

The **P**ALIMPSEST

OCTOBER 1948

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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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McKinley in Iowa

The 1896 presidential campaign was one of intense feeling and excitement. William Jennings Bryan, the "Boy Orator of the Platte," had swept the Democratic convention with his now-famous "Cross of Gold" speech. During the summer and fall Bryan campaigned widely for his free silver program, traveling some 18,000 miles in an unprecedented effort to win the election.

Meanwhile the Republican nominee, under the astute guidance of the Republican boss, Mark Hanna, staged a "Front Porch" campaign in Canton, Ohio, where he met selected delegations and gave carefully prepared speeches setting forth the conservative financial philosophy of his party. Iowans hoped that they would have a chance to see Major McKinley during the campaign. Several invitations were extended — one to attend the Republican state convention and another to visit the Iowa semi-centennial at Burlington.

McKinley did not accept these invitations, how-

ever, although for a time, when it was beginning to look as though Bryan might carry the traditionally Republican states of this area, Hanna seriously considered a middle-western tour for his candidate should matters get "desperate." The danger passed with improving financial conditions and McKinley stayed in Canton.

It was not until 1898, then, that Iowans could welcome President McKinley. He was not a stranger to Iowa, however, for he had campaigned for the Republican party in the State in 1892. His 1898 trip was one of triumph and rejoicing. America had, in 113 days, defeated Spain in a hopelessly one-sided contest, and even as the President toured the country, peace commissioners of both nations were meeting in Paris. One question especially plagued McKinley as he left Washington — should he demand from Spain the surrender of the Philippine Islands? On this trip he was to find the answer.

The purpose of the journey was a visit to the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha. On October 12, the presidential special first entered Iowa over the North Western lines at Clinton, where Governor Leslie M. Shaw and Senators Albert B. Cummins and John H. Gear boarded the train. The party was a distinguished one, including many of the cabinet members, several high-rank-

ing military officers, and the ministers of China, Argentina, Brazil, and Korea.

At Cedar Rapids the President spoke from a platform erected at the station. He talked briefly of the war and of the responsibilities of victory. From Cedar Rapids the train proceeded westward, stopping at Belle Plaine, Tama, Marshalltown, Ames, Boone, Carroll, and Council Bluffs.

When time permitted, McKinley spoke from a platform at the station; otherwise, he greeted the throngs who came to see him from the rear platform, in the time-honored tradition of presidential journeys. His good nature impressed those who met him. "He is so amiable and conscientious," the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* recorded, "that he sacrifices himself for the gratification of the public in ways that none of his predecessors have done. Between stations — when he ought to be resting and thinking over what he is going to say next time — he receives local committees who get aboard to pay their respects and explain the program and insist upon talking with him, which, in the dust and rumble of the train, is very wearing upon the voice. He . . . submits to all the arrangements they have made for his reception, regardless of his own comfort and convenience."

The general tenor of McKinley's talks during the trip was of the unity of the nation — a unity

experienced for the first time since the Civil War. Two Confederate generals, Butler and Wheeler, now wore the uniform of the United States army. The South had responded as eagerly as the North to the call for men to fight against Spain. One of the President's most telling speeches was made at Boone, where he reminded his listeners that there was "no north, no south, no east, no west," but one really united nation. He added: "The triumphs of war will be written in the articles of peace." This, to some, seemed a hint of the demand the United States would soon make — that Spain surrender the Philippine Islands.

After a short stay at Omaha, the presidential train returned eastward across southern Iowa on the Burlington lines. Seven stops were scheduled for the day's run to Burlington — Council Bluffs, Glenwood, Hastings, Red Oak, Creston, Ottumwa, and Burlington. But, and here was another instance of McKinley's good nature, "he was persuaded at the expense of his health and comfort" to make 10 unscheduled appearances — at Malvern, Corning, Prescott, Afton, Osceola, Chariton, Albia, Melrose, Fairfield, and Mt. Pleasant.

Throngs greeted the train at each station and the applause and enthusiasm seemed to grow with every stop. "The people surged forward to grasp

the hand of the president, and he smilingly accommodated as many as he could before the train started, reaching far out over the railing."

McKinley's speeches hinted ever more strongly that it was our duty as a great nation to assume our responsibilities in the world. The *Burlington Saturday Evening Post* commented, "Utterances of the President on his journey through Iowa last week were such as to reveal the foreign policy of the administration very clearly. The Philippines are to become American colonial territory, and the American people are in hearty accord with this purpose. President McKinley will do for fifteen million yellow people what President Lincoln did for six millions of blacks, while the industrial development of the Philippines will furnish another parallel no less instructive and suggestive."

At Burlington, McKinley was spared another platform appearance, but instead was taken on a drive around the city. Two incidents illustrate the laxity with which he was guarded — a laxity which was to cost William McKinley his life three years later. A Burlington woman broke through the line of soldiers, rushed up to the President, threw her arms around his neck, "and implanted a kiss on his coat collar that sounded like a circular saw striking a knot." Again, after the drive through Burlington streets, McKinley and his es-

cort returned to the train to find it completely surrounded by people anxious for another glimpse of the distinguished visitor. "The President had to fight his way through with the rest of the party, which he did in a most energetic manner." Although the mayor and the city marshal were with him, McKinley reached the car some time before they did. "It was a good natured crowd and apparently did not recognize the president, for he was alone among them for several minutes, and their eyes were fastened upon the car."

The enthusiasm with which McKinley had been greeted throughout "his famous Western journey," evidently convinced him that the people would support the step he was about to take. On October 31, the United States peace commissioners at Paris presented to the Spanish delegates a demand that Spain surrender all of the Philippines.

McKinley's next visit to Iowa was just a year later, in October of 1899. Returning from a trip through Minnesota and the Dakotas, the President entered Iowa at Sioux City and traveled across the northern part of the State on the Illinois Central lines to Dubuque. The country was still filled with the excitement of a successful war. The Philippine revolt had not yet stirred up sufficient misgivings as to our new imperial policy. At Cedar Falls, McKinley said, "It is no longer a

question of expansion with us — we have expanded. If there is any question at all, it is a question of contraction, and who is going to contract?"

A voice in the crowd replied, "Not we!"

The President traveled with the members of his cabinet and — during the journey across Iowa — with Senators Allison and Gear and Governor Shaw. At all the stops the train was surrounded with the usual cheering throngs anxious for a glimpse of the Nation's leader. At Dubuque, in spite of periodic showers, which dampened both the decorations and the spirits of the entertainment committee, the stop of 35 minutes was a huge success. The *Dubuque Weekly Times* reported that "more than ten thousand people saw the chief executive and more than half that number got within range of his voice." During a brief talk at the city park, McKinley praised the Iowa regiment in the Philippines which had consented to stay there as long as needed.

As in 1898, so in 1899, President McKinley was received by Iowans with enthusiasm, parades, bonfires, and a surge of patriotism. In 1900 Iowa would again cast her vote for McKinley. Within a year after that election McKinley's assassination at Buffalo would bring to the White House the dynamic and colorful Theodore Roosevelt.

MILDRED THRONE

Teddy Roosevelt in Iowa

Twice within a period of four and a half years Iowa was visited by Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States. The first visit was in April, 1903. The President had been spending a vacation in Yellowstone Park and was on his way to St. Louis for the dedication of the site of the St. Louis World's Fair. His two-day route across Iowa included Shenandoah, Clarinda, Van Wert, Osceola, Des Moines, Oskaloosa, Ottumwa (where his train lay on a siding overnight), and Keokuk.

"The president comes to Iowa feeling 'bully,'" reported the *Des Moines Register*. An outdoor vacation, of the type he loved; successful prosecution of the "trust-busting" Northern Securities case; the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty; the success of Governor Taft in the Philippines — all this made 1903 a happy year for the President. His enthusiastic reception in Iowa added to that "bully" feeling.

On his trip the President was surrounded by secret service men, to guard him against any such tragedy as had befallen President McKinley in 1901. While the presidential train lay overnight

at Ottumwa, sixteen men stood guard over the car, four of them from the Rock Island Railroad's secret service force, eight from the Ottumwa police force, and four from the government secret service. Such restraint irked "T. R." and his independence was illustrated by an incident at Keokuk. Seeing a man in the crowd trying unsuccessfully to take pictures, the President called the photographer to his carriage and told him to "shoot all he wanted."

The reception of the President at Keokuk was typical of that of the other Iowa towns. Mayor Andrew J. Dimond and his reception committee met the President at the train and rode to Rand Park with him. Six companies of the Iowa National Guard, commanded by Major John A. Dunlap of Keokuk, marched in the long procession. In the speech delivered to a large throng at Rand Park, the President said, "When I come to Iowa I feel I can learn rather than teach, because in peace and war, you men and women have acted on these principles, a capacity for organization and recognition of individual initiative." So intent was the President on his address and so receptive was the crowd that the efforts of Howard Elliott, later president of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, to halt his speech in order to get back to the train on time were fruitless. T. R.

continued to the end of his prepared talk, and delayed the departure of his special train eight minutes.

At the conclusion of the address hundreds surged forward cheering and trying to reach the side of the speaker. Negro citizens of Keokuk pressed a huge bouquet into his hands; Dan Anderson, leading Republican, making the presentation address. Before he left the stand the President pressed a button which started the machinery rolling in the J. C. Hubinger Brothers large new starch factory and on the way out of the park the President's carriage stopped long enough to allow him to plant an elm tree in honor of the Civic Division of the Keokuk Woman's Club. A small stone with the date and a Rough Rider's hat carved in the center marks the tree which stands in the present Rand Park flower gardens.

Roosevelt's second visit to Iowa, in 1907, was on the occasion of a presidential cruise down the Mississippi in the interests of the development of the river as an avenue of commerce. Could "Teddy" make the trip today, one may be sure he would give vent to his pet word, "dee-lighted," at the sight of the commercial development which has all but obscured anything but the memory of the packet boats which plied the peaceful river fifty years ago.

On this occasion Keokuk was the President's only stop in Iowa. He came to the city to board the river steamboat, *Mississippi*, a newly-built steamer of the government fleet. He was greeted at the railroad station by wild cheering and the playing of "Hail to the Chief" by the National Guard band. Governor Cummins and Mayor Strimback welcomed him both to Iowa and to Keokuk. The President was then driven to Rand Park, where he made a short address, ignoring the threatening financial worries of 1907, and stressing the importance of the development of Mississippi river commerce. He also took this occasion to express again the Roosevelt creed, "I believe the average American citizen will no more tolerate rule by the mob than by the plutocrat. He desires to see justice exacted from rich and poor alike."

After the address Roosevelt boarded the *Mississippi* for his trip down the Great River. He was accompanied by members of the Inland Waterways Commission and the governors of fourteen of the central western states. A large flotilla of river boats accompanied the *Mississippi* on its journey downstream from Keokuk to Memphis.

As the President's boat steamed out of the lock and through the Keokuk and Hamilton draw-bridge, it was joined by the other boats in the con-

voy, heading south to the accompaniment of whistles from the boats anchored at the Keokuk waterfront and from the factories of the city. A *Constitution Democrat* writer described the scene: "As soon as the Mississippi steamed out of the lock and through the draw, a naval display was given with hundreds of launches taking part, the little boats forming two lines in the middle of the river through which the President's boat passed." This was a maneuver which the boat owners of Keokuk had practiced for weeks, and it made a big hit with the crowd which lined the shore and bluffs to watch the display.

President Roosevelt, in his letters to his children, has left a record of this trip from the point of view of the chief actor. In a letter to Kermit, he wrote: "After speaking at Keokuk this morning we got aboard this brand new stern-wheeler of the regular Mississippi type and started downstream. I went up on the texas and of course felt an irresistible desire to ask the pilot about Mark Twain." To Archie he wrote, "I am now on what I believe will be my last trip of any consequence while I am President. Until I got to Keokuk, Iowa, it was about like any other trip, but it is now pleasant going down the Mississippi. . . . At night the steamers are all lighted up, for there are a dozen of them in company with us." Describing

the boat, he wrote, "There is no hold to the boat, just a flat bottom with a deck, and on this deck a foot or so above the water stands the engine-room, completely open at the sides and all the machinery visible as you come up on the boat. Both ends are blunt, and the gangways are drawn up by big cranes."

To his "dearest Ethel" he wrote on October 1, "The first part of my trip up to the time that we embarked on the river at Keokuk was just about the ordinary style. I had continually to rush out to wave at the people at the towns through which the train passed. If the train stopped anywhere I had to make a very short speech to several hundred people who evidently thought they liked me, and whom I really liked, but to whom I had nothing in the world to say. At Canton [Ohio] and Keokuk I went through the usual solemn festivities — the committee of reception, and the guard of honor, with the open carriage, the lines of enthusiastic fellow-citizens to whom I bowed continually right and left, the speech which in each case I thought went off rather better than I had dared hope — for I felt as if I had spoken myself out. When I got on the boat, however, times grew easier. I still have to rush out continually, stand on the front part of the deck, and wave at groups of people on shore, and at stern-wheel steamboats

draped with American flags and loaded with enthusiastic excursionists. But I have a great deal of time to myself, and by gentle firmness I think I have succeeded in impressing on my good hosts that I rather resent allopathic doses of information about shoals and dykes, the amount of sand per cubic foot of water, the quantity of manufactures supplied by each river town, etc."

It is the picture of T. R. in a frock coat, waving to enthusiastic crowds from the front of the steamer *Mississippi*, that thousands who were in Keokuk that October day forty-one years ago, carry in their memory.

FREDERIC C. SMITH

Taft in Iowa

When President William Howard Taft visited Iowa in 1909 he was cordially received in Des Moines. Flags and bunting "wafted a silent greeting" to the Chief Executive, while a multitude of jubilant residents of Iowa and the Middle States extended to him a "noisy and enthusiastic" welcome. The *Des Moines Register* regretted the briefness of Taft's stay in this "great state, this progressive state, this unswerving state, this composite state of the whole nation."

On September 17, three days before Taft arrived in Des Moines, the President had spoken at Winona, Minnesota, where he had defended the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Law. Tariff legislation had been the "bone of contention" in the previous session of the Congress. In accordance with a campaign promise, President Taft had urged some amendments for downward revision of tariff rates, but he had not obtained sufficient results to satisfy many of the leading Republicans. Indeed, a group of midwestern Senators — among them Senators Jonathan P. Dolliver and Albert B. Cummins of Iowa — had come to be known as "insurgents" within the Republican ranks, and had led the fight

against the Payne-Aldrich bill. President Taft's bold defense of this measure on the eve of his arrival at Des Moines — the home town of Senator Cummins — presented a political enigma for suave politicians to conjure with. However, when the President came to town, political differences were laid aside, and all local citizens united to make it a gala occasion.

The President's train was scheduled to arrive in Des Moines at 7:00 A. M. on Monday, September 20. Many citizens had planned to arise early to be at the station to greet the city's distinguished guest. Taft's broad smile and jovial disposition had been well advertised in advance. On Saturday, September 18, the *Des Moines Capital* carried on its editorial page this little jingle:

“If you're waking, call me early Monday
morning, mother dear;
It's going to be the biggest day of all this
blessed year.
The people will be coming in for many a
long long mile —
They've read about and want to see that
famous Bill Taft smile.”

Lafayette Young, editor of *The Des Moines Capital*, joined the President's party at St. Paul,



ANSCHUTZ PHOTO LOANED BY I. L. YOUNKER

ROOSEVELT BOARDS STEAMBOAT MISSISSIPPI AT KEOKUK

Senator Cummins, President Roosevelt, and Governor Carroll Lead Dignitaries Aboard Boat

AS THE CARTOONIST REMEMBERS THEM



DRAWN EXPRESSLY FOR THE PALIMPSEST BY "DING"

A NEW GIRL IN TOWN



CARTOON BY "DING" IN THE DES MOINES REGISTER, FEBRUARY 1, 1916

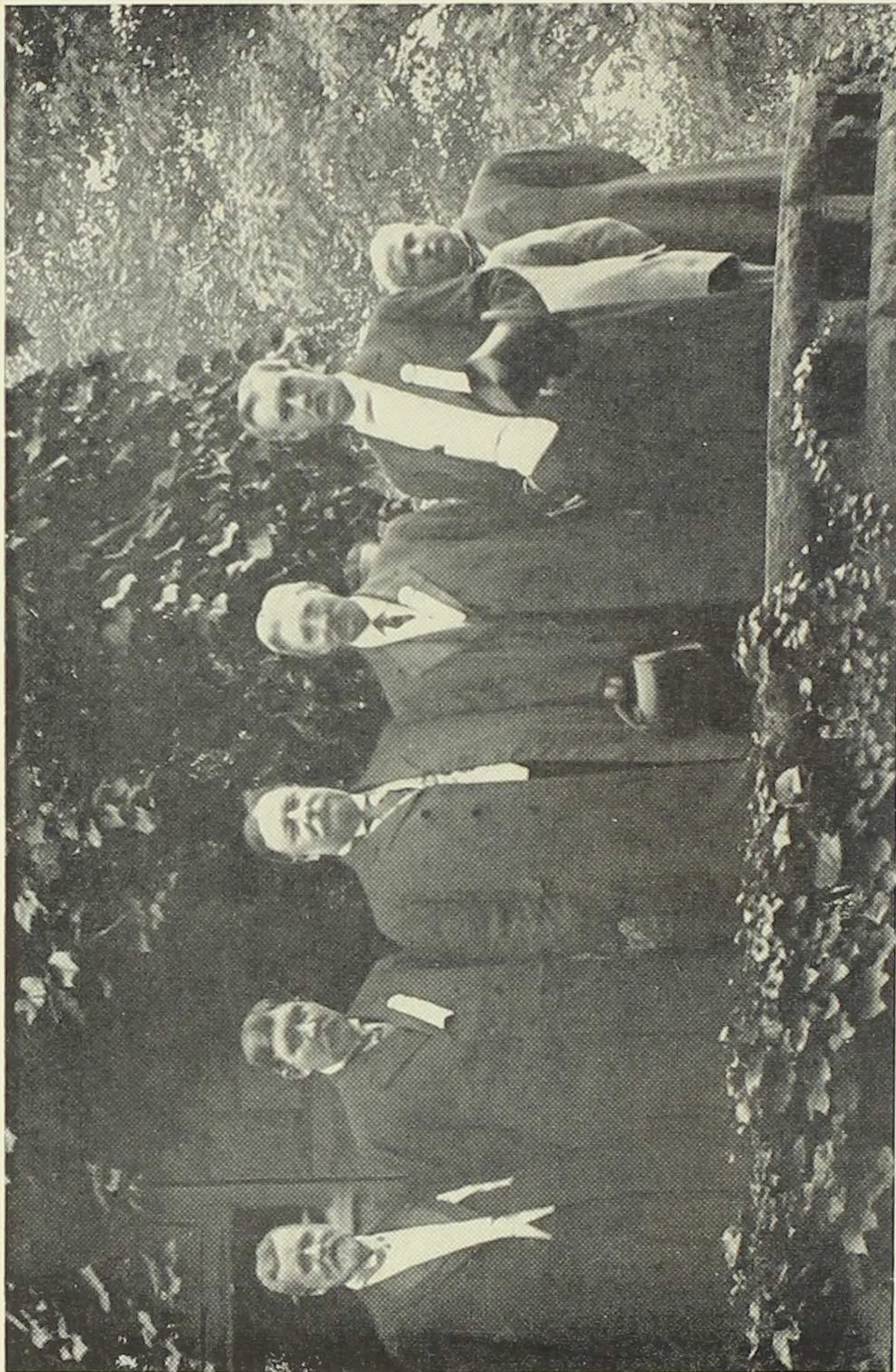


PHOTO LOANED BY STATE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

PRESIDENT TAFT AS BREAKFAST GUEST OF SENATOR CUMMINS

Left to Right: J. A. T. Hull, J. P. Dolliver, President Taft, A. B. Cummins, B. F. Carroll, G. N. Haugen

Minnesota, and accompanied Taft to Des Moines. When the President's train arrived at the capital, it was met by a committee of distinguished Iowans, including Harry H. Polk, C. A. Rawson, Governor Beryl F. Carroll, Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver, and Senator Albert B. Cummins. From the Union Station the President and his party were taken in automobiles to the home of Senator and Mrs. Cummins, where a breakfast of "crisp waffles and fine beefsteak" was served to more than a score of guests.

Following the breakfast hour the President was taken to a stand south of the Capitol building where he reviewed 5,000 visiting United States army troops, and presented a short speech. In his address the President made no mention of the tariff question, except to say that he had discussed this subject on a former occasion, and chose to confine his remarks to matters of legislation confronting the next Congress. He discussed the question of railway rates — a topic of popular interest in Iowa at that time. Taft spoke, too, of interstate commerce, labor, and law enforcement legislation. These measures, he said, were "in the line of performing the promises of the republican platform. . . ."

At the conclusion of his remarks the President was whisked briskly back to the Union Station

where his train was waiting to carry him on west. A brief, unscheduled stop was made at Atlantic, where a crowd of 4,000 cheered Taft's endorsement of the candidacy of Congressman Walter I. Smith. The presidential train then continued to Council Bluffs, stopping there but a few moments before leaving the State.

In the fall of 1911, after occupying the White House for two and a half years, Taft made an extensive 46-day tour of the West and Mid-West, spending two days in Iowa. His position as head of the Republican party was being challenged by the Progressives and the tour was made "with the object of feeling the public pulse."

On the morning of September 28, he was introduced to his first Iowa audience at Council Bluffs, where, it is said, "2,000 citizens rubbed the sand out of their eyes at an early hour and gathered at the Illinois Central depot to greet the President." Governor Beryl F. Carroll, Iowa Congressmen, high-ranking State officials, and a large concourse of prominent citizens were on hand to welcome the President and to escort him across the State.

Leaving Council Bluffs, the presidential special passed through Woodbine, Arion, Denison, Rockwell City, and arrived at Fort Dodge, where it made a brief thirty-minute stop. Introduced to Fort Dodge citizens by Senator William S. Ken-

yon, the President paid high tribute to the late Senator Dolliver. "I am delighted," he said, "to be in Fort Dodge, the home of J. P. Dolliver. I knew him well and loved him. . . . As a statesman he was moved to the highest principles of integrity and patriotism, and as an orator his equal we seldom see."

From Fort Dodge the President's train moved on to Webster City, Iowa Falls, and Waterloo, where it arrived at 3:15 P. M. A parade was formed with "two big bands and two companies of militia, twenty-five automobile loads of people, notable in state and national politics, protected by a squad of twenty-five officers," and with a multitude of interested spectators. In introducing the city's distinguished guest, Attorney Benjamin F. Swisher paid high tribute to Taft, personally, when he said: "It is more than President Taft we are to hear today, for behind the president is William H. Taft, the man, conscientious, honest, and courageous." In response, the President paid tribute to Waterloo as a city of business, of manufacturing, and of industries, and then launched forth in one of his major addresses on the subject of "Government and Business." Although a drizzling rain had fallen at intervals throughout the day, the President's reception at Waterloo was spontaneous and genuine.

When the presidential party arrived in Des Moines on the morning of September 29, it was taken directly to the Grant Club where breakfast was served to invited guests, and where the informality and cordiality of the occasion made it one to be long remembered. President Taft, with his ready wit and jovial manner, was the "life of the party." Senator Cummins was one of the first to greet the President in Des Moines and welcome him to the capital city. Again, as in former years, political differences were by-passed while the President of the United States and the distinguished Senator from Iowa greeted each other cordially.

Taft's principal address in Des Moines was at the Coliseum. The large crowd which had assembled there responded with vigorous applause when Governor Carroll introduced Taft as "The president whose comprehension of public questions is as broad as the need of the land, and whose courage to do right is measured only by the limit of human ability." Taft waxed eloquent as he pleaded the cause of international arbitration as a means toward permanent peace. An arbitration court which had authority and in which the nations of the world would have confidence, he believed, would afford the best guarantee of permanent peace.

Leaving Des Moines, the presidential party moved on to Knoxville and Albia where cheering crowds waited to see and hear the Nation's Chief Executive. At Ottumwa there was a large parade in which the children from the public schools played a conspicuous part. In his address there the President again referred to the tariff question, discussed Canadian reciprocity, and commented upon the function of a presidential veto.

Bloomfield was the last Iowa town which the President visited on his extensive tour. There he was greeted with something in the nature of an old-fashioned torchlight parade. The train arrived at 9:15 P. M. and remained for twenty minutes. "Automobiles conveyed the guests over the famous Waubonsie trail to the public square where the big demonstration took place. Hundreds of people carried torches and shouted long and loud for President Taft." Bloomfield was Governor Carroll's home town. It was only fitting that the President and the Governor should receive a warm welcome there.

From Bloomfield President Taft and his party moved across the State line into Missouri, having been royally entertained for two days in the Hawkeye State.

JACOB A. SWISHER

Wilson in Iowa

President Woodrow Wilson made two trips to Iowa, both at rather crucial points in his career. The first was in 1916 when the country was turning its attention from domestic issues to the question of preparedness, and the second was in 1919 during the bitter Senate fight over the League of Nations. This was his last speaking tour which began September 4 in Ohio, and continued day and night all the way to the west coast and back to Pueblo, Colorado, where his health collapsed and he was forced to return to Washington. On both these visits the President spoke at the Coliseum in Des Moines and received a more than moderately warm welcome from a normally Republican state.

In 1916 Wilson's visit was part of a tour begun in January largely to call the attention of the North to the need for a greater army. That the issue of preparedness was to dominate the nation's interest through the approaching presidential election in the fall of the same year, is reflected in a cartoon by J. N. Darling appearing in the *Des Moines Register and Leader* just before Wilson's visit. The cartoon shows "Tariff" as a young

lady who is the deserted wallflower at the dance while an attractive young "Preparedness" has grouped around her caricatures of such prominent figures as William Jennings Bryan, Theodore Roosevelt, and the President himself. The war in Europe had clearly caused the popularity of the new issue, yet Wilson had managed not to commit himself to the likelihood of American participation. In fact, two days before his Des Moines appearance, he had solemnly promised in a speech at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, "I pledge you that, God helping, I will keep it [the nation] out of war."

The day before Wilson appeared (February 2), the Des Moines papers were full of descriptions of the preparations for his visit. "It will not be the mere recognition of the office," one paper declared, "it will be in large measure the welcome of the man." Iowa had voted for Wilson in 1912, in the electoral college, the first Democrat to receive such favor since Franklin Pierce. Now Iowans were turning out to welcome him.

All along his route into the State, crowds gathered at the station in below-zero weather. At Davenport, Iowa City, Grinnell, and Newton, Wilson spoke briefly from the rear platform of his train. Iowa City alone mustered 5,000 people, including many students from the University who

left their classes to greet him. At Grinnell, tragedy was narrowly avoided when the train began backing into the crowd as a mother was holding up her small child to shake hands with the President. Everywhere the crowd was not a little curious to see the President's bride, the much-talked-of former Mrs. Edith Galt, whom he had married less than three months before. People crowded around for a close look at the new Mrs. Wilson, and as the couple stepped off the train in Des Moines, a girl near the rope was heard to exclaim, "She looks just like her best pictures."

At the state capital, Governor George W. Clarke and Mayor James R. Hanna were on hand to welcome the President. There were other welcoming delegates, a motor procession, dinners for officials of the arrangements committee, and a parade, but the President and Mrs. Wilson dined alone at the Chamberlain Hotel on a menu specially prepared by the head chef, Frank Tyck. (The menu of the President's dinner appeared in the paper on the following day.) Crowds began collecting at the Coliseum by 4:30 and the roped-off block in front was completely filled by 6:00 P. M., a half-hour before the doors were open.

That evening nearly 8,500 heard President Wilson declare, "There is danger to our national life." This he gave as the reason "why greater

preparedness is necessary in the United States." The speech was received with enthusiasm and cheers, yet the conclusion the next day after the President's train had moved on to Kansas City was that Iowans were still not won over. "There seemed to be an impression on the train that Iowa's response to the president's appeal was less pronounced than that of states farther east. The message was heard with earnest interest, but there was that about the crowds that led one to feel that they were disposed to go home and think it over soberly rather than be convinced offhand of grave perils threatening the country from without." This seems to have been the President's impression, too. At any rate, the result of the journey was a conviction that it was best not to hasten the larger preparations which Secretary of War Garrison demanded.

When Wilson came to Iowa on September 6, 1919, preparedness and the war, too, were past events. The post-war period had brought the usual reaction to national solidarity which found one of its outlets in resentment against and delay in ratifying the Versailles Treaty. Wilson's impatience with the delay made "Save the Peace" his first purpose and the reason behind his tour of the country in the fall of 1919. It was a tour of desperation taxing all of his physical reserves and

made out of his deep conviction that a failure to support Article X and the League of Nations was a betrayal by Americans of the men who had fought the war.

Again Des Moines hung out the bunting and made elaborate preparations to welcome the President. This time he arrived with an airplane escort which met his train twenty miles out and hovered overhead as it pulled into the station. Governor William L. Harding and Mayor Thomas Fairweather were on hand to welcome him officially. Again there were parades and processions and huge crowds which gathered at the Coliseum and waited more than two hours to hear the President speak. People began to arrive before 6 o'clock and by 6:30, when the doors were opened, the crowd was immense. Nine thousand persons listened to him declare, "America is the make-weight in the fortunes of mankind. How long shall we be kept waiting for the answer whether the world shall trust or despise us?" The following day part of his speech was reprinted in a front-page box by the *Des Moines Register*. This excerpt, besides presenting one angle of the significance of the Senate delay over ratification, is a good example of Wilson's eloquence:

"There was another thing we wanted to do, that is done in this document (the peace of Ver-

sailles). We wanted to see that helpless people were nowhere in the world put at the mercy of unscrupulous enemies and masters. There is one pitiful example which is in the hearts of all of us. I mean the example of Armenia. There was a Christian people, helpless, at the mercy of a Turkish government which thought it the service of God to destroy them. And at this moment it is an open question whether the Armenian people will not, while we sit here and debate, be absolutely destroyed. When I think of words piled on words, of debate following debate, when these unspeakable things that cannot be handled until the debate is over are happening in these pitiful parts of the world, I wonder that men do not wake up to the moral responsibility of what they are doing.

"Great peoples are driven out upon a desert where there is no food and can be none, and they are compelled to die and then men, women and children are thrown into a common grave, so imperfectly covered up that here and there is a pitiful arm stretched out to heaven and there is no pity in the world. When shall we wake to the moral responsibility of this great occasion?"

"One of the glories of the great document which I brought back with me is this: That everywhere within the area of settlement covered by

the political questions involved in that treaty, peoples of that sort have been given their freedom and guaranteed their freedom.

“To reject that treaty, to alter that treaty, is to impair one of the first characters of mankind. And yet there are men who approach the question with passions, with private passion and party passion, who think only of some immediate advantage to themselves or to a group of their fellow countrymen, and who look at the thing with the jaundiced eyes of those who have some private purpose of their own.

“When at last, in the annals of mankind they are gibbeted, they will regret that the gibbet is so high.”

The emotion behind this plea was so evidently sincere that most Iowa editors, regardless of the political affiliations of their papers, were inclined to agree with the *Des Moines Register* that, “There is this to be said for President Wilson, he has always been on the large side.” Today as the peace following World War II likewise totters precariously, Wilson’s crusade which took him to Des Moines and caused his collapse twenty days later seems even more significant. As one editor said of him then, “It is the measure of big men that they are on the big side of big events.”

JEAN B. KERN

Comment by the Editor

THE PRESIDENTIAL PARADE

Presidential visits and presidential campaigns are always exciting. Iowans took an intense interest in the presidential campaigns of 1840 and 1844, but their territorial status prevented participation in those heated contests. Just a century ago, in 1848, when Iowans first voted for a president, not one of the three candidates — Lewis Cass, Zachary Taylor, or Martin Van Buren — entered the Hawkeye State. In contrast, in 1948, all three major presidential aspirants as well as their running mates have visited Iowa.

The first chief executive to come to Iowa was ex-President Millard Fillmore who boarded the steamboat *Golden Era* at Rock Island in 1854 to make the Grand Excursion to St. Paul. President Fillmore spoke on internal improvements and the great West at Davenport and also gave a brief talk at Dubuque. Aside from Fillmore, no president or ex-president visited Iowa until after the Civil War. Zachary Taylor and Abraham Lincoln both were in Iowa before they achieved the presidency.

Ten of the last fifteen presidents since Andrew

Johnson have paid one or more visits to Iowa — all of them during their term of office. Ulysses S. Grant was in Iowa on several occasions, but his speech delivered to the "Army of the Tennessee" at Des Moines on September 29, 1875, caused nation-wide comment. "Let us all labor to add all needful guarantees for the more perfect security of Free Thought, Free Speech, a Free Press, Pure Morals, unfettered Religious Sentiment, and of Equal Rights and Privileges to all men irrespective of Nationality, Color or Religion. Encourage free schools and resolve that not one dollar of money appropriated to their support, no matter how raised, shall be appropriated to the support of any sectarian school. Resolve that either the state or Nation, or both combined, shall support institutions of learning sufficient to afford to every child growing up in the land the opportunity of a good common school education, unmixed with sectarian, pagan or atheistical tenets. Leave the matter of religion to the family circle, the church and the private school supported entirely by private contribution. Keep the church and state forever separate. With these safeguards I believe the battles which created us 'the Army of the Tennessee' will not have been fought in vain." (*Palimpsest*, 6:409-421.)

The next three presidents following Grant

(Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur) apparently did not visit Iowa. On October 12, 1887, Grover Cleveland and his beautiful wife saw the famous Sioux City Corn Palace. After marveling at the prodigal resources of the Northwest, Cleveland declared the Sioux City Corn Palace was the "first new thing" he had seen on his trip.

President Benjamin Harrison, at the Ottumwa Coal Palace on October 9, 1890, expressed delight at the things of beauty made of familiar materials. "If I should attempt to interpret the lesson of this afternoon," President Harrison declared, "I should say that it was an illustration of how much that is artistic and graceful is to be found in the common things of life and if I should make an application of the lesson it would be to suggest that we might profitably carry into all our homes and into all neighborly intercourse the same transforming spirit."

The next four presidents — William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson — journeyed to Iowa on a number of occasions. Harding stumped Iowa prior to his election; Coolidge seems to have missed the Hawkeye State. In 1928, eighty years after Iowans first voted for a president, citizens of the Hawkeye State cast ballots for Herbert Hoover, a native of Iowa, and the first and only

man born west of the Mississippi to be elected president of the United States. Herbert Hoover visited Iowa both as a candidate and as president.

Possibly the most dramatic presidential visit occurred on September 3, 1936, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt met his chief political adversary, Governor Alfred M. Landon of Kansas, in a drought conference at Des Moines attended by a number of Midwestern governors. During a heated political campaign, Roosevelt and Landon dropped politics long enough to study the plight of the farmer. It was the only meeting of two presidential candidates in Iowa and probably one of the few times in American history that two aspirants for the position of chief executive met for joint discussion during a campaign.

American history, as well as Iowa history, can be linked with the coming of presidents to Iowa. McKinley, for example, was testing Iowa sentiment on annexation of the Philippines; preparedness and the League of Nations prompted Woodrow Wilson to visit the Hawkeye State. In every instance our presidents have received a warm and respectful welcome.

W. J. P.

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