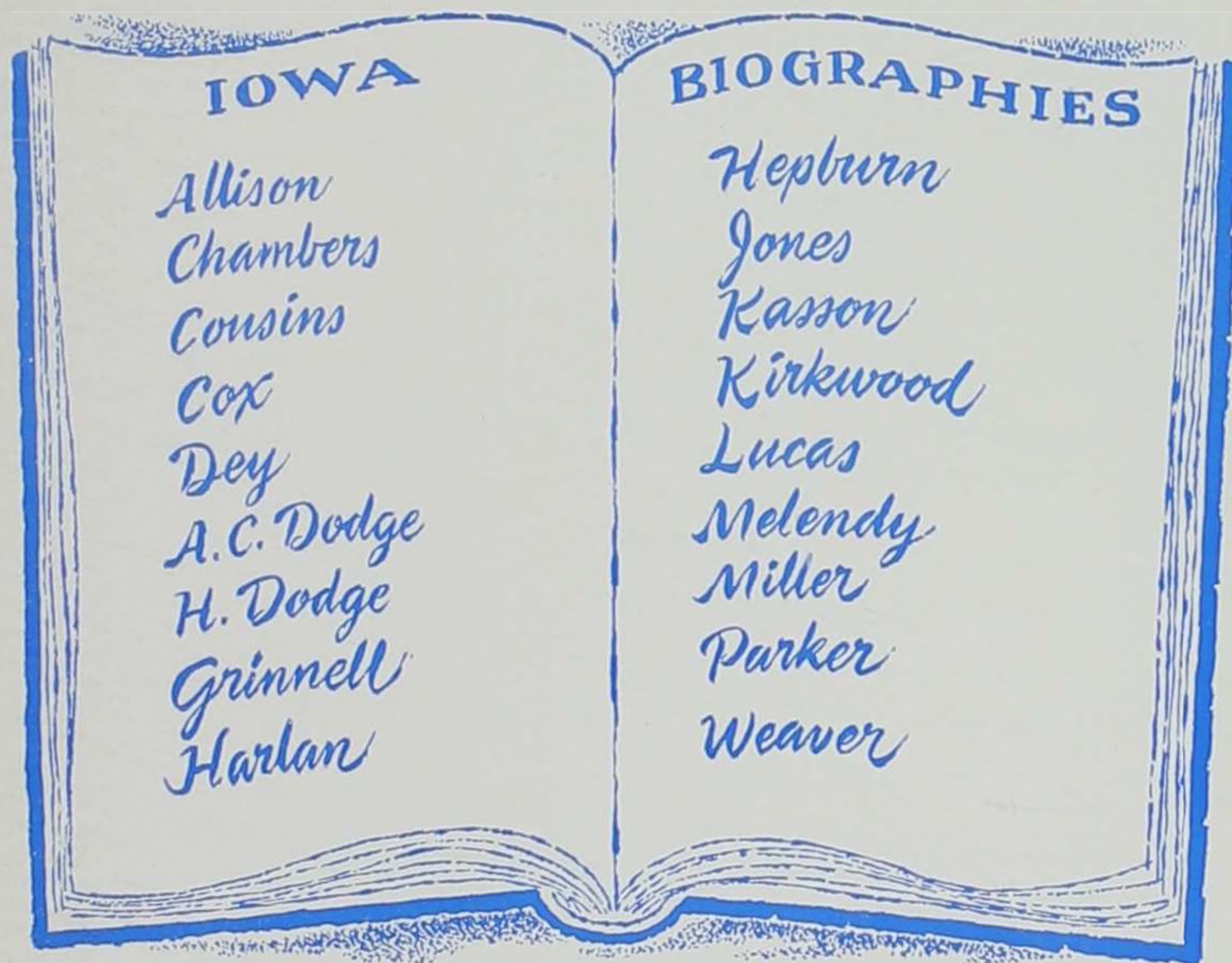
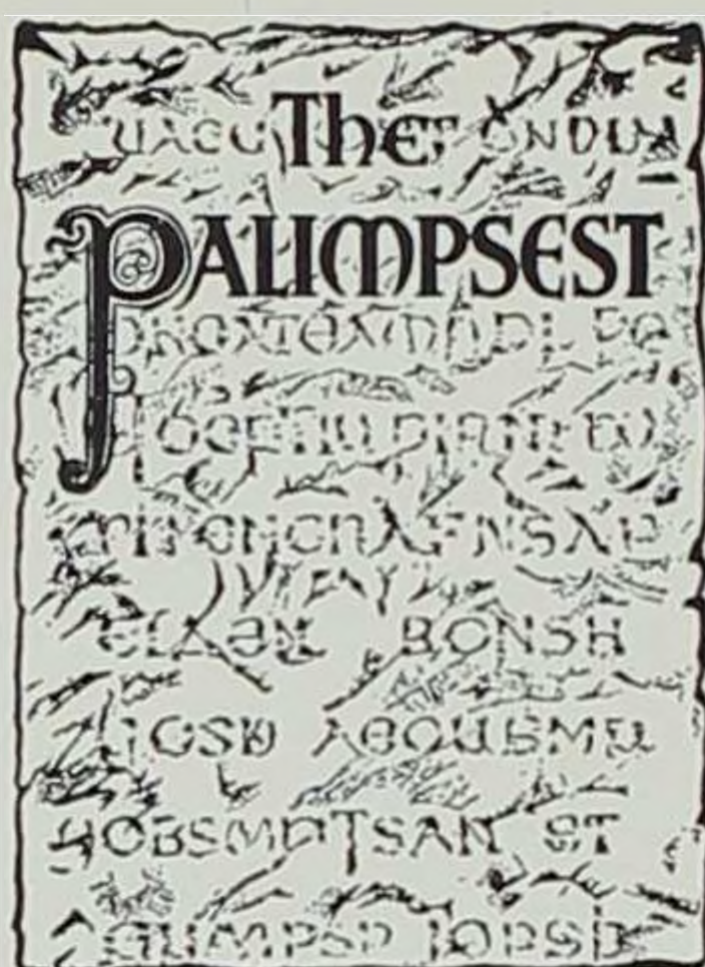


The **PALIMPSEST**



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OCTOBER 1956



The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the 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.

Contents

IOWA IN BIOGRAPHY

JOHN T. FREDERICK

Iowa in Biography	481
Leaders in Early Days	482
Leaders in Civil War Days	496
Makers of Modern Iowa	503

Cover

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THE PALIMPSEST

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Iowa In Biography

The story of Iowa is best told in the lives of its citizens.

Rightly, the State Historical Society of Iowa has made biographical studies a major part of its work. In 1907, under the editorship of Dr. Benjamin F. Shambaugh, the Iowa Biographical Series was inaugurated with the publication of a volume on Robert Lucas. Eighteen books in this series, spanning a century of Iowa history and illustrating the wide variety in achievement which has contributed to the shaping of the commonwealth, afford the subject matter of the present article. Marked by high standards, both literary and scholarly, these eighteen volumes constitute a rich library, a telling of the Iowa story which is indispensable to an appreciative understanding of the state as it is today and of the part it has played in the life of the nation and the world.

JOHN T. FREDERICK

Leaders in Early Days

The lives of the men who shaped the destinies of Iowa in territorial days and those of early statehood display a common pattern, as revealed in their biographies. They were — of necessity, under the circumstances of settlement and development delayed by the Indian barrier and then occurring very rapidly — men who had achieved maturity and gained experience on other and older frontiers and had then come on westward to share in the founding of a new commonwealth. Though their birthplaces ranged from New England to the South, these men were alike in having distinguished themselves as lawyers, legislators, soldiers and social leaders in the earlier frontiers of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois before they made their contributions to the formation of Iowa.

First in order of these "founding fathers" as presented in the field of biography was Henry Dodge, a frontiersman all his life, for he was born at Old Vincennes in 1782. He is the subject of one of the earlier volumes in the Iowa Biographical Series, written by Dr. Louis Pelzer and published in 1911. Having demonstrated his abilities both as a leader of men and as an Indian fighter, Dodge was appointed at the age of thirty to the

post of marshal of the newly created Missouri Territory, by President James Madison. In the ensuing years of the War of 1812 he served as brigadier general of the territorial forces of Missouri, and was associated with Daniel Boone.

Dodge was one of those who developed the lead mines in the Galena region in the late 1820's. Extinguishment of Indian claims to these mines was one of the immediate causes of the Black Hawk War. Dodge was one of those who forced that extinguishment by erecting a fort for the protection of miners and disregarding the orders of federal Indian agents to leave. He was active both in the Black Hawk War and in the "uprisings" which preceded it.

This frontier military experience in fighting Indians justified the appointment of Dodge, by President Andrew Jackson in 1833, as Colonel of the First Regiment of Dragoons of the United States Army. In this capacity he led important expeditions as far as the Rocky Mountains, which did much to prepare the way for later westward expansion. His achievement in this and earlier aspects of the empire-building of the period led to his appointment as Governor of the newly-formed Territory of Wisconsin, 1836-1838, decisive years in Iowa history.

A fact which may be new to other readers, as it was to me, is that this "Wisconsin Territory" was in the beginning largely Iowa, so far as popula-

tion was concerned. This is demonstrated by the fact that the first legislative assembly of the territory was called by Governor Dodge at Belmont in Iowa County, and the second at Burlington. The separate Iowa Territory was created in 1838. In his biography, Dr. Pelzer sums up admirably the significance of the Dodge regime in Iowa history: "The first two years of the administration of Henry Dodge represent the connecting link between Iowa and the Old Northwest. During this time the aegis of the Ordinance of 1787 extended over the Iowa country, bringing with it a mass of precedents, conventions, and traditions. . . ."

Dr. Pelzer's study also illustrates the admirable concreteness in significant detail which marks most of the volumes of the Iowa Biographical Series. "Prairie chicken, venison, duck, goose, and fish" were on the menu of the banquet given by the citizens of Burlington to the territorial legislators — with a "cotillion" to add to the festivities. The homely facts of everyday frontier living come home to us in the reminiscence of Henry Dodge's son Augustus: "I have frequently seen my father go to a blacksmith shop with a bag of silver dollars, and then cut them up into halves, quarters, and eighths, for small change. My mother made buckskin pockets in his clothes to carry this fractional currency."

This son, Augustus Caesar Dodge, is the subject of an earlier volume in the Iowa Biographical

Series — also by Dr. Louis Pelzer — published in 1908. While his father's career was, after 1838, chiefly associated with Wisconsin — where he served as territorial delegate to Congress, two additional terms as Governor, and finally as United States Senator from 1848 to 1857 — Augustus Caesar Dodge stayed in Iowa and played an important part in government during the territorial days and the earliest years of statehood. Not quite the leader of men that his father was, and never in the first rank of prominence, Augustus Caesar Dodge is one of those less obvious but indispensable figures in our history which the Historical Society has done well to recognize and include in the Iowa Biographical Series.

Born in Missouri in 1812, young Dodge was only twenty-six when he was appointed by President Martin Van Buren as register of the Land Office at Burlington in the newly created Territory of Iowa. In this capacity he figured in the dramatic land sale, when bona fide settlers protected their land claims against speculators, which is brilliantly and amusingly narrated in one of Phil Stong's novels.

The most important service of Augustus Caesar Dodge was rendered as Iowa's territorial delegate to Congress for six years. He was nominated by the Democrats in 1840, and participated in the famous "log cabin and hard cider" campaign of that year, with special features accounted for by the

frontier conditions in Iowa. His opponent for the election was the Whig, Alfred Rich. Pelzer describes their campaign in one of the most valuable passages in the book for its down-to-earth rendering of frontier reality:

The two candidates stumped the Territory, holding joint debates, traveling together, and sharing common hardships and hospitalities. Across the prairie they rode on their horses, eating at the same table, and generally sleeping in the same bed. Sharp rejoinders would be given and taken in their discussions; but off the stump they knew no party and were friends. At the present site of Brighton (Iowa) they found a village of less than a dozen cabins. There was scarcely a bridge in the Territory, and owing to the unusual rains the smallest streams were overflowing. Brighton was finally reached by fording and swimming the swollen streams, and both candidates were forced to leave the little village in the same way.

Skunk River in Washington County was also booming and was more than a quarter of a mile in width. The candidates entered a small skiff and while one of them rowed the other held the reins of the horses as they swam behind. Crooked Creek with its swollen waters also confronted them. This was passed on a log — the one candidate driving in the horses while his opponent caught them when they landed on the other bank.

Finally the weary candidates with their bedrabbled horses reached Washington, the county seat, where they hoped to secure rest and food for themselves and their horses. But Bloomer Thompson, the respectable and accommodating tavern-keeper of the only hotel in town, had gone to Moffet's mill, near Burlington, for flour. For five or six days he had been detained by the swollen streams,

and his good wife had neither bread nor meat in the house. Without any dinner the two men supped on tea and onions, and retired to forget campaigns, votes, and election.

As territorial delegate, Augustus Caesar Dodge helped to iron out the persistent boundary dispute with Missouri, and labored for appropriations to aid and stimulate the development of the Territory. He must have felt a keen personal interest in a petition which he presented to Congress on April 14, 1842, for an appropriation of \$6,000 to build a bridge and another of \$5,000 for road improvement!

For two years after Iowa's admission to statehood, partisan politics delayed the selection of United States senators; but in 1848 Augustus Caesar Dodge became the first senator from Iowa, and the first man born west of the Mississippi to be elected to the Senate. His father, Henry Dodge, became a senator, from Wisconsin, at the same time. In the Senate Dodge participated in the great debates of the period — the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law, and the Homestead Act of 1853. Defeated for re-election by James Harlan in 1854, he was appointed by President Franklin Pierce as Minister to Spain, and conducted negotiations for acquisition of Cuba which reflected the tensions ultimately responsible for the Spanish-American War. Back in Iowa in 1859, he became the Democratic candidate for the governorship, and was defeated by Samuel J. Kirk-

wood in a hard-fought campaign. His remaining years were uneventful.

The two territorial governors of Iowa are the subjects of biographies by John C. Parish, both published by the State Historical Society of Iowa in the Iowa Biographical Series: *Robert Lucas* (1907) and *John Chambers* (1909). These two men exemplify most clearly the pattern of distinguished achievement on older frontiers before they played their part in the history of Iowa. Robert Lucas is described by his biographer as a man of "aggressive strength of character." Born in Virginia, and of the traditionally fiery Virginian disposition in spite of Quaker ancestry, his early distinction was largely military. As an admired leader of the frontier militia, he came on one occasion into collision with the civil authorities, and the sheriff of Scioto County, Ohio, where Lucas had emigrated from Virginia, attempted to arrest him. Lucas objected effectively, however; and the sheriff, in Parish's phrase, "rather than endanger his life, resigned his office. His duties then devolving upon the Coroner, he also resigned. Then Lucas swore vengeance upon the Clerk who had issued the writ, and he too resigned." Others came forward to enforce the law, however, and Lucas was eventually placed under arrest by the new sheriff, one Glover. Lucas had married the daughter of an innkeeper named John Brown, who, says Parish, "though insignificant in stature,

was a man of fiery disposition. In his wrath he followed them [the sheriff and his posse] from his tavern and made some demonstration as if to rescue his son-in-law from the long arm of justice. But he reckoned without his host; for Nathan Glover, a man of enormous frame, picked the little man up bodily and rudely threw him into a clump of jimson weed. No more resistance came from the father-in-law." The peculiar indignity of being thrown into a "clump of jimson weed" will be appreciated by Iowans who are familiar with the plant.

Lucas established his reputation through the part he played in the War of 1812. Particularly interesting to me is the fact, discovered by Dr. Parish, that the account of the Hull campaign and the surrender of Detroit by the then Colonel Lewis Cass — a document well known to all historians of the period — is in large and essential part a transcription (unacknowledged) from the personal journal of Robert Lucas.

After the War of 1812 Lucas played an increasingly important part in Ohio politics, and in 1832 and again in 1834, as a Jacksonian Democrat, he was elected Governor of Ohio. Moreover, in 1832 he gained, in Parish's words, "the distinguished honor of presiding over the first national convention ever held by the Democratic party of the United States." This convention, in Baltimore, was — like others of more recent mem-

ory — distinctly a Vice-Presidential convention. The candidacy of Jackson for President was not a matter of debate;" and Martin Van Buren received the Vice-Presidential nomination on the first ballot. During Lucas' two terms as Governor of Ohio the bitter boundary dispute with Michigan was settled in Ohio's favor. His hope of a seat in the United States Senate, following his terms as Governor, was shattered; and he was even defeated by a Whig in 1837 in a contest for a seat in the Ohio State Senate. From the obscurity to which these reverses seemed to doom him, Lucas was rescued by appointment by President Van Buren, in 1838, to the Governorship of the newly created Territory of Iowa. He was in his fifty-seventh year when he journeyed to Iowa to assume his new duties.

Lucas' two years as the first territorial Governor of Iowa were stormy ones. Another boundary dispute (with Missouri) was on his hands; but his chief troubles were with the territorial legislature, and these, as Parish shows, were in part the result of defects in the organic act creating the Territory, but more largely the products of the mind and actions of the secretary of the Territory, one William B. Conway, of whom Parish remarks, with effective understatement, that he was one who "could serve the public best by refraining from any participation in politics." Following the exercise by Lucas of the unqualified power of

veto conferred on him by the original organic act, and his attempts to curb reckless appropriations, he was denounced by a legislative resolution affirming that "Robert Lucas is 'unfit to be the ruler of a free people,' " and demanding his removal from office, a demand not heeded in Washington. A contemporary diarist noted that this first Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa "adjourned in confusion. All drunk with few exceptions." Parish suggests that the positive stand which Lucas had taken against gambling and intemperance played a part in his conflict with the legislators. The sudden death of Conway in the fall of 1839 removed the chief source of trouble, however, and the two remaining years of Lucas' Governorship were less contentious. Harrison's election in 1840 meant the appointment of a Whig to the post, and Lucas' public service was over except for his rather important part in the first Constitutional Convention of 1844. He lived out his life quietly on his farm south of Iowa City. He died in 1853.

Iowa's second territorial Governor, John Chambers, was known in his Iowa days as "the old Kentuckian." Born in Massachusetts, he moved with his family to Kentucky at the age of fourteen. At seventeen he became a law clerk, and at twenty was licensed to practice law. A fateful action of his early years was his volunteering in 1813 as an aid-de-camp to General William Henry Harrison.

He was with Harrison at the Battle of the Thames, where the British commander, Proctor, fled and the Indian leader, Tecumseh, was killed; and he was especially commended by Harrison after the campaign. It was the result of this early friendship, supported by his record of ability and integrity as a lawyer and as congressman from Kentucky, that Chambers was named by Harrison to the Iowa post. The part he played in Harrison's successful "log cabin" campaign no doubt had its effect as well. Parish quotes a contemporary account of Chambers' speech at the great "Miami Valley convention," at Dayton, before a crowd of 100,000 cheering enthusiasts: "he took hold of the great 'petticoat hero,' Senator Allen, and held him up before the searching fire of his sarcasm and rebuke, turning him first this way and then that, basting him now here and now there, as the blisters were seen to rise on his epidermis, very much as a log-cabin housewife manages a roasting goose, till everyone present must have had a feeling of pity for the Ajax of locofocracy in Ohio."

He played important parts both in the continuing boundary dispute with Missouri and the efforts toward statehood, but his highest distinction, according to Parish, was his persistent and often thwarted effort to obtain some degree of justice and humanity in the treatment of the Indians of the Iowa region. As Superintendent of Indian Affairs in addition to his duties as Governor, like

many other frontier leaders he was caught in the pressure between the irresistible westward expansion of the white race and the reluctance of the Indians to be exiled from their homes and hunting grounds. Superimposed on this basic problem was the need for regulation of traffic with the Indians, too often marked by extremes of exploitation. I have found few men, in my study of this aspect of American history, for whom I can feel so much respect for their convictions and conduct as I do for the old Kentuckian, John Chambers, as the second territorial Governor of Iowa. It seems probable that his conscientious devotion to this aspect of his public duty contributed to the fact that he left office broken in health. He returned to Kentucky, where he died in 1852.

Though Parish's style is occasionally marked by what some modern biographers might consider a "purple patch," these two studies of territorial governors are eminently readable, and seem to me to achieve sharply lined and convincing human portraits, somehow suggestive of fine daguerreotypes.

Studies of two less prominent figures round out the group of books published by the State Historical Society of Iowa which deal with the lives of men chiefly associated with territorial days and those of early statehood. Of these, *George Wallace Jones*, by John Carl Parish (1912), is primarily a volume of autobiography, though it in-

cludes a biographical sketch. For this reason I shall reserve it for later treatment. On the subject of *Thomas Cox*, by Harvey Reid (1909), Dr. Benjamin F. Shambaugh wrote in his introduction to the volume: "Measured by the careers of eminent men, Thomas Cox would not be classed among the great characters of his time. Nor does he occupy a conspicuous place in the history of Iowa. . . . He was an active, capable local leader, always identified with the social forces of the community whose movements he was often the most influential in directing. . . ." I hold it to be one of the distinctions of the Iowa Biographical Series, as conceived by Dr. Shambaugh, that "local leaders" have not been ignored, but have even been included in preference over men of wider fame: the result is a far truer and fuller record than would otherwise be possible.

Thomas Cox eminently justifies inclusion. He was a vigorous, colorful figure. Born in Kentucky, he moved to Illinois before it became a state, served as a member of its first state legislature, and distinguished himself as an Indian fighter before coming to Iowa — first as a federal surveyor in the Maquoketa River country, and then as a permanent settler in 1838. Elected to the first Legislative Assembly of Iowa Territory, he was prominent in the struggle with Governor Lucas over the veto power. He served also in the second, the third — in which he was speaker of the

House of Representatives — the fifth, and the sixth Legislative Assemblies. He died in 1844, before Iowa became a state. In the opinion of his biographer, he might have become its first Governor.

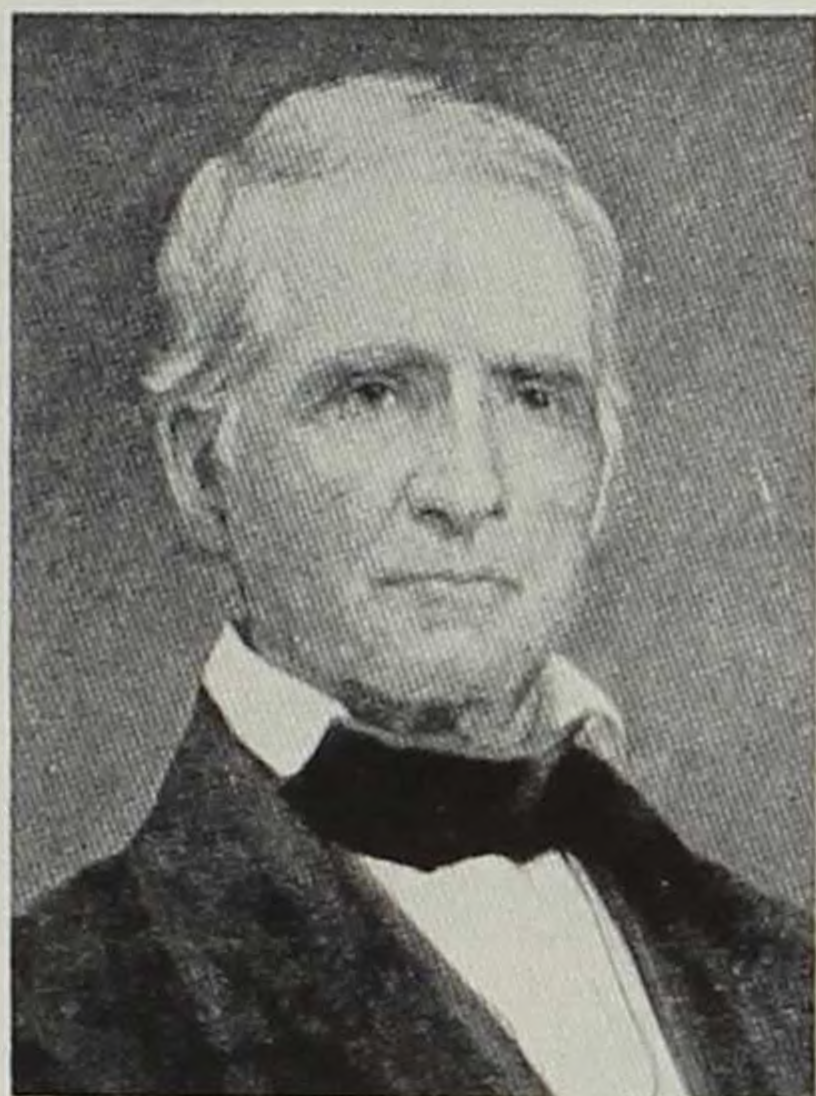
Some forty pages of Reid's study are devoted to a detailed and considered account of "the Bellevue war" — between bona fide settlers and an organized gang of outlaws preying upon them. Colonel Cox played an active part in this dramatic frontier incident. Though Reid's style is eminently pedestrian, the story makes good reading and the social atmosphere of that early frontier is perhaps more fully apparent than in any other of these books about the leaders of the early days.

JOHN T. FREDERICK

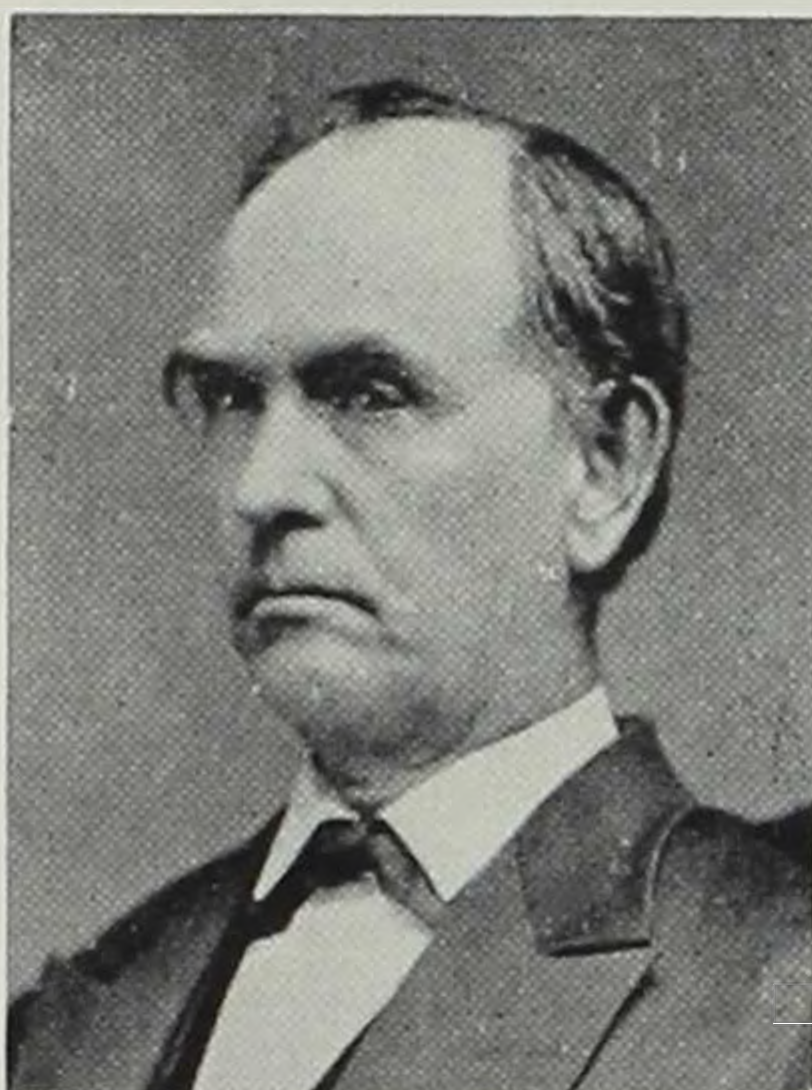
Leaders in Civil War Days

The men most influential in Iowa during the two decades from 1850 to 1870 had for the most part, like their predecessors of the era of Iowa Territory and early statehood, gained experience and reputation before they came. A partial exception to this rule was James Harlan, who was destined to serve three terms as a United States Senator from Iowa — with a brief interlude as Secretary of the Interior. He was a power in Iowa politics almost from his arrival in the state in 1846 to his death in 1899. His biography, written by Johnson Brigham, was published in the Iowa Biographical Series in 1913. Harlan, born in Illinois but brought up in Indiana, came to Iowa as a young schoolmaster. He performed valuable service as principal of Iowa City College (incorporated in 1843); as Superintendent of Public Instruction for the new state of Iowa; and as president of the Mt. Pleasant Collegiate Institute (now Iowa Wesleyan College).

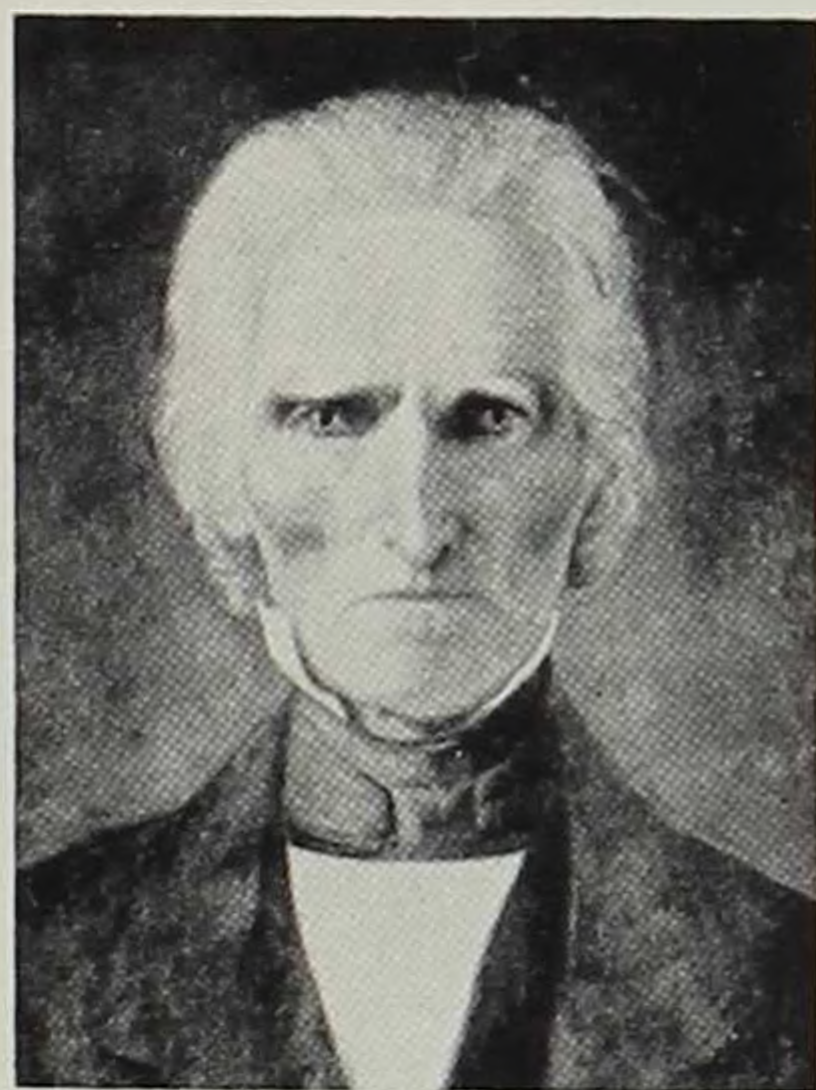
Harlan's campaign for the office of state superintendent had brought him into touch with political leaders, and in 1855 he was elected to the United States Senate. A technical irregularity in the election enabled the slavery forces in the Sen-



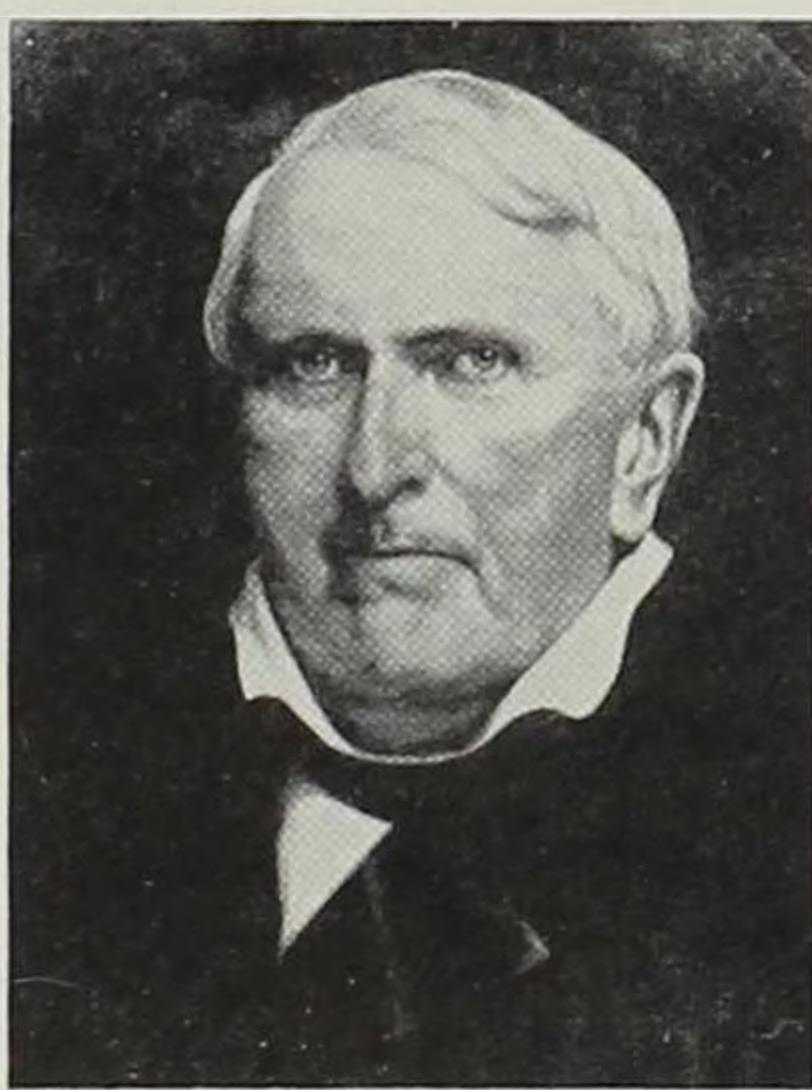
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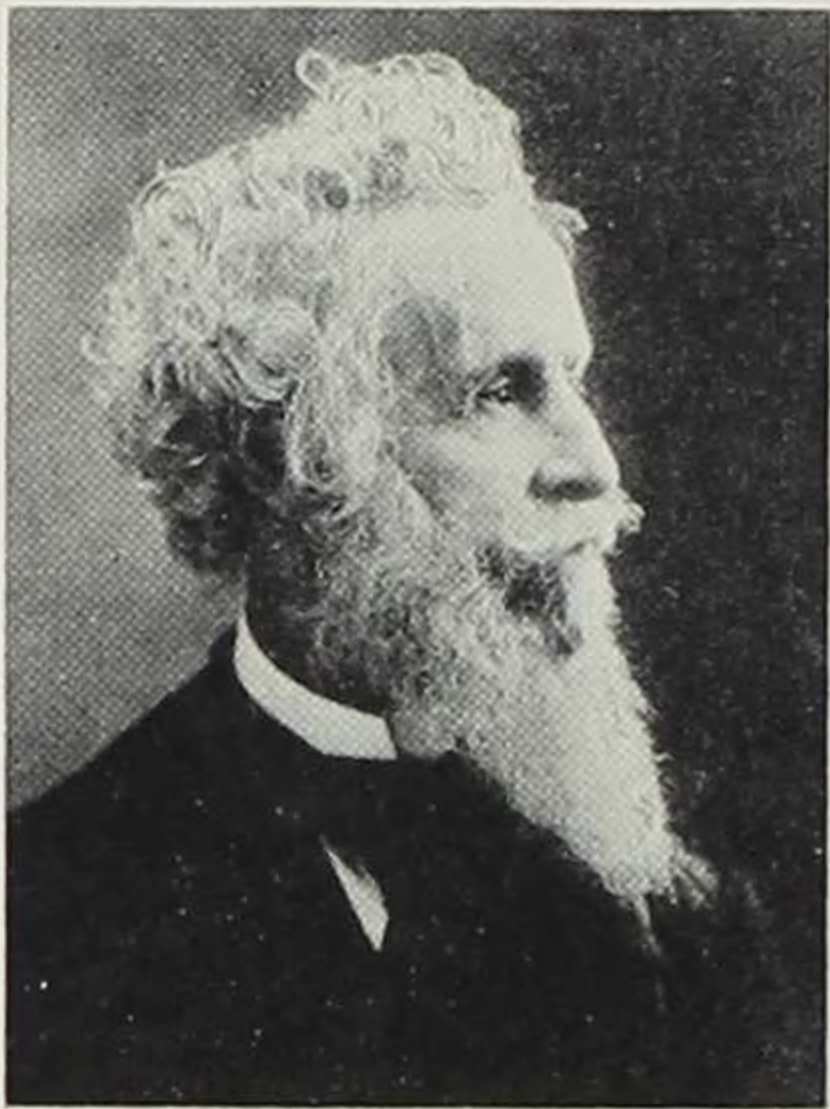
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ROBERT LUCAS



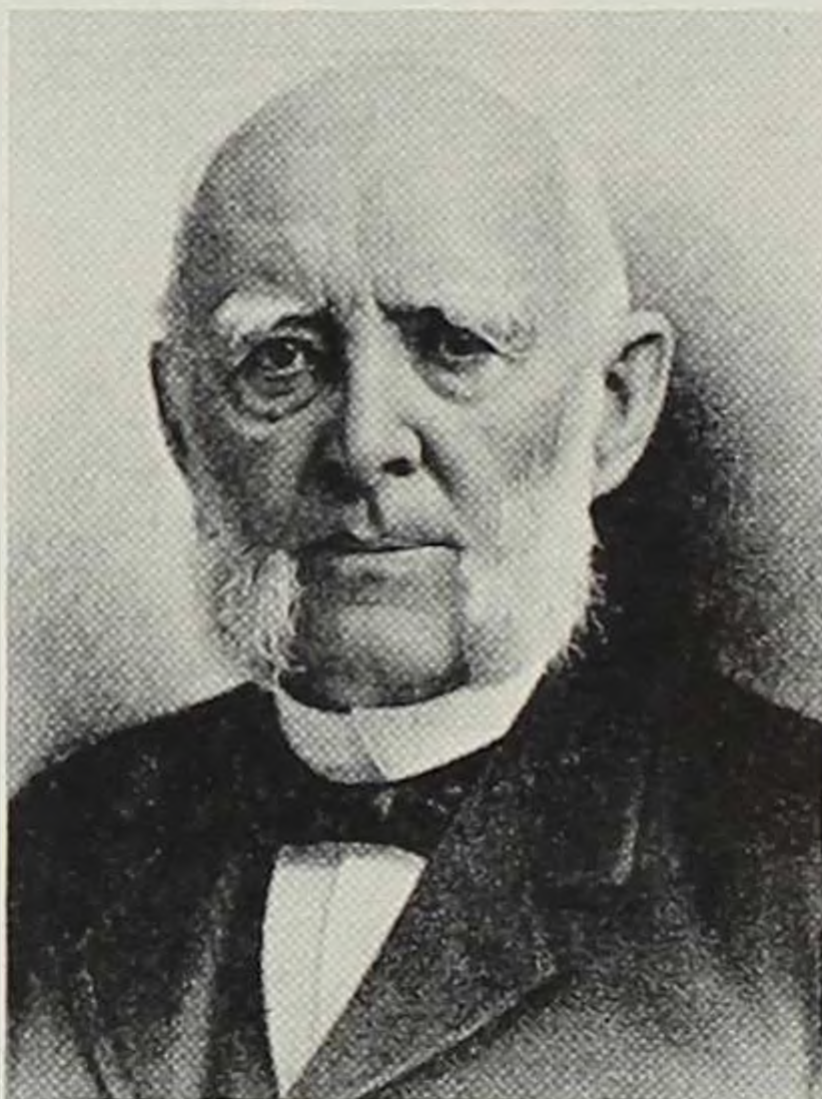
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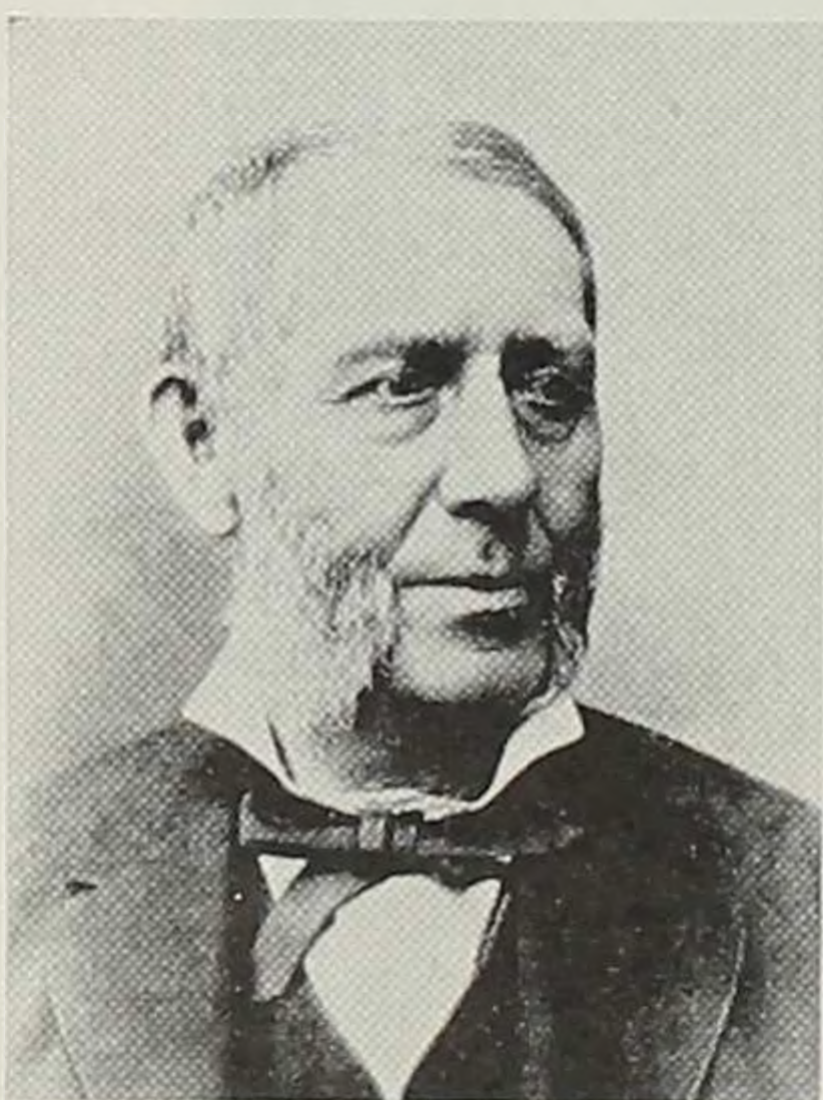
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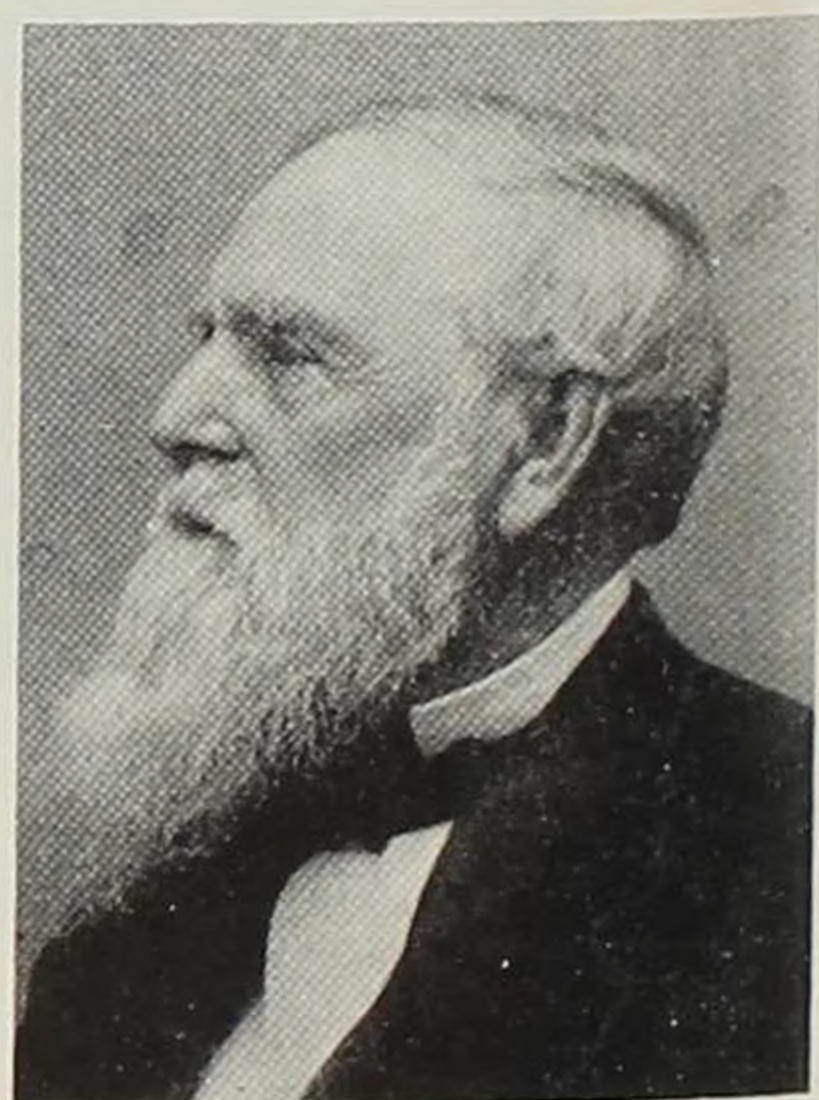
THOMAS COX



PETER ANTHONY DEY



SAMUEL JORDAN KIRKWOOD



JAMES HARLAN



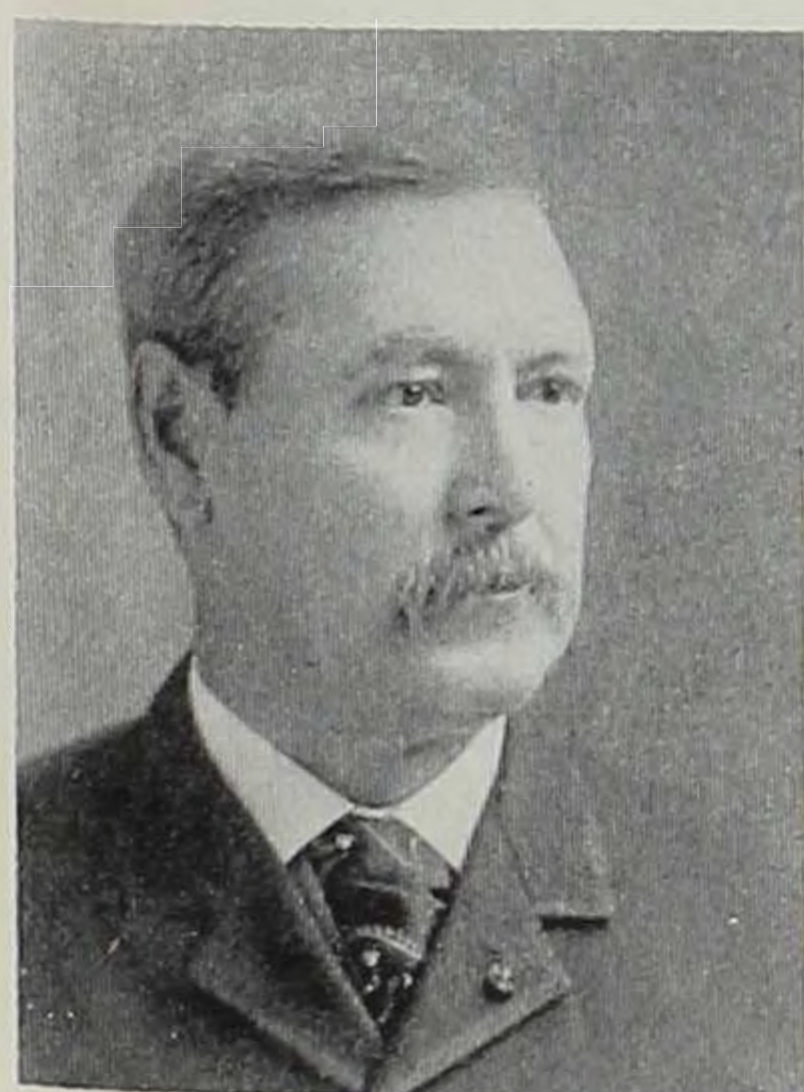
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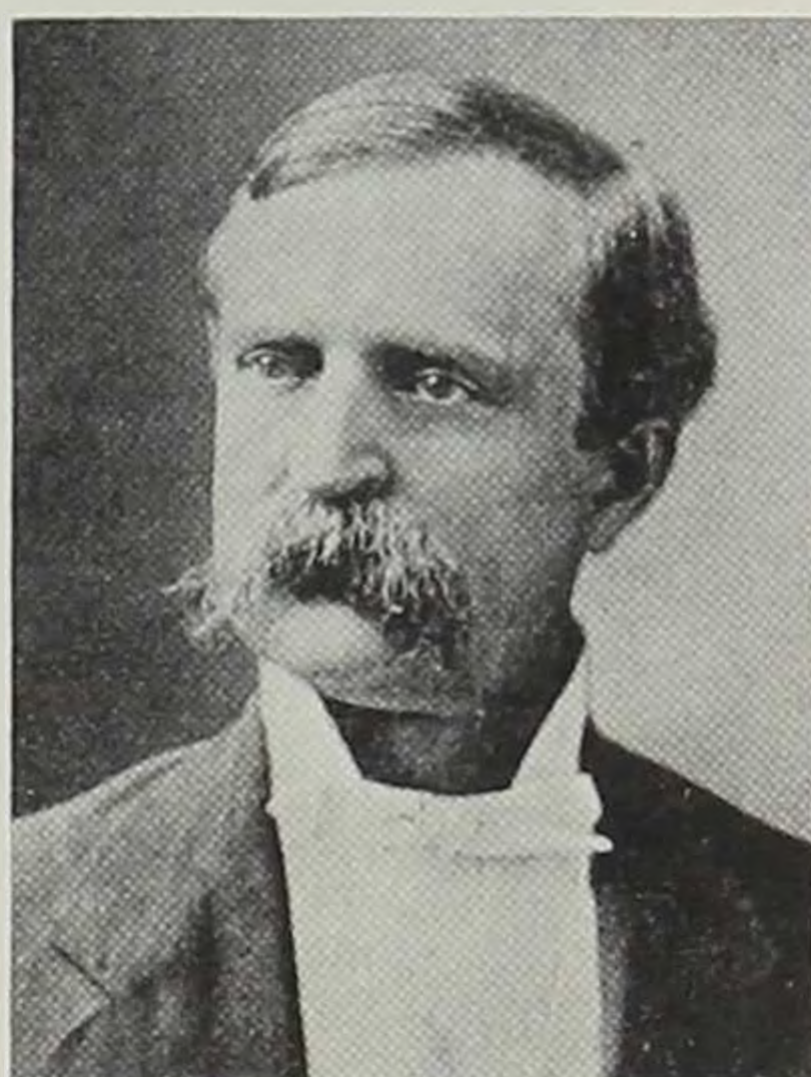
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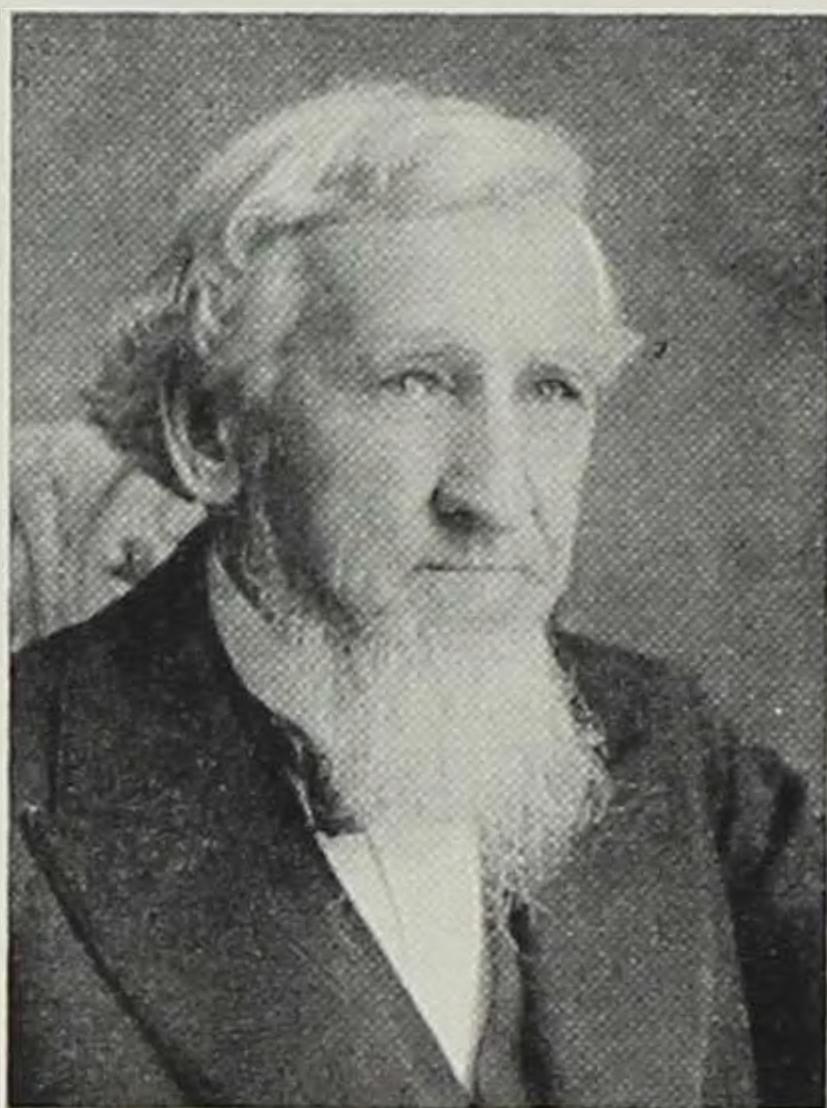
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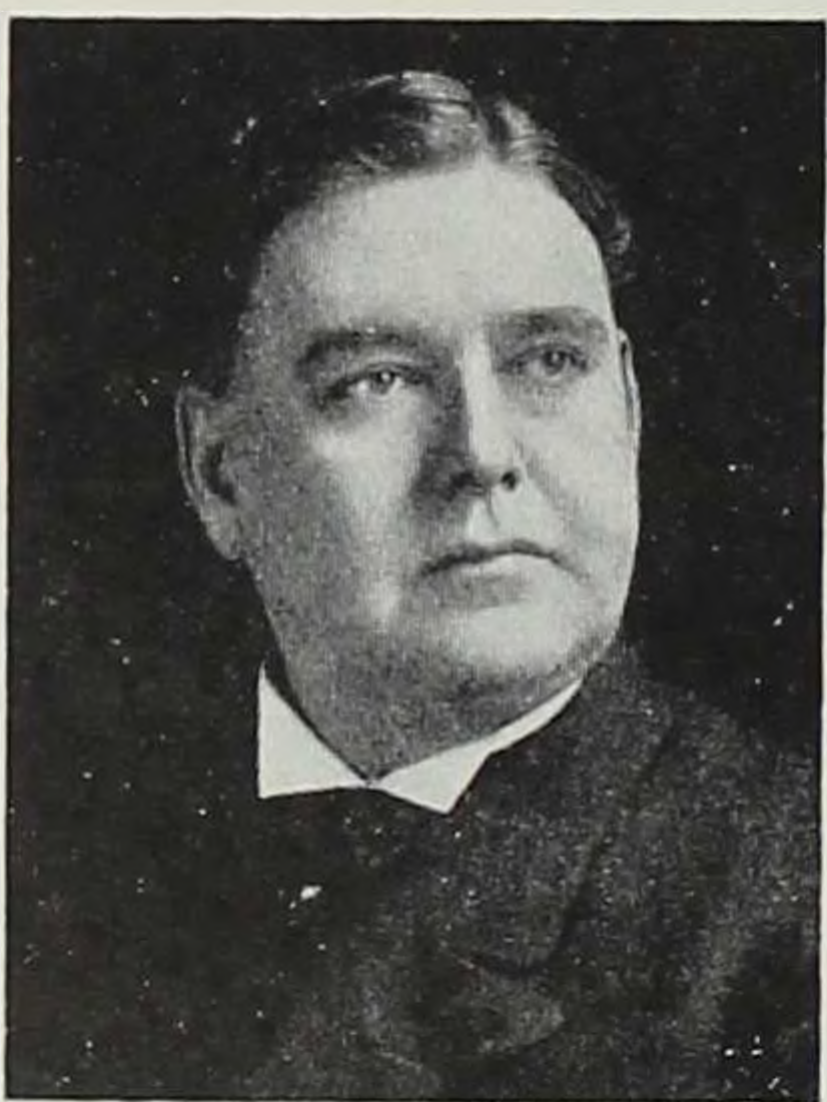
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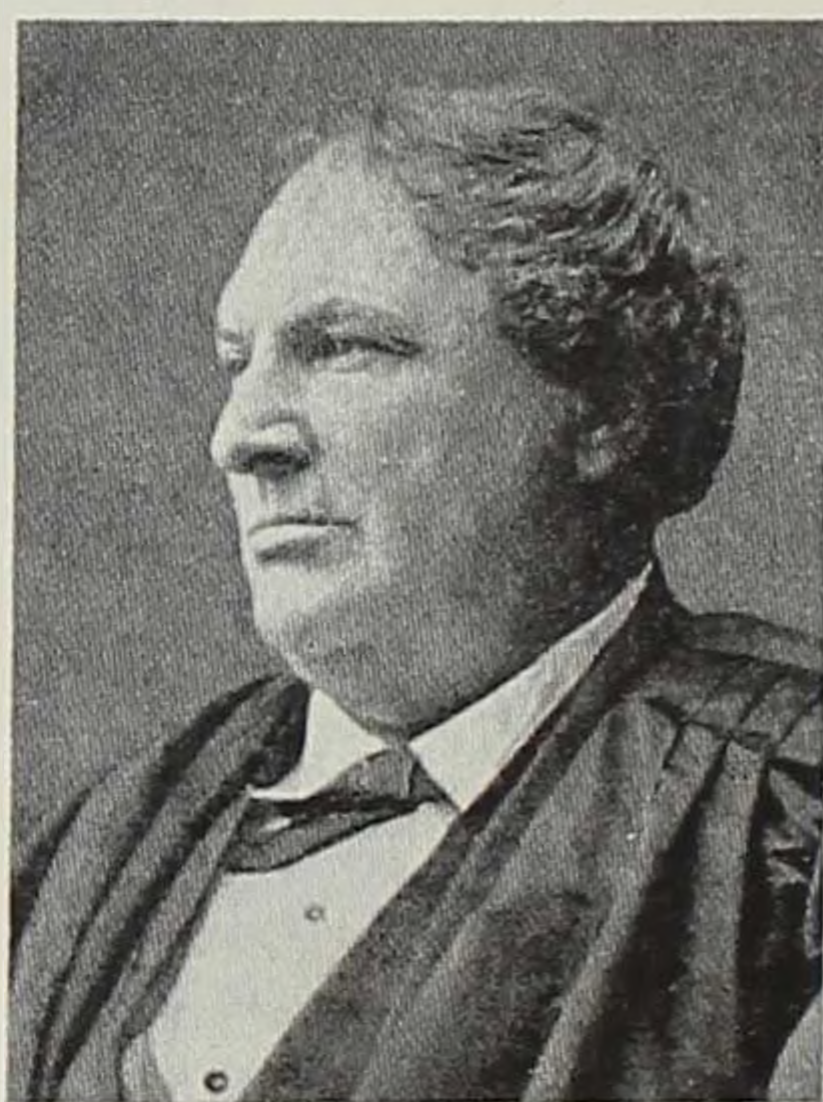
LEONARD FLETCHER PARKER



JOSIAH BUSHNELL GRINNELL



ROBERT GORDON COUSINS



SAMUEL FREEMAN MILLER

ate, after Harlan had distinguished himself as an anti-slavery leader, to unseat him in 1857 — but only for three weeks, when he was triumphantly returned to the Senate by unanimous vote of the Republicans in the Iowa legislature.

Harlan's career in the Senate during the war years was marked by most inflexible opposition to disunion and by frequent criticism of the administration. He and his family became close friends of the Lincolns, however. In 1868 Mary, Harlan's daughter, became the wife of Robert T. Lincoln. She was still living when Brigham wrote his biography of her father, and he acknowledges special obligation for her help. Just before the end of the war Lincoln persuaded Harlan to accept appointment as Secretary of the Interior; Harlan did not take office until after Lincoln's death. He soon came into collision with President Andrew Johnson, and resigned after little more than a year in the Cabinet. His appointment had been designed to effect economies and reform in a department burdened by useless office-holders. One of the hundreds of employees dismissed by Harlan was the poet Walt Whitman, a circumstance which has made Harlan's name known unfavorably to thousands of readers and admirers of Whitman. In Brigham's opinion, Harlan was fully justified in his action.

Harlan returned to the Senate in 1867, aided in the attempt to impeach President Johnson and in

the shaping of reconstruction policies, and defended President Grant in 1871 against charges that he had usurped congressional powers. In 1872 he was defeated by William B. Allison for the Republican nomination for the Senate, largely as a result of charges of dishonesty which had followed his service as Secretary of the Interior. Brigham, in his generally admiring though well-documented biography, shows reason to believe that Harlan was not guilty of these charges. In his last years Harlan prepared an *Autobiographical Manuscript and Papers*, used by Brigham in writing the biography.

One of the most interesting and engaging figures in Iowa's history is Samuel Jordan Kirkwood, the subject of a biography written by Dan Elbert Clark and published in the Iowa Biographical Series in 1917. Kirkwood was born in Maryland in 1813, spent some years of his boyhood in Washington, D. C., and emigrated with his father to north central Ohio in 1835. He helped his father clear a farm, taught country schools, and in 1841 began to study law at the growing town of Mansfield. He served for four years as prosecuting attorney of Richland County, and participated in the prolonged Ohio Constitutional Convention of 1850-51. In 1855 he left a prospering law practice to move to Iowa City, where relatives of his wife had preceded him.

In Iowa City Kirkwood became not a lawyer,

but a successful miller and farmer. His first appearance as a public figure was an unpremeditated speech at the convention which met in Iowa City on February 22, 1856, to organize the Republican party in Iowa. In the same year he was elected to the state senate from Johnson and Iowa counties. It is interesting to note that in his first period of public service in Iowa, Kirkwood was one of those chiefly responsible for the introduction and adoption of the bill establishing the State Historical Society of Iowa — with an initial appropriation of \$250!

In January, 1858, Kirkwood journeyed to the new capitol at Des Moines, like other legislators from the eastern part of the state, "in the old Concord stage" that "day and night wallowed through the great snow drifts that filled the sloughs and ravines of the bleak unsettled prairies" between Iowa City and Des Moines. The seat of government was then "a little shabby frontier town of less than 3,000 inhabitants. . . . The new state house had been located on the east side of the river a mile or more from the hotels, and the streets leading to it were, for the most part, simply wagon tracks made through a long stretch of low, swampy river bottom. One long straggling walk of native lumber boards, warped and slippery, could be seen strung out lonesome and wabbling in the direction of the new brick capitol."

When Kirkwood became the Republican candi-

date for Governor in 1859, an opposition newspaper made the mistake of referring to his ticket as "the Plough-Handle Ticket," and another advised him to stay at home among his hogs! The Republicans were not slow in making political capital of these attacks, among farm voters. The campaign was a bitter one, marked by a series of joint debates between Kirkwood and his Democratic opponent, Augustus C. Dodge, chiefly on the issue of the extension of slavery.

Clark's biography gives the reader a dramatic picture of the problems that Kirkwood faced as Governor, especially after the outbreak of the Civil War, and of his courage, candor and vigor in dealing with them. His gravest problem was the provision of equipment and supplies for the tens of thousands of Iowans who came forward to volunteer. In August, 1862, he wrote Secretary Stanton demanding blankets; he wanted permission to organize at once into regiments the volunteer companies that were ready. "If I don't get this permission," he declared, "I will have to volunteer myself and leave the State." Kirkwood distinguished himself especially by his concern for the welfare of Iowa troops in the service. After one of many personal visits which he made to "camps and hospitals where Iowa men were to be found, in order to judge for himself concerning their treatment and needs," a soldier taking part in the siege of Vicksburg wrote home, "The Gover-

nor is the same in 'Dixie' that he is in Iowa."

Kirkwood's public career was rounded out by a short term as United States Senator in 1866-67, an unsought third term as Governor in 1876-77, four years as United States Senator, 1877-81, and brief service as Secretary of the Interior following appointment by President Garfield in 1881.

The long and useful career in Iowa of Peter Anthony Dey, who came to Iowa in 1853 and lived until 1911, raises a question as to whether his biography, written by Jack T. Johnson and published in the Iowa Biographical Series in 1939, should be included in the group of those dealing with men whose most distinguished contributions were made in the mid-century or with those chiefly identified with later decades. It seems probable, however, that the most brilliant and history-making services of Dey were rendered in those first few years as an Iowan. A graduate of Geneva College and already an experienced construction engineer at the age of twenty-eight, Dey was largely responsible for the first survey of what is now the route of the Rock Island line across Iowa. He played a similarly important part in other railroad surveys farther west.

Peter A. Dey served for twenty-four years as a member of the Board of Curators of the State Historical Society of Iowa, and from 1901 to 1909 as president of that body. The importance of his contribution to the development of the Society,

both in its material establishment and in its policy and purpose, is summarized by his biographer in the statement: "Without the firm convictions and the unswerving support of President Dey, the State Historical Society of Iowa could not have made the transition from the collecting of relics and reminiscences to scholarly research and publication."

JOHN T. FREDERICK

Makers of Modern Iowa

Two of the volumes in the Iowa Biographical Series which I have elected to include in our third grouping, those with emphasis on the period between the Civil War and the present day, illustrate very notably both the quality of the series and the remarkable range of material offered by the field of Iowa biography: *Peter Melendy*, by Luella M. Wright; and *John A. Kasson*, by Edward Younger. Both of these books meet high and exacting standards, both literary and scholarly. They are written with warmth and with ample and well-chosen concrete detail so that the men whose lives they portray emerge as knowable human beings. At the same time, they display firm organization and ample and precise documentation, and in every aspect satisfy the most exacting requirements of scholarship. Yet their subject matter illustrates the immense diversity of lives which are important in the Iowa story. The arena of Peter Melendy's mature activities was almost wholly limited by the geographical boundaries of the state itself, and largely to a single community. He never sought or gained elective office. His contribution was made directly to the homes and farms of Iowa. In contrast, John A. Kasson's ser-

vice was world wide. He served three terms in the Iowa legislative assembly and six terms in Congress, and fulfilled important foreign assignments under six Presidents. His personal power and capacity made themselves felt in the state, in the nation and in the world. We can be grateful that both of these highly interesting and significant lives have been well and fully pictured in the Iowa Biographical Series.

Like most of his predecessors in the earlier periods, Peter Melendy had "made his mark," and struck out the major lines of his interest and achievements, before he came to Iowa. He was born at Cincinnati in 1823, and grew up in that city during its period of swift development as the metropolis of the region. That development meant prosperity for the family enterprise, the manufacture of fanning mills; and that business led naturally, as Peter came to share in it, to stimulation of his interest in agriculture. When his father died and the family lost the business, Peter Melendy invested his share of the estate in a farm near Cincinnati, where he gained marked distinction, both as a practical farmer and stock raiser and as a writer on agricultural subjects, before his removal to Iowa in 1856.

Melendy's first years in Iowa were devoted to a short-lived co-operative venture in large-scale stock raising on a raw tract of rich land in Butler County. But from the first he made his home at

Cedar Falls, a community scarcely ten years old when the Melendy family arrived. In the foreword to her biography, Dr. Wright emphasizes Melendy's achievement as a community builder through his nearly half a century as a citizen of Cedar Falls, and the significance of that record as representative of Iowa history. Her statement is worth pondering:

Every paved highway across Iowa cuts a gray swath through a succession of prairie villages. Upon the casual motorist these towns have an impression of uniformity, for, at right angles with the thoroughfare, streets with wide-spreading elms and hard maples systematically checkerboard the towns into rectangles. Upon more intimate acquaintance with the life of these communities, each is found to possess individuality. . . .

However much an Iowa town participates in its regional culture, each owes its elemental singularity and its dominant strain to the character of its inhabitants. The distinctive pattern of a community is usually derived from the influence of a few leaders.

Peter Melendy was clearly such a leader. He played a consistently prudent and positive part in the religious, educational, commercial, industrial, and general social development of Cedar Falls, as Dr. Wright shows in a detailed and interesting narrative.

Melendy's importance to Iowa history was not limited to his contribution as a community leader, however. In his chosen field of agricultural education he served the whole state. He began this

work almost immediately after his arrival in Iowa as a newspaper columnist on farm matters. In 1860 he started his department, "Field and Garden," in the *Cedar Falls Gazette*, which developed, in Dr. Wright's words, "into a miniature farm magazine with literary flavor." After helping to organize regional agricultural fairs, Melendy became a director of the State Agricultural Society and helped to shape the early development of the Iowa State Fair. His work with the State Agricultural Society continued for eleven years, the last five of which he served as president. Melendy's greatest contribution to Iowa agriculture and education was probably in his capacity as a member of the first board of trustees of the State Agricultural College. He was chosen by Governor Kirkwood to select the lands granted to the college by the federal government. The task involved a thousand miles of travel by stage coach and on horseback, in twenty-eight counties, and was completed in three months. Later Melendy traveled to Ohio and Kentucky to select and buy livestock for the new college farm, and he served for a time as secretary of the farm. Finally, Melendy and Lieutenant Governor Benjamin F. Gue undertook the responsibility of visiting other agricultural colleges to study methods of organization and courses of study and to select the first president and professors for the new institution. When Melendy finally severed his connection

with the college, he could feel that he had contributed more than any other person to the firm establishment and sound direction of the institution. Melendy's whole career was in large measure a stay-at-home, grass-roots one, marked by little political activity and no national notoriety; but it was deeply significant for Iowa, and truly representative of much that has been best in Iowa.

In contrast, John A. Kasson won his highest honors far from his adopted state, in services that had no direct relation to her fortunes. Born in Vermont in 1822, he practiced law in Massachusetts and in St. Louis before coming to Iowa in 1857. He established a law office in the new capital, and so quickly gained friends and influence that he was made chairman of the state central committee of the new Republican party for the crucial campaign of 1859. In his biography, Edward Younger pictures vividly the progress of this hard fought campaign, and emphasizes the importance of Kasson's service as a member of the Iowa delegation at the Chicago convention which nominated Lincoln. Chosen by his fellow-delegates as their representative on the platform committee, Kasson ultimately had a major hand in drafting the fateful platform.

Though Kasson took an active part in important legislation both in the state and in the nation, perhaps his highest distinction was won in the international field. Appointed as First Assistant

Postmaster General by Lincoln, he conducted for this country, and largely initiated, the negotiations which ultimately led to the formation of the International Postal Union as we have it today. Major diplomatic posts — as Hayes' Minister to Austria-Hungary, and as Arthur's Minister to Germany — together with briefer special missions, gave Kasson a substantial share in the development of the international relations of the United States in a critical period.

I have been interested in the parallels and the contrasts in the lives treated in another pair of volumes in the Iowa Biographical Series: *William Peters Hepburn*, by John Ely Briggs (1919); and *James Baird Weaver*, by Fred Emory Haynes (1919). Both men were born in Ohio, in the same year — 1833. Both came to Iowa in their boyhood, with their families, Hepburn to Iowa City in 1841, Weaver to Keosauqua the following year. Both studied law and were active in frontier politics. Both served with genuine distinction in the Union Army in the Civil War; Weaver advanced from a lieutenancy to regimental command, as colonel of the Second Iowa Infantry, while Hepburn entered the war as captain of the "Marshall Horse Guards" and emerged as lieutenant colonel of the Second Iowa Cavalry. Both went into politics after the war and became nationally prominent and influential.

But there the parallel ends! Hepburn's public

service was performed almost wholly in the halls of Congress, where he served the remarkable total of twenty-two years; indeed, his biographer states that "it is his own estimate that the *Congressional Record* contains everything worth while that he ever did." In that service, Hepburn was from the first and increasingly identified with the conservative elements and policies of the Republican party. Though he played a constructive part in the efforts toward regulation of the railroads, he was criticized as a friend of the railroads and a foe of the farmer, and attacked by Henry Wallace and A. B. Cummins. His biographer shows that this criticism was far from being fully justified, emphasizing especially the part played by Hepburn in his last years in Congress in obtaining enactment of the progressive legislation favored by President Theodore Roosevelt. Yet in the Iowa mind, Hepburn was by and large a conservative.

Not so James Baird Weaver. He withdrew from the Republican party in 1877, after attaining prominence and nearly gaining the nomination for the Governorship in 1875, and was elected to Congress by the Greenback party in 1878. Achieving leadership there, he was the Greenback nominee for President in 1880. After further service in Congress, he left the Greenbackers for the Populist party and was its nominee for the Presidency in 1892. Four years later he led the Populists in support of William Jennings Bryan. Thus

Weaver was more consistently and conspicuously identified with political liberalism and progressivism, during the decades of agrarian unrest following the Civil War, than any other Iowan.

As I write this article a new volume in the Biographical Series of the State Historical Society of Iowa is just coming from the press — the eighteenth: *William Boyd Allison, A Study in Practical Politics*, by Leland L. Sage. William Boyd Allison was first sent to Congress by his fellow Iowans in 1863, as a member of the House of Representatives. Forty-five years later he was nominated — shortly before his death — for an unprecedented seventh term in the Senate of the United States. He had represented Iowa in Washington for forty-three of those forty-five years, thus eclipsing in length of service every other Iowan.

As the title suggests, this work deals primarily — and most thoroughly and ably — with Allison's political career. Dr. Sage has not overlooked or excused certain business dealings of Allison while in Congress, which mar somewhat his earlier career; he does, however, show that these were very mild examples of the low level of political morality in the years following the Civil War, and also that Allison's subsequent conduct as a public servant was free from any such reproach. He traces clearly and interestingly Allison's relations with contemporaries, especially with Jonathan P. Dolliver

and Albert Baird Cummins. Perhaps by intention, this very scholarly volume gives less attention to the personal side — the qualities which must have endeared Allison to thousands of Iowans, and accounted in part for his career — than do others in the series. This lack is in part made good by Dr. Petersen's informal Foreword.

Rounding out the Iowa story as contained in the lives of its representative citizens are four more volumes in the Iowa Biographical Series: *Josiah Bushnell Grinnell*, by Charles E. Payne (1938); *Leonard Fletcher Parker*, by Jacob Armstrong Swisher (1927); *Samuel Freeman Miller*, by Charles Noble Gregory (1907); and *Robert Gordon Cousins*, by Jacob A. Swisher (1938). Grinnell was one of those vigorous and farsighted men of affairs who gave their names to Iowa towns — and in this case to a college as well. Parker was a builder of Iowa's educational system — as legislator, as public school official, and as teacher at Iowa College (later Grinnell College), and at the State University of Iowa. Miller was, like Kason, an Iowan distinguished primarily for service outside the state. He was appointed as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States by President Lincoln in 1862, and served until his death in 1890. Gregory's book includes the full text of some of Miller's addresses and a calendar of his opinions. Cousins represented Iowans in Congress for sixteen years, but his rep-

utation in the state and in the nation rested primarily on his ability as an orator — on “the brilliancy of his spoken words,” as Dr. Shambaugh expressed it in his Introduction to the biographical volume by Jacob A. Swisher. Appropriately, therefore, two-thirds of the pages of this book are devoted to presentation in whole or in part of more than a score of Cousins’ orations.

Rich biographical materials, not published in book form and hence omitted from the present survey, are scattered through the volumes of Iowa periodicals, particularly *The Annals of Iowa*, *The Iowa Historical Record*, *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, and *The Palimpsest*. Here and elsewhere are the materials for many more books as well as briefer biographical studies which are complete in themselves as parts of the Iowa story told in the lives of its citizens.

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IOWA BIOGRAPHIES

Published By
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Book	Author	Date
<i>William Boyd Allison</i>	Leland Sage	1956
<i>John Chambers</i>	John Carl Parish	1909
<i>Robert Gordon Cousins</i>	Jacob Armstrong Swisher	1938
<i>Thomas Cox</i>	Harvey Reid	1909
<i>Peter Anthony Dey</i>	Jack T. Johnson	1939
<i>Augustus Caesar Dodge</i>	Louis Pelzer	1908
<i>Henry Dodge</i>	Louis Pelzer	1911
<i>Josiah Bushnell Grinnell</i>	Charles E. Payne	1938
<i>James Harlan</i>	Johnson Brigham	1913
<i>William Peters Hepburn</i>	John Ely Briggs	1919
<i>George Wallace Jones</i>	John Carl Parish	1912
<i>John A. Kasson</i>	Edward Younger	1955
<i>Samuel Jordan Kirkwood</i>	Dan Elbert Clark	1917
<i>Robert Lucas</i>	John Carl Parish	1907
<i>Peter Melendy</i>	Luella M. Wright	1943
<i>Samuel Freeman Miller</i>	Charles Noble Gregory	1907
<i>Leonard Fletcher Parker</i>	Jacob Armstrong Swisher	1927
<i>James Baird Weaver</i>	Fred Emory Haynes	1919

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