



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.

THIS WEEK: Governor Herring's Message of State Economic Optimism

BACKGROUND:



Governor Clyde Herring

Clyde LaVerne Herring (1879-1945), a Senator from Iowa; born in Jackson, Jackson County, Mich., May 3, 1879; attended the public schools; moved to Detroit, Mich., in 1897; served as a private in Company D, Third Michigan Regiment, in the Spanish-American War; moved to Colorado Springs, Colo., and engaged in ranching 1902-1906; moved to Massena, Iowa, and engaged in agricultural pursuits 1906-1908; entered the automobile business in Atlantic, Iowa, 1908-1910; moved to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1910 and continued in the automobile business; during the First World War served with the Iowa National Guard on the Mexican border; unsuccessful candidate for Governor of Iowa in 1920; unsuccessful candidate for election to the United States Senate in 1922; member of the Democratic National Committee of Iowa 1924-1928; Governor of Iowa 1933-1937; elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate for the term beginning January 3, 1937, but did not qualify until the expiration of his term as Governor, and served from January 15, 1937, to January 3, 1943; unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1942; senior assistant administrator in the Office of Price Administration 1943; resumed the automobile business in Des Moines, Iowa; died in Washington, D.C., September 15, 1945; interment in Glendale Cemetery, Des Moines, Iowa.

**From the Journal of the House
January 15, 1935**

GOVERNOR HERRING'S MESSAGE (Excerpt)

To the Senate and House of the Forty-sixth General Assembly of Iowa:

Two years ago I came before you at a time when the tide of adversity was running high; when our country had fallen upon evil days; when men of courage had all but lost hope. Today the sun is again shining and hope and confidence fill the hearts and souls of men.

If we but take measure of our possessions in spirit and in opportunity, we will find much that was not ours two years ago. One of the priceless things of life is the human tendency to forget evil and pain and want, while at the same time remembering that which is good. It is fortunate for humanity that we thus forget and thus remember. Of the two, I think, perhaps, the ability to forget is the most essential to happiness, but it is sometimes necessary that we give thought to the past that we may rightly judge the present.

That you may look upon today in the knowledge of yesterday, I wish you to read briefly from the opening paragraphs of my message to you two years ago. I then said:

“You are met as the 45th General Assembly of Iowa in one of the darkest hours of our history. This session transcends in importance those of previous years for reasons which are distressingly plain. Our principal basic industry is prostrate. With corn selling in a typical Iowa county at twelve cents a bushel, oats at eight cents a bushel, hogs at two cents and cattle at one to four cents a pound, our farmers are not realizing production costs. Bank failures, actions in foreclosure of rural and urban homes, and of stocks of merchants, constitute a large part of the business of our courts. Few of our industries are operating at a profit, and in many of them operations are stopped. Men and women eagerly seeking the opportunity to earn their living can find no work. Despair is in the heart of the debtor, and mute appeal for help, in the faces of our heavily burdened citizens.”

As I repeat this paragraph today, it does not seem possible that the statements therein could be true; that corn sold for ten or twelve cents, oats for eight cents, hogs for two cents and cattle for four cents and less; that banks were failing everywhere; that mortgages were in course of foreclosure in all our courts; that men despaired and that hope had fled, and yet every statement was then true, but true no longer.

We have not scaled the heights, nor are we wholly out of the shadow into the sunlight, nor is full accomplishment as yet ours, but we are steadfastly marching forward. Our forces are united, marching in even step. They are confident, they are hopeful.