

The **P**ALIMPSEST

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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

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 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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With Captain Allen in 1844

At ten o'clock on Sunday morning, August 11, 1844, a detachment of fifty United States dragoons rode out "in very good order" from Fort Des Moines at the mouth of the Raccoon River. Wagons loaded with camp equipment and "pork for 40 days, flour for 60 days, and small rations for 70 days" creaked along behind the file of horsemen at the slower pace of mules and oxen. At the head of the column rode Captain James Allen, classmate of Robert E. Lee at West Point, commandant at Fort Des Moines, and competent explorer. First Lieutenant Patrick Calhoun and Second Lieutenant Patrick Noble, both South Carolina graduates of the United States Military Academy, assisted in command of the expedition. Brevet Second Lieutenant J. H. Potter acted as the commissary and was assigned the duty of preparing a map of the march. The medical staff consisted of Assistant Surgeon J. S. Griffin.

According to orders No. 13 issued from head-

quarters at St. Louis on June 13, 1844, Captain Allen was directed to organize Company I for an exploring expedition "up the Des Moines river, and to the sources of the Blue Earth river of the St. Peter's; thence to the waters of the Missouri; and thence returning through the country of the Pottowatomies." Preparations were made at once but the company was detained for about a month by subsequent orders.

Though the southern part of the region designated had been previously traversed by companies of dragoons, very little was known of the geography of northwest Iowa. The captain was instructed to report upon the physical features of the country, the prospects of settlement, fertility of the soil, and particularly on evidences of recent floods. As a basis for his report he kept a daily journal of the march, full of exploring adventures and geographical information.

For three or four miles the dragoons followed the trail of the Oregon emigrants up the Raccoon River. The covered wagons of Iowa settlers who had caught the Oregon fever in 1843 had cut a clear trace in the sod as they crossed the Sauk and Fox country to Council Bluffs. Presently the dragoons swung northward away from the Raccoon. The supply wagons lumbered along through the high grass on the trail made by the

mounted troopers. The weather was fair and the soldiers were happy to get away from the routine of garrison life. Early in the afternoon the company crossed Beaver Creek and camped in the timber about eight miles from the fort.

The dragoons were up early on the following morning, but the oxen had strayed during the night and so the march was delayed until ten o'clock. A hard rain in the night had softened the prairie. Though the company followed the divide between the Des Moines River and Beaver Creek, the heavy wagons often stuck in the mud, particularly those drawn by the sluggish oxen. Nevertheless, the explorers marched sixteen miles before making camp at five o'clock on a wooded ravine near the Des Moines.

On the next three days the dragoons were on the march by seven in the morning and averaged about seventeen miles a day. Their route continued up the west side of the Des Moines River, skirting the timber and deep ravines. Captain Allen observed many "good springs". The weather was "fine". One day they found a bee tree full of honey. As they approached the Neutral Ground they saw many signs of wild game. On August 16th a drove of a hundred elk was sighted at a distance. That day they crossed Lizard Creek "after going much out of the way

to get down to it" because the country in that vicinity (Fort Dodge) was very rough.

Saturday, August 17th, was spent in camp near the mouth of Lizard Creek "to allow the men to wash, and the teams to rest." Apparently they did some hunting too, for an elk, two deer, and several coons, squirrels, and waterfowls were shot. Lizard Creek "is a pretty little branch of the Des Moines," wrote Captain Allen, "clear, crooked and many ripples; when we crossed it yesterday near its mouth, it was 20 feet broad, 10 inches deep, with current of four miles per hour". Its valley, "which is narrow and deep, is skirted with timber enough to support farms along each side of it."

Captain Allen, who had explored the upper reaches of the Mississippi in 1832 and later served at frontier posts in Kansas and Oklahoma, was pleased with the Des Moines Valley below the fork. This "beautiful river", he said, was bordered by "elevated rich prairie, broken by points of timber". The valley "often expands to make bottoms, sometimes prairie and sometimes timber, of one, two, and three miles in breadth, and always of the richest quality of soil."

With regard to the "extraordinary floods" of the early summer, upon which he was requested to report his observations, Captain Allen had

neither the time nor means "for making the nice observations necessary to a close investigation of this matter," but he found evidences of overflow in the timbered bottoms which left alluvial deposits at the rate of about one-half inch to three feet of flood water. The Des Moines seemed to have risen in proportion to its breadth all the way to its source. At Fort Des Moines it was thirteen and a half feet above common stage in 1844, at Iron Banks on the west branch a hundred miles above the Raccoon it had risen to ten and a half feet, and a hundred miles farther up the high water reached a seven-foot stage. Inasmuch as the Des Moines had few tributaries above the Raccoon and drained a flat, marshy country above the fork, Captain Allen predicted that it might "never rise in height like some other streams of lesser magnitude."

After a day of rest, the march was resumed on Sunday, August 18th. It had rained hard in the night and the prairie was very soft. "We had to double teams, and also apply the men to draw the wagons through the slues, and these were numerous", wrote Captain Allen in his journal. The company moved out away from the timber and so did not find a suitable place to camp until nine at night. This was a deep ravine leading to the Des Moines, "the mouth of which is called 'Delaware

battleground,' a place where a party of some 20 Delawares were all killed by the Sioux three years since."

Six horses were missing in the morning and not recovered until nine o'clock. After the expedition got under way a wagon tongue broke which caused further delay. Nevertheless, they soon came to the west fork of the Des Moines at the Iron Banks, where they "crossed without trouble at a rapid ford, on a bottom of lime rock and primitive boulders". The place was named for a "limestone ledge of 20 feet height, on the east bank, in their horizontal strata, and much mixed and colored with oxides of iron." Above this point, "the prairie seemed to change its character, becoming rolling and dry, and much mixed with sand and limestone pebbles".

Marching up the left side of the west branch of the Des Moines, "as close to the river as the slopes and ravines would permit," the dragoons soon reached the level swampy prairies of Palo Alto and Emmet counties. Progress was "slow and difficult". In four days the expedition traveled only about twenty miles. The ground was so wet "and the slues so numerous" that the route was very crooked.

August 21st was a hard day. The wagons, "being yet heavily loaded, cut deep into the wet

ground, and stuck fast in every mire till pulled out by the main strength of the command; the men were all the time muddy and wet, and more fatigued than on any previous day". About five in the afternoon, while they were fast in a mudhole, "there came a tremendous storm from the north, with torrents of rain; and night and pitch darkness, with rain, thunder, and cold," found the expedition three or four miles from timber. With no firm ground around them and unable to go farther, they spent a miserable night, "without fire, shelter, or food."

All the next day was consumed in going six miles. The weary men were glad to camp at sunset "on a pretty little lake 4 miles long and 300 or 400 yards broad, having a rich looking little island near the centre." This must have been Medium Lake at Emmetsburg. There the expedition rested two days, while a party was sent back about eight miles for the ox team which could not get through the slues. About this time, Jones, a civilian employed as a guide, resigned. He had never been so far north, "and never heard of such a country as we are now in", wrote Captain Allen.

Bright and early on Sunday morning the march was resumed. Presently they came to a prairie stream "100 yards broad and swimming deep". Everything had to be ferried across "in the pon-

toon wagon bed," which occupied the whole day. About dark camp was made on "a large irregular grassy lake that seemed to belong to a chain or series of small lakes". All day Monday was spent "in fruitless search of a way" through "these interminable lakes". At last the officers determined to cross a strait between two of them, probably Swan Lake in Emmet County. "The grass in this country is tall and luxuriant", observed Captain Allen, but then added in exasperation, "the whole country is good for nothing, except for the seclusion and safety it affords the numerous water fowl that are hatched and grown in it."

The expedition crossed the parallel of $43^{\circ} 30'$ (which became the northern boundary of Iowa two years later) on August 28th. The land was less swampy and the timber sparser. Lieutenant Calhoun and the guide, reconnoitering eastward, found a beautiful large lake with "bright pebbled shores, and well-timbered borders", which they thought was the source of the Blue Earth River. It was probably Turtle Lake, now regarded as the source of the east branch of the Des Moines River. The explorers may have been misled by Nicollet's map which was not accurate in all details.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Potter explored the west branch of the Des Moines several miles to the west. He found the stream "a reddish muddy

color, 30 feet broad, 2 feet deep, with a current of three miles per hour". The prairie in this vicinity was high and rolling. The dry ground made travel easier and the dragoons marched about twenty miles a day. By the end of August the company camped on a small lake while Captain Allen spent an afternoon riding over the prairie to determine whither to proceed. He decided to leave Lieutenant Noble and half the company encamped near a large irregular lake surrounded by a forest of white oaks. Upon investigation he concluded that this lake, which was not shown on Nicollet's map and which he named Lake of the Oaks (now Shetek Lake), was the headwaters of the "longest and most northerly branch of the Des Moines".

With the other officers, twenty-five dragoons, and a wagon carrying provisions for a week, Captain Allen circled to the north and east "to extend the examination of the country." He marched northward with his detachment for about thirty-seven miles over "a miserable country, full of swamps, and no timber except sparse little groves on the borders of brooks and lakes." Then he turned east and, toward the end of the afternoon, September 4th, came to the Minnesota River, probably near the mouth of the Yellow Medicine River. Apparently Captain Allen realized that he was many miles northwest of the Blue Earth

valley, which he had supposed he was exploring, and so, after following the Minnesota a few miles downstream, he marched back to Lake Shetek.

Although a few traces of hunting parties were observed on the prairie, no Indians were encountered. Captain Allen thought the country was "too poor, bleak, and broken to attract white men much," but "wild enough for an Indian" and "remote enough for all large game." He was tired of eating elk meat: "it has a coarse fibre, is unlike the deer, and I think a mule would taste about as well."

For two days the dragoons rested beside the "pretty and singular" Lake of the Oaks. Further exploration convinced Allen that it was the true source of the Des Moines River. On the morning of September 9th the dragoons marched west "in search of the Big Sioux river." They were soon on the level divide between the tributaries of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Signs of buffalo appeared, and on the following day three "rather lean" bulls were shot. "Lieutenant Potter killed the first one in full chase by the first shot of his pistol." That night, on the east bank of the Big Sioux River, the soldiers feasted on buffalo steak. In the morning the dragoons awoke from dreams of exciting buffalo hunts to find the grass white with the first frost of the season.

A few miles down the Big Sioux the explorers "came upon two lodges" of Sioux Indians. Three warriors galloped forward in alarm, but were pleased to find the soldiers had come "on a mission of friendship". The principal man hoisted a little American flag over his teepee. But the next morning twelve of the best horses and mules were missing. It was very unusual for the horses to stray at night, particularly so far from home. Captain Allen suspected that the Indians had sneaked up in the high grass, loosened the pickets, and driven away the animals. Searching parties were sent out in all directions and five horses and three mules were recovered. But the other four were never found. One horse belonged to Lieutenant Potter, another to Dr. Griffin, and the other horse and mule were government property.

"The Sioux", observed Captain Allen, "are great rascals, and capable of all kinds of theft." The trading post, which the Indians had described as being three day's distance down the river, did not exist, which prompted the Captain to remark that the Sioux were reputed to be "prouder of, and more habituated to, lying than truth-telling, and here is pretty good evidence in support of the charge."

On September 13th the expedition came to the "great and picturesque" Sioux Falls in a large S-

shaped bend of the river. The water flowing over a "massive quartz" formation fell about a hundred feet in a distance of less than a quarter of a mile. There were "several perpendicular falls — one 20, one 18, and one 10 feet." The rock bordering the stream was "split, broken, and piled up in the most irregular and fantastic shapes," and presented "deep and frightful chasms, extending from the stream in all directions."

It was rough country over which the dragoons traveled on their marches down the valley of the Big Sioux. The bluffs were high along the river and the ravines precipitous, causing the expedition to move far inland from the river and follow a very crooked line of march. Progress was slowed to ten or sixteen miles a day. Occasionally the troops filed down a narrow brook valley to the river which was larger than the Des Moines below the Raccoon. But it was impossible to find a passage along the bank because the steep hills came down to the edge of the water at the bends. Driven inland on the higher land, "broken almost every mile by deep ravines, that, from the heights, look like great chasms in the earth", the weary dragoons "had all sorts of trouble, upset one wagon twice, killed one mule, and broke another wagon square off at the hounds."

After a day of such experiences the "romance

of marching through a wilderness country", remarked Captain Allen, "is much abated." Nevertheless, he was interested in the broad open plains across the river and would have explored farther west if it had not been so late in the season. "But my horses are much worn," he admitted reluctantly, "and the grass and prairie are killed by the frost, and it is incumbent to hurry home."

While the expedition remained in camp on September 20th, Captain Allen and three officers set out to find the mouth of the Big Sioux. They "encountered bluffs, ravines, vine, valleys, tall grass, and swamp, and plum-bush, and willow thickets, worse than anything" they had seen. Rain most of the day contributed to the general discomfort. After working their way over the hills and through the brush for about seven miles, the explorers came to the top of a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Big Sioux and the muddy Missouri. "Both, at their junction, wash the base of a steep bluff, some 500 feet high, and the great river then pursues its general course to the southward and eastward." With evident relief, Captain Allen wrote in his journal, "I have learned all I can, now, of the river which we have followed down to its mouth. To-morrow I shall march for home by the nearest route I can find."

All day Saturday, September 21st, was spent

“at hard labor in making ten miles out from the river over these terrible hills”. Two small streams had to be bridged. During the next day, however, the going was easier. Floyd River was “a very pretty, clear stream”, slightly skirted with timber, but the west fork of the Little Sioux was deep and sluggish. A practicable ford was hard to find. Wood for the cook-fires had to be carried, for there was none on the prairie.

It was nearly noon on September 24th when the troopers reached the Little Sioux somewhere near the northeast corner of Woodbury County. It was a clear stream, as large as the Raccoon at its mouth, and bordered by narrow groves of cottonwood, walnut, and oak. Even after preparing the banks for crossing, some of the weak horses had to be helped out of the mud. By sunset, however, the expedition was safely on the east side, camped at the site of a former Indian encampment supposed to have been used by the Potawatomi on a hunting trip in July.

The nights were growing colder and there was little wood for fires. While the prairies were easily traversed, the steep, muddy banks of the streams caused long delays in crossing. Twelve, fifteen, and twenty miles a day was the best that the tired horses and men could do. They crossed the divide into the Des Moines Valley on Septem-

ber 26th and changed their course to the south.

Beyond the Raccoon River in the northern part of Calhoun County the dragoons found the "country full of marshes and old shallow grass, like that of the Upper Des Moines." Though they camped one night near an "island of timber", they could not reach it on account of the "ugly marsh that surrounded it." The whole forenoon of Saturday, September 28th, was spent in traveling "ten miles to make four" on their course. Four-fifths of the land was swampy, "which turned us to all points of the compass." Finally they reached a small lake and, "after much winding around the peninsulas", found an Indian trail that led south to better ground.

Jaded though they were, the troopers did not halt to rest on Sunday. Instead, anxious to get home, they marched twenty miles over hilly country and came to the Raccoon River on the east side below the mouth of Cedar Creek in Greene County. The next morning, however, both horses and men were too tired to make an early start. "The grass has been so much deadened by the many frosts," explained Captain Allen, "that it no longer gives the horses a good subsistence; the horses and mules have failed wonderfully since we left the Little Sioux, though we have walked (on foot) most of the way."

Captain Allen was as weary as the rest of the company. The notes in his journal dwindled day by day as he plodded down the Raccoon Valley. If he observed the details of timber, streams, and other geographical features, he did not bother to record them. Perhaps he was on familiar ground as he marched along the dry ridge between the Raccoon River and Beaver Creek and felt no need for describing the country. One day Sergeant Williams enlivened the march by chasing a fine bear over the prairie and shooting "him dead on first fire with his carbine from his horse at a gallop."

At one o'clock on October 3rd the travel-worn expedition returned to Fort Des Moines. Uniforms were dirty and ragged, wagons falling apart, equipment lost and broken, horses famished, and men glad to resume garrison duty. They had marched 740 miles in fifty-four days over uninhabited and difficult country.

Captain Allen must have been very busy at Fort Des Moines that fall, for it was January 4, 1845, when he sent his report of the expedition to Colonel Stephen W. Kearny at St. Louis. As he read his journal and recalled his experiences on the long march, he concluded that northwest Iowa was not much good. The marshy land in the lake region gave "the greatest embarrassment to the

traveller" even if he had a raft or a pontoon wagon. For seventy or eighty miles below the source of the Des Moines River there was "not enough timber to supply a single row of farms along its border." While there were "many hundred acres of excellent timber" in the vicinity of the Lake of the Oaks, "the country all around it is high and bleak, and looks so inhospitable that it will be many years before any settlement can be led to it."

The "great buffalo range" in the Big Sioux Valley pleased him. "Surely, of all this upper country," he wrote, "these animals could not have selected any more rich, luxuriant, and beautiful for their summer feeding." The surface of the land between the Minnesota and Big Sioux rivers was "well adapted to the operations of cavalry", he thought, but the "ugly hills" between Sioux Falls and Sioux City were too formidable for ordinary travel. There was not enough timber along the Big Sioux "to authorize a full settlement of the valley". In contrast, the Raccoon Valley, a hundred miles long, was "clothed with the richest of timber." This river, in the opinion of Captain Allen, was "one of the most beautiful in the territory," and would "soon induce settlement and cultivation of its borders along its whole length."

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

A Century of Iowa Masonry

Freemasons were among the early prospectors who came to the Dubuque lead mines even before Iowa was organized as a Territory. By 1844, the four regularly established lodges of Burlington, Bloomington (Muscatine), Dubuque, and Iowa City felt competent enough to seek authority to establish a Grand Lodge. The recent Centennial Communication of that Grand jurisdiction bore witness to the fact that Iowa Masonry was well launched upon its second hundred years.

During the same year the Grand Lodge of Iowa came into being, it granted Letters of Dispensation to new groups at Wapello, Marion, Augusta, and Mount Pleasant. Growth of the order was relatively slow through the remainder of the decade. Only two lodges were empowered in 1845, both of them being in Van Buren County — at Farmington and Keosauqua. The largest number in any one year before 1850 was four.

The first lodge at Keokuk (Eagle) was one of the oldest in Iowa. It had received a dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Illinois, but, because of its Mormon contacts, had fallen into disfavor with that Grand jurisdiction and with some of the

delegates who had labored for the establishment of the Iowa Grand body. However, an Iowa charter was granted to a new Eagle Lodge, No. 12, in 1847.

Throughout the ten years immediately preceding the Civil War, Masonry in Iowa enjoyed vigorous expansion. Twelve lodges received authority to operate in 1851, among which were those at Sigourney (Hogin No. 32), Maquoketa (Helion No. 36), and Davenport (Davenport No. 37). By that time second lodges had appeared in several communities. The first of these, appropriately, was at Burlington, in 1849, the new body taking the name of Burlington No. 20, since No. 1 was known as Des Moines Lodge. The second venture at Farmington was made with Mount Moriah No. 27, at Keokuk with Hardin No. 29, at Muscatine with Hawkeye No. 30, and at Iowa City with Zion No. 31. These four last mentioned were established in 1851. The mortality, however, among these additional lodges was high. In time, Burlington, Hawkeye, and Zion lost their independent existence, as also did the first lodge at Farmington. The usual procedure in such cases was to surrender the charter and unite with a stronger local lodge. Of course, in some cities which made ample growth, not only one but several additional lodges were established.

Before the eruption between North and South, Masonry expanded most rapidly in 1854 and 1857. During the former year, twenty-one Masonic units received the necessary dispensations. These included one in Cedar Falls, and a second lodge at Davenport (Tuscan Lodge No. 57) which later became extinct. In 1857 the all-time record was achieved for the establishment by dispensation of Masonic Lodges in Iowa during a single year. The number was twenty-nine, and among the communities concerned were Sioux City (Landmark No. 103), Waterloo (Waterloo No. 105), Marshalltown (Marshall No. 108), Des Moines (Capital No. 110), Fort Dodge (Ashlar No. 111), Marengo (Marengo No. 114), and Waverly (Tyrell No. 116). During this year, also, Letters of Dispensation were granted to Capital Lodge No. 101 of Omaha, Nebraska, which were surrendered when Nebraska established its own jurisdiction. In 1858, Dubuque boldly undertook its second Masonic band (Mosaic Lodge No. 125). By the close of 1860, 163 lodges had received Letters of Dispensation, over thirty of which, by then or later, merged with other lodges, transferred to other jurisdictions, or lost their charters by revocation or surrender. Many of these lodges had started hopefully but found they did not have the vigor to continue.

The actual years of conflict checked the expansive course of Masonry in Iowa. Only two lodges received authority in 1861 — at Red Oak and Tracy. Three were added in 1862, including St. John's Lodge of Yankton, Dakota Territory, and three more in 1863. Only one was placed upon the State roll in 1864, this being National No. 172 at Farmersburg. Five more were empowered between January and April, 1865, thus giving a total of thirteen new lodges authorized within the State during the war period.

The Civil War placed an enormous strain upon the fraternal sentiments of Masonic brethren living on opposite sides of the Mason and Dixon line, as it did upon the churches and other national organizations whose ideals and principles had never contemplated sectional distinctions. Thomas Hart Benton, Jr., was Grand Master in 1861 when the fighting began. During the Communication of the Grand Lodge that year, Benton presented a moving appeal to Northern Masons from the Grand Lodge of Tennessee. That such a message should be sent to Iowa was understandable because the Iowa jurisdiction traced its Masonic lineage through the Grand Lodges of Missouri, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

"We appeal to you," was the cry from Tennessee, "and through you to the thousands of

Masons in your jurisdictions, to stop the effusion of blood while yet they may. . . . Restore peace to our unhappy country, and surely Heaven will bless every faithful effort toward its accomplishment. But if all efforts fail . . . if the sword must still be the last resort, and accepted as the final arbiter, we beseech the brethren engaged in the awful contest to remember that a fallen foe is still a brother, and as such is entitled to our warmest sympathies and kindest attentions. . . . While each is true to his sense of public and patriotic duty, on whichever side he may be arrayed, we earnestly urge that he shall also be true to those high and holy teachings inculcated by our order."

The appeal from Tennessee was received with deep feeling in Iowa. Every Mason, said Grand Master Benton, "within this jurisdiction heartily and cordially joins in the desire expressed for restoration of that tranquillity and prosperity for which our common country was so recently and so universally distinguished, and that we stand ready to unite in any effort consistent with our duty as men and Masons, that is at all likely to produce this desirable result." But Benton went on to say, "I must confess, however, that all hope of accomplishing anything as a fraternity, in staying the hand of civil discord, is with me at an end." The Grand Master was soon commissioned col-

onel of the Twenty-ninth Iowa Infantry. He served in the Union Army for three years, attaining the brevet rank of brigadier general. Like other citizens, Masons flocked to defend the Union. Fundamental in Masonic teaching is loyalty to God and country. "The true Mason," Benton reminded his brethren, "will ever be ready to respond to the call of the government to which he rightfully owes allegiance." Southern Masons felt likewise about the Confederacy.

Many Iowa Masons fell on the fields of battle. In 1864, Grand Master Edward A. Guilbert, then serving as Captain of Company A, Forty-sixth Iowa Infantry, wrote his address to the Grand Lodge from Camp McClellan at Davenport. Many of our brothers, he said, "sleep their last sleep in the trenches of Vicksburg, and Port Hudson, on the plains of Louisiana and Arkansas, and by the still clear waters of the far Tennessee." Three pages of the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge for 1864 record the names of Masons who had died in the service of their country.

Following the close of the Civil War there was an immediate acceleration of Masonic membership in Iowa. Every year dispensations were issued to large numbers of new lodges to be followed in due time by charters. Twenty-five charters were granted in 1867, nineteen in 1868, thirty in 1869,

and nineteen in 1870. Two hundred and eighty-six charters were sealed and granted from 1871 to 1900, inclusive. The increase of the lodges had meant a corresponding multiplication of the membership, of course. The four lodges which erected the Grand Lodge in 1844 then had a combined membership of 101. By 1864 the number of Iowa Masons had increased to 4549 and in 1904 to 33,181. There was a decrease in the number of new lodges established after the turn of the century: only eighty-six charters were granted between 1901 and 1931. This was to be expected since each passing year approached closer to the point of equipoise. By this time the Masonic fraternity had become a familiar institution in hundreds of cities and towns.

The ranks of membership were greatly enlarged during the first World War and in the lush years of the twenties. Before marching off to war large numbers of young men felt the urge to associate themselves with the ancient brotherhood, while in the booming years that followed the armistice there was a marked flocking to virtually all the fraternal orders. The high point of Masonic membership in Iowa occurred in 1927 in which year 86,541 names were recorded on the books of the Grand Secretary. The greatest number of lodges — 655 — was achieved in 1931, since

which date no new ones have been chartered in Iowa.

The expansive trend was sharply reversed as the country was swept into the stress of economic depression. As with other comparable institutions, Masonry lost ground annually during the thirties. The low point was 1941 in which year 66,691 members maintained their good standing. There was also a loss in the number of chartered lodges. But the decline was arrested as material conditions improved. In 1944, the number of lodges stood at 543 with 69,450 men in the ranks of the brotherhood.

To perform effectively its function of guidance for this large body of Masons in Iowa, the Grand Lodge is under the executive and fraternal direction of the Grand Master and his officers. These include a Grand Secretary, Grand Treasurer, and several standing and special committees. Among the committees are those on Dispensations and Charters, Division and Reference, Appeals and Grievances, Jurisprudence, Finance, Charity, Library, State Hospitals, and Masonic Service. The scope and activity of these committees are apparent from their titles with the exception, perhaps, of Masonic Service.

The Committee on Masonic Service originated in 1913 as the Masonic Research Committee.

Arising from its basic work of investigation into all phases of Masonic thought and interests, the Committee was designed to accomplish five purposes: (1) organization of Masonic study clubs; (2) formation of classes in Masonic law; (3) use of traveling libraries; (4) establishment of a Masonic lecture bureau; and (5) providing lecturers for schools of instruction. Out of the early activities of this committee came the creation of a National Masonic Research Society. While the Iowa committee continued its investigative and literary work, it became aware of an increasing demand for less specialized and more direct and immediately helpful service to the craft at large. The same impulses were in evidence elsewhere, and on the national stage resulted in the creation of the Masonic Service Association of the United States. In Iowa the Masonic Research Committee became, by 1921, the Masonic Service Committee.

This body is composed of five members appointed by the Grand Master. It has a full-time secretary who maintains his office in the Masonic Library at Cedar Rapids. The broad function of the Service Committee is to assist the order in all possible ways. Among the materials prepared and sent by the committee to the local groups or individuals are pamphlets and brochures, program

outlines and suggestions for anniversary and other occasions, summary of Grand Lodge proceedings, courses of study of Masonic history and practice, and considerable quantities of reference and research items. The committee also uses its machinery to convey certain of the Grand Master's communications to the craft, and to serve him or the Grand Lodge in any way it can. Notable among the Service Committee's functions is the maintenance of a Speaker's Bureau composed of competent Masons living in all parts of the State. The services of these men can be secured by the lodges upon simple request. During the past year sixty-nine speakers filled 121 assignments and spoke to Masonic audiences totalling nearly 10,000. More broadly, however, during the year ending with the centennial gathering of the Grand Lodge, the Masonic Service Committee had direct interest in 452 meetings involving an attendance well over 18,000.

At the heart of the Masonic structure lie the ancient landmarks, the ritual, and the truths and teachings they embody. To keep these clear and uncorrupted, the Grand Lodge of Iowa maintains a Board of Custodians, a system of District Lecturers, and periodic Schools of Instruction. It is the task of the Custodians to keep themselves carefully informed on Masonic history and maintain

the purity of the ritual. In earlier years it was the practice of a Grand Lecturer to travel through the State exemplifying and encouraging ritualistic proficiency in the lodges. As this method became too onerous, however, the Grand Lodge divided the State into districts and from these the custodians undertook to train and test a large number of instructors. When certified, these became known as District Lecturers; to their ranks were added by later provision, Masonic Instructors. It is the business of the Lecturers and Instructors to hold periodic schools of instruction in their districts, and the obligation of the lodges therein to send representatives to attend them.

Beyond the district gatherings there are held each year five Regional Schools of Instruction at as many important centers in the State. These are under the supervision of the Board of Custodians, and are attended by the Grand Master, Grand Secretary, and many Lecturers and Instructors. Beyond these, a Grand Lodge School of Instruction is held at the place of and immediately preceding the annual Grand Lodge Communication.

A striking accomplishment of the Grand Lodge of Iowa has been the accumulation of an impressive library. The first Grand Master, Oliver Cock, suggested a small annual appropriation for the purpose of "procuring books for the Grand

Lodge". The truly architectural spirit behind this enterprise, however, was Theodore S. Parvin, the first Grand Secretary and Grand Librarian. The purpose visualized was a growing library that would "Tend to throw light on the origin, antiquity, and constitutions of Masonry, and to furnish the members of the Grand Lodge with all tangible information concerning its progress, and the duties of Masons as individuals and members of Grand and subordinate lodges." For several years, the growing library had a migratory existence, its residence alternating between Muscatine, Iowa City, and Davenport. In 1884 it found a permanent home in a special building provided for it at Cedar Rapids.

This collection has enjoyed remarkable growth in the course of a hundred years until its 40,000 volumes are now regarded as one of the leading Masonic libraries of the world. In its great Masonic section (for there are also large numbers of non-Masonic works) all phases of the fraternity may be studied: "history, traditions, symbolism, moral teachings, ritual, jurisprudence; Masonic conditions abroad; Anti-Masonic propaganda; histories of Grand Lodges, both foreign and American, including those of many individual lodges which have attained age and prominence. In addition to these may be found many volumes

dealing with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Royal Arch, Royal and Select Masters, Knight Templar, and other rites in Masonry, some of them little known in this country."

Some items in this collection are of great rarity and value. The library contains many foreign language works, of course, since Masonry, like religion and philosophy, is universal in its scope. There is also a section of periodical literature, Masonic and otherwise. Many books and pamphlets have appeared under the imprint of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, and since 1897 it has published, monthly for the most part, the *Grand Lodge Bulletin*. It is not necessary that those who desire to use the Grand Lodge Library or publications make the journey to Cedar Rapids. Any lodge, or individual Mason, may borrow items on request. Indeed, the Grand Librarian is prepared to assemble a "Traveling Library" of from ten to twenty or more selected works and forward them to lodges for a period of three months, with renewal privileges.

Though the Grand Lodge exercises so large a part in the life of Freemasonry in Iowa, it is in the subordinate local lodges that the true substance and vigor of the fraternity are found. These lodges hold regular meetings once a month. Beyond that, however, as many additional meet-

ings are held as the conferring of degrees requires. The principal officers are elected and other officers appointed, annually. There are three degrees in what is known as Blue Lodge Masonry, the type to which all Masons belong. A few go on to affiliate with the Scottish Rite and York Rite bodies and obtain additional degrees. Masonry is not a religious association as the term is conventionally understood, yet at the base of all its thought and belief is the rule of the Great Architect of the Universe, the brotherhood of men, and the attainment of the just and upright life. To promote understanding of these, and the moral, ethical, and philosophic system that Masonry has evolved through the centuries, are the rich symbols, landmarks, and ritual in evidence at every tyled lodge meeting.

Many Iowa lodges were established amid pioneer conditions. Most of them began existence in humble circumstances. The first meeting places were usually rooms above stores or hotels on the Main Streets of the rural towns, in one-room schoolhouses, or, even, the auxiliary rooms of the early churches. The Iowa City brethren, for example, held their first gatherings in William Reynolds's schoolroom and Chauncey Swan's hotel, while the early home of the Bloomington Lodge, and the first to be built for any Masonic group in

Iowa, was the specially constructed second floor of the little Episcopal Church. As certain communities grew and prospered, becoming the large cities of the Commonwealth, impressive temples replaced the earlier modest lodgings. It is to be remembered that, in theory, every Masonic temple reflects something of the magnificence of King Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem. Notable examples of these improved edifices are to be found in Burlington, Muscatine, Iowa City, Waterloo, Chariton, and many other places. Such structures as those at Dubuque, Des Moines, Sioux City, Davenport, and Cedar Rapids, may be said to be in the grand manner.

In all countries where it exists, Freemasonry is an important and constructive force in the social order. In some lands it is politically active, but this is not the case in the United States. Everywhere, however, when it is true to its principles and teachings, it stands only for that which is good. As this fraternity begins its second century in Iowa, it appears to move on a rising tide of vigor and popularity. This should be pleasing to all people, for it is an ancient and honorable institution, whose purpose is to work for justice, freedom, generosity, goodwill, brotherhood, and peace among all men.

HARRISON JOHN THORNTON

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