

BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS

OF THE

SOLDIERS' HOME

AT

MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA.

---

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

---

DES MOINES:  
G. H. RAGSDALE, STATE PRINTER.  
1891.

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF IOWA SOLDIERS' HOME.

*To the General Assembly of Iowa:*

The Commissioners of the Iowa Soldiers' Home have the honor to submit the following report.

The last General Assembly made appropriations as follows:

For hospital building.....	\$25,000
For new building for boiler and electric light.....	12,000
For sewerage.....	1,250

As soon as practicable after these appropriations were made we had plans and specifications prepared for the hospital building and boiler house, and advertised for bids for the erection of these buildings. Mr. Atkinson of Marshalltown was the lowest responsible bidder, and the contract was awarded to him to furnish the material for and erect the hospital building, including plumbing and steam heating, also to erect the boiler house and to furnish the boilers.

The work was done and materials furnished in strict accordance with the contract, and were entirely satisfactory to the commissioners. Mr. Atkinson merits commendation for the honest and faithful discharge of his duties as contractor of this work. For statement of cost of these improvements see treasurer's report.

It has at all times been the policy of the commission in its expenditures for new buildings or other improvements to keep within the respective appropriations placed at its disposal, and the buildings above mentioned, together with the electric light plant and other improvements, have been made for about \$600 less than the amount appropriated therefor.

The hospital is 131 feet in length, 60 feet wide, with two stories above the basement with spacious verandahs and balconies. On the first floor are the surgeon's rooms, dispensary, reception room and matron's room, and seven dormitories, and dining room, 18

42 feet, in the rear of which is a kitchen 20x30 feet. On the second floor there are eight wards and dormitories. The water closets and baths for each floor are in a tower 18x25 feet, reached by a well ventilated vestibule. Great care was taken to secure good ventilation and to have the building erected upon the most approved plans for buildings of this character. It is a worthy monument of the gratitude of the State to those broken and feeble persons for whom it was erected.

A somewhat detailed statement of what the character of the improvements made during the last two years, and of the number admitted to the home, the cost of maintaining it and other information concerning it will be found in the commandant's report.

Of the one hundred and seventy-five who have been discharged during the four (4) years since the house was established one hundred and fifty-nine were honorably discharged upon their own request and sixteen were discharged for violation of rules, and of the sixteen so discharged eight were re-admitted upon promises to obey the rules. Many of those honorably discharged were men with families who have received pensions and prefer to remain with their families.

Believing that these men whose weaknesses and infirmities were brought upon them while risking their lives in camp and upon the battle field in the defense of their country were entitled to the most considerate treatment we have demanded for them the largest individual liberty consistent with the general welfare of the home. It has been, and is our purpose so far as practicable, to provide for the peace, comfort, and welfare of those whose disabilities and misfortunes have compelled them to become inmates of this institution. If, however, any member is purposely, persistently and notoriously violating the rules and by his example demoralizing others so that many who are well disposed are deprived of the peace and comfort which the home should afford them, it is in our judgment wiser that such members should suffer the penalty of a discharge than that many others should be robbed of the blessings which the home was intended to give them.

The present rule in relation to discharges was adapted in July, 1890, and is as follows:

"In all cases before an inmate of the house shall be discharged by the commandant, written charges shall be filed stating the offense or offenses charged, and such inmate shall be furnished with a copy of the charges and shall be notified of the place and time of hearing and that he may appear and make defense to such

charge or charges. Whenever an inmate is discharged the commandant shall report such discharge to the commission at its next meeting and the facts upon which it is based. Any discharged inmate shall be informed in writing at the time of his discharge that if he feels aggrieved with the action of the commandant he can appear before the commission at its next meeting and be heard upon an application for re-admission."

There have been no discharges except upon request since the adoption of this rule.

Of the fifty-three dropped from the rolls because absent without leave ten have been re-admitted. If a member stays away sixty days after the expiration of his leave of absence, he is dropped from the rolls.

It is now quite apparent that all of the available room will be required for those who will desire places in the home and it is doubtful whether our present accommodations will enable us to provide for all who may apply for admission. The present chapel is on the first floor above the basement and opens into the main hall. It would make a good dormitory and if used for that purpose we could care for about forty more men than can now be provided for. If we take the chapel for this purpose there will be no room for entertainments, or religious or funeral services; we therefore concur in the suggestions of the commandant that an appropriation of \$7,500 be made for the erection of a hall or building which can be used for a chapel and for such entertainments and social gatherings as are incident to an institution of this character.

There are no buildings upon the grounds which can be used by the quarter-master or adjutant for their families and they are compelled to live some considerable distance from their work. We believe it would be wise for the State to provide the necessary accommodations for them upon the home grounds and we recommend an appropriation of seven thousand and five hundred dollars for the erection of suitable buildings for residence for the officers of the home.

There is at present a large basin or depression near the end of the main building and in front of the hospital which we attempted to use for a lake, but it was abandoned because of the cost of pumping water, this should be filled and other grading done. We ask for \$3,000 to be used upon the grounds.

A large majority of the members have made applications for pensions under the dependent pension act and very many are now in receipt of regular pensions. At our April meeting we directed

that a statement be made showing the number receiving pensions and the amount paid them. The following is the statement as given by the commandant:

NUMBER.	AMOUNT PAID EACH PER MONTH.	NUMBER.	AMOUNT PAID EACH PER MONTH.
11	\$ 2.00	6	\$ 17.00
30	4.00	2	18.00
1	5.00	1	20.00
34	6.00	2	22.00
57	8.00	4	24.00
15	10.00	2	30.00
57	12.00	1	45.00
4	14.00	1	72.00
4	16.00		

The law establishing the Home provides that it shall be for "All honorably discharged soldiers, sailors and marines who have served in the army or navy of the United States, and who are disabled by disease, wounds or otherwise." It also provides that the Commissioners shall have power to "make rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the laws and constitution of the State, for the management and government of the Home."

The members of the Home are supplied with the necessary clothing, with an abundant supply of wholesome food, beds and bedding, and with medicines and medical attendance when required; tobacco is also furnished to those who use and desire it. They are at all times supplied with all that is essential to their health and comfort.

Under the law, if an applicant is disabled and draws a pension of from \$10 to \$20 per month, and his condition is such that with his pension he cannot properly support and provide for himself, we admit him. In such instances should the State furnish him with all the necessities of life and allow him to keep the whole of his pension money?

If he has relatives dependent upon him should he be required to give a portion to them, and if no such relatives should he pay a part of it to the State, which furnishes him with all that is essential to his personal welfare?

We cannot believe the Legislature intended to provide for those who, by reason of a pension or other income, have the means to provide for themselves, nor can we believe it was intended to exclude those whose pension is insufficient to support them. It is believed that nearly all of the members whose income is not sufficient to support them would prefer to remain in the home and pay

to the State all of their pension in excess of \$24 or \$36 per year, rather than leave it.

In our judgment, if at the time of making his application for admission, the applicant has, or afterwards receives, a pension sufficient in amount to provide for his wants, he should not be allowed a place in the Home. We have accordingly adopted the following rule:

"Persons who have property or means for their support, or who draw a pension sufficient therefor, will not be admitted to the Home, and if after admission an inmate shall receive a pension or other means sufficient for his support, or shall recover his health so far as to enable him to support himself, he will be discharged from the Home."

We are also of the opinion that the member's pension, in excess of three dollars per month, should be given to his dependent relatives or to the State. In this connection the proceedings of the Superintendents of State Soldiers' Home, at a meeting held in Dayton, Ohio, may prove of interest. After a thorough discussion of the matter they adopted the following resolutions:

"WHEREAS, The pensions of ex-soldiers are granted by the United States Government, which is primarily responsible for the maintenance of its disabled defenders, as a total or partial means of support for the recipients or their families, proportionate to the degree of disability, and,

"WHEREAS, The obligation of the State government to care for the disabled veterans of the war is only secondary in its nature, extending to the men whom the general government has failed to provide for, yet whom humanity and patriotism forbid should be allowed to suffer; therefore,

"Resolved, That when an ex-soldier becomes a charge on any State government it should be the privilege of the State authorities to require the pension of such ex-soldier, if he be in receipt of a pension, to be applied to the support of his family, or dependent relatives, or in the absence of such dependents to be turned into the treasury of the State institution caring for him.

"Resolved, That this meeting recommends to the managing authorities of all State Soldiers' Homes that the surrender of a fair proportion of the pensions of members for the benefit of dependents, or of the Home, be made a condition of the admission and retention of pensioners in such Homes."

We call attention to this subject that the General Assembly may take action in the matter if it shall seem desirable.

The number of men in the hospital is gradually increasing, and the expense of maintaining it and providing for the sick will be larger in the future than in the past two years.

By the contract entered into with the city of Marshalltown at the time of the location of the Home the city agreed to supply the Home with water for a period of five years without charge, and after that time for the actual cost of pumping. This will be an item of considerable importance. We have not as yet made agreements for a future supply, and cannot now say what the cost will be. We recommend that an appropriation of two thousand dollars be made, to be used by the board in furnishing a system of water supply for the Home if in their opinion it will be wiser and more economical for the State than to take it from the city.

It will be seen by the foregoing that we have asked for appropriations as follows:

A chapel.....	\$7,500
Two buildings for officers of the Home.....	7,500
Improvements on grounds.....	3,000
For water-works.....	2,000

We attach hereto the reports of the Commandant and Treasurer. All of which is most respectfully submitted.

N. A. MERRILL, *President.*

J. J. RUSSELL.

S. L. DOWS.

C. W. BURDICT.

## COMMANDANT'S REPORT.

CAPT. N. A. MERRILL, *President Iowa Soldiers Commission:*

DEAR SIR:— I have the honor to present the following report of the operations and conditions of the Iowa Soldiers' Home. Since the last biennial report on the 30th day of June, 1889, there has been three hundred and forty-eight members admitted, making a total of seven hundred and forty-three since the home was opened. Of that number one hundred and seventy-five have been discharged, sixty-nine have died and fifty-three dropped from the rolls for being absent without leave, leaving four hundred and forty-six belonging. There are three hundred and twenty-six present and one hundred and twenty absent, with leave mostly on thirty days furlough. The average number belonging for the two years was three hundred and seventy-nine, and the average age of all is fifty-seven years. Since the last report forty have died, and in every instance they have died of disease with which they were afflicted when they entered the Home. The general health of the members is remarkably good. The construction of the hospital boiler room and electric light added largely to the comfort of the sick and enabled the surgeon to take much better care of the sick than ever before.

The hospital has fully met the expectations of its friends and is in every respect well adapted to the purpose for which it was built. The hospital, boiler house, electric light plant, and sewer cost \$37,649.83—\$600.17 less than the amount appropriated for the purpose. The tunnel, piping and work to connect the new boiler room with the main building cost \$2,290.88, they were all completed and in use by the tenth day of December, 1890, and have all proved entirely satisfactory.

The commissioners were very fortunate in the selection of all their contractors; they were prompt as to time and worked faithfully up to the specifications and gave the Home in all respects good work and no extras were paid on any contract. The hospital is sixty by one hundred and thirty-one feet and two stories high,

has a capacity of eighty beds, making four hundred and forty that can be cared for in both buildings.

The hospital has now fifty patients and they can be cared for in the very best possible manner as it contains all the conveniences for caring for the sick that could be desired.

The electric light cost \$3,588.15 and has a capacity of 300 incandescent lights, and has thus far given entire satisfaction and comes up fully to the guarantee of the contractors.

The boiler room has four boilers fifty-four inches in diameter and sixteen feet long, all connected. One is used for cooking and running the electric light, and the other three when needed for heating the buildings. During the coldest weather last winter we were able to heat both buildings with two boilers, leaving us one at all times in reserve to provide against accidents. There is also room in the building for another boiler of the same size if the time should ever come that there was a necessity for more heat. All the buildings have proved entirely satisfactory, and fully capable of performing all that can reasonably be required of them.

There has been expended in the two years for improvements of grounds \$2,132.88, for support of the members \$89,807.15, and for expense of commissioners \$1,797.73. The cost of subsistence on the table from June 30, 1889, to June 30, 1890, was \$17,359.18 equals 16 1-6 cent per ration. The cost from June 30, 1890, to June 30, 1891, was \$22,432 equals 16 3/4 cents per ration. The average number of members from June 30, 1889, to June 30, 1890 was 284; from June 30, 1890, to June 30, 1891, was 353. The average number present and absent from 1889 to 1890, was 335; from 1890 to 1891, was 423, and the average for the two years, 379. The cost of clothing was \$13.46 per man per year, and the total cost per man per year \$141.79, not including the income from the farm. In ordinary years the farm will provide all the vegetables required for the use of the home. The present indications are that the supply will be ample for the coming year.

There are at this time two hundred and thirty-three pensioners in the Home and this number is rapidly increasing, under the pension law of June 27, 1890, nearly every member of the Home who is not already a pensioner, will get a pension; eighty-three of those receiving \$6, \$8, \$12 are under the pension law of June 27, 1890, and most of them at \$12 per month and the amount in the aggregate will be so large that it becomes an important question what disposition shall be made of it. When the members have a dependant family the question is easily answered, but there is a large

majority here who have no one depending upon them, and some who have no known relatives in this country and some who have no known relatives living anywhere, and these classes constitute the bulk of the pensioners that will remain here. Many take their discharges from the Home as soon as they receive their money, and it is generally those who have families that they desire to live with, but the bulk of the money will either accumulate in the Home or be spent by the pensioners for useless and unnecessary articles that will in no manner add to their comfort, as everything needed is furnished by the Home, and the amount beyond what is furnished is so small that a very little money each month would be amply sufficient to supply them with everything they ought to have, and there are many who are so demented as to be totally incompetent to care for their money, and others who, from their habits of life, have become incompetent and whose money must be cared for in some way or they will become a constant annoyance.

The present indications are that both buildings will be taxed to their full capacity during the next two years, and the application that each member is required to sign before admission should require the applicant to state under oath whether he has the means of support, or whether he has relatives who are able and liable for his maintenance; and the question of pensions should have immediate attention, that provision can be made for those that are incapable of caring for themselves, and also as to what amount of pension should exclude a soldier from the home. When a soldier is able to care for himself, it is suggested that \$24 per month is sufficient, if properly used, to keep him comfortably.

The improvements needed are two cottages, for the adjutant and quartermaster, and a chapel for religious services, the present chapel in the building, owing to the peculiar construction of the building, is not well adapted for religious services, the noise of people walking in the main halls and in different parts of the building interferes very materially with the quiet use of the chapel, and the present room could be used as an additional dormitory, and would increase the capacity of the home forty beds. A chapel that would be sufficient for the use of the home can be built for \$5,000, and the cottages can be built for \$2,500 each; total for two, \$5,000. There will be needed for improvement of grounds, \$2,000. The expenses will be increased during the next two years the cost of the water supply. As the contract with the city of Marshalltown expires next March, and the contract of the Chicago & Northwestern for

January	6.	Col. Smith, hay, hogs and barrels sold	\$ 103.27
February	5.	State order.....	4,280.00
February	7.	Col. Smith, freight rebate.....	45.54
March	5.	State order.....	4,370.00
April	6.	State order.....	4,400.00
May	7.	State order.....	4,440.00
May	9.	Col. Smith, rebate on oil.....	50.00
June	10.	State order.....	4,500.00

1889.

## DISBURSEMENTS.

August	17.	Col. Smith, July disbursements.....	\$ 2,299.07
September	13.	Col. Smith, August disbursements...	2,109.41
October	9.	Col. Smith, September disbursements	2,329.82
November	20.	Col. Smith, October disbursements...	2,590.66
December	7.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	2,669.71

1890.

January	9.	Col. Smith, December disbursements.	3,353.18
February	12.	Col. Smith, January disbursements..	3,770.58
March	12.	Col. Smith, February disbursements..	2,212.08
April	15.	Col. Smith, March disbursements....	2,268.52
May	9.	Col. Smith, April disbursements.....	2,401.94
May	14.	Temporary transfer to salary fund...	2,000.00
June	3.	Printing and supplies for Secretary..	15.95
June	16.	Col. Smith, May disbursements.....	2,450.83
July	15.	Col. Smith, June disbursements.....	2,229.34
August	16.	Col. Smith, July disbursements.....	2,711.22
September	12.	Col. Smith, August disbursements...	2,326.75
October	10.	Col. Smith, September disbursements	2,271.13
November	11.	Col. Smith, October disbursements...	3,399.96
December	11.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	3,663.89
December	11.	Temporary transfer to boiler house fund.....	2,164.76

1891.

January	16.	Temporary transfer to boiler house fund.....	1,985.76
January	16.	Col. Smith, December disbursements.	4,797.08
February	16.	Temporary transfer to boiler house fund.....	1,183.33
February	16.	Col. Smith, January disbursements..	3,290.39
March	13.	Col. Smith, February disbursements.	3,786.80
April	15.	Col. Smith, March disbursements....	3,418.78
May	15.	Temporary transfer to boiler house fund.....	250.00
May	15.	Col. Smith, April disbursements.....	3,708.40
June	16.	Col. Smith, May disbursements.....	3,619.19
June	29.	Temporary transfer to sewer fund...	323.86
July	10.	Col. Smith, June disbursements.....	2,989.50
		Exchange.....	96.15
		Expenses and salaries of commissioners.....	1,797.73
		Balance on hand June 30, 1891.....	16,530.61

\$ 97,016.38 \$ 97,016.38

## SALARY FUND.

## RECEIPTS.

1889.			
July	1.	Balance on hand last report.....	\$ 994.95
July	6.	State order.....	500.00
August	3.	State order.....	500.00
September	6.	State order.....	500.00
October	9.	State order.....	500.00
November	16.	State order.....	500.00
December	4.	State order.....	500.00
1890.			
January	4.	State order.....	500.00
February	8.	State order.....	500.00
March	7.	State order.....	500.00
April	10.	State order.....	500.00
May	14.	Temporary transfer from support fund.....	2,000.00
May	19.	State order.....	500.00
June	11.	State order.....	500.00
July	22.	State order.....	800.00
August	6.	State order.....	800.00
September	10.	State order.....	821.00
October	8.	State order.....	800.00
November	8.	State order.....	850.00
December	5.	State order.....	1,050.00
1891.			
January	6.	State order.....	1,050.00
February	5.	State order.....	1,050.00
March	5.	State order.....	1,050.00
April	6.	State order.....	1,050.00
May	7.	State order.....	1,050.00
June	10.	State order.....	1,050.00

## DISBURSEMENTS.

1889.			
August	17.	Col. Smith, July disbursements.....	\$ 540.83
September	15.	Col. Smith, August disbursements...	564.07
October	10.	Col. Smith, September disbursements	578.48
November	20.	Col. Smith, October disbursements..	656.68
December	7.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	716.93
1890.			
January	9.	Col. Smith, December disbursements	746.83
February	12.	Col. Smith, January disbursements..	751.09
March	12.	Col. Smith, February disbursements.	731.42
April	13.	Col. Smith, March disbursements....	724.74
May	9.	Col. Smith, April disbursements.....	773.11
June	17.	Col. Smith, May disbursements.....	790.51
July	15.	Col. Smith, June disbursements.....	756.04
August	16.	Col. Smith, July disbursements.....	779.53
September	12.	Col. Smith, August disbursements...	821.65

October	10.	Col. Smith, September disbursements	\$ 809.45	
November	10.	Col. Smith, October disbursements	844.50	
December	10.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	936.08	
1891.				
January	16.	Col. Smith, December disbursements	973.65	
February	16.	Col. Smith, January disbursements	997.77	
March	13.	Col. Smith, February disbursements	1,013.20	
April	15.	Col. Smith, March disbursements	988.07	
May	15.	Col. Smith, April disbursements	940.15	
June	16.	Col. Smith, May disbursements	1,003.56	
July	10.	Col. Smith, June disbursements	1,047.36	
		Balance on hand June 30, 1891	930.96	
			\$ 20,415.95	\$ 20,415.95

## IMPROVEMENTS ON GROUNDS.

## RECEIPTS.

1889.				
July	1.	Balance on hand last report		\$ 1,815.61

## DISBURSEMENTS.

1889.				
August	17.	Col. Smith, July disbursements	\$ 262.56	
September	15.	Col. Smith, August disbursements	316.73	
October	9.	Col. Smith, September disbursements	55.95	
November	21.	Col. Smith, October disbursements	19.17	
December	7.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	12.68	
1890.				
June	16.	Col. Smith, May disbursements	39.94	
July	15.	Col. Smith, June disbursements	219.34	
August	16.	Col. Smith, July disbursements	86.38	
October	10.	Col. Smith, September disbursements	17.75	
December	11.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	45.52	
1891.				
January	16.	Col. Smith, December disbursements	97.60	
June	15.	Col. Smith, May disbursements	641.99	
			\$ 1,815.61	\$ 1,815.61

## BARN, HORSES, CATTLE, ETC.

1889.				
July	1.	Balance on hand last report		\$ 42.81
		Balance on hand June 30, 1891	\$ 42.81	
			\$ 42.81	\$ 42.81

## COAL HOUSE.

1889.				
July	1.	Balance on hand last report		\$ 2.97
		Balance on hand June 30, 1891	\$ 2.97	
			\$ 2.97	\$ 2.97

## BEDS, BEDDING AND CLOTHING.

1889.				
July	1.	Balance on hand last report		\$ 880.00

## DISBURSEMENTS.

1889.				
November	26.	Col. Smith, October disbursements	\$ 778.28	
December	7.	Col. Smith, November disbursements	101.72	
			\$ 880.00	\$ 880.00

## SEWER FUND.

## RECEIPTS.

1890.				
June	26.	State order		\$ 600.00
1891.				
June	29.	Temporary transfer from support fund		323.86

## DISBURSEMENTS.

1890.				
June	8.	Col. Smith, May disbursements	\$ 332.04	
September	12.	Col. Smith, August disbursements	591.82	
			\$ 923.86	\$ 923.86

## HOSPITAL BUILDING.

## RECEIPTS.

1890.				
June	26.	State order		\$ 2,000.00
August	16.	State order		3,000.00
September	27.	State order		2,500.00
October	20.	State order		4,000.00
November	12.	State order		1,000.00
November	12.	State order (due May 1, 1891)		7,387.50
November	12.	State order (due October 1, 1891)		7,387.50

## DISBURSEMENTS.

1890.				
July	9.	John Atkinson, contractor	\$ 2,000.00	
August	16.	John Atkinson, contractor	3,000.00	
September	29.	John Atkinson, contractor	2,500.00	
October	20.	John Atkinson, contractor	4,000.00	
November	17.	John Atkinson, contractor	1,000.00	
November	17.	John Atkinson, contractor (order due May 1, 1891)	7,387.50	
November	17.	John Atkinson, contractor (order due October 1, 1891)	7,387.50	
			\$ 27,275.00	\$ 27,275.00



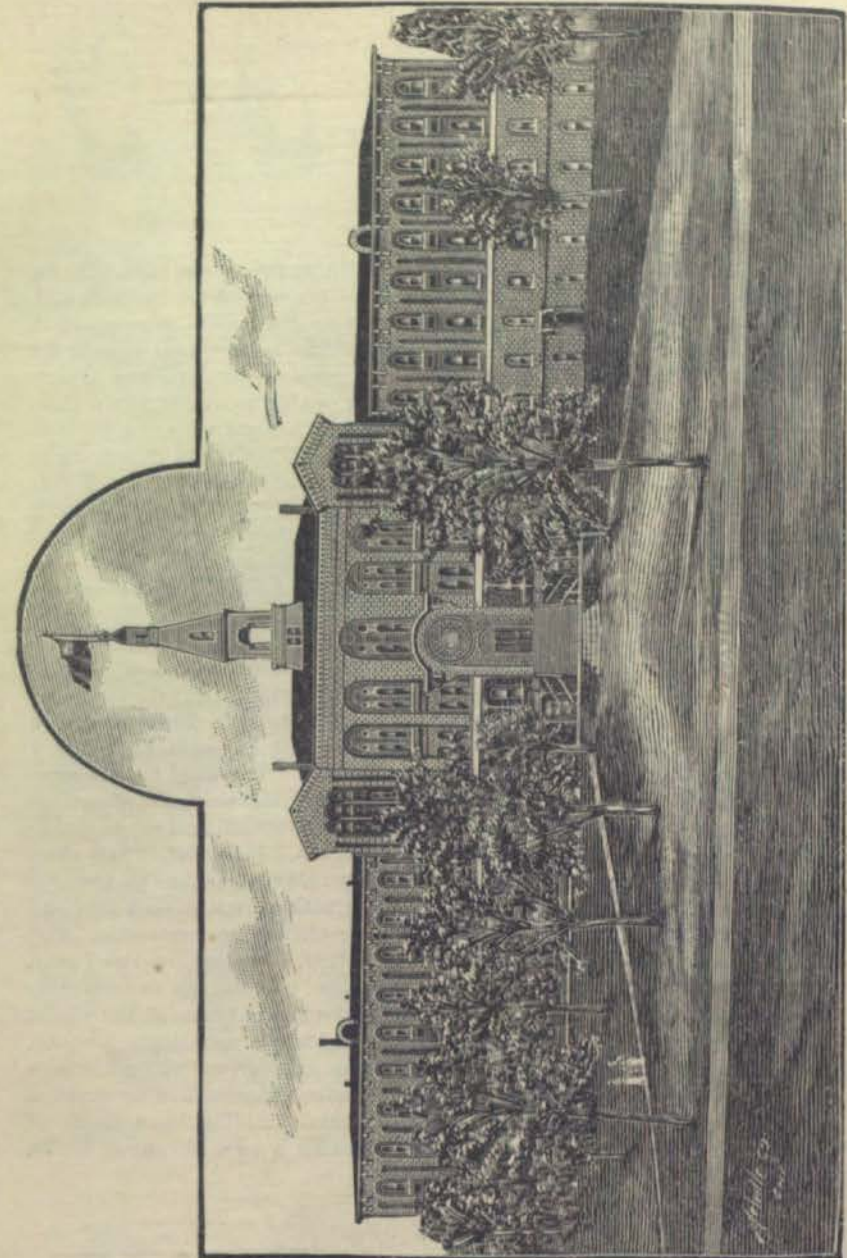
BOILER HOUSE AND ELECTRIC LIGHT.

RECEIPTS.

1890.			
November	12.	State order.....	\$ 6,000.00
December	11.	Temporary transfer from support fund.....	2,164.76
1891.			
January	16.	Temporary transfer from support fund.....	1,985.76
February	16.	Temporary transfer from support fund.....	1,183.33
May	15.	Temporary transfer from support fund.....	250.00

DISBURSEMENTS.

1890.			
November	17.	John Atkinson, contractor.....	\$ 2,275.00
December	11.	Boiler room plant.....	1,821.02
December	11.	Furniture and fixtures.....	2,847.25
December	11.	Electric light works.....	1,221.49
1891.			
January	16.	Col. Smith, December disbursements.	1,985.76
February	16.	Col. Smith, January disbursements..	1,183.33
May	15.	E. G. Arnaud, architect.....	250.00
		\$ 11,583.85	\$ 11,583.85



MAIN BUILDING.