

# THE PALIMPSEST

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## Composition of the Assembly

Every even-numbered year Iowa's usual calm is stirred by a general election. When the returns are in, it is a signal for the start of one of the state's biggest political field days. Politicians, lobbyists, newshawks — yes, even casual observers — begin figuring the composition of the legislature chosen by the people to represent them.

In this respect the interval between the general election of 1950 and the opening of the 54th General Assembly in January of 1951 was no different from any similar interval in Iowa history. Before the smoke had cleared, interested parties took out paper, sharpened pencils, and went to work to see what kind of men and women were to occupy the 108 House and 50 Senate seats.

They weren't long in discovering that there was little difference between the composition of the 1951 legislature and those it succeeded. Farmers and lawyers dominated both houses, with scatterings of representation from a wide variety of other walks of life.

Of the 158 lawmakers, 53 listed themselves as farmers. At least 23 others indicated they made their living through a combination of farming and some other business. These 76 gave the general field of agriculture more representation by far than that of any other and showed once again how dependent Iowa is on its valuable land. Another 27 members listed themselves as lawyers with at least 3 more combining law with another business and a fourth completing his studies for a law degree.

Eighty members then, including 57 in the House of Representatives and 23 in the Senate, listed themselves singularly as either "farmer" or "lawyer" in their own descriptions, leaving the other 78, including those combining farming or the law with another business, distributed as follows:

Seven merchants, five publishers, four retired farmers, three manufacturers, three restaurant owners, three insurance men, two realtor-insurance men, two physicians, two editors, two banker-farmers, two housewives, two farmer-lawyers, two businessman-farmer-lawyers, two implement dealers, one gasoline dealer, one food dealer, one investment banker, one druggist, one contractor, one realtor, one lumberman, one farmer-horse breeder, one printer, one farmer-insurance man, one manufacturer's representative, one dentist, one savings and loan man, one farmer-broker, one sales representative, one retired banker, one thea-

ter owner, one dentist-farm manager, one produce and fur dealer, one soil conservationist, one retired publisher-printer, one retired farmer-businessman, one railroad yard master, one radio farm editor, one drainage engineer, one automobile dealer, one fuel dealer, one broker-farm manager, one hatchery-feed dealer, one hatchery-feed manufacturer, one bottle gas dealer, one farmer-stock buyer, one relief director, one mine operator, one banker, one simply "retired," and one law college student.

Once occupations were established, the busy statisticians turned to other things. They found each party had feminine representation with two Republicans and one Democrat having been named to represent the fair sex in the House of Representatives.

They also found the average legislator to be a person 53.32 years old. Their ages ranged from twenty-five-year-old Representative Jack Schroeder of Davenport, who interrupted his senior year in law college to serve, to eighty-one-year-old Senator F. M. Roberts of Knoxville. The parties thus divided these honors evenly since Representative Schroeder was a Republican and Senator Roberts, a Democrat.

The age range table showed that most of the legislators were between 46 and 65. The complete breakdown of age range for the General Assembly is as follows:

<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Number of Legislators</i>	<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Number of Legislators</i>
21-25	1	56-60	24
26-30	6	61-65	28
31-35	4	66-70	11
36-40	8	71-75	7
41-45	13	76-80	2
46-50	26	81-over	1
51-55	27		

Oldest legislator in point of service was Representative Arch W. McFarlane of Waterloo, a Republican, who had served in fourteen regular and six extra sessions up to the 54th. He was first elected in 1914 to the 36th General Assembly in 1915. Except for three sessions, he has served continuously since then. Twice, in 1919 and 1921, he served as Speaker of the House.

Dean of the Senate and second to McFarlane in point of service was Senator Frank C. Byers of Cedar Rapids, a Republican. Not including the 54th, Senator Byers has served in eleven regular and four extra sessions and has a continuous service record outranking McFarlane's, since he was first elected in 1928 and has served in every session since.

Among the Democrats, Senator Leroy S. Mercer of Iowa City had the most service with nine sessions, including the 54th. Second was Senator A. E. Augustine of Oskaloosa with eight, and third was Representative George E. Miller of Harlan, a former Speaker of the House, with seven.

Education-wise, 121 legislators said, in statistical data appearing in the *Iowa Official Register*, that they either possessed college degrees or, at least, had taken some work beyond high school. Thirty more said they had high school educations. The remaining seven listed either "grade school" only or did not mention their education. The breakdown showed 104 Republicans and 17 Democrats among the college-educated, 25 Republicans and 5 Democrats among the high school-educated, with 5 Republicans and 2 Democrats falling into the "grade school" only or "not listed" category.

Of the 158 legislators in the 54th General Assembly, 41 were serving their first terms, 44 their second, 23 their third, 15 their fourth, 9 their fifth, 3 their sixth, 7 their seventh, 4 their eighth, 2 their ninth, 1 his twelfth, and 1 his fifteenth.

The above statistics are for the legislature as a whole and make for a good start, but it is always interesting to look statistically at the two houses separately.

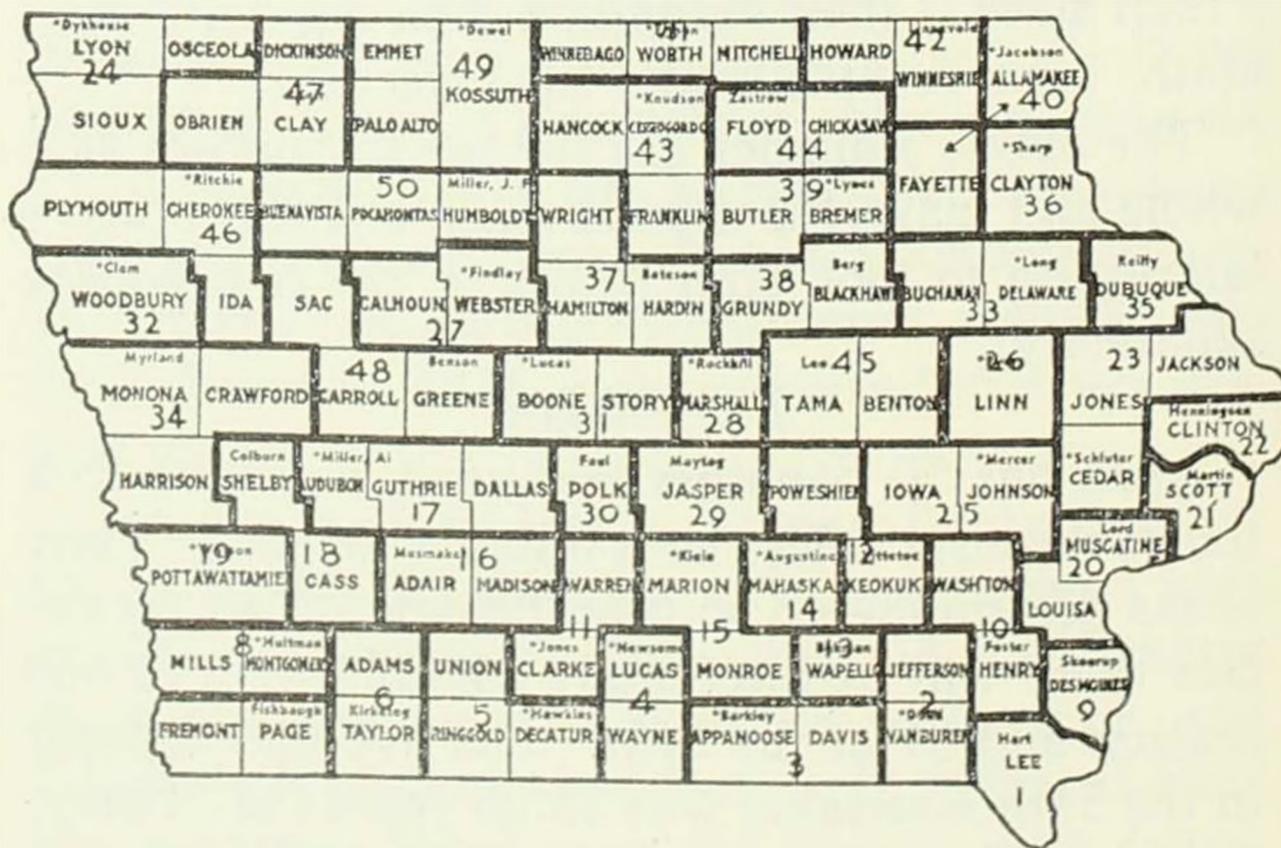
#### *The Senate*

Iowa has 50 Senators and each is elected to a four-year term unless he is filling a vacancy. Their terms are staggered so that if there are no vacancies there will be alternately 29 holdovers at one session and 21 at the next. The average Senator in the 54th Assembly was 55.26 years old. Forty-one were Republicans and nine were Democrats. There were no women Senators.

Average age of the Republicans was 55.93 and that of the Democrats 56.11. Among Republicans the ages ranged from thirty-nine to eighty, with Senator Alan Vest of Sac City and Ernest L. Humbert of Corning enjoying those respective distinctions.

Among Democrats the ages ranged from the thirty-six years of Senator Thomas J. Dailey of Burlington, to the eighty-one years of Senator F. M. Roberts of Knoxville.

Thirty-five Republican and Democratic Senators listed their education as including college degrees or work beyond high school, four Republicans and one Democrat listed high school educations, while two Republicans and one Democrat either omitted education or listed grade school only.



Map of State Senatorial Districts

During the session there were no vacancies caused by death or any other reason, but several seats were left vacant after adjournment. They were those of: Senator Loyd Van Patten of Indiana, a Republican, who resigned to accept an appointment as Assistant State Secretary of Agriculture a week after the session ended; Senator John Hattery of Nevada, a Republican, to become a member of the State Highway Commission; Senator O. H. Henningsen of Clinton, a Republican, to become a member of the State Board of Parole; Senator Ernest L. Humbert, who died; Senator Edward S. Parker of Ida Grove, a Republican, who died; and Senator J. M. Tudor of Olin, a Republican, who moved to Sioux City. None of the vacancies had to be filled since no special session of the 54th was called.

Lawyers were predominant in the Senate, there being 14 in all including 12 Republicans and 2 Democrats. There were 9 farmers, including 7 Republicans and 2 Democrats.

#### *The House*

The 108 House members are elected to two-year terms. In 1950 the people named 93 Republicans and 15 Democrats to represent them. Of the 108 House members, 44 were farmers, including 37 Republicans and 7 Democrats. Twelve were lawyers, including 10 Republicans and 2 Democrats.

The fair sex was represented politically on both

sides of the House — Katheryn C. Metz of Lamon and Gladys S. Nelson of Newton being Republican, while Mrs. John W. Crabb of Jamaica was a Democrat.

Average age of House members was 53.03, Republicans averaging 52.99 and Democrats 53.27. Oldest Republican Representative was seventy-nine-year-old C. M. Langland who represented Winneshiek County but got his mail from the post office across the state line in Spring Grove, Minnesota. His residence, of course, was in Iowa. Youngest Republican was Jack Schroeder of Davenport, a senior in law school, at twenty-five.

Oldest Democrat at seventy-four was George E. Miller of Harlan, former Speaker of the House. Youngest, at thirty-four, was Mrs. Crabb.

Sixty-nine Republican and ten Democratic House members listed their education as including college degrees or some college work, 21 Republicans and one Democrat either did not list their education or gave it simply as "grade school."

No vacancies occurred in the House during the session, but after adjournment there were several. They included the seats of: G. T. Clark of Knoxville, a Democrat, who resigned to become acting postmaster of that community; Gene Poston of Corydon, a Democrat, who resigned to become clerk of the Federal District Court for Southern Iowa; Norman Norland of Kensett, a Democrat, who died; Robert P. Munger of Sioux City, a Re-

publican, who resigned to become a member of the State Board of Education; Harvey Uhlenhopp of Hampton, a Republican, who resigned to enter a Des Moines law firm; and Laurence M. Boothby of Cleghorn, a Republican, who resigned after being renominated in the 1952 primary to run for the Senate vacancy created by the death of Senator Edward S. Parker, veteran legislator from the 46th district. Since there was no extra session of the legislature, these changes had no effect on the work of the 54th General Assembly.

FRANK T. NYE