

Education For All

Iowans could not boast of their educational facilities at the common school level in 1858. Maturin L. Fisher, who served as Superintendent of Public Instruction, expressed genuine concern over the statistics contained in the seventy-six reports from the eighty-four organized counties in the State. No response had been received from eight counties — Chickasaw, Mitchell, Monona, Story, Sac, Tama, Woodbury or Worth. Of the seventy-six counties reporting, it appeared that only 79,670 of the 195,285 persons between the ages of five and twenty-one were attending school in Iowa. According to Superintendent Fisher:

It must be remembered that this is not the number of those who constantly attended school, but it includes every scholar who attended school at all; barely two-fifths of the whole number. Three-fifths of the children of the State, of the proper age to attend school, did not enter into the school room during the past year. More than one-half of the youth of the State are growing up in ignorance, notwithstanding the provision made for the support of schools. In the State of Ohio, from which more people have emigrated to this, than from any other State, four-fifths of the youth between five and twenty-one years of age attend school; yet there, the absence from school of barely one-fifth of the children, of a suitable age, is considered a serious evil, demanding an effectual remedy.

The Superintendent was further disturbed by the fact that schools were being maintained in only 2,708 of the 3,265 school districts that had been organized. While some counties had made great progress and exhibited commendable zeal in the subject of education, other schools were in a "very unsatisfactory" state. "There is usually no examination of teachers, and frequently most unsuitable persons are employed as instructors, and there is seldom any visitation of schools, to insure fidelity on the part of teachers, and to inspire emulation on the part of pupils." Finally, the Superintendent attributed the deplorable condition of Iowa schools to the want of an efficient school law, the system in 1858 being a "patchwork" of laws enacted at different times in the past.

A school law to regulate the erection of buildings was also needed in 1858. Superintendent Fisher reported 1,686 school houses in Iowa, of which 168 were brick, 47 stone, 936 frame, and 535 log. According to Fisher:

Probably many of the log houses, and some of the frame houses are of little value; yet the expense of building them was doubtless heavily felt by the districts by which they were erected. In most districts a school cannot be kept until a school house is erected, and they are usually obliged to impose a tax for the whole cost in a single year; a tax which in many cases must be oppressive, especially if a commodious house is erected.

There were 1,572 male teachers and 1,424 fe-

male teachers in Iowa in 1858. The aggregate amount paid teachers was \$126,357.77 from the teachers fund and \$71,784.58 from voluntary subscriptions. Generally speaking, male teachers received twice the salary of females. Female salaries ranged from \$8 to \$20.68 per month whereas male salaries ranged from \$16 to \$31. A century ago some school boards endeavored to regulate the apparel of female students, as well as their intellectual attainments and moral character. According to the Bloomfield *Democratic Clarion* of December 29, 1858:

The Board of Trustee of Marietta, Marshall County, have issued an edict, prohibiting from the common school of that District, any girl who shall venture to WEAR HOOPS!

The next thing will probably be a requirement that all schoolmasters in the District must wear loose petticoats; and the "school marms" short breeches.

Education in Iowa contemplated a system of (1) common schools; (2) high schools; and (3) a state university of Iowa. Public high schools were just getting started in 1858 but private academies, seminaries, female academies, and commercial colleges flourished. The definition of a college at this time was rather nebulous. The State University of Iowa in 1858 would be eclipsed by a good Iowa high school a century later. In 1858 Maturin L. Fisher served both as Superintendent of Public Instruction and as President of the Board of

Trustees of the State University of Iowa. In his report, President Fisher observes:

The Chancellor, the Professor of Natural History, and the Professor of Chemistry, have not yet entered upon the discharge of the duties of their Professorships, and it will be seen that Professors have not been appointed in the departments of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy. It appears, from this catalogue, that the whole number of students, male and female, in the University, is one hundred and twenty-four. Of this number, sixty-five are in the Preparatory and forty in the Normal Department. Some students are in both the Preparatory and Normal Departments, and some from both these departments receive instruction in the departments belonging to the University proper; but there are probably not thirty of the whole number pursuing a regular university course. This is indeed a very small number. But of the whole number of students, one hundred and three are from Iowa City, and of the remainder, fourteen are from Johnson county, and only seven from other counties in the State. Thirty students may be a small number for a whole State, but it is sufficiently large for a single city. We come, then, to this result, — that the benefits of the University are almost exclusively confined to Iowa City. This is not the fault of the people of that city. The University is established there by law, and they avail themselves of the advantages it affords them, as they have a right to do, by sending their sons and daughters there to be educated. We have a University munificently endowed, with able and faithful Professors; yet, our young men are obliged to resort to other States to obtain a classical education: and the reason is this, we have made no provision to accommodate them with suitable rooms for study. It costs a young man seeking a liberal education, more to procure board and a suit-

able room for study in Iowa City, than his whole education would cost in most of the colleges in other States. But let there be a suitable building erected to accommodate students with rooms, a liberal education may be acquired with as little expense here, as in any college in the United States.

If free public education was in its infancy there were many private schools — elementary, academy, classical, seminary, commercial and college — that afforded opportunities to the youth of Iowa. Thus, on December 29, 1858, the Bloomfield *Democratic Clarion* noted that Mr. and Mrs. McCarty would again open a "Select School" in the new school building on November 1st. The session was to be 22 weeks in length, divided into two terms of eleven weeks each. Mrs. Clara V. Weaver, an experienced and well-qualified teacher, had been employed to take charge of the primary department, and the rate of tuition per term for residents was as follows:

Spelling, Reading and Writing	\$2.50
Mental Arithmetic, Primary Grammar, Primary Geography	3.00
Practical Arithmetic, Analytical Grammar, Advanced Geography	3.50
The higher English branches	4.00

Persons not residing in the district would be charged an additional twenty-five cents per scholar per term for the use of the school room. None but regular scholars were solicited and no

reduction for lost time would be made except in cases of "absolute sickness."

Apparently Mr. McCarty's school was popular with Bloomfield residents. The *Davis County Index* of October 16 records:

The exhibition of Mr. M'Carty's School took place at the M. E. Church, on Wednesday evening last, and was well attended. It consisted of declamations, dialogues, and reading composition by the students. The exercises were well timed, interesting and in some instances happily conceived. The large and attentive audience seemed delighted with the performance of the "little ones," who were repeatedly cheered by the clapping and stamping of the audience. Altogether it was a very pretty affair and every one seemed pleased with the rapid progress and great improvement Mr. McCarty's students are making and have made during the term just closed.

The Council Bluffs *Weekly Nonpareil* of February 6, 1858, carried an advertisement of the Council Bluffs Male & Female School which intended to open its sixth quarter on Monday, February 14. J. B. Rue was Principal and the following rates prevailed:

Terms Per Quarter of Eleven Weeks.	
Primary	\$ 5.00
Preparatory	7.00
Junior	10.00
Senior	15.00
Instruction on Piano or Guitar	15.00
Use of Instrument	3.00
Vocal Music	2.00
Incidentals	.50

All the English branches usually taught in the first class Institutions, together with Latin and Greek, are included in the above terms.

It is highly important that Pupils should commence at the opening of the quarter, and be punctual in attendance.

No deductions after entrance, except in cases of protracted illness.

The variety of schools established in Iowa prior to the Civil War is amazing. In Iowa City, for example, Professor Welton conducted an English and Classical School in Mechanics Academy. Professor Welton, according to the *Iowa City Republican* of December 8, "sustains a high reputation as a teacher" whose previous term had met "with a very flattering success." The editor hoped the professor's benches would be "full of youthful learners."

Another Iowa City private school was taught by Edward Zitzchke for those interested in learning German. This class was exclusively for men although the professor was prepared to organize a ladies' class if a sufficient number applied. The Bloomfield *Democratic Clarion* advertised the second session in dancing lessons by Professor O. F. Clark at the Mozart Hall. "Instructions to the Ladies, from 3 to 5 o'clock P.M.; to the Gentlemen, from 7 to 9 P.M. All who propose to attend the school are requested to do so regularly."

Several commercial colleges were begun in 1858. Thus, Davis and Tipton's two "Mercantile Colleges" were located in Peoria and at 5th and

Brady streets in Davenport. An institution that in 1958 could look back on a century of successful teaching is Baylies Business College at Dubuque.

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One of the relatively few Iowa colleges that actually dates back to 1858 is Grinnell. The Des Moines *Iowa Citizen* of February 10, 1858, declared:

Grinnell University commenced its winter term on the 7th ult. A seminary building is in process of erection, 40 by 70 feet, four stories high, which will be ready for use in the spring. It is in contemplation, to erect a large College Hall, as soon as arrangements for that purpose can be perfected.

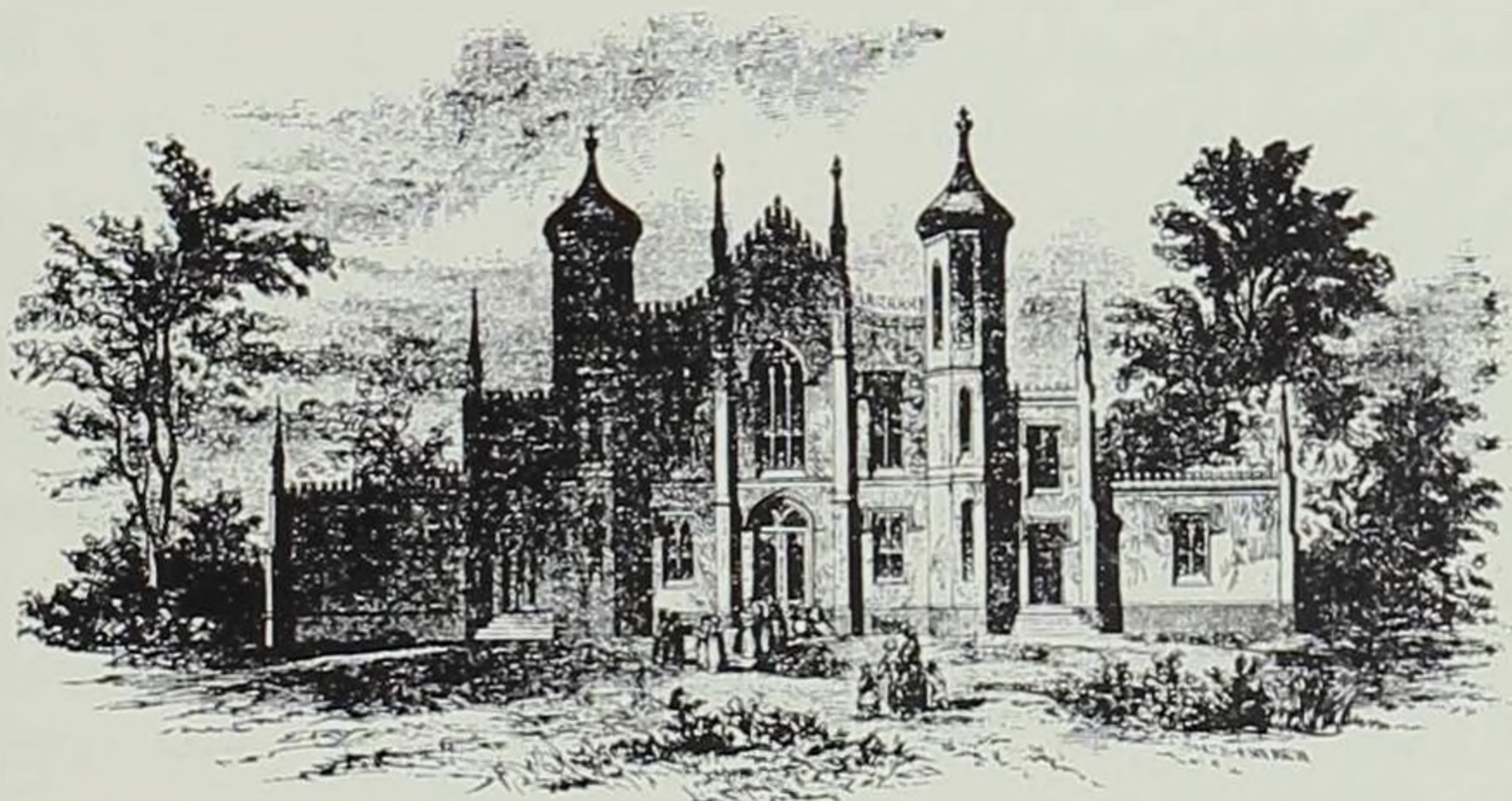
The year 1858 marks the centennial of the movement of Iowa College from Davenport to Grinnell

to consolidate with Grinnell University. It is interesting to note the reaction of a Davenport editor to the double loss within a decade of Iowa College to Grinnell and the College of Physicians and

Surgeons to Keokuk. According to the *Daily Gazette* of August 28, 1858:

The *Keokuk Gate City* says that the building now being constructed for the Medical Department of the Iowa University, is drawing towards completion. It will be one of the finest buildings in Iowa — a credit to the Institution to which it belongs, and an ornament to the city. This Department of the Iowa University was originally located in Davenport, but from the unwise opposition of our citizens — just such an opposition as some have shown towards the Iowa College — the trustees were induced to remove it to Keokuk, where it has ever since been an additional attraction to intelligent people who designed making that city their home.

Women's colleges and seminaries were particularly popular in 1858. Eighty students were at-



DUBUQUE FEMALE SEMINARY.

tending the Dubuque Female Seminary in 1857-1858. The school occupied a handsome building which had cost \$11,000 with its equipment, too

costly for the small attendance and the property was sold in 1859 for \$12,000. The Female Eclectic Institute and the Mount Ida Female College were a source of pride to Davenport although the latter closed its doors in 1859. The Vinton College Institute had its beginnings in 1858. Institutions of this type were fairly common in the 1850's, although many of them were short-lived.

If the University of Iowa in 1858 could count only 124 students (117 from Johnson County) its friendly rival — Iowa State College — was just being created by law that year. Although legislative enemies opposed to the creation of Iowa State had referred derisively to agricultural students as "educated clodhoppers," William Duane Wilson of *The Iowa Farmer* took sharp issue with them:

An Agricultural college should be connected with a model farm. It should aim to give as complete an education in the common and higher English branches as any institution of learning; but connect study all the way through with labor. Let us see whether human hands and muscles hard with toil are a damage to an intelligent head or incapable to high civil truths. *We must learn to honor labor*, and to this end labor should honor its votaries.

An agricultural college should enlarge, arrange, classify and harmonize the field of natural sciences. The revolution of Philosophy, the discoveries of Chemistry, the phenomena of earth and air, can have to no one more interest than to him who notes the seasons and watches the changing winds for seed time; who waits upon nature in her distilling of the dew, and her rattling of the thunder clouds to help on the growing corn, and who sings the

harvest home by the light of the kind harvest morn. The agriculturist walks hand in hand with step dame nature, he needs to know her wayward moods and understand her to sway and bend her variable temper.

The editor of the *Sigourney Life in the West* was equally convinced of the value of an agricultural college.

This bill, should it become a law, will lay the foundation broad and deep for the future greatness of Iowa. Iowa must, from necessity, be an Agricultural State, and it is by fostering that interest that her resources must be developed. Every cent of money well expended in that direction must yield a rich return in future. Agriculture and Education must go hand in hand on the mission of civilization, and we know of no work which our Legislators could do better calculated to advance the future of the State than by maturing plans for the advancement of these.

Truly there were men and women of vision, whose dreams were large, whose hopes could not be crushed, and whose labors and sacrifices in 1858 did much to bring education to the forefront, thus causing the Hawkeye State to be ranked high among the states of the Union.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN