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May 11, 2011

THIS WEEK: Governor Kirkwood :" . . . what my state could do for you."

BACKGROUND The Fourth reunion of **the Pioneer Lawmakers Association** assembled in the auditorium of the Young Men's Christian Association Building at Des Moines, on the 14th day of February, 1894, at 9 a.m., and were called to order by Hon. George G. Wright, President.

H.O. Weaver served in the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Iowa General Assemblies. The youngest member of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth General Assembly, the Hon. H. O. Weaver of Louisa County was 27 years old when he took office in 1894. It was the first public office he had held. Born and raised in the county that sent him to the legislature, his constituents paid him a very high compliment. Though untried in legislative circles, he entered the field well equipped with a thorough education backed by plenty of common sense. He was born in Marshall Township, Louisa County, April 20, 1866. His early years were spent at his father's home, working on the farm in summer and attending village school during the winter months. In his eighteenth year, he entered a preparatory school at Columbus Junction, Iowa. He remained here several terms, spending his vacations in the store of Dr. W. H. Darrow, a brother-in-law. During the winter of 1886, he taught a country school in Muscatine County, and the following fall, he entered the State University of Iowa as a member of the freshman class. Four years later, he graduated with the class of 1891, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The following year, by close application, he was able to complete the law course of the same school. Being admitted to the practice of law in June 1893, he at once formed a partnership with the Hon. L. A. Kiley, member of the Twenty-first and

Twenty-second General Assemblies at Wapello, Iowa. The firm had a branch office at Columbus Junction, Iowa.

Speaker Stone said:

I now have the pleasure of introducing the youngest member of our House, H.O. Weaver, of Louisa county.

Mr. Weaver said:

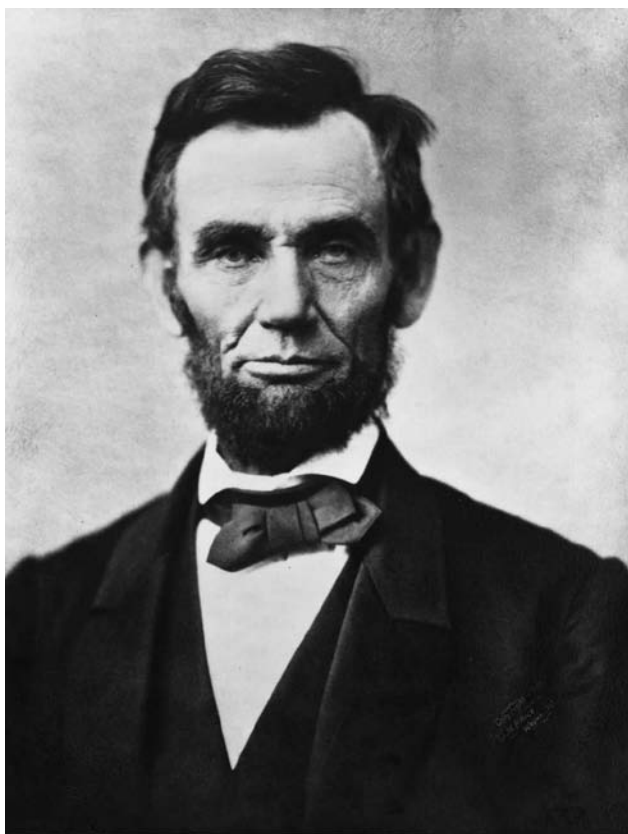
Mr. Speaker and Pioneer Law-makers of the State of Iowa—I deem it no disparaging title to be the youngest member of the Twenty-fifth General Assembly, nor do I consider it a small honor to be called upon to respond on an occasion like this. For it is indeed your work that has brought us here, not that we are here to overturn the work which you have done, but merely to broaden and widen the foundation you so artfully constructed. Many of the questions which you have dealt with have given place to problems corresponding with the advancement and development of the State. Many of you whom I see here this afternoon dealt with the small Territory along the eastern part of the State with a modified government thereof, and we are here as members of the Twenty-fifth General Assembly to enact laws to cover ninety-nine well-governed counties. You dealt, many of you, with turnpikes and the natural courses of streams. We are here to provide government for railroads in almost every civil township within the borders of the State. Where once the surveyor chained the western prairies we to-day enact municipal laws for that region. And when I look into your faces this afternoon I feel like repeating the words of the sage, that "Surely the sower has seen his grain garnered." Our institutions of the State of Iowa are but the mere reflection of the lives and character of those men who came here and molded our early laws and institutions. It is but the mere outgrowth of those pioneers whose spirit was for the upbuilding of a broad commonwealth and our State has advanced in correspondence with them. From the time of the first territorial legislature in Burlington in 1838, and in the old stone structure in Iowa City until here to-day in the center of so vast a population we are sheltered with this magnificent structure, has the progress of our



Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood

institutions kept pace with the intelligence of our people. Who among us this afternoon can estimate the influence of these characters upon the early institutions of the State. Mr. Speaker, I am reminded that you have among you to-day one from whose life I could write the history of many of our several institutions. Many years ago a son desirous to take up the study of law appealed to his father, who not only undertook the instruction of his own son, but also the sons of several of his ambitious neighbors, and this system of instruction grew, and the number of students grew and more teachers were added until to-day we have as the product of this school the law department of the State University, which is second to none, I may say, to any state institutions of the nation. This same individual has interpreted our statutes and given us the basis for our law, which placed him beside the most eminent jurist of our nation. It is useless for me to refer to that, your honor, at present, but while I gaze into the faces here of those who yet

linger among us, I am reminded of another character who is not present today, but whose influence we must all feel; a man who from the earliest inception of the institutions of this State has given his entire time to the upbuilding of the broad commonwealth; a man who was, I might say, the founder of our banking system—of our currency; a man who controlled the affairs of this State in the darkest of its existence, at a time when neighbors were brought face to face in the struggles that followed. When the homes of the busy villagers were hushed, the work-shop closed—it was at such a time that he was called upon to protect an endangered nation, with not a dollar in the treasury. It was during such hours as these that the governors of the northern states were debating as to the best policy to adopt in the interest of the union, and in consequence they assembled at Washington



President Abraham Lincoln

to consult President Lincoln in person. Mr. Lincoln consulted each one of them with a view to ascertaining their wishes, and as he approached the last one of those governors he extended his hand with the remark, "Well, Governor, what can I do for your State?" and the man whom he addressed arose from his chair, and with a voice that never was known to falter in time of need, replied: " I came here not to find out what you could do for my State, but I came here to find out what my State could do for you." That man was Samuel J. Kirkwood . . .