



*Pieces of Iowa's Past*, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the legislative session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All historical publications are reproduced here with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

January 16, 2008

### THIS WEEK: Iowa Mottoes

**BACKGROUND: *The Palimpsest*:** Benjamin F. Shambaugh, was the superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa for forty years, professor of political economy at the University of Iowa, and one of the founders of the “new social science” at the turn of the 20th century. He launched two popular publications *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* and the popular journal, *The Palimpsest* (now called *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*).

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*The Palimpsest*, October 1924 - By Bruce E Mahan

In February 1847 a committee of State Senators—Thomas H. Benton, Jr., Francis Springer and Phillip P. Bradley suggested that this motto become part of the State seal. “Our liberties we prize, and our rights we will maintain”. The wood cut of the “First Seal of Iowa” does not include this motto.

Another well known Iowa motto is the statement chiseled into a block of “marble” contributed by Iowa for the Washington Monument. The block of “marble” came from a quarry in Van Buren County owned by Moses B. Root. In 1850 a committee of three State Senators and three Representatives was appointed to recommend a suitable inscription. Senator George G. Wright, committee chairman invited several people to suggest appropriate mottoes. The motto submitted by Lieutenant Governor Enoch W. Eastman was adopted. “Iowa: the affections of her people, like the rivers of her borders, flow to an inseparable Union.”

A well known slogan by Sidney A. Foster sometimes appears with slight variations. Foster’s exact declaration in 1886, “In all that is good, Iowa affords the best.”

When the Des Moines Register began a slogan contest for the best advertising slogan for Iowa in 1923 the five hundred dollar prize went to C.W. Christensen of Des Moines for his slogan, “Horace Greeley meant Iowa.”