

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

VOL. XVI

ISSUED IN JANUARY 1935

No. 1

COPYRIGHT 1935 BY THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



Similarities and Contrasts

A panoramic view of Iowa's Governors presents many interesting similarities and quite as many striking contrasts. Twenty-eight men have served as Governors of Iowa — three during the Territorial period, and twenty-five since Iowa became a State. Five of these men were born in New York, four in Pennsylvania, and only four in Iowa. Among this distinguished company, some were trained in the art of war. Two of them were soldiers in the War of 1812. One was a soldier in the Black Hawk War. Among them were three colonels, two captains, and a brigadier general of the Civil War. One was wounded at the Battle of Shiloh. Another was wounded at Blue Mills, taken prisoner at Shiloh, released through an exchange of prisoners, and wounded again at Vicksburg. Two veterans of the Spanish-American War have served as the chief executive of the State.

One of Iowa's Governors was once a stage driver. Another was a dealer in automobiles. Two

were editors. Three were farmers. Four were merchants. Seventeen were students of the law. Most of the men were content to earn their livelihood, directly or indirectly, from the soil of Iowa. One made a fortune by mining gold in California.

Two of the Governors were Whigs, six were Democrats, and twenty were members of the Republican party.

Before coming to Iowa several had legislative experience: one in New York, another in New Hampshire, one in Kentucky, and another in Ohio. One had been Governor of Ohio before he became Governor of Iowa. Four of these men served in the Constitutional Convention of 1844, and eighteen of them, at some time in their careers, served in the legislature of Iowa. After being Governor, six of them became members of Congress, and two attained the distinction of becoming members of Presidents' cabinets. One became Governor at the age of thirty-three. Another did not attain that office until he was sixty-five. One of the Governors died at the age of thirty-eight. All others lived to be at least fifty-four. Fourteen — one-half of the whole number — have lived more than the allotted span of three score and ten years, and one attained the ripe old age of ninety-five. Six of the Governors of Iowa are still living.

J. A. SWISHER