

The  
**PALIMPSEST**

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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

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

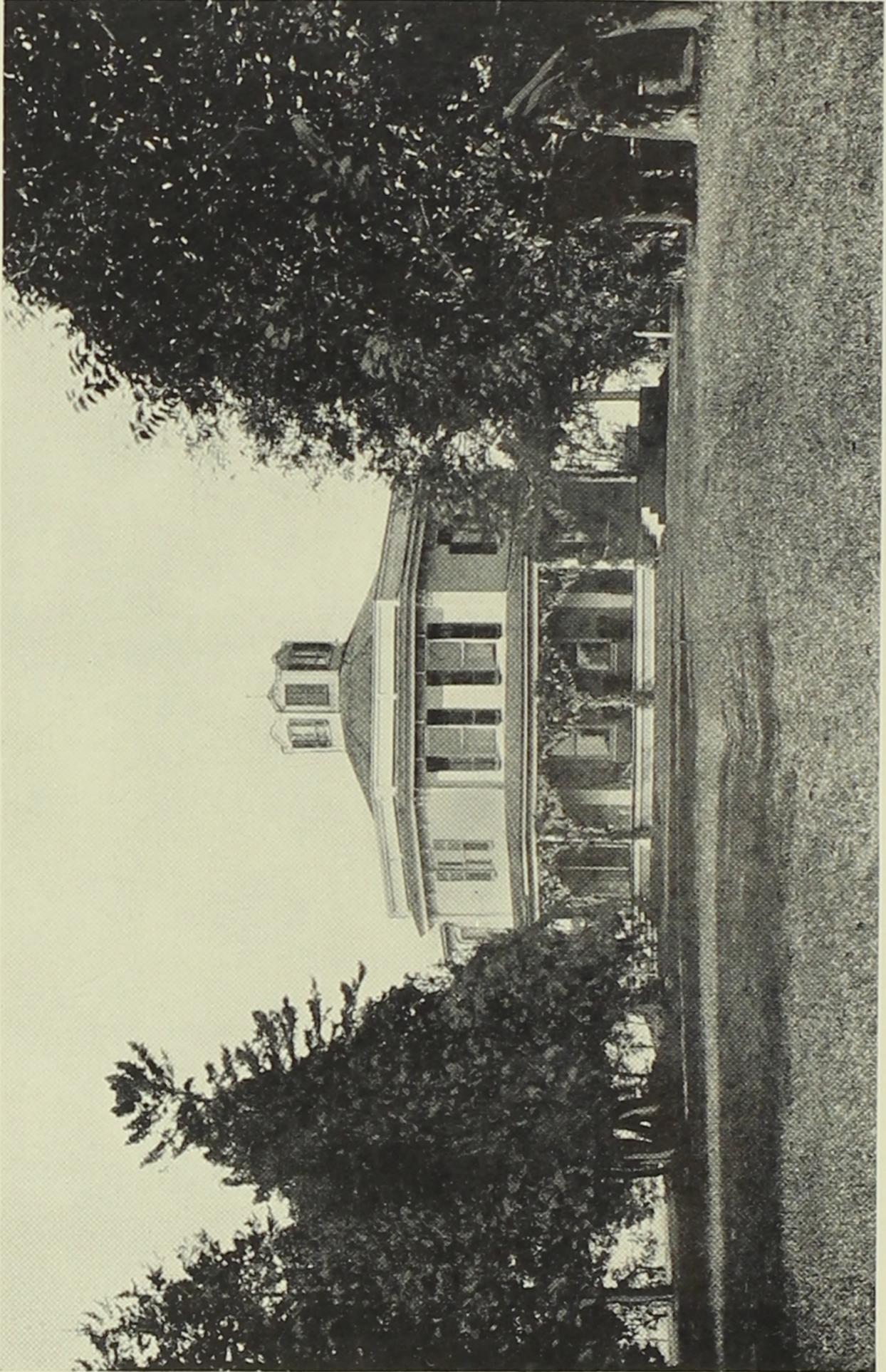
In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the 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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OCTAGON PLACE

# THE PALIMPSEST

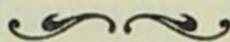
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## Octagon Place

A crowd estimated to exceed two thousand persons thronged about the famous old Sinnett home on the outskirts of Muscatine when the auctioneer lifted his hammer the afternoon of December 17, 1934. The air was chilly and lowering clouds indicated snow, but the antique collectors, curio hunters, townspeople, and farmers were intent on the articles laid out for sale. Their bargain-hunting and curiosity were tinged with a sense of sadness, for all knew that the owner, the last of a famous family to occupy the home, was dead. All the furniture and family possessions left in the house were to be sold over the auction block.

The house, a two-story brick structure topped by a cupola, was set in a large yard. A winding driveway, flanked by large evergreen trees, led to the spacious house, made even larger by the wide porch. No doubt every member of the milling throng noticed the peculiarity of the house; both

the house and the cupola had eight sides. Because of this unusual plan the Sinnett home had long been known as the Octagon Place. Some persons, familiar with Scotch history, called it "John O'Groat's House".

The story of this unusual home, built on the Iowa frontier in 1855, goes back, perhaps, to Lyons, France, in the year 1685 when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes. The de Sinnette family, silk-weavers by occupation and Huguenots in religion, fled to Dublin, Ireland, and there carried on the family trade for a century and a half. Apparently they prospered and became influential in Ireland, for William III, of England, presented to one de Sinnette a sword elaborately inscribed with the motto of Great Britain, "*Dieu et mon droit*" (God and my right), and "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" (shame to him who thinks evil), the motto of the Order of the Garter.

After the legislative union of Ireland and England in 1801, silk manufacturing ceased to be profitable in Ireland and in 1835, the two sons of the French-Irish family, Samuel and John T. Sinnett, came to America. Samuel Sinnett, then eighteen, first bought a farm in Indiana, but by 1840 he had moved to Muscatine County, Iowa, where he purchased a half section of land. On this land in 1855 he built the octagonal house with its eighteen

rooms and spiral staircase in the center ending in the octagonal cupola. One room, it was said, had a secret entrance and was never shown to visitors.

The location of this spacious home was ideal. It stood on a slight eminence overlooking the northern part of Muscatine and a short distance west of the highway known as the Old Telegraph Road. Tiny evergreen shoots were brought in wrapped, it is said, in a handkerchief and planted along the drive. Eighty years later the throng attending the auction saw these as large trees. Inside the house with its shuttered windows the many rooms had the elegant furniture of the period, with rugs and carpets in keeping with a mansion.

The first master of Octagon Place was a man of medium height, with light hair and gray eyes. He was twice married. His first wife died in 1844 leaving one daughter. In 1847 he married Sarah E. Knox who died in 1897. Three daughters and four sons were born of this marriage, and Octagon Place must have been a center of activity and hospitality.

As the years passed Samuel Sinnett developed one of the finest apple orchards in the neighborhood. He located a gravel pit on the land he owned and realized its importance, for he mentioned it in his will. At first a Democrat, he later

became one of the leaders of the Greenback Party and he was strongly opposed to the use of public funds to aid the railroad. He had been well educated in the classical schools of Dublin and he wrote magazine articles on rural mail delivery, agriculture, and the rights of labor. In 1872 he helped organize the Patrons of Husbandry.

During the Civil War he sympathized with the South. On one occasion, hearing that his home was to be raided on a certain night, he gave a party and opened wide the doors of Octagon Place, but nothing happened. Originally an Episcopalian, he later joined the Presbyterian Church to which his second wife belonged. That he was deeply religious is suggested by the fact that he gave a prayer each morning at the breakfast table and read a selection from the Bible.

When Samuel Sinnett died on November 30, 1899, Octagon Place passed to a son, Samuel T. Sinnett, who, it is said, developed the gravel pit and, good roads having become a necessity after the coming of automobiles, netted a neat fortune. He was interested also in improved farming methods. For ten years he experimented with soil building, trying many kinds and combinations of fertilizers. Among his experiments was the application on one field of from one to thirteen tons of ground limestone to the acre.

He worked for years with clover, alfalfa, and other legumes, exchanging loads of soil with another experimenter three miles away. They discovered that clover and alfalfa were almost sure crops, if planted on soil that had been limed, fertilized, and inoculated with the bacteria necessary for development of legumes. In the beginning of these experiments farm neighbors ridiculed hauling dirt from one farm to another, but when Mr. Sinnett produced the finest clover and alfalfa fields in all the neighborhood, men came from far and near to secure his formula.

Other children in the Samuel Sinnett family followed the traditions of culture. Isabella Sinnett was an artist, like her uncle, John T. Sinnett. Her landscapes, flower pictures, and hand-painted china added to the collection at Octagon Place. Another daughter, Georgia (or Georgiana) married Russell B. George and the couple traveled extensively in Europe, bringing back to the old Sinnett home their contribution of souvenirs, art treasures, and curios to add to the Sinnett collection. John H. Sinnett became a physician in New York and died in 1894.

But there is an end to all human activities. Samuel T. Sinnett was the last of the Sinnett family to occupy Octagon Place. He died on September 11, 1934, leaving no children and, since no

other member of the family wished to take over the estate in Muscatine, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Grigg. Many of the pictures, works of art, furniture, and other antiques were distributed among the relatives. Under Mr. Sinnett's will, the famous sword went to a nephew, John H. Sinnett of Los Angeles, California, a son of Dr. John Harris Sinnett, and grandson of the first Samuel Sinnett.

And so it happened that, on the afternoon of December 17, 1934, all that remained of the Sinnett belongings in Octagon Place were sold by a noisy auctioneer. It had been agreed, with unusual courtesy, that in case a Sinnett relative bid on an article, outsiders would refrain from bidding. Even the most enthusiastic antique collector, it is said, respected this rule, and members of the Sinnett family, if present, acquired the heirlooms they desired.

When the auctioneer's hammer fell for the last time and the crowd disbanded that December day, Octagon Place was left empty. The house which had served two generations of a family which had pioneering in its blood was to be occupied by strangers.

JESSE J. FISHBURN

## An Adams in Iowa

One afternoon in July, 1854, a young man landed at Dubuque. He saw the sky arching over three States, the Mississippi River linking north and south, the sun setting on hills to the west. He visualized the freedom and opportunities of the new West and decided to make Dubuque his future home. This blond, tall, slim young man was Austin Adams, one more of New England's gifts to Iowa. Henceforth he was a loyal and devoted Iowan — worthy of a place of honor in the annals of Iowa history.

Austin Adams was a member of one of the renowned families of American history, a family which included Samuel Adams of Revolutionary fame; John Adams, second President of the United States; John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States; and Charles Francis Adams, diplomat and statesman. Alvin Adams, founder of the Adams Express Company, was his uncle. All these men were descendants of Henry Adams, who came from England and settled at Braintree, now Quincy, Massachusetts, in 1632. Almost two hundred years later Austin Adams was born at Andover, Vermont, on May 24, 1826. His father

was Jerry Adams, a veteran of the War of 1812, who had married Dorcas Austin.

The boyhood days of Austin Adams were spent on a farm in the Green Mountain State, where the outlook upon life was lofty and "humanity seemed to borrow the grave, enduring, reticent, and solid qualities that belong to the rocks and hills". But there were things to be enjoyed too — a trout brook, a grove of sugar maples, a fruit orchard in which birds sang in spring, a district school where windows opened to the larger world.

Interest in law and public service seems to have been a part of his very being. Writing in later years he said: "When a boy I would go any distance to hear an eloquent address. If there was a law suit in the town I was never easy until I found out all about it. Long before I attended a trial, I remember a suit brought for fraud in the sale of a horse." His interest in public affairs, no doubt, was due in part to his training. His father, returning from a session of the legislature, brought his ten-year-old son a copy of Watts' *On the Improvement of the Mind*. His mother later gave him Pope's *Essay on Man* which he learned by heart.

When he was fourteen years of age Austin went to Ludlow Academy and afterwards to another academy at Townsend, Vermont. At the

age of sixteen he taught a school where several of the pupils were older than himself. In one case of insubordination, finding that the pupils appeared to be indirectly enlisted with the delinquents, he converted the school into a court and had the subject discussed, much to the benefit of both teacher and pupils. He did not advocate the use of physical force in schools, although he was considered a good wrestler, able to throw boys twice his weight.

After graduating from Dartmouth College in 1848, Austin Adams pursued legal studies during the five years he was principal of an academy at West Randolph, Vermont. In 1853 he attended the Harvard Law School for a short time, taught school again for a brief period at Woodstock, Vermont, and was admitted to the bar in January, 1854. Some influence led him to decide to come to Iowa. "I wanted", he said, "more liberty, a society with more variety than I had ever seen in the East." His friends prophesied an early return, but Austin Adams found Iowa to his liking and remained.

When he came to Dubuque, in July, 1854, he found that his reputation as a student and teacher had preceded him to the new West. Many parents in Dubuque urged him to open an academy, for there were only limited advantages for youth in the higher branches of education. Yielding to

this pressure, he taught for a period of six months in a school in which Mary Mann, a sister of Horace Mann, was also a teacher, but in 1855 he became a member of the law firm of Cooley, Blatchley & Adams. During this year he was also active in assisting with the teachers' institutes and in working for the establishment of the public school system in Iowa.

During the winter of 1854 and 1855 Mr. Adams gave three public lectures "to gain a fund for the nucleus of a public library" sponsored by the Young Men's Library Association. The books, bought with the receipts, were kept in his office, and for two years he and his partner, Mr. Blatchley, kept the record of books taken and returned. In 1856 he was a member of the law firm of Lovell, Adams & Lovell. He was active in politics, and a staunch supporter of John Charles Fremont for the presidency.

Austin Adams had been shocked by the terroristic sermons of his childhood, but he remained deeply religious. He defined religion as the "conscious effort of the finite to realize the Infinite", and he took an active part in the religious development of the community in which he lived, respecting the beliefs of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics alike. Soon after his arrival at Dubuque he delivered an address on "The Study of the Bible as

Aiding People to Constitutional Liberty". For several years he conducted an adult Bible class, at first in the Congregational Church and later at the Universalist Church.

He helped to organize the Young Men's Christian Association in Dubuque and, to aid in the cultural program, he conducted evening classes in science, unrolling "the gospel of the storied world to the youth gathered there." To him the truths of science and religion were one — a revelation of God. On one occasion he wrote: "All science may be regarded as sacred. It reveals the creative energy through which God expresses himself." Later in life he said: "We believe that God is not revealed by the imaginations of men, but in the truths of history, and of the physical and moral world. We are therefore reverently seeking such truth, believing that as we find it we shall find God and that as we find Him He will command our unfeigned worship and love."

In September, 1857, Mr. Adams married Mary K. Newbury, a daughter of the Reverend Samuel Newbury, with whom young Adams had coöperated for community betterment when he first arrived in Dubuque. In the establishment of their new home Mr. and Mrs. Adams sought "to have some inspiring thought woven into the duties of each day." They recognized that "the ornaments

of a house are the friends who frequent it" and their hospitality brought to their home many choice and inspiring guests. Among these in later years were Bronson Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Four children were born in the Adams home — Annabel, Eugene, Herbert, and Cecilia. Mr. Adams frequently joined with the young folks in their pleasures, and aided and encouraged them in their industry and tasks — "his sunny disposition and exquisite imagination being a great inspiration as well as help." His attitude toward youth can perhaps be best expressed in his own words, when he said: "We cannot make children perfect, but we can place before them such visions that they will be greatly stimulated in working out their own salvation." In the home Mr. Adams cultivated freedom and cordiality. "He guided by reason in government, but used no force to compel obedience, allowing each to reap the error of wrong doing."

His educational interests were always apparent. In 1865 he was elected president of the board of education in Dubuque and he always manifested a deep interest in the educational program of the city. In December of the same year he and a few of his friends formed a literary club called "The Round Table". They hired a room, furnished it, and had a large round table around which fifteen

or more men could congregate. When Wendell Phillips and Ralph Waldo Emerson visited it, they were much pleased and carried back to Boston complimentary reports of their "find in the West". Austin Adams was president and an active participant in the activities of this club until it disbanded when he went upon the bench in 1876.

Possibly his congenial marriage was one reason for his advocacy of the right of women to equal status in the fields of education and law. In 1868 he protested the refusal of the authorities of Iowa College (now Grinnell) to permit a woman to address the Ladies Literary Society commencement program and he is said to have been the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Iowa to admit a woman to practice in that tribunal.

As a lawyer, Austin Adams ranked high among the members of his profession. Edward H. Stiles said of him: "He was a lawyer of deep learning and exalted principles". He believed in the sanctity and dignity of the court and in the security and protection of the law. He greatly lamented the unauthorized attempts "to subject principles of law to some imagined expediency." He felt that the courts must prevent the ignorant and impetuous from destroying the stability of the law. His strength of will, his courage of conviction, and his familiarity with the law, made him a leader in his

profession and a man of influence throughout the State.

Mr. Adams practiced law in Dubuque from 1855 until 1876 when he became a member of the Supreme Court of Iowa. In 1870, he became a member of the Board of Regents of the State University, serving in that capacity for a period of eight years. Two years later he was appointed one of the Curators of the State Historical Society. In 1875 he became a member of the University faculty. In the University catalogue for 1875-1876 his name appears in a triple role — as a member of the Board of Regents, as Lecturer on the Laws of Corporations and Insurance at the University, and as Justice of the Supreme Court of Iowa.

When he first lectured at the University, his academic rating was designated by the letters "M. A.", Master of Arts. In August, 1883, however, his alma mater, Dartmouth College, conferred upon him the honorary degree LL. D. When he retired from the bench, at the end of 1887, he returned to Dubuque where he resumed the practice of law, but he continued to lecture at the State University until the year before his death.

Judge Adams had an impressive personality. It was frequently said of him that he "looked like a college professor". Indeed, it is not strange that

he should have acquired a professorial appearance. He was a scholar, a teacher, and a gentleman of culture, before he was a judge, and he never failed to display these high qualities. They were a part of his very being.

In figure he was of good height and rather slim. His face was long, his nose prominent, his forehead high. His complexion was fair. His light brown hair and whiskers were both luxuriant — the former being combed up without parting, the latter cut round slightly under the chin, the upper lip being clean shaven. He wore spectacles, due, perhaps, to his studious boyhood, when tallow dips and whale oil lamps were the best lights available. His dress was described as in harmony with his person — always a Prince Albert coat and otherwise neat attire.

Judge Adams was elected to the Supreme Court in 1875 and served on the Supreme bench for a period of twelve years. Although he was interested and qualified particularly in corporation law, his Supreme Court decisions, reported in thirty-two volumes of the Supreme Court Reports, cover many phases of the law. The first case which Judge Adams was called upon to decide on the Supreme bench was one involving the question of whether or not the State University of Iowa is a corporation which may be sued. Judge Adams

ruled that it was not such a corporation, but rather a creature of the legislature, the property of which belonged to the State. His ruling is still accepted.

Under the constitutional rule which provided for the advancement of Judges of the Supreme Court to the office of Chief Justice by rotation, Judge Adams served as Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court in 1880-1881 and again in 1886-1887. His many able decisions are evidence of his aptness for expressing legal principles by means of well-chosen phrases. If a litigant failed to receive a favorable decision from the court, he was nevertheless made to feel that he had been given a fair trial and just treatment.

By whatever criterion he is tested, by whatever standard he is judged, Austin Adams was a man of full stature — learned, dignified, cultured, refined. Contented and serene in his later years, his pleasure and enjoyment could have been increased only by having leisure to enjoy that which he had. "Malice or misfortune could not injure him, his happiness was in the state of his mind, not exterior conditions." Thus he lived, and thus he died, quietly at his home, in Dubuque on October 17, 1890, having enjoyed sixty-four fruitful years.

JACOB A. SWISHER

## An Apostle of Free Education

On the first day of December, 1856, a school opened in the town of Tipton, Iowa. It was not, of course, the first school in the town, but it became famous as the first public school in Iowa with grades and a high school department and the first *free* school west of the Mississippi. The Tipton Union School, as it was known, became a sort of model, experimental school on which the system of free schools in Iowa was based. The man who called the school to order that cold December day was Christopher C. Nestlerode, recently arrived in Iowa from Ohio. Large and heavy-set, with auburn hair brushed back in a pompadour, he was a dynamic personality and the young men and women, the boys and girls, who sat before him that day and the days to come never forgot the man or his teaching.

At that time he was thirty-two years of age, for he was born in Center County, Pennsylvania, on March 17, 1824. His parents, Israel and Susanna Nestlerode, may have admired the famous discoverer or hoped that the child would grow to be an explorer. At any rate they named their son Christopher Columbus. Christopher started his travels

early, for when he was six the family moved to Ohio. When he was twelve he helped erect a log schoolhouse in which he attended school part of three winters. Later he attended school at Fostoria and was soon teaching local schools in the vicinity for \$14.00 per month and "boarding around". He soon became an ardent advocate of free public schools.

Just how he came to Iowa — "the Garden of Eden of the Free School Territory of the World" as he later described it — is not definitely known. For some years following 1849, he had been holding teachers' institutes in Ohio. B. F. Gue says that Nestlerode was "visiting" in Galena, Illinois, in December, 1854. Possibly he was participating in an institute there. At any rate, so one story goes, he heard of the State Teachers' Association meeting to be held at Iowa City on December 27 and 28, 1854, and walked more than one hundred miles to attend it. He was impressed by the caliber of the Iowa teachers and by 1856 he was back in Iowa, possibly to attend the session of the State Teachers' Association held at Iowa City in June.

Hearing that the town of Tipton in Cedar County needed a school, Nestlerode walked to the town and on December 1, 1856, opened a school there. His motto, it is said, was: "Whether we die young or old let us die with armor on, striving

to do something to benefit mankind." That something, in the mind of C. C. Nestlerode, was free education, and he became a crusader for tax-supported schools.

Having started his school, Nestlerode became a lobbyist to secure for Tipton in particular, and all other towns which might be interested, authority to levy taxes to support a union, graded school. The bill received influential support and on January 28, 1857, the General Assembly passed a law similar to that in effect in Ohio. Tipton at once established a school under the terms of this act, which permitted districts with 200 or more residents to maintain a school with various grades and to support the school by taxes. Under certain conditions, rates (tuition) might be charged but no child otherwise eligible to attend the school could be excluded because of failure to pay such tuition. In the December, 1857, issue of the *Voice of Iowa*, the first professional magazine published for the teachers of Iowa, Mr. Nestlerode explained in detail the system followed in the Union School.

In spite of the favorable beginning and the enthusiasm of superintendent, teachers, and pupils, trouble soon loomed on the horizon. In the fall of 1857 a new constitution was adopted and authority to enact school laws was assigned to a Board of Education. Before this Board began to func-

tion, the General Assembly passed a new law and repealed previous school legislation, the union school law included. Some taxpayers refused to pay their taxes, but the Tipton school continued until May, 1858, when a meeting was called and the school was voted out. During this fight Nestlerode is said to have coined the phrase "school killers" for opponents of the school law, but he did not give up.

The school law enacted by the General Assembly was declared unconstitutional on December 9, 1858, and the Board of Education enacted a new law. The Tipton voters then decided to re-open the Union School and C. C. Nestlerode was again employed as superintendent at a salary of \$700 per year for a period of ten months. Sessions of school began on April 11, 1859, and continued until March, 1862, when Mr. Nestlerode was recalled to Ohio to assume what he termed "a still more sacred duty", that of caring for his aged parents.

During these years C. C. Nestlerode was a conspicuous advocate of better schools and better teachers and of the support of schools by taxation. He emphasized the responsibility of the government to provide education for all. This struggle for free schools was expressed in the lilting tune and words of the popular song "Uncle Sam's

School" often heard in schools and public meetings during the late fifties and early sixties. Two stanzas and the chorus ran as follows:

Of all the institutions in the east or in the west,  
The glorious institution of the schoolroom is the best;  
There is room for every scholar, and our banner is unfurled,

With a general invitation to the children of the world.

Chorus —

Then come along, come along, make no delay,  
Come from every dwelling, come from every way,  
Bring your slates and books along, don't be a fool,  
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to send us all to school.

Our fathers gave us liberty, but little did they dream  
Of the grand results to follow in this mighty age of steam,  
With the march of education all the world is set on fire,  
And we knit our thoughts together with a telegraphic wire.

But all the enthusiasm of educators and pupils did not make clear the path to universal education. While the pupils at the Tipton Union School became devoted and life-long disciples of C. C. Nestlerode and his coterie of able teachers, school orders "went begging and oftentimes would neither command money, buy clothes, or pay board" and Superintendent Nestlerode was sometimes compelled to send back to his home in Ohio for money to provide necessities for himself and the teachers.

The first number of *The Iowa Instructor*, which appeared in October, 1859, contained the following description of the Union School which had opened on September 29th that year. The school year was divided into three sessions — fall and spring with 12 weeks each and a winter term of 16 weeks. The school was organized in four grades, each grade having three divisions. The enrollment included 75 pupils in high school, 50 in the grammar school, 70 in secondary grade, and 90 in the primary grade. The high school included a "Normal Training Department" with 30 students, most of whom had already had experience in teaching. Subjects taught in the high school included, in addition to the common branches, botany, rhetoric, algebra, geometry, and the theory and practice of teaching. The report also asserted that people were moving into Tipton to secure the advantages of the school and that pupils were coming in from other districts.

But C. C. Nestlerode did not limit his activities to one school. As chairman of the executive committee of the State Teachers' Association, he became editor of *The Iowa Instructor*, published by the Association. The first number appeared in October, 1859. During the next two years he contributed a series of articles to the magazine under the general title, "The Theory and Practice

of Teaching". In these he discussed the training and character needed by teachers, the relation of the teacher to the community, contracts between teachers and school boards, preliminaries to opening a school, the maintenance of discipline in a school, and the minimum equipment required by a teacher. He served as editor of the *Iowa Instructor* for three years and during that time assumed much of the financial burden of the paper — which usually paid only half what it cost.

That these articles and others which he contributed were widely read and well received is proved by a letter written to Mr. Nestlerode in April, 1860, by Jesse H. Berry, county superintendent of Clinton County, Pennsylvania. "God bless you, Brother C. C. NESTLERODE, in the noble struggle you are engaged in — the diffusion of common school education in the growing State of IOWA. I have just read the April No. of the IOWA INSTRUCTOR, and I confess I like it much. There is *fight* in it, and that of the right kind, too. . . . Free Speech, Free Press, and *Free Schools*, thank God, are in the ascendancy *now*, and will continue to be."

During that first winter of 1856-1857, while organizing the Tipton Union School and drafting and supporting the bill which gave it existence, Mr. Nestlerode founded the first teachers' insti-

tute held in the West in the old courthouse in Tipton. His mode of conducting these meetings and the principles of his teaching were based upon the saying, "As is the teacher, so is the school".

Mr. Nestlerode's success as a leader in education was soon recognized; at the State Teachers' Association meeting at Davenport in 1858, he was elected chairman of the executive committee, a position he held for three years. The first year he conducted twelve institutes, traveled 3,700 miles, much of that distance on foot, and gave 712 talks on the need of free schools. Mr. Nestlerode was also chosen to represent the Association at the meeting of the State Board of Education in December, 1858, and was present during the twenty days of the session. It is said that he refused the position of secretary of the Board because he considered his other responsibilities more important.

In modern pedagogical literature, we read of service-training for teachers. Proof that this early educator recognized its importance is shown in the minutes of the secretaries' books which recorded the weekly teachers' meetings held each Monday night for three hours at which regular attendance of all instructors of the Union School was required. The branches taught in all departments were discussed, and the most approved methods for teaching were suggested. One half

hour was devoted to mutual consultation on the welfare of the school and to suggestions, inquiries, and complaints. Mr. Nestlerode said of these meetings: "New teachers were soon led to see that each lesson must be thoroughly prepared before attempting to hear the recitation."

In 1861 he wrote, "I have earnestly devoted my time and efforts for the past four years to secure uniformity of instruction through the school. I am happy to state that this has at length been accomplished. A child can now enter the Primary Department and take regular courses through the school, without unlearning or learning anew anything previously learned in the School."

He might fittingly be named one of the fathers of modern guidance and character education in public schools. "I taught my scholars many things", he wrote, "I taught them how good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity; the necessity of living for something; of being prompt in all things — to do to others as they would have others do to them, to love and obey their parents, to stand firm for the right and oppose the wrong, to be good, and to be true to themselves, and to all with whom they came in contact. To avoid deceptive practices in all their relations in life; to accept Christ as their counsellor, and when they needed wisdom, to ask of Him".

His great respect for the Scriptures and the constant need of reading them, although he seems not to have been a church member, he emphasized in many of his articles. Before the Cedar County Teachers' Association in 1857, he delivered an address on, "Should the Bible be introduced into our Public Schools?" "I", said Mr. Nestlerode, "unhesitatingly and emphatically answer 'YES'. I would that the Bible were introduced and *used* in every public school in our State . . . *I will not teach in any school where I am not allowed to read the Bible.*"

In an address given before the Iowa State Teachers' Association in 1857, he gave basic principles concerning free public education which earned him the title, "The Great Apostle of Free Education", asserting: "I believe in the doctrine that the property of a State ought to educate the children of that State. I am aware there are some who claim that this is an unjust doctrine, and shall therefore offer a few arguments in support of it. . . . Good schools enhance and render secure *all* the property in their vicinity alike; therefore *all* the property should be equally taxed to support them."

Furthermore, he argued, every child has a right to an education and this can be guaranteed only by government support, adding: "as each State

claims the right, and enforces it, to punish its inhabitants for crimes, therefore it is not only its *right* but its *imperative duty* to use all honorable means to prevent crimes. . . . If half the money that is expended in criminal prosecutions, building jails, penitentiaries, poor houses, and supporting them, were spent in supporting good schools — educating properly all the children — three-fourths, if not nine-tenths of the crime that is committed, would be prevented, and few poor-houses, jails, and penitentiaries be needed.”

If children, for one reason or another, fell into evil ways, C. C. Nestlerode believed it was the State's responsibility to re-educate them. In an address in 1857 he said: “My friends, if ever we expect to reform juvenile offenders, we must educate not only their head and hands, but their *hearts*. Heart training is the only kind that is adapted to the nature of the case — all others *must and will fail*.”

At the meeting of the State Teachers' Association held at Dubuque in April, 1857, he offered a resolution that a committee be appointed to present to the next legislature the need of a State reform school for juvenile offenders and was named chairman of a committee of three appointed for that purpose. The memorial, prepared by Nestlerode and J. L. Enos, included the following com-

ment on juvenile delinquency ninety years ago: "Our State, and *especially* the cities and towns, abound with vagrants and truants of both sexes, who refuse to obey their parents or have none or worse than none to obey. These children are mostly destitute and without employment, and would not be inclined regularly to follow any, if they could get it, consequently resort to any means, however dishonest to support themselves, regardless of consequences."

Mr. Nestlerode's personal appearance is best given in the words of one of his students, Zenas C. Bradshaw: "I was at first seated in the high school room, near the door opening into the hall. The room was warm, well lighted, clean, orderly, and quiet. A large, smoothly shaven man entered. His auburn hair was combed pompadour. Instead of coat, he had a long, red dressing gown, and a pair of thin slippers. He came to me directly, and that smiling face and warm handclasp can never be forgotten."

But it was, apparently, in personality that C. C. Nestlerode made the greatest impression on students, teachers, and school board members. That pupils and teachers alike acquired a life-long respect and affection for Superintendent Nestlerode is evident from the records of the reunions held in 1882, 1887, 1893, and 1897, when he was the hon-

ored guest. In 1887 former pupils presented to him a huge album bound in red plush, with silver clasps and a silver plate on which was the following inscription: "Presented to C. C. Nestlerode at the Second Reunion, June 30th, 1887, by the Teachers, Pupils and Friends of the Tipton Union School, from 1857 to 1862." At the reunion in 1893, Mr. Nestlerode was given a gold-headed cane.

Teachers throughout Iowa seem to have held this educator in equally high regard, for in the six years Mr. Nestlerode was in Iowa he was twice president of the State Teachers' Association, serving in 1857-1858 and 1860-1861. It was during his second term in this position that he wrote to Governor S. J. Kirkwood, pledging the loyalty of the teachers of Iowa, some of whom had already enlisted. He added: "if in your opinion we, who are engaged in school room duties, can serve our country better by administering *lead* and *steel* to traitors, than by guarding the unprotected children of our State and preparing them for future usefulness you can *draw* for the remainder, and your draft shall not be dishonored."

C. C. Nestlerode left Iowa in 1862, and little is reported in Iowa publications concerning his work in Ohio, but he was apparently busy in promoting education there as he had been in Iowa. After his

retirement from public school work he devoted much time to Sunday schools and the temperance cause and was president of the Seneca County Sunday School Association for thirty years. He died at Fostoria, Ohio, on December 29, 1900.

According to the obituary notice in a Fostoria newspaper he had married Mary Ann Skinner "in 1870 or about that time" and the couple had one daughter. This was probably the Miss Mary Nestlerode who attended the Tipton Union School reunion with Mr. and Mrs. Nestlerode in 1893. The newspaper indicates that Mr. Nestlerode was wealthy, but there is nothing to indicate the source of wealth. Certainly it was not secured from his Iowa activities, valuable as they were to the State.

Now, after a century of statehood, Iowa pays tribute to Christopher Columbus Nestlerode, the "Apostle of Free Education". To make it possible that all children in this State might have equal opportunities for education, he drafted and promoted passage of Iowa's first law for free public education. Because he knew no school was better than its teachers, he founded the first teachers' institute west of the Mississippi. Because he believed in unity and organization, he helped promote the Iowa State Teachers' Association, and was twice its president. Because he was interested in public education everywhere, he was prominent in the

American Normal School and National Teachers' Association, and was one of the vice presidents in 1860. Because he believed that all teachers needed to be guided, and kept constantly alert to educational movements, he contributed to the *Voice of Iowa*, the first State magazine for teachers, and he became editor of its successor, *The Iowa Instructor*, for three years. It can truly be said of Christopher Columbus Nestlerode that "he planted seed which was not wasted, but found rich soil in the hearts of educators. It rooted and grew, budded and blossomed, and bore rich fruitage."

GERTRUDE HILMER

## Comment by the Editor

*FROM FAR AND NEAR*

When Israel Zangwill wrote "America is God's Crucible, the Great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! . . . God is making the American", he had in mind the newly arrived immigrants of the late nineteenth century. The process, however, had been going on long before Zangwill wrote his play; and Iowa inherited many of the products of this crucible. Samuel Sinnett of Muscatine came from a French refugee family sojourning for two centuries in south Ireland.

Austin Adams of Dubuque was a descendant of an English family which had taken root in New England. C. C. Nestlerode came to Iowa from Ohio, but he was born in Pennsylvania and his name indicates that the family came originally from south Germany. His given name, Christopher Columbus, came from an Italian serving the Spanish court, the discoverer of America. How many other nationalities from far and near would be revealed if one could trace the genealogies of these men, we cannot know, but that these people were Americans no one can doubt.

R.A.G.

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