

The
PALIMPSEST
NOVEMBER 1944
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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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The First Iowa Thanksgiving

The population of the Territory of Iowa soared from 22,859 in 1838 to 75,152 in 1844. A steady flow of immigrants from the more populous eastern States had streamed across the Mississippi — upwards of two hundred German families from Hamilton County, Ohio, settling at present-day Guttenberg for the purpose of cultivating grapes. Although the Rock River country in Illinois had been heralded as the “most salubrious district in the west” the Dubuque *Transcript* noted a large cavalcade of Rock River farmers crossing the Mississippi in order to enjoy the “still greater salubrity” of northern Iowa. Before the year 1844 closed a State constitution had been adopted at Iowa City and the six-year-old Territory was rapping at the doors of Congress for admission into the Union.

At the end of the harvest season a century ago, the pioneers of Iowa realized that they had much to be thankful for. Recognizing the general atti-

tude, Governor John Chambers drafted a suitable manifesto at his "Executive Office" in Burlington. Duly countersigned by S. J. Burr, Secretary of the Territory, the first official Thanksgiving holiday in Iowa was proclaimed on October 12, 1844.

"At the request of many of my Fellow Citizens," declared the Governor, "I have deemed it proper to recommend that Thursday, the 12th of December next, be observed throughout the Territory, as a day of general Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the many and great blessings we enjoy as a people and individually, and of prayer and supplication for the continuance of His mercy and goodness toward us; and for the prosperity, happiness and ultimate salvation of the American people.

"We are told that, 'righteousness exalteth a nation,' and are taught by divine authority that the voice of thanksgiving and prayer is acceptable to our Father in Heaven. Let us then, on the day designated, unite our voices, in the humble hope that they will reach the Throne of Grace and obtain for us a continuation and increase of blessings."

The appearance of this Thanksgiving proclamation two years before Iowa achieved Statehood is both noteworthy and significant. It is significant because it revealed the religious bent of the

Iowa pioneers as well as the New England origin of a considerable portion of the population. It is noteworthy because Thanksgiving was not a national holiday in 1844, nor was there any uniformity in the date of its observance among the few States that celebrated it. Washington had designated Thursday, November 26, 1789, as a day of thanksgiving for the successful launching of the new government, but he failed to follow this precedent. John Adams had proclaimed May 9, 1798, as a day of prayer and thanksgiving for the improvement of relations with France, and James Madison urged his countrymen to recognize January 12, 1815, as a day of prayer and thanksgiving for the speedy conclusion of the war. Aside from these instances, however, no other President had issued a thanksgiving proclamation.

But forces were at work throughout the United States to revive the old New England festival and make its observance nation-wide in scope. The leader in this crusade was Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, literary editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, who editorialized on the subject and urged Governors to issue proclamations for the uniform observance of Thanksgiving on the last Thursday in November. It is not known whether Governor Chambers heard directly from Mrs. Hale or from some of her friends. The fact that many Iowans had im-

portuned the Governor, coupled with the presence of a half-column advertisement of *Godey's Lady's Book* in the *Iowa City Standard*, suggests that her influence was felt beyond the Mississippi.

Only a few newspapers were published in the Territory of Iowa in 1844. Several of these were curtailed because of inadequate paper supplies during the last two months of 1844. The heated presidential campaign of 1844 and the constitutional convention in October filled columns which ordinarily might have contained news about Thanksgiving. Only a few newspaper reactions to the proclamation have been found, but most editors probably agreed with these. The *Davenport Gazette* of November 21, 1844, believed that "former residents of New England" would rejoice to learn that Governor Chambers had introduced the "time-honored custom" west of the Mississippi. "May it long prevail with due observance", the *Gazette* concluded. The *Iowa City Standard* of November 28, 1844, declared: "We believe this is the first Thanksgiving Proclamation ever issued in Iowa; we are glad to welcome the good old Pilgrim custom to our midst, and trust when the day comes around with its plentiful cheer, none will omit to send up to the Almighty Giver a tribute of praise."

Burlington celebrated Thanksgiving in a man-

ner befitting the most populous city in the Territory. Most of the stores and commercial houses were closed and a "partial suspension" of business was generally observed. "During the day," declared the *Territorial Gazette*, "there was an appropriate celebration by the Sunday School scholars, under the management of their teachers; and in the evening the whole town assembled at the Methodist Episcopal Church, to listen to a most delightful entertainment of vocal and instrumental music, and an admirable lecture on music as a science." The music was presented by Mr. Robbins assisted by several "amateur" Burlington musicians who were studying under him. That better music had seldom been heard was manifested by the "frequent and loud plaudits" of the "discriminating audience" that had gathered to hear the "distinguished performers". During the evening, Mr. Shackford presented his "well written, well arranged and highly chaste" address on the subject of music.

Not all Burlingtonians, apparently, spent their time in this manner, for the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* noted that some engaged in "shooting deer and prairie chickens on the bottoms" after which they "wound up" Thanksgiving by attending the ball at the City Hotel in the evening. The Davenport *Gazette*, which had expected appropriate church

services, was shocked at such lack of good taste in Burlington. "We certainly misunderstood the intention of this day," the *Gazette* chided the fun-loving citizens of Des Moines County.

Though the fragmentary newspaper files do not indicate how widespread Thanksgiving was observed, a study of the columns of the press during 1844 reveals there was much for which the Iowa pioneers could offer thanks. The growing population produced higher land values and richer social opportunities. The settlers had been spared from plagues and pestilence. The great flood of 1844 had caused little damage in Iowa compared with the havoc wrought in Missouri and Illinois. The earthquake that shook the Ohio and lower Mississippi Valley was not felt in Iowa.

Press and pulpit alike could render thanks for the rapid spread of schools and academies throughout eastern Iowa in 1844. Churches of all denominations had gained many adherents. Iowa City was described as the "most virtuous, religious and pious" town in the west with five well-organized choirs capable of making "harmony and sweet sounds" according to the most modern rules of music. Preachers and editors could also be thankful for their success in directing the temperance movement. Steamboats were bringing prosperity to all Mississippi River towns while

smaller steam craft were navigating the Des Moines, the Cedar, and the Iowa in 1844. Stagecoach and mail connections in the Territory were improving and the dreary monotony of frontier life was gradually being dispelled. The lyceum, the circus, and groups of traveling players and minstrels were doing their part to brighten recreational facilities.

Since most of the pioneers were engaged in agriculture the unprecedented fertility of Iowa farms naturally evoked heart-felt thanksgiving. The Dubuque *Transcript* likened the "magnificent farm sites" of the "Makoketa" Valley to the Garden of Eden and declared that farms once established there ought never to be sold. Cultivators of the "sterile hills" of New England were urged to settle in the beautiful Iowa River Valley west of Johnson County where they could have "square fields without roots, stumps, or other impediments to interrupt the course of the plough or the growth of vegetation." A writer in the Iowa City *Capital Reporter* described Mahaska County as "one of the best districts" in the Mississippi Valley with unsurpassed soil and inexhaustible beds of stone and coal. Of Iowa in 1844 John B. Newhall wrote: "In all my travels in Europe, both in France and England, I have been forcibly struck with the superiority of our country, as a well wa-

tered region, either as regards navigation, manufacturing or grazing."

The farms were producing bumper crops of corn, oats, wheat, and hay in 1844. The editor of the *Davenport Gazette* rejoiced that sweet potatoes flourished in Scott County, noting that David Morgan had made \$45 from a small crop of thirty bushels. Fruits were also successfully cultivated in 1844. Many farmers around Davenport had picked from twenty to forty bushels of peaches from their trees and hoped to treble the quantity in 1845. Wagon loads of delicious peaches were brought into Bloomington [Muscatine] at prices which even a printer could pay. The *Burlington Territorial Gazette* found the markets of that city "abundantly supplied" with fine peaches which had been grown in Des Moines and adjoining counties. In addition to experiments with legumes, grains, fruits, and vegetables, Iowa farmers were bringing in flocks of sheep from Ohio. According to the *Davenport Gazette*: "The production of a staple so profitable as that of wool will form a new era in the wealth of our Territory."

The enthusiasm of Iowa editors may well be pardoned when they expressed astonishment over the truly amazing harvest of 1844. "Who can Beat us?" challenged the *Capital Reporter* of October 19th, after viewing the "mammoth produc-

tions" of Johnson County in C. C. Morgan's grocery store in Iowa City. "Among other vegetables," the editor noted, "was a South American Squash, raised by Messrs. Miller and Bowman of 'Squash Bend' weighing 141 pounds, — a Radish raised by D. A. Abrahams, measuring 32 inches in circumference, and weighing about as much as we could lift. We also found a *Beet* which we think hard to *beat*, weighing 15½ lbs. and measuring over three feet in circumference. It was from the garden of Dr. Ballard of this city." Lest the weight of the "South American Squash" should be doubted, it might be noted that the rival *Iowa Standard* verified the weight of this 141-pound "pumpkin" and added that it measured six feet and one inch in circumference! This same editor also called attention to a four-pound carrot measuring sixteen inches in circumference which was left at the office by J. H. Frost of Johnson County.

Iowans could well observe the harvest festival a century ago. Not only could they give thanks for tables heavily laden with beef, pork, and domestic fowl of all kinds but they could also rejoice over the plentiful supply of wild game found everywhere in Iowa. Deer were on the prairie and along the wooded streams. The large number of black bears killed was the subject of con-

tinual comment in the press. On one occasion a fifty-year-old farmer living eighteen miles from Muscatine encountered a "pretty sizeable" young bear in a grove on his farm in the Wapsinonoc Valley. With the aid of his trusty dog and a pocket-knife he attacked the animal and succeeded in killing him in a few minutes!

The streams of Iowa abounded with fish of all kinds and sizes. "Captain" McClellan pulled them out of the Turkey River faster than a bystander could take them off the hook. A large fish in swift pursuit of a smaller fish ran aground on a sandbar in the Cedar River just as the ferry was crossing. The ferryman leaped overboard, stunned the 102-pound pike with a pole, and hauled the huge fish into his boat.

Prairie chickens, quail, pigeons, and ducks were brought into Davenport "by the load" every fair day in the fall of 1844. The *Bloomington Herald* of October 11th declared that when hunters became lazy whole "flocks of quail" came to town inviting massacre. As they fell by the scores from housetops and lumber piles, visions of well-broiled quail overcame all feelings of sympathy.

A Christian people surfeited with all the produce of so fair a land could not fail to respond to the first Thanksgiving Proclamation. The *Davenport Gazette* of December 12, 1844, assumed that

“religious exercises, appropriate to the day” would be “observed in most of the churches”. Church bells, which were already common, called the people to worship. It was said that the large bell of the Presbyterian Church in Iowa City could be heard a distance of ten or twelve miles. In many a community between Lee County and the Turkey River Valley, the Iowa pioneers gathered from far and near on December 12, 1844, to give thanks to their God as did the Pilgrims of old.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

A Geological Report

David Dale Owen, son of the well-known Scotch social reformer, Robert Owen, had a life of unusually varied experiences which prepared him for a wholly unforeseen exploit far from his native land. When the United States government needed accurate information about the mineral resources of the upper Mississippi Valley, he was selected to make the survey. His *Report of a Geological Exploration of part of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois*, published in June, 1844, laid the foundation for the study of geology in this region.

Two factors in Owen's training united to make the book valuable and distinctive: his scientific method and his skill at drawing, and each of these was rooted in his earliest schooling. As a boy, Dale lived on his father's estate in Scotland where he had the opportunity to become acquainted with nature; but because his father expected him to take charge of factories he was given lessons in architectural drawing as a means of fostering mechanical skill. When he was in his teens, his father sent him to a "progressive" school near Berne, Switzerland, where for three years the boy specialized in mathematics and science. Mineral-

ogy, botany, and zoology were the chief subjects, and Dale sketched industriously on the many field trips which were part of his instruction.

Further scientific study, with the advantage of performing laboratory experiments, was carried on at the Andersonian Institute in Glasgow. Chemistry and geology particularly attracted Dale's attention, and he became so interested in the subject of industrial applications of scientific knowledge that he undertook to persuade his father that he should devote himself to industrial chemistry rather than manufacturing.

Robert Owen, displeased with developments in Scotland, had bought outright the town of New Harmony, Indiana, as a place to carry on his investigations in social reform, and thither Dale journeyed in 1827 intending to proceed with scientific research. However, Robert Owen's colony was not meeting any more success than the German religious-economic group which had founded the settlement, and the nearest possible approach to scientific activity was the recording of meteorological data.

Bored by his situation, young Owen first began to study lithography and printing in New Harmony, and then went to New York where he worked in a printing office and resumed his practice of drawing. A chance encounter reawakened

his taste for study, and this time he enrolled at the University of London where he specialized in chemistry, but upon completing his work he returned to New Harmony, which remained his home from 1833 until his death in 1860.

Within two years, Owen had become convinced that the most useful field of scientific activity in a pioneer land was geology. As he wished to do well whatever he undertook, he attended the Medical College of Cincinnati in 1835-36, in order that he might properly understand anatomy which was essential to paleontology, which in turn was requisite to competent geological work. He had no intention of practicing medicine, but his ten months of study entitled him to a degree and this accounts for the rather surprising appearance of M. D. after his name on the title-page of the *Geological Exploration*.

Owen's first professional work in geology was done for the State of Indiana, and it was so satisfactory that on July 31, 1839, he was appointed "Principal Agent to explore the Mineral Lands of the United States." The problem of disposing of the public land in the lead region was puzzling Congress. While the policy of selling agricultural land was well established, it seemed desirable to lease mineral rights. But no one knew how extensive the lead deposits might be. The Treasury

Department, which had charge of public lands, decided that a scientific survey was necessary. Since prospective settlers were very importunate, the Treasury Department asked Owen to secure the desired information that same year, even though he did not get his instructions until late in the summer and he could not expect to carry on field operations beyond the first days of November.

It was a prodigious assignment. How could he explore with scientific precision the 10,000 square mile area in the allotted time? His bold but successful decision was not to be penurious. No limit had been set to the expenditure he might make, and he concluded that Congress would more willingly pay a large sum for satisfactory results than a lesser amount for inadequate or belated information. Accordingly, he hired over one hundred men who were divided into twenty-four parties, each of which was assigned to cover a definite area. Among these men there was only one trained geologist, Dr. John Locke, who served as Owen's principal assistant. About twenty from New Harmony had attended the popular lectures Owen had given, but the others were probably completely devoid of geological knowledge. This situation Owen remedied as best he could by a short course started while the party was making

preparations in St. Louis and continued aboard the steamboat while they moved up the Mississippi River.

The actual survey began on September 18, 1839, with each group going to its assigned area from their landing place at Rockingham. Owen and Locke ranged back and forth to receive reports and to undertake personal investigation of those regions which the exploring parties reported to be mineral bearing. The survey worked steadily northward and by October 20th had finished the Dubuque district, which meant all of its work in Iowa, and thereupon crossed the Mississippi to repeat the established procedure.

Iowans were interested in the project, for they were proud of their land and felt that an unprejudiced report would spread its glories before the whole country. The mine owners were especially cordial and gave Owen every facility for inspecting their operations. However, part of the cordiality Owen met was due to his own gifts of understanding and tact, as evinced in his recommendation that the sale of non-mineral land should be postponed until spring in order to give the settlers a fair opportunity to locate claims.

The complete report of the survey was prepared in New Harmony and reached the Treasury Department in April, 1840. It was accompa-

nied by sketches, maps, charts, cross sections, and beautiful drawings of fossils which Owen himself carefully prepared. These illustrations, however, were not published in the first edition of the report issued in June. Despite the omission of the illustrations, there was such a steady demand for the report that exactly four years later it was reissued, this time fortunately with the drawings included.

The book itself is rather narrow for its height, measuring five and three-fourths by nine inches, and consists of 191 pages of text. The paper is soft and in perfect condition except for some foxing. Some of the maps, cross sections, and fossil plates are in color, but what attracts the casual eye are the naturalistic sketches of scenery which introduce an unexpectedly romantic note into a scientific work published by the government a hundred years ago.

One of the most interesting and best-known illustrations is a cross section of a lead mine. At the top, on the earth's surface, stand two men turning a common windlass by means of which a miner is being lowered down the cylindrical shaft. The man, wearing a kind of Prince Albert coat, stands nonchalantly on his right foot which is inserted into a noose in the rope, while his left foot guides his downward course by thrusting

against the wall to keep his body from scraping the sides. His hands could not fill this function because one holds a lighted torch above his head and the other dangles a pickaxe. The shaft ends in a chamber which is being further enlarged by the energetic blows of two men with pickaxes working in the illumination provided by a torch thrust into a crevice. A third man holds a large bucket in which the ore is removed from the mine. Thus the whole process depended upon man power, but as Owen sketched the scene it conveyed a sense of adventure rather than drudgery.

The true significance of Owen's report lay, of course, in the extensive and precise information it made available to prospective settlers. In addition to a general survey of the characteristics of the whole area explored, there were separate sections on lead, zinc, copper, iron, coal, building stone, and millstones — with corresponding tables showing where these were located.

While Owen's primary objective had been to locate the mineral wealth, he had also been instructed to report on the value and productiveness of the soil. The appendix, therefore, contained a summary of the character of each township setting forth its elevation, timber and water resources, and nature of soil. Owen pointed out the peculiar fact that contrary to the prevalent condi-

tion in mineral areas, the surface in Iowa and Wisconsin was such as to "afford promise of liberal reward, no less to the husbandman than to the miner;" and a chemical examination of the soils gave assurance that the promise would be amply fulfilled. It was, indeed, this double character of the Iowa-Wisconsin lands that had necessitated Owen's survey in 1839.

JEAN PHYLLIS BLACK

A College in a Cornfield

At the Algona session of the Northwest Iowa Conference of the Methodist Church in 1889, a committee was authorized to receive bids and locate an institution of "college grade", although the Conference refused to "sanction the establishment of such a school of high grade unless there be guaranteed a suitable campus, and in securities \$500,000, accredited guarantees to accompany each bid."

The enterprising business men of Sioux City accepted this challenge. A committee, headed by Reverend G. W. Carr, met that fall and negotiated the purchase of part of the property where Morningside College now stands from E. C. Peters. Those were boom days in Sioux City; it was the time of the building of the Combination Bridge, the Union Depot, and the Elevated Railroad. In harmony with the spirit of the times, the local sponsors decided not to establish a college, but a university.

Accordingly, the first catalogue of the University of the Northwest, published in 1890, announced employment of faculties to instruct in the Preparatory Department, the Conservatory of

Music and the Liberal Arts, Commerce, Didactics, Law, and Medical Colleges. Early in the summer the cornerstone of the present Conservatory of Music, then known as the School of Technology, was laid. But it was not ready for occupancy that autumn. Instead the Liberal Arts College opened on September 16th in Grace Church, a small brick structure at the corner of Orleans Avenue and Sioux Trail. McClellan Davis, who became a prominent real estate man in Portland, Oregon, purportedly was the first of some fifty students to register for the fall term. The Law College was established in downtown offices, while the Medical College was located in a residence at 1712 Garretson Avenue.

Described as "an interesting event," the first chapel exercise was "somewhat poorly attended." Two visitors swelled the audience to fifteen! But this was probably not the total enrollment. Students in the nineties suffered from the afflictions of twentieth century collegians, for "doubtless some students were loitering in the vestibule or strolling on the church lawn."

Representatives of the University sought the sponsorship of the Northwest Iowa Conference at its meeting in Spencer in 1890. Accordingly, the Conference authorized Bishop Charles H. Fowler to appoint the presiding elder and two

ministers and two laymen from each district to investigate the University's measure of compliance with the terms laid down at Algona. They were to report the next year. The University of the Northwest was recognized to the extent that the Conference requested Bishop Fowler to appoint Wilmont Whitfield president, R. C. Glass to a professorship, and I. N. Pardee its financial agent.

Again in 1891 the University sought adoption by the Conference, which prompted Dr. Bennett Mitchell to write: "Like the camel of the fable it got its nose into our tent last year, and this year it sought to come in bodily, loaded down with a debt of over \$100,000, while all the real estate to which it had any title was loaded with first and second mortgages calling for amounts far exceeding any reasonable valuation, besides which it had some equities that depended for their value on the sale of lots and other property at fabulous prices. But its name, University of the Northwest, was high sounding and its pretensions were great."

Nevertheless, the Conference gave "its endorsement to the establishment of the University of the Northwest" and resolved: to give the University "earnest support and to promote its highest success and efficiency"; to "encourage young people to attend the institution"; and to "welcome

representatives of the University as well as of Cornell College to the various charges".

This action was taken with the proviso that certain amendments, suggested by the Conference, be added to the articles of incorporation. It should be noted that the Conference had not yet assumed responsibility for the new institution. Indeed, something of a dilemma must have prevailed. Here was a church body seeking to support a college while the University was seeking a sponsor, but the church was not willing to adopt the college without a dowry.

Perhaps no better insight into conditions at the University in those early days could be obtained than from the following petition presented by twenty-five students to the "various Boards of the University of the Northwest" on June 22, 1892.

We the undersigned students of the U-N-W having an interest in the welfare of the University and wishing to see it prosper desire to make a few statements which we believe should be made for the welfare of the school:

1. During the past year we have had no sidewalks and have been compelled to wade through mud a large portion of the time to reach the University building.

2. Our physical health has been endangered on account of the extreme coldness of the building; in consequence of which classes were dismissed a number of times and on some occasions the whole school was adjourned as the building was too cold for students or instructors.

3. We have no library to aid us in our work.
4. We have but one water-closet for both sexes and that one unfavorably located.
5. We have no cloakrooms.
6. We have no study-room or any convenience for study in the building.
7. We have no apparatus for the teaching of physical sciences.
8. It being necessary frequently to attend night meetings of our societies we have been greatly inconvenienced by having no lights upon the school grounds.

We realize the critical condition the financial affairs of the University are in and heartily sympathize with those in authority; but on the other hand we believe that for a school to prosper it must compare favorably with schools in competition with it.

We are satisfied with the present corps of instructors but they and their students have been laboring under great disadvantages.

We do not ask for a new building or buildings but we do believe that the present quarters should be properly arranged for the accommodation of those who may wish to attend and if we are given some assurance that these things will be remedied you will find us voluntary agents working in the interests of the University; but and if we are not given such assurance we cannot conscientiously ask our friends to attend next year or return ourselves.

It was the panic of the years 1893 and 1894 which brought matters to a climax. The boom of previous years collapsed and land values dropped in this area, while corn fell to eight cents a bushel. Foreclosures and sheriff sales became the order of

the day. The University of the Northwest borrowed as long as it could, but its credit was soon gone. Meanwhile, the foundations of the present Main Building had been laid, but there was no money to build the superstructure and weeds began to grow within the basement walls. Inevitably the campus and University properties were placed in the sheriff's hands.

The Conference of the Methodist Church met again on September 26, 1894, and decided it was "important that an educational institution be maintained at Morningside, Sioux City, Iowa, under the control and management of the Conference." The church authorities agreed further that it seemed unlikely that the University of the Northwest could fulfill this purpose. Accordingly, the Committee on Education was instructed to consider the feasibility of appointing a conference commission "with full power and authority to establish a college."

Subsequently, the commission met in the parsonage of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Sioux City and organized itself into a Board of Trustees. Thereupon, they proceeded to incorporate Morningside College. G. W. Carr was elected president both of the trustees and the College at a salary of \$1200 per year plus traveling expenses. "The President was instructed to pur-

chase a suitable book for the permanent record of the business of the Board." An Executive Committee was appointed and empowered to negotiate for the purchase of property if deemed advisable by the members.

The first annual meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at Morningside on June 11, 1895. At that time A. M. Jackson proposed that the University property be purchased on convenient terms of a small cash payment and the remainder over a period of several years. President G. W. Carr, P. A. Sawyer, A. M. Jackson, and the treasurer, H. L. Warner, were designated as a purchasing committee and instructed to negotiate for other necessary property on similar terms.

Subsequently, it was found that the campus of sixteen and one-half acres could be purchased together with all improvements for \$25,250. The terms called for a payment of \$4000 on September 11, 1895, and a second payment of \$3750 one year later. The balance was to be paid in three subsequent installments with interest at six per cent. The records state that it was "found needful to borrow \$2500 from Rev. J. B. Trimble to make the first payment last September."

Whereas, it had been declared at Fort Dodge in 1891 that "the Northwest Iowa Conference will become one of the patronizing Conferences of

the University of the Northwest" by reason of action taken there, the twenty-fourth annual session at Webster City in 1895 declared that Morningside College, "beautifully and healthfully located, and purchased for much less than the finished building cost," was now the Conference's "own child and trust."

The Board of Trustees voted to confer appropriate degrees upon Edwin Lawrence Benedict and F. H. Plondke at its June meeting in 1895. Recommended for graduation by Dean Schotts upon completion of the classical and scientific courses, respectively, they were probably the first alumni of Morningside College. They had received most of their training in the University of the Northwest and Morningside thus presents the paradox of having conferred degrees before opening for its first academic year which did not occur until September 11, 1895. At that time 196 students registered and were taught by "instructors of marked ability and experience" who did "most excellent and thorough work." Moreover, they were "all earnest Christians". During the year a revival in Grace Methodist Church "brought all the unsaved students, but four or five into the kingdom of God." Ten young people were graduated in June, 1896, seven in didactics and three from the regular college classes.

The first year's work at the college was carried on though "freighted with burdens," which were "cheerfully borne" by trustees, faculty, and students. Nevertheless, success attended the work in all departments, due in no small measure to "the homelike character and high moral tone" which pervaded the institution. During the year 253 students had registered. Commercial, shorthand, and typewriting courses had been added and plans were under way "to bring the department of vocal and instrumental music to Morningside". In 1897 the trustees authorized the faculty to issue charters for the Othonian, Philomathian, and Zetaethian literary societies.

Comparatively few rules were established in the early days. Then, as now, Morningside believed in "the principle that self-control constitutes the central power in human character." Since the College was co-educational from the beginning, care was taken to avoid "improprieties" in general deportment between sexes. Profanity, obscenity, gambling, and use of liquor were prohibited because they interfered with the highest mental and moral development. Military drill was required one and one-half hours per week, of all male students, except the disabled. "No system of physical exercise" could be compared with it for "preservation and development

of the body." Moreover, it could be taken "out of doors or in the chapel room!"

Dr. Whitfield, who resigned as president of the University in 1892, was succeeded by Dr. William Brush, formerly president of Upper Iowa University and later the president of Dakota Wesleyan. He was followed by the Reverend G. W. Carr in 1894, who served for three years. Upon conclusion of his term the trustees decided to secure a younger man with experience in school administration. Thereupon, Dr. Robert B. Smylie stated: "I know the man we seek. He is Dr. Wilson Seeley Lewis of Epworth." A committee of trustees was appointed "to consult" with the Seminary principal.

The story of his visit to Sioux City and the interview with the committee as related by his daughter, Miss Ida Belle Lewis, is full of humor and pathos. "He had heard about Morningside only vaguely," she wrote, but he "decided to go out and investigate. As was his custom, he made the trip sitting up in the red plush seat of the day coach to save the price of a Pullman ticket. The train rattled along through the night, stopping at every town. Peanut shells, oil lamps, fretful children, and stale air made sleep possible only in snatches. He reached Sioux City the next morning about ten o'clock, and registered in a hotel.

He inquired the way to Morningside College. Nobody knew what he meant. He explained that Morningside College was the new name for the University of the Northwest. Laughter greeted his request. With a loud guffaw directions were given.

"He reached the suburb of Morningside and walked to the college. He found it set in a cornfield, for the campus was planted to corn. 'A college!' he ejaculated to himself. 'A college in a cornfield!'

"The situation was clear enough, and his soul revolted from the irony of it all. Then the thought came, 'What if God should call you to this college? Would you be willing to come and build a college here?'

"He knelt down there in the cornfield and asked to be forgiven for his false pride. He promised the Lord that he would respond to the call of building a college even here, should that call come.

"He consulted his friends who had urged him to go into college work. They were not certain that this was his special task, but assured him of their support if he decided to go.

"On September 19, 1897, Dr. Lewis met the committee.

" 'What is there to build on?' he queried.

" 'Nothing. Absolutely nothing but opportu-

nity,' Dr. Smylie honestly answered. 'We believe that Northwest Iowa holds a great future. But today there is no support for the college. Indeed, except for the trustees, and perhaps one or two other men, everybody is hostile who is not indifferent.'

" 'Nothing is there except a hole in the ground,' remarked another committee member.

" 'Do you want a college or an academy?'

" 'A college,' was the unanimous decision.

" 'Are you ready to pay for a college? Failure cannot be endured again.'

" 'We will pay for a college. The people are poor, but the acres are broad.'

"The trustees met the issue. They built upon the wide territory of which Sioux City was the center, which had no college. They believed in their own young people, who could not go long distances to college, but who would respond eagerly to a college in their midst. They did not fear the struggle; it was for God and man.

"Dr. Lewis remembered his hour in the campus cornfield. He knew that God's hand had been in the work of these men."

And so he promised to come. The record says: "After free consultation with Dr. Lewis, the committee agreed to recommend to the trustees, and support his election to the presidency of Morn-

ingside College, his term to begin at the close of the present year on the following terms:

“That no teacher be employed who is not, in the judgment of the trustees, a practical Christian.

“That no person be employed in any department of the institution as teacher unless approved by the president.

“That daily class recitations in the study of the English Bible and sacred music shall be conducted throughout the school year, and Professor Barbour shall have charge of the musical department.

“That the salary of Dr. Lewis be \$2000 per annum, and in addition, one scholarship.”

THOMAS E. TWEITO

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