crowded with politicians and citizens. Judge Kinne came on the 10:40 train from Dubuque, where he had addressed a large political gathering the night before. Upon his arrival in the city he was escorted to the residence of Mayor Charles M. Durham where he was entertained and where he had his headquarters while in the city. General Weaver also arrived at 10:40 from Toledo where he had spoken the previous evening. He was entertained at the Wheeler House, where headquarters had been provided. Although he was not one of the joint debaters he was treated very much the same as if he had been accorded that honor.

By noon an immense crowd had gathered. The grounds at the courthouse square were elaborately decorated. Seats for about five thousand people were provided, and a platform large enough for the band, reporters, distinguished guests, and the speakers was erected. Several special police lent dignity to the occasion, while the Fourth Regiment band entertained the crowd, which began to assemble two hours before the speaking commenced. An hour before the meeting was called to order every available seat had been taken and about two thousand people were compelled to stand.



A few minutes before two o'clock General Weaver quietly took a seat in the grand stand and was greeted with cheers. A little later Governor Sherman and Judge Kinne appeared on the platform and were received with a wild display of enthusiasm and loud applause. When the noise had subsided H. W. Holman, chairman of the Republican county committee, announced that Governor Sherman would speak for an hour, Judge Kinne for an hour and a half, and then Governor Sherman would close the debate with a half hour rebuttal speech. He then introduced the Governor as the first speaker.

At the end of three hours when both the Republican and Democratic candidates had used their allotted time General Weaver asked the privilege of making an announcement. Judge Kinne agreed to grant him this privilege, but W. G. Donnan, speaking for the Republican forces, shouted, "Weaver, sit down. This is *our* meeting!" The meeting adjourned without Weaver's announcement. Later in the afternoon the Republicans attempted to arrange a joint debate between General Weaver and Colonel William P. Hepburn, a Republican member of Congress, but Weaver refused to debate with any one except "those of equal rank with him" — candidates for the office of Governor. So the Republicans announced that Hepburn would speak in the evening after Weaver had finished.

In the evening the crowd which again assembled in the park was almost as large as the one in the



afternoon. When General Weaver came upon the platform he announced, "I can now say to the Republicans that this is *my* meeting and that no Republican shall speak from this platform this evening, and there are a thousand men in this audience who will see that he don't". The excitement for a few moments was intense, but it soon subsided and Weaver spoke for three hours. Colonel Hepburn had to be content with delivering his speech at Independence two days later.

During the various joint debates the main issues of the campaign were argued pro and con. Governor Sherman in his opening speech declared that the people are sovereign and insisted upon their right to secure prohibition through a constitutional amendment. He spoke of national defense, of the war and its "disasterous consequences", of the great national debt, and of the vast sums that had been paid upon this debt during Republican administrations. He then referred to the growth of the school system, and of the manufacturing interests under the Republican policy of protection, the prosperous condition of the people as a whole, and the comfortable circumstances of the laboring men in Iowa. The Democratic party claimed to be a friend of the laboring man, he said, but the records proved quite the opposite. The homestead law, which was defeated three times by a Democratic Congress and President and was finally passed by a Republican Congress and signed by Abraham Lincoln, he asserted, had re-



sulted in many poor eastern men becoming prosperous and well-to-do western farmers.

Judge Kinne, after a few pleasant introductory remarks, dismissed a large part of the argument of his opponent as being "irrelevant to the issues of the day." Having discussed the Republican tariff record, he compared Iowa taxes with those of surrounding States, and then launched forth in a scathing denunciation of the "Republican cry of the home against the saloon." The Burlington *Hawk-Eye* had referred to his speech delivered at Greenfield a few days previous and had quoted him as saying: "I am in favor of a saloon on every hilltop, if necessary, and on every roadside, and on every street and thoroughfare, and in all public places. The more public the better." The Judge took occasion in his speech at Independence to deny most emphatically that he had made such a statement. He said, "I am not in favor of the saloon on the hilltop, as they report me in this respect. My political adversaries lie about me and have not the manhood to make honorable correction."

Governor Sherman replied that it made little difference to him or to the people of Iowa "whether Mr. Kinne made the remark ascribed to him at Greenfield or not. His speech here today", continued the Governor, "is evidence incontrovertible that he is in favor of a saloon not only on every hilltop, but everywhere, in every household of the State."



The intense excitement, the political intrigue, and the dramatic episodes which characterized this first meeting at Independence were in a large measure continued throughout the series. At Postville on the following afternoon the candidates addressed a crowd of about four thousand people. There the order of speaking was reversed, Judge Kinne having the opening and closing speech. Governor Sherman at the close of his remarks threw a political bomb at his opponent's position by asking him to explain what he meant by a "well regulated license law," insinuating that these words implied a contradiction of terms. To this Judge Kinne made no reply.

The Republicans again challenged General Weaver to a joint debate with Colonel Hepburn, but Mr. Weaver again declined. L. H. Weller, the only Iowa Greenbacker then in Congress, thereupon announced his willingness to meet Representative Hepburn on the stump, but the Colonel refused.

There was a ten-day interval between the date of the Postville meeting and the one at Webster City. During that time popular attention centered in the State Fair, and for a few days politics were neglected. But the Webster City debate revived interest in the campaign. Governor Sherman reviewed the work of the Republican party since the days of the Civil War. He said that the future could only be judged by the past and he did not believe that the people were ready to hand over the reins of government to a party which had never been the champion



of a great moral idea or a measure for the benefit of the laboring man. When Judge Kinne was introduced he referred to the past, concerning which his opponent had spoken, as a "graveyard". He devoted the greater part of his time to a discussion of the tariff question, provoking frequent laughter by ridiculing the "free list". In the evening General Weaver spoke at the opera house, while Colonel Hepburn held a Republican meeting at the courthouse.

Rainy weather interfered somewhat with the meeting at Cherokee on September 13th. Despite this fact, however, about three thousand people attended. The program was very similar to the one at Webster City two days before.

At Atlantic political enthusiasm was again at flood tide. The Republicans stole a march on the Democrats by securing the services of a brass band. Governor Sherman was escorted to the open forum by the band, the Republican committee, and about two hundred members of the Republican Club, while Judge Kinne walked quietly to the place of meeting, accompanied only by a few intimate friends. Both speakers were at the zenith of their oratorical powers. Excitement was rampant. While Governor Sherman was making the closing speech some of the Democrats tried to make a disturbance but did not succeed. Some one who attempted to announce General Weaver's meeting was impatiently "cried down". In the evening Weaver spoke at the opera



house, while Judge C. C. Cole held a Republican meeting at the skating rink. This was the last attempt made by the Republicans to oppose the Weaver meetings.

The remaining joint debates were not unlike those already described. At Osceola more than seven thousand people attended the meeting. "Both speakers were feeling excellently and both made probably their best speeches at this place." In the afternoon the Democratic ladies of Osceola presented Judge Kinne with "the finest bouquet of flowers ever seen in the city." The Republicans announced a meeting for Colonel Hepburn in the opera house and challenged General Weaver to meet him, but as usual he declined. It was learned later that the whole affair was a camouflage — Hepburn was not in the city at all.

The debate at Oskaloosa on the twenty-second of September was anticipated as the greatest meeting of the series, but rain again interfered. At Mount Pleasant three days later between five and six thousand people were present. "Both speakers were applauded by the audience indiscriminately", and both presented able arguments. At the close of Governor Sherman's speech he was presented with four magnificent bouquets by the ladies of Mount Pleasant and Burlington. General Weaver spoke as usual in the evening.

Only three meetings of the series remained. At Cedar Rapids on the twenty-ninth of September both



speakers were a little hoarse from the long-continued campaign, and the arguments were not quite up to the previous standard. Despite the fact that inclement weather again interfered at Dewitt, about three thousand people attended the meeting, and "remained almost to a man." Members of the band augmented the applause by joining with their instruments.

At the final meeting in Des Moines on October 3rd about thirty-five hundred people were present. No more could get within hearing distance on account of the strong wind which swept the courthouse square. Governor Sherman was a little hoarse, although otherwise he was feeling "in the best of trim". Both speakers delivered essentially the same speeches as at Independence at the opening of the campaign; both candidates were congratulated by their many friends at the close of the meeting; and both parties seemed well pleased with the efforts of their champions, each confident of victory at the polls six days later.

Various reports were circulated as to the merits of the joint debates. Certainly the issues of the campaign were thoroughly discussed. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the newspapers in reporting the speeches indulged in an unusual amount of repartee and satire. A Republican paper in speaking of the debate at Independence said: "There is no question as to the result of this meeting in the minds of the people of Buchanan County. It was a com-



plete triumph for Governor Sherman and Iowa republicanism, and will insure a sweeping Republican success in the county in October. Kinne was completely routed by Sherman's closing remarks, and, though called for at the close by his party friends, did not respond."

The Democratic press in referring to Governor Sherman's speech on the same day said it was a "flat failure", and accused him of resorting to history to avoid a discussion of current political issues. "He took a metaphorical snooze", they said, "and woke up about a quarter of a century back, prowled around with nightmare's long handled spade and exhumed issues that died, were buried, and wandered into oblivion before the present generation saw light. He raked over the musty pages of by-gone times, and told the people, who had come so far to hear the 'living issues of the day,' about Brooks' attack on Sumner, about the extension of slavery into territories, the birth of the republican party, the beginning and prosecution of the war, its termination after a carnival of blood and an avalanche of consequent debt, all of which he, with herculean effort, saddled onto the terrible shoulders of democracy". The Governor's closing speech, it was averred, "left him in no better plight than his opening splatter, and left every one present with the impression that he is no competitor in any possible sense in a joint discussion with Judge Kinne."

General Weaver was portrayed as a political camp



follower of the Republican party. Newspapers variously referred to him as "a disappointed office seeker", or as a candidate "having no hopes of success".

The Chicago *Tribune* was of the opinion that the joint debates placed the candidates before the public "under the light of severe contrast." It seemed incredible that Mr. Kinne was "as bad a man as his speeches would indicate." He "wears the Democratic uniform", wrote the *Tribune*, "but is really a bushwhacker between the lines, and fires in both directions. He strikes Prohibitionists and protective-tariff men in his own ranks as often as among the enemy, and it is quite likely he is killing off more Democrats than Republicans."

The Des Moines *Iowa Staats Anzeiger*, a Democratic German paper, on the contrary, was even more vociferous in its denunciation of the Republican cause. It declared that this campaign "will be noted in history for a century to come as having produced the most stupendous liars the world ever knew, and that those liars were wholly on one side — on the side of the party that professes to hold all the moral and virtuous element of the nation, the Republican party."

Throughout the series of debates the best of feeling prevailed among the speakers themselves. It is probably a fair estimate to say that at Oskaloosa and Dewitt the meetings were advantageous to the Democrats. At Cherokee, Mount Pleasant, and



Cedar Rapids they were more favorable to the Republicans, while at the other cities neither side seems to have had any decided advantage. Governor Sherman's strength was shown in his frankness, his earnest style, and in his wonderful fund of information on all public questions. Judge Kinne's power lay in his clear reasoning, his sarcasm, and his fine voice; while General Weaver was prominent for his oratorical powers and his ready wit.

All in all the campaign of 1883 was one of the most remarkable in the history of the State. Governor Sherman was reëlected, although Judge Kinne carried twenty-one counties, polling an overwhelming majority in the Democratic strongholds of Dubuque and Davenport. James B. Weaver was far behind, winning only twenty-three thousand votes out of a total of over three hundred and twenty-seven thousand.

J. A. SWISHER



## Comment by the Editor

### POLITICAL DEBATE

Politics and the weather are probably the most common topics of conversation in the world. The principal distinction seems to be that people seldom propose to do anything about the weather. But with politics it is different. Reformers are ever at large; substantial citizens argue perennially for their favorite panacea; while ambitious politicians predict the doom of society unless their party runs the government.

Political democracy has been established, but the problem still remains of making popular control fruitful by determining the proper objects to which it should be devoted; and the question of ends is simple compared to devising the methods of achieving those ends. So the debate goes on and on perpetually through endless assertions and continual refutation. The issues are as complex as the diversity of human interests; alternative decisions are neither clear nor completely satisfactory; public opinion is always somewhat confused; and the final solution is never attained.

In the whole realm of political discussion no more effective way of influencing the public has ever been conceived than joint debate. Face to face in the



presence of the sovereign people, the proponents of opposing policies are compelled to state their positions plainly and in vivid contrast. Dissimulation, artifice, or misrepresentation is promptly exposed, so that the issue is truly drawn in its stark and unencumbered form for all to recognize who will. The fog of innuendo and subterfuge which clouds political campaign literature is dispelled in joint debate.

The classic Lincoln and Douglas debates on the question of slavery in 1858 were fresh in the minds of the voters of Iowa when Samuel J. Kirkwood and Augustus C. Dodge canvassed the State in a series of ruthless forensic encounters to win the office of Governor in 1859. In other campaigns since then rival candidates for public office in Iowa have often stumped the State together. James B. Weaver and William P. Hepburn, both masters of parliamentary repartee, were always ready to meet their opponents in joint discussions of the prevailing issues. But the triangular gubernatorial campaign of 1883 was probably the most dramatic exhibition of political debating in the history of Iowa.

J. E. B.



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