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PALIMPSEST
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EDITH MAY BELL

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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

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

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Phil Stong's Hawkeyes

This volume is advertised as an intimate biography of Iowa, one of the first of a series planned by Dodd, Mead & Company for the forty-eight States. It is, in fact, a mixture of reminiscence (both personal and second hand), history (with many question marks), and description. In the foreword and the seventeen chapters, the author has assembled an amazing collection of stories about Iowa events and people, told in his breezy dramatic style. The foreword is headed Nicollet's Bowl. Among the chapter titles are Forums (general stores as centers of pioneer life), Corn-fed Art, Justice, Revolt, Worship, Indian Stuff, High Sassiety (devoted chiefly to the Masons, the P. E. O., the W. C. T. U., women's clubs, and the society page of the Des Moines *Register*), Big Red Schoolhouse, Land of the Free, The Grapefruits of Wrath (an optimistic picture of farm tenancy), Flies in the Ointment (including lack of bathrooms), The River, and Crops (two pages).

Phil Stong can write; there is no doubt about that. For example, here is one of his comments on a shooting match: "Certainly the turkey was not unusually worried about its life — turkeys are always worried, and these no more than usual." In another chapter the author writes: "The Iowa country was full of school teachers and preachers, a little while after settlement, who fancied themselves as budding Whittiers or Emersons or Lowells. They taught what they wished they knew." But isn't this true of all good teachers and preachers? Closed minds are no indication of learning. Cynical but expressive is the observation, "When a man does something, it's news; when a lady does something, it is usually society page."

There are also excellent descriptions of places and events — the view of the countryside as a boy saw it on Saturday afternoon; the story of the curmudgeon who bet ten cents he could split a bullet on the sharp edge of an axe, smashed the much prized hand-made handle, and considered the joke on the owner worth the dime he lost; the characterization of the hired man; the vivid portrayal of pioneer conditions.

But on the whole, this book is a disappointment, a greater disappointment because of its possibilities. If the publishers intended this series to portray the true characteristics of the States, Iowans

have good reason to feel cheated in their representation. *Hawkeyes* is a sardonic caricature of Iowa.

For one thing, the volume was evidently written in haste. Was it more important that the Iowa book should be *first* than that it should be *good*? Mr. Stong wrote (on page 36), "You can't rush a tree or a stand of corn or a hen or a moo cow and this fact impresses itself upon the thinking and behavior of the people". Although Mr. Stong is, or was, an Iowan, he evidently did not learn that you can't rush a book either, even a best-seller.

One of the most evident faults of *Hawkeyes* is best expressed by the homely phrase which came from pioneer kitchens — "half-baked". Bread was an important item of food and the housewife who did not allow sufficient time for her loaves to bake through was outside the circle of the elect, and "half-baked" came to be a term of derogation indicating slovenliness and a lack of judgment.

This hasty compilation probably accounts for the large number of errors. The very first statement in the first chapter is wrong. Iowa celebrated its Territorial centennial anniversary in 1938, not in 1939, as stated in the book, although a number of towns held celebrations on the later date. The Iowa State Fair presented the pageant on Iowa history in August, 1938.

Was it State pride which led Mr. Stong to write, "these scoundrels had the highest literacy rate in the country in 1840"? In using the term "scoundrels", he is sarcastically quoting a phrase used in Congress. The census figures do not, however, bear out his claim. If Iowa had a population of 43,112 persons in 1840, with 1118 of those over twenty years of age listed as unable to read and write, what about Connecticut with a population of 309,978 and only 526 illiterates or even Michigan with 2173 unable to read and write out of a population of 212,267.

And the so-called boundary war between Iowa and Missouri did not involve "a hundred years of not too bloody hostilities". The old dispute involved several conflicting lines run by surveyors and was settled once and for all by a decision of the United States Supreme Court in 1849. The recent redefinition of the southeastern boundary was necessary because the Des Moines River refuses to recognize the jurisdiction of either Iowa or Missouri.

In preparing his copy on the "Cow War" in Cedar County, Mr. Stong says he secured his information "first-hand" from a "Federal vet". This man appears to have given him some misinformation. The farmers made no distinction between Federal and State agents and, in fact, the testing

was done by authority of the State law. Was the "Federal vet" responsible for the statement that the government veterinarians were "inoculating healthy ones against the disease"? He would have something there if he could prove that bovine tuberculosis could be prevented by inoculation. No claim of immunizing cattle was made, however; the test was and still is used only to detect infected animals.

There are a number of questions on other points the inquiring reader would like to ask. Who was the Dominican priest who "preached the first sermon in the state"? Father Charles Van Quickenborne, the first priest to hold services in Iowa, was a Jesuit. Father Mazzuchelli, the well-known Dominican priest, did not come to Dubuque until 1835, some two years after religious services had been held there by the Reverend Aratus Kent and other ministers.

There is also a question about the assertion that "the government" (whether Federal or State is not specified) requires the Indians residing near Tama to marry according to the white man's law but has ruled that the use of peyote is "entirely all right". The Indians are not required to comply with the marriage laws of the white men, and the government does not approve the use of peyote. The Indians checkmated efforts to eliminate

it by claiming that it was used in religious ceremonies.

And the story of Keokuk's joke on LeClaire and Black Hawk during Black Hawk's trip through the East in 1833 is so good, one is reluctant to point out that neither Keokuk nor LeClaire was with Black Hawk on that trip.

Mr. Stong has had newspaper experience and been around a lot. How did he come to make the statement that "Except for the matter of Mr. O'Connell, our first murderer mentioned in Chapter Three, I have not been able to find an account of any lynching that was not duly authorized by the state, either in the history of Iowa or the history of lynching." Just what he means by "duly authorized by the state" is not clear, but his search for lynching data must have been very casual indeed, for an article published in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* in 1912 listed some sixty men who had been put to death in Iowa without benefit of legal court trials. Incidentally the man executed in chapter three was named O'Connor.

Any one who reads proof knows how easy it is to miss the spelling of names. "Kirby Paige" seems to refer to Kirby Page. LeClaire spelled his name with an e at the end. The proof reader, however, can not be blamed for Voltaire Paine Twombly Kneeland. Voltaire Paine Twombly

was the son of Samuel T. Twombly, one of Abner Kneeland's associates, and his name was not Kneeland. Or is the confusion of names meant to suggest a family scandal?

The attention of farmers in Iowa is called to the "processing taxes" not always "faithfully reported". Why should they report non-existent taxes? The Secretary of Agriculture would be surprised to learn that he has been demoted to the head of a Bureau. And the institution maintained by the State at Oakdale is not "the infirmary for minds".

If facts are considered inconsequential in a best-seller, what about style? Mr. Stong can write well. Who then was responsible for this sentence (found on page 22): "They very were certainly were not." Perhaps the proof reader let that get by, but what does this sentence mean? "There was fear at the Convention that, if the question of recovery of an escaped slave should come up, Iowa might become a Negro state, because of its rich, almost free lands and its immunity to the statutes of other states or to anything less than federal law."

Another sentence which indicates hasty or fuzzy thinking is this one: "Their idea of a proper legal procedure was one such as that indicated in the constitutions of the Claims Associations — find

out which man is squatting and then 'throw him off.' " Mr. Stong ought to know that the men who formed the claim associations were all "squatters", occupying land not yet for sale. The claim associations merely guaranteed the right of the first claimant.

There can be no doubt now that the Indians of Iowa lacked art. On page 126 Mr. Stong tells us, "Curiously, the Indians never developed any pictorial art." Three pages later he remarks, "it is strange that the Indians never developed a pictorial art worthy of a first-grade school child", and to clinch the matter, he writes on the following page, "the Indians never created or began a pictorial art." Three times and art is out.

"Iowans", says Mr. Stong, "have little faith in violence as an ideological argument, in spite of the fact that the state has produced Buffalo Bill, Frank Gotch — the greatest wrestler who ever lived — and the current baseball pitcher, Bob Feller, and also Lillian Russell." What is the Iowa biographer's idea of "violence as an ideological argument"? Should we infer that the Hawkeyes are generally pacifists or athletically incompetent?

The hasty preparation of this volume is aggravated by the flippant attitude of the author. Although Mr. Stong writes as an Iowan and evidently has some affection for his native State, he

snubs what he calls the "Sheep-Dip School" of writers because, he says, they misrepresent Iowa conditions; yet there is much that is condescending and contemptuous in his own comments, especially on churches, schools, and government.

"The Sabbath", writes Mr. Stong, "is the Lord's Day, held holy by a lot of old women and quivering Legislatures [legislators?]." In another place he says: "Ministerial volubility and the cawings of some trained regiments of elderly ladies have frequently led to unusual and undesirable effects in the behavior and culture of Iowans, but for the most part the conventicles furnish little more to the state than a pleasant and convenient resource for its reasonably exuberant social life."

Of the rural schools of Iowa (which he also calls grade schools), the author writes: "It will probably occur to these people [the farmers] by and by that paying for a bus is cheaper than paying semi-educated imbeciles to operate schools". It has not occurred to Mr. Stong, apparently, that the transportation of children by bus has its own health and social problems, that the teachers in these rural schools are often the daughters of the farmers, and that the rural schools have no monopoly on mediocrity.

In a comparison of the State University and the Iowa State College there is this comment: "The

law and medical schools are by no means up to the comparative ratings of the Ames cow-physicians, but the doctors are good enough and it doesn't make much difference what a lawyer is taught in college."

Of the government, the critic writes superciliously: "Politics has fortunately never risen above the status of a children's game in Iowa." Charles Mason, one of the wisest lawyers of early Iowa and a member of the first Territorial Supreme Court, is dismissed cavalierly, after quoting his legalistically phrased indictment of a murderer, with this sarcastic comment, "Unfortunately there is no record of their having then and there hanged the aforesaid Charles Mason." These and many other clever phrases are not the humorous comments of a man who pokes fun at the frailties common to humanity; they are acid, flippant remarks which suggest a superiority complex.

But suppose we accept these comments as clever and witty thrusts at certain defects in Iowa life. There is a still more serious criticism of this book, a book which has been published, we are told, to represent Iowa at home and in other States. There are an inexcusable number of off-color stories and obscene allusions in *Hawkeyes*. Most Iowans are familiar with the problems and practices connected with breeding livestock, but smutty stories are not

characteristic of Iowans and have no place in a book which should be fit for a home or school library.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, the English cooks used a great many condiments and herbs, because lack of refrigeration and poor sanitation frequently resulted in spoiled meats, too strong for even the hearty eaters of that day. To make things appetizing, spices were sprinkled over the food. Because the people bathed infrequently and clothing was seldom changed, perfumes were lavishly used by the better classes to overcome unpleasant odors. Phil Stong reverses the process: the book is sprinkled with filthy and offensive stories and allusions and leaves a bad taste in the reader's mouth and an unpleasant odor in his nostrils.

One is often inclined to marvel at the author's vocabulary along other lines. He knows a lot of seventy-five cent words. Look at echolalia, minuscule, gooiily muliebritious, and prosencephalon!

The impression is formed from reading *Hawkeyes* that there are less than half a dozen really intelligent persons who live, or have lived, in Iowa, among whom, we assume, is the "state biographer". Next to him is Grant Wood, of whom the author rhapsodizes, "It is possible that Grant Wood is one of the greatest painters who ever lived; aside from that there is nothing much in the

arts of Iowa that is likely to prove immortal, at this time." Greatest among the poets is Paul Engle. Among the lesser lights is Ruth Suckow (Mrs. Ferner Nuhn) who "writes like a nun in hell". Is this a pun?

It is something to learn that *Hawkeyes* is not expected to be immortal, but it is unfortunate that Iowa is represented, even temporarily, in the Sovereign State Series by a volume that is, roughly speaking, one-fourth wrong, one-fourth dull, one-fourth offensive, and only one-fourth good. It might so easily have been a really great book.

RUTH A. GALLAHER

No Convention in 1840

When the House of Representatives of the United States was discussing the creation of Iowa Territory, Augustine Shepard of North Carolina protested that, "If the Territory of Iowa be now established, it will soon become a State". That prediction was soon verified because agitation for Statehood began before the Territorial government was well rooted in Iowa soil.

Aware of the growing population and the attendant political needs, Governor Robert Lucas messaged the question of seeking admission into the Union to the Second Legislative Assembly which convened at Burlington on November 4, 1839. The Governor suggested that the lawmakers consider measures preparatory to the formation of a State government. To such a suggestion the Chief Executive of Iowa knew that many persons would raise serious objections of a financial nature. They would argue that while Iowa remained a Territory the national government would pay the costs of operation, but a State government would have to be supported by taxes levied on local citizens whose ability to pay was very limited. In rebuttal of this view, the Governor pointed out that the

prosperity of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan rapidly improved with their admission into the Union, so that the cost of government was not burdensome.

With these general remarks, Governor Lucas offered three specific suggestions. One was to memorialize Congress "asking of that body the passage of an Act, at their ensuing session, granting to the inhabitants of Iowa Territory, the right to form a Constitution and State Government, and to provide for their admission into the Union". The Governor also described boundaries for the new State. Another proposal of the Chief Executive was that the Legislative Assembly enact a statute providing for a constitutional convention as soon as Congress should authorize the drafting of a State constitution.

The Second Legislative Assembly adjourned on January 17, 1840, without enacting the Governor's recommendations. Though a minority, led by Stephen Hempstead, the President of the Council, endorsed the views of the Governor, most of the members could see no clear advantages for the farmers, merchants, and miners. Perhaps one explanation of this difference of opinion may be found in the diversity of political responsibility. The Governor, being appointed by the President of the United States, was consequently not likely

to be swayed by the prejudices of the local citizens. Contrary to this position of local political immunity, the legislators were close to the Territorial voters and naturally influenced by their views upon taxation and finance.

The portion of the Governor's message which dealt with Statehood was referred to a committee in the House which made a detailed report on the subject. On November 14, 1839, the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* explained: "We are rejoiced that we have an opportunity to inform our readers of the total annihilation of the *office holders* scheme for immediate admission of our Territory into the Union as a State. That part of the Governor's Message which related to this subject was referred to a committee in the House of Representatives, and on Monday a report was received from them and unanimously adopted by the House. The report goes at length into the matter and finally arrives at the conclusion that it is inexpedient and impracticable to take any steps at this time preparatory to our admission. We believe that is the opinion of nine-tenths of the people throughout the Territory. Gentlemen office holders and office seekers! You cannot be Senators in Congress next year. Wait a *bit*, till your merits and demerits are generally known."

The Second Legislative Assembly convened

again in an extra session in July, 1840, to reapportion its membership according to the current census. In the meantime, Congress, little concerned with or ignorant of the action of the Iowa legislature and because of political expediency, opened the Iowa Statehood question. Governor Lucas in his message to the special session of the legislature on July 14, 1840, stated the reason for the Congressional action. "I perceive," he said, "by the journals of Congress, that a bill was reported by the committee on territories to the House of Representatives, early in the session, to enable the people of the territory of Iowa to form a constitution and state government and for the admission of such state into the Union. This bill was reported in connection with a bill extending the same privilege to the citizens of Middle and West Florida." Congress was apparently seeking free territory to balance a slave area that was ready for admission into the Union.

"I have not yet learned the fate of these bills," continued the Governor, "but presume that they will both pass together and probably [at] the present session of Congress. I therefore, suggest to the Legislative Assembly the expediency of providing by law for taking the sense of the people of this territory on the subject of a convention at the ensuing annual election. It appears to me that

there can be no objection to submitting this subject to the people for their consideration, as an expression of public opinion thereon, through the ballot-box, would enable the ensuing Legislative Assembly to act understandingly, and in accordance with the expressed will of the people on this important subject."

The bill to which Lucas referred was introduced by Representative John Pope of Kentucky on March 5, 1840. The House of Representatives adjourned on July 21st without taking further action. Certainly William W. Chapman, Iowa's Delegate, knew of this proposal but he did not take an active part in promoting its passage.

In response to the Governor's insistent urging, however, the Legislative Assembly passed an act, approved on July 31, 1840, "to provide for the expression of the people of the Territory of Iowa as to preparatory steps for their admission into the Union". At the annual election on October 5th, the judges of each precinct were to provide a separate ballot box in which the voters could deposit their decision on the question of Statehood. Those in favor of calling a constitutional convention were to write on their ballots "Convention" and those opposed to such action were to write "No Convention". Voting was to be conducted according to the statute governing Territorial elections.

Between the passage of this act and the date of the election there were two months for a popular discussion of the subject. The historical records that remain indicate that the question elicited little argument. Perhaps the formation of local party lines was more debatable. Perhaps the sentiment opposing Statehood was well known. But in either case the campaign of 1840 was fought out on issues other than that of calling a constitutional convention.

In the numerous county conventions held throughout the Territory for the purpose of nominating candidates for public office, the question of Statehood was seldom mentioned. Nor is there evidence that any candidate made a prominent issue of the convention proposition. That the referendum on admission to the Union stimulated relatively little interest is evident from the fact that officially 7595 votes were cast for Delegate to Congress while only 3844 ballots were deposited on the question of Statehood. Obviously the people of Iowa Territory considered the issue a minor one in comparison with the enthusiasm generated by the campaign for the office of Delegate to Congress.

The opposition to the calling of a constitutional convention was overwhelming. Three negative ballots were cast for every one in favor of drafting

a State constitution. According to the final but incomplete count, only 937 electors wrote "Convention" on their ballots while 2907 persons wrote "No Convention". Tabulated by counties, the election figures show some interesting variations. Although printed as the "Official Return" in the local press, the editors had to apologize for the fact that they did not have the results from Dubuque, Delaware, Jones, or Cedar counties. Either no record was kept or the final tabulation never found its way into the public records. Even so, the rejection of the proposal was convincing.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION REFERENDUM

<i>County</i>	<i>Convention</i>	<i>No Convention</i>
Clayton	3	52
Clinton	17	24
Des Moines	56	440
Henry	164	229
Jackson	14	260
Jefferson	47	173
Johnson	54	117
Lee	108	423
Linn	81	39
Louisa	59	126
Muscatine	93	210
Scott	115	277
Van Buren	97	373
Washington	29	154
	—	—
<i>Total</i>	937	2907

The only county casting a majority for the convention was Linn, while Clinton was the only other county in which the vote was close. It may be assumed that Dubuque and Delaware county opinion was similar to that in Clayton and Jackson counties, though Jones and Cedar county results may have paralleled those in Linn and Clinton counties. The defeat of the proposition was decisive: the people of Iowa Territory did not want the responsibilities that went with the formation of State government. There the question remained. Even Governor Lucas admitted defeat. In his message to the Third Legislative Assembly on November 3, 1840, the Chief Executive said: "The votes given at the late general election for and against a State Convention, were against a Convention by a large majority. The sentiments of the people of the Territory thus indicated will necessarily preclude all further legislation on the subject at the present session. The people have, by their votes, expressed their preference for a Territorial Government for the time being."

No further action was taken until the meeting of the Fourth Legislative Assembly. On December 8, 1841, Governor John Chambers in his first message to the legislators declared that what seemed to be "of paramount importance, is the legislation necessary to the ascertainment of the

wishes of the people of the Territory, touching our admission into the Union of the States, as one of the confederates, in the duties and obligations of the National Government."

Chambers said that he was aware of the vote in 1840 but believed that circumstances had changed. The Territory had continued its phenomenal growth in population and Congress had passed the "Distribution Act" providing that Iowa among the States and Territories should receive a share of the revenue from the sale of the public lands, and that each new State upon joining the Union should be granted 500,000 acres of land for internal improvements. This, indeed, did alter the opinion in Iowa relative to the calling of a constitutional convention. Although Statehood was not consummated for five years, some phase of the issue was continually the subject of political debate.

The agitation in 1840 was simply premature. Territorial government seemed to provide adequate services and sufficient political liberty, while the movement for Statehood appeared to be mainly the object of ambitious politicians. Yet the election of 1840 was an example of the continual development of democracy on the western frontier. Iowa voters decided between the fostering care of the national government and political independence.

JACK T. JOHNSON

Crum and the Standard

While the pioneers were laying the foundation stones of the capitol at Iowa City, a young man who had recently emigrated from Pennsylvania was occupied with laying the foundations for one of Iowa's prominent pioneer newspapers. William Crum arrived in the frontier river town of Bloomington in 1840 equipped with a press and some type, journalistic ambitions, and strong political convictions. The same year a fellow printer from the Quaker State, Thomas Hughes, arrived with equal ambitions. The greatest difference between the two Pennsylvanians who had come to the recently organized Iowa Territory was in their political convictions. Hughes was glad to settle in a Territory predominantly Democratic in politics. Crum rolled into the frontier town that is now Muscatine with the hard-cider barrel of the Whigs, singing their campaign ballads.

Of the rivalry between the two young editors in their publishing enterprises there can be no doubt; the same rivalry must have been felt intensely as they prepared for the first issues of their papers. As in many pioneer races to be "first", it was a small matter that made William Crum's

Iowa Standard and not Thomas Hughes's *Bloomington Herald* the first newspaper in Muscatine. The first issue of *The Iowa Standard* published by Crum and Bailey appeared on October 23, 1840. Four days later the *Bloomington Herald*, issued under the firm name of Hughes and Russell, made its initial appearance. The publishers of the *Herald* had waited a week for the completion of the room they were to occupy!

Crum's paper was the sixth and Hughes's the seventh to be published in Iowa. The first, John King's *DuBuque Visitor*, had begun four years earlier while the Iowa country was still a part of Wisconsin Territory. Of the five editors who had preceded Crum and Hughes, four were Jacksonian Democrats. Only James G. Edwards, publisher of the Fort Madison *Patriot*, and later the Burlington *Hawk-Eye*, espoused the cause of the Whigs.

In 1840 Iowa was "the West". When he left Pennsylvania, young Crum, still in his early twenties, must have guessed the newness of the frontier into which he was going. He was able to grasp the unheralded honor of starting Bloomington's first newspaper and ride on the crest of the Whigs' political rise in Iowa. He did the same in the newly established community of Iowa City.

For Crum the first year was the hardest, the

paper being tossed up and down by its editor's financial insecurity. But if the little press of the *Standard* was silenced completely in lean weeks or was gaunt in appearance when paper failed to come into town on schedule, it made up for such weakness when it did appear. The political voice of the *Standard* was raucous, and as Editor Crum lived up to the caliber of vitriolic personal journalism when talking politics, so was he unsparing in his personal denunciation of rival editors.

There was no scarcity of vital news during the *Standard's* first year. The meaning of democracy, federalism, abolitionism, public printing, organization of the Iowa Whigs, the Oregon question, General Dodge's position in Congress, removal of the Iowa legislature from Burlington to Iowa City, opposition to Statehood for Iowa, the arrival of the first steamboat in Iowa City, agriculture, and the peculiarity of the slang expression "O.K." were editorial questions discussed. Chauncey Swan, the Territorial Commissioner of Public Buildings, was providing news copy with his reports on the progress of the new stone capitol.

Although the *Standard* devoted a sufficient amount of space to political news of the Whigs in Iowa and to the sessions of the Territorial legislature, the most important news event was the national election. Election returns from the States

were printed with comments throughout the weeks preceding the balloting in the Harrison-Van Buren race. The *Standard* hailed the election of Harrison with an editorial statement that, "This week we can, with glorious certainty inform our readers, that General WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, is elected President of the United States, and with as large a majority as any President before elected. . . . Thus it is seen that the people have spoken themselves, and in a voice of thunder which cannot be mistaken from the voice of condemnation pronounced upon, and echoed through the castle of the tyrant."

Typical of the flowery pen of the pioneer editor was his condemnation of "locofoco trickery". "Schemes of many, and various, no matter how dark and treacherous, how high-handed and barefaced, has characterized that party during the Presidential canvass — to the very end. Should they, with these false inventions and fabrications, have gained their election, it will prove an immortal shock to a Republic which has been so prosperous till of late. But, nay — nay — we have other indications and prospects brightening the political horizon, which becomes more manifest every day. By all their insidiousness, they must die — die — die, in despair and forlorn."

Crum and his partner, W. D. Bailey, published

their weekly four-page paper from an "office in the second story of the building occupied by Howland & Brady" on Front Street. The prospectus announced that the paper was printed on a "super-royal sheet" with "entire new materials". An additional dollar was charged subscribers who paid at the end of the year, and there is evidence to show that most subscribers, if they paid at all, waited until the end of the year. The first twenty issues of *The Iowa Standard* were five column pages, but after March 5, 1841, the editor changed to six columns and Imperial size sheets.

The publishers announced that "all advertisements sent to this office for insertion, without the number of insertions marked thereon will, at the option of the Editors, be continued until ordered out, & charged accordingly." Rates for the first insertion for one square were one dollar. Each subsequent insertion cost fifty cents, with "a liberal deduction . . . to yearly advertisers."

The nature of the paper is readily characterized. Page one was given over largely to "Foreign news". "The Foreign news brought by the Great Western," the proprietor wrote editorially, "will be found on our first page and very lengthy, and excites much interest, to which we invite the attention of our readers." That part of the front page not taken up by the foreign news, mostly

second-handed, was filled with news of Europe and the United States which had been clipped from the papers of New York, Richmond, Bangor, Salem, and other eastern cities.

Six of the ten inside columns were reports and comment on politics and State elections. The *Standard's* editor seemed to relish no clipped item more than one which effectively scourged the "Locofocoism" of the Democrats. That the paper was to be a Whig organ there could be no doubt after the first issue.

Essays might be found on any of the pages, but page four usually gave the reader a half column of poetry, several columns of fiction, and a column of miscellaneous trivia having the appearance of filler.

By the end of the first month, the publishers of the *Standard* were becoming more conscious of advertising. With issue No. 4 there appeared the office's bid for book and job printing, and legal paper was being sold from the office. In the same issue advertisements appeared for the first time on the front page. The date was November 13, 1840, and the editors acknowledged the support of their friends with the comfortable statement that it had been "beyond all expectations".

From his first issue Editor Crum carried the caption in his dateline, "Printed & Published simul-

taneously at Bloomington and Iowa City by Crum & Bailey, at \$2.50 per annum in Advance." T. S. Parvin expressed doubt as to the double publication in Bloomington and Iowa City, but there is evidence for and against it. Parvin said in the *Iowa Historical Record* that the line "simultaneously" was carried "until a wag of a devil in the office changed it to *spontaneously* when it was dropped." In an issue dated both December 24th and December 25th the *Standard* carried a column on page three under an Iowa City heading. "Our subscribers in this City and County," the editor said at the beginning of it, "will recollect that LANSFORD W. HASTINGS, Esq. is Agent for this paper, who has a publication office open in this City for the distribution of the papers, and to whom communications can be made by them, if they think it more convenient to do so, than to us; from whose hands those matters will receive prompt attention."

The *Standard* seems to have weathered well the winter of 1840-1841. At times paper and ink were scarce, but by March, 1841, the firm of Crum and Bailey was prepared to announce an enlargement. Heading the editorial column on March 12, 1841, was this paragraph: "OUR ENLARGEMENT.— We have the pleasure, this week, of presenting to our subscribers an enlarged sheet. The liberal

patronage which has been so far bestowed upon us, we are determined to repay, if possible, by the most unwearied efforts to please our patrons. In order the more effectually to do this, we have added four columns to our paper. . . . We trust our friends will not permit their efforts in our behalf to flag, as our success and future improvement of our paper depend upon the patronage of the public."

Evidently the new six-column Imperial sheets were not the only surprise Crum had in store for his readers. The *Standard* announced on March 26th that a young Bloomington lawyer, Stephen Whicher, Jr., was joining the staff as an editorial writer, to enable the publishers to spend more time on the mechanical side of publication. Bailey's name was dropped from the flag the following week, and in the same issue (April 2) the names "S. Whicher, Jr. & W. Crum, Editors" appeared in the masthead.

In the first issue to which he contributed, on March 26th the young Whig lawyer addressed a message to the patrons of the *Standard*: "In pursuance of an arrangement made with the publishers of the 'STANDARD' since their last publication," he wrote, "the undersigned enters upon the cares and participates in the duties of an editor of a political newspaper. This occupation, to him, is new,

and he feels it to be arduous and responsible." Whicher promised no polished sentences, but only what he might judge to be the best political interests of the people. His only pledge was "fidelity". In explanation, Whicher continued, "The patronage usually accorded to a village newspaper, seldom justifies the publisher in securing a high grade of talent in its editorial department, nor in making it the primary and only business of any one to superintend its columns. The same hand that pens the paragraph, composes and puts to press. Such has been the condition of the publishers of this paper."

Whicher pointed out that the publishers of the *Standard* had no government printing contracts or other patronage, had a subscription list of less than six hundred, and an "advertising custom below that of any other paper in the Territory". Subject to the "pressure of hard times" and the lack of surplus capital, the establishment of the press at Bloomington was "an experiment and its continuance problematical". It could not be expected "under these circumstances to command the pecuniary means to make it the primary object of any man by his pen to raise up and sustain for its columns a reputation enjoyed alone by those papers whose proprietors are free from these embarrassments", Whicher wrote. The young lawyer, un-

doubtedly concerned most about his personal rise in the Whig party in Iowa, was careful to point out that he was in no manner connected with the *Standard's* pecuniary concerns.

Whicher's smoother style of writing enlivened the editorial columns during his short connection with the paper and, even though his pen was not as acid as Crum's, he drew fire. Following Whicher's introductory editorial the editor of the Bloomington *Herald* wrote, "A decent respect for our calling forbids that we should welcome a self-important demagogue into our corps, thereby sanctioning the opinion which is already too prevalent, that printers are fit only for the mechanical department of a paper, and pettifoggers the only qualified persons for the management of its editorial columns." Whicher's best contribution during his short association with the *Standard* was his report on April 2nd and 9th of the Whig convention in Davenport.

The paper seems to have had a hard time during the month of April, 1841, in spite of Whicher's assistance. Crum must have sunk into despair at the news of the death of "Old Tip". Since its beginning the *Standard* had devoted itself with dogged faithfulness to the Whig hero, President Harrison. The April 29th issue was printed with black column rules in mourning for Harrison; and

heading the editorial column was the *Standard's* farewell to Bloomington. "All those indebted to this establishment for subscription and advertising up to this time", Crum wrote, "will please call and settle their accounts immediately, as the proprietor is determined to wind up his affairs and discontinue the publication of the *Standard* till the times become easier."

For the month of May the *Standard* was suspended. But during that month, Crum apparently regained hope and moved his press and type to Iowa City. Publication was resumed in the new capital on June 3rd with No. 28 under the new name, *The Iowa City Standard*. Still devoted to Harrison, Crum carried a quotation from "Old Tip" in the flag: "I desire you to understand the true principles of the Government. I wish them carried out — I ask nothing more."

The rivalry between the *Standard* and the Bloomington *Herald* did not cease when the *Standard* moved to Iowa City. In late July the two quibbled editorially over the exchange of copies of the two papers. On December 4, 1841, Thomas Hughes of the *Herald*, who had also moved to Iowa City, helped Ver Planck Van Antwerp launch the *Iowa Capitol Reporter* as a Democratic competitor of the *Standard*. Before the *Reporter* was established, the *Standard* had a short-

lived rival in the *Iowa City Argus*, begun in July, 1841, but as unpopular with the Democrats, whose cause it espoused, as with the Whigs.

During the year the *Standard* shifted publication dates several times from Thursday to Friday to Saturday and back, in order to adjust itself to mail schedules. Entrenched in the new Territorial capital, the *Standard* was holding its own during the summer months. At the same time the *Standard* was making its bids for acceptance, the Whig party was continuing its efforts to secure a firmer foothold in the Iowa legislature.

With October came the first anniversary of the *Standard*, marked only by Crum's pleas that patrons pay their subscription bills. "Patrons, we have now been associated together nearly one year", he wrote. "We commenced the issuing of the *Standard* under the pressure of hard times, with the hope of seeing them change, but it appears that they are equally as embarrassing now as at the commencement. We have labored hard, and worked our way thus far without receiving enough from our subscribers to purchase the paper required for the printing. We distribute between six and seven hundred copies weekly, the paper of which costs \$7 per week. Among that number we can count but about fifty who have paid us thus far, and the remainder are of course unpaid.

These are facts lamentably true. By one glance it will be seen that our own labor, the labor of our journeymen, our apprentices, the wearing of our materials, and numerous other items are all to be accounted for, and where is it to come from? Did we receive a livelihood? No. In a good book we learn that the laborer is worthy of his hire. But this is not fulfilling it in our case."

The fortunes of the *Standard* after it was printed in Iowa City are not primarily a part of this story, but they do show that for William Crum the business of publishing became easier as the paper grew. By the fall of 1842 he was able to make a trip East to buy new type and a new press. In December of 1844 he sold out to A. P. Wood. In 1849 the paper passed into the hands of Dr. S. M. Ballard who, sensing the approaching death of the Whig party, changed its name to *The Iowa City Republican*. Crum himself continued as a prominent citizen of Iowa City and as late as 1869 was treasurer of the board of trustees of the University of Iowa.

JAMES FOX

The Bloomington Herald

On October 27, 1840, the first edition of the *Bloomington Herald* issued from a primitive press in a humble cabin. Vast as is the difference between the Bloomington of 1840 and the Muscatine of 1940, it is no greater than the difference between the *Herald* of that early day and the *Journal* of the present. The city has prospered and grown through lean years and fat ones; so has the newspaper, which one hundred years ago began its course under none too favorable circumstances.

"Encouraged by the flattering prospects of the success of a Democratic paper in Bloomington, held out by many of its citizens and of the counties adjacent to Muscatine, professing the principles we advocate, as well as many of the opposite party, all looking to the interest of the country at large," Thomas Hughes and John B. Russell "at a very heavy expense," established the *Herald* at the small but promising river town just four days after the first issue of the rival Whig *Iowa Standard* had been published.

Something of the condition under which newspapers were begun at that early period is reflected

in an editorial on the second page of the first issue. "So numerous", declared the *Herald*, "have been the prospectus here-to-fore circulated for obtaining subscriptions to the newspapers, to be published in this place, which have ended in wind, that the people generally have been so deceived that they now look upon all with suspicion and are unwilling to give in their names until publication has been commenced. Aware of this fact, we have commenced the *Herald* with a smaller number than we would have felt safe in doing under any circumstances yet we are by no means discouraged. Our list is already sufficiently large to give us the fullest confidence of success. The democracy of Muscatine are too wide awake to their interests, too firm in their support of their fixed and immovable principles, to suffer a channel to which they can all have access, languish for want of patronage. Then we would say to all, the prospectus of the *Herald* was issued and its publication commenced with a determination to go on with it triumphantly, too, if economy, industry, and perseverance would avail, and if not, to fail in the attempt. We now, instead of promises only, present the performance, hoping to meet with a hearty reception at the fireside of every farmer in the country."

Thomas Hughes was a journeyman printer,

trained in the shops of Danville, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia in his native State of Pennsylvania. At the age of twenty-four he came west to seek his fortune as a newspaper publisher. For about a month he set type for the *Iowa Sun* at Davenport and then went to Burlington to work for James Clarke on the *Territorial Gazette*. In the spring of 1839, after the legislature had adjourned and the ice had gone out of the river, he went to Dubuque and got a job on the *Iowa News*, of which John B. Russell was the managing editor. The two printers decided to start a newspaper of their own. Hughes returned to Pennsylvania, bought a press and type, and shipped the equipment to Bloomington in the summer of 1840. Being of Quaker ancestry Hughes was calm and non-aggressive in disposition with neither aptitude nor liking for controversy. He was entirely willing to leave editorial writing to his partner while he attended to the business management. Both men set type and worked the press.

John B. Russell was one of the most dynamic newspaper men on the Iowa frontier. An experienced printer, he was a partner with James Clarke in the publication of the *Belmont Gazette* in 1836 when the Territorial capital was located in Wisconsin. In the following spring, however, the *Belmont* paper was discontinued. Clarke followed

the Territorial government to Burlington and established the *Wisconsin Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser*, while Russell formed a new partnership with John King and William W. Coriell at Dubuque and began the publication of the *Iowa News* in June, 1837. There were many changes of ownership while Russell was managing editor of the struggling Dubuque paper. It was not a profitable enterprise, and he must have welcomed the opportunity to help launch a new paper. Good-natured but outspoken and sarcastic, he enjoyed the hazards of his vocation. The apocryphal assertion that he composed his editorials at the type case seems to be confirmed by many sentences that ended in a tangle of phrases. His personality, rather than the more sedate temperament of Thomas Hughes, characterized the *Bloomington Herald*.

Besides current news, both foreign and domestic, Hughes and Russell promised that "a good space" in their paper would "always be devoted to Literary and Miscellaneous selections, so as to render it interesting to the lover of literature as well as the politician and man of business." Nor would the "interests of the Farmer" be neglected, "but such information of value" to him as could be "collected from the writings of old and practical farmers" would be printed. To make the paper

“interesting to our Territorial readers as a channel of information concerning our own country,” the editors offered inducements to correspondents that were calculated to insure communications from all parts of the Territory describing in detail the growth of towns, the formation of new settlements, the condition of crops, and other matters of importance.

“The perpetuity of our unequalled form of government, depending, as it does, upon the wisdom and intelligence of its citizens,” announced the prospectus of the *Herald*, should insure the support of the “best means of spreading universal knowledge, which is admitted to be common schools”. To the “advancement of this great cause”, the editors pledged their efforts.

But Russell, if not Hughes, was most interested in politics. Perhaps the discussion of governmental policies and the character of public officials were supposed to have the greatest news value a hundred years ago. “In National Politics,” the prospectus declared, “the HERALD will yield a cordial support to the leading measures of the present administration, yet we shall not be so devoted to its support as to give our sanction to any and every measure it may propose. We do not claim for the Chief Magistrate infallibility, but we are sincere in our belief that the measures of

his administration are far better calculated to carry the country through its besetting dangers, than those proposed by the opposite party. If in the future course of the Chief Magistrate, he shall, in our opinion, leave the path of duty, we shall plainly speak our mind, as well upon his course as upon the Whig party, which, for the sake of power, has left principles to take care of themselves, and is, by its wily leaders, endeavoring to sing and drink into office, a representative of no set of fixed principles, that they may themselves fatten on his lack of principles, judgment and decision."

On problems affecting local interests, the platform of the *Herald* was more specific. It promised to "advocate an immediate and thorough organization of the Democracy, preparatory to the formation of a State Constitution, imposing restrictions on future legislation in granting exclusive privileges to corporate bodies, the free exercise of which has enslaved the people of many of the states; and of defining its powers in other respects so as to suit its condition." Another important issue concerned suffrage, according to the *Herald*. "Justice to naturalized citizens requires that their rights to the elective franchise, according to the spirit of the constitution of the United States be guarded against the schemes of the Whig party,

as their efforts in some of the states to deprive them of this sacred privilege, prove their principles to tend. That these safe-guards may be incorporated in that instrument, it is essential that the Democracy maintain their ascendancy, therefore we shall advocate the policy of drawing the party lines at every subsequent election."

In fulfillment of the prepublication pledge of partisanship, the first issue of the *Herald* editorially chided the Whigs for claiming direct descent from the Revolutionary opponents of the Tories, and predicted that they could not gull the people into a belief of their fabricated stories of Presidential dictatorship. In accordance with its partisan standards, the *Herald* supported President Martin Van Buren for reëlection and opposed General William Henry Harrison, the military, "cider-barrel" candidate of the Whigs. "It will not do to fall into their footsteps," the editor proclaimed, "and select a hero because they have succeeded with a mock hero for a tool. Let us take up the same man and show no military titles to give us strength. Principles are what we are contending for, and it is upon the intelligence of the people we rely and not upon blind attachment to a title. Martin Van Buren is our first, second, and last choice."

The first number of the *Herald* consisted of four pages twenty-one by fourteen inches in size, with

six columns to the page. There were no headlines and the front page was made up of news taken from the papers that had been brought by the "latest" steamboat. Most of the news dealt with political controversies and seldom included items of local interest. Advertisements were few even though the rates were one dollar for one square of twelve lines and fifteen cents for each subsequent insertion. The subscription price was three dollars a year if paid in advance, three fifty at the end of six months, or six dollars at the end of the year. The circulation of the *Herald* never exceeded five hundred.

Thomas Hughes, having moved to Iowa City in October, 1841, joined Ver Planck Van Antwerp in establishing the *Iowa Capitol Reporter* at the Territorial capital in December, 1841. Russell published the *Herald* until 1845 when he sold his interest to Dr. Charles O. Waters. Under the management of Dr. Waters, who was reputed to be a scholarly writer, the tone of the paper improved.

In 1846, M. T. Emerson, a printer and a man of good judgment and character, purchased the *Herald*. Emerson was a Whig and changed the politics of the paper to favor that party. He threw his whole energy into the conduct of his paper and made noticeable changes in the mechanical and

editorial departments. But his connection with the paper was destined to last only a few months, for the career which began so brightly soon ended in death.

The next owners of the Bloomington *Herald* were N. L. Stout and William P. Israel. Of this firm, Stout was the editor and Israel the printer. They conducted the affairs of the office from 1846 until 1848. Stout was a vigorous partisan and during his term in the editorial chair the columns of the *Herald* abounded in vigorous denunciations of slavery. It required no small amount of courage to advocate abolition in 1846, especially in a Territory bordered by the great thoroughfare which floated the commerce of the South. Fear, however, had no deterring influence upon the editor of the *Herald*. He condemned slavery without stint so that the Bloomington newspaper became noted throughout the Northwest.

Probably the most important event marking the administration of Stout and Israel was the employment of a thirteen-year-old boy to work as "devil" in the shop and learn the printer's trade. This young apprentice was John Mahin who started to work in November, 1847, and remained with the paper over fifty years.

Of conditions in a typical newspaper shop when he began his apprenticeship Mahin wrote: "The

printing establishment was a primitive affair, consisting of three double racks of cases for type, a Washington hand press and an imposing stone, about four by eight feet on the surface. All the mechanical work was done in one room, where was also the editorial writing table. Mr. Israel and Mr. Parvin were masters of the art preservative and were my preceptors in learning the trade. My duties consisted in sweeping out in the morning, carrying water and wood, and keeping up the fires when necessary, while the remainder of the time was devoted to setting type. I was also carrier for the paper, delivering it to the town subscribers on Saturday." According to the young apprentice, it "was quite an achievement to 'learn the boxes,' that is, to ascertain the arrangement of the letters in the case containing the type, for they were not arranged alphabetically as one might suppose, but for convenience. The letter 'e' therefore had the largest box in front of the compositor as he stood at the case. The 'i' came next and was on the right hand side of the 'e' box. The 'k,' 'j' and 'z' boxes were small and on the outer part of the case, because comparatively few of them were used. It was not many weeks until I was given a copy to set for the paper and I was immensely proud when what I had set first appeared in the paper. The news at that time was mostly

in reference to the Mexican War. There were also stirring times in France and I remember once when I had set up a reprint article referring to Napoleon, with an 'a' instead of an 'o' in the last syllable, I was much mortified when the proof sheet came to me to find that I was in error. After that I kept in mind the humorous precept of Mr. Israel, who said it was a good rule 'to follow copy even if it was blown out the window.' "

Although the *Herald* was only four pages of six columns each and issued once a week, its two printers and one apprentice were hard pressed to do the mechanical work. Issue day was Saturday but almost invariably they had to work all Friday night to get the paper out on time. It was the business of the apprentice to "roll the forms", that is, "apply the ink to the type by means of a large soft roller made in an iron mold, from glue and molasses, which had previously been boiled to the proper consistency. These rolls had to be made by the office force in those days.

The pressman, according to Mahin, had the hardest part of the job. Each sheet of paper had to be placed by hand on the tympan and clasped in place by a rim of the tympan called the "brisket" which was drawn down upon it, swinging on hinges. The tympan thus prepared was turned over and laid flat on the type forms resting on the

“platen” or iron bed of the press. By turning a crank the platen with the forms was carried beneath the framework of the press. A pull on the lever pressed the tympan against the type and made the impression. Then the form was cranked out, the tympan raised, and the sheet of paper unclasped, taken off, and laid on a board prepared for the purpose. One side of the paper was usually printed on Thursday and the other side on Friday night.

A pressman did well if he could print a “token” an hour on the old Washington hand press. A token then meant ten quires of paper. Each quire contained twenty-four sheets. Thus, at least two hours were required “to print an issue of two hundred and forty papers as each paper had to go through the press twice.”

John Mahin remembered that the *Herald* office had some job printing. “It was the custom to print invitations to funerals with a dark border around them. Ball tickets were printed in the gaudiest style of the art. Chromatic presses were unknown then, so a color or tint was given to the ticket by sprinkling some powder on it as it came from the press, before there was time for the ink to dry. In this kind of printing it was my duty to apply the ink with a ball made by tightly packing cotton in a piece of silk. All kinds of jobs were printed on

the Washington press, as there was no other kind of press in the office."

Financial liabilities compelled Stout and Israel to suspend publication of the *Herald* toward the end of 1848. Presently, however, it appeared as a Whig sheet of six columns, on February 20, 1849, under the editorship of F. A. C. Foreman. "Alphabet" Foreman "believed a newspaper should have a little of everything in it. He was an imaginative and florid writer . . . a practical printer, as well as a good writer, but a man of intemperate habits." While he lay helplessly drunk, his wife often had to set type for the paper and with her foot rock "the baby in a rude wooden cradle under the type stand." Foreman published only a few issues of the *Herald*. With his failure the paper expired.

On May 9, 1849, Vol. I, No. 1 of the *Muscatine Journal* came out. Noah M. McCormick of St. Louis, who had bought the old *Herald* plant, was editor and publisher. About that time the name of the town was changed from Bloomington to Muscatine, so the new editor named his paper accordingly and substituted *Journal* for *Herald*. Though McCormick was a poor writer, he managed the paper with more financial success than any of his predecessors.

In July, 1852, he sold the improved property to

Jacob Mahin and his son John. The erstwhile apprentice assumed the duties of editor. John Mahin served the *Journal* almost continuously until his retirement in 1903, and made it a vital influence in Iowa journalism. Tracing its origin to the old Bloomington *Herald*, the *Journal* files now span a century of almost continuous publication.

EDITH MAY BELL

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