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March 13, 2013

THIS WEEK: Judge Reuben Noble Praises the Iowa State Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

BACKGROUND: REUBEN NOBLE

REUBEN NOBLE was born on the 14th of April, 1821, in Ada County, Mississippi, where his father was a farmer. When he was eighteen years of age, Noble began to study law and was admitted to the bar at twenty-one. In 1843, he came to Iowa, making his home at Garnavillo, in Clayton County.

In 1854, Noble was elected to the legislature as a free soil Whig and upon the organization of the House was chosen Speaker, serving in the regular session of 1854 and extraordinary session of 1855. At the first Republican State Convention of 1856, he was placed at the head of the ticket for presidential elector. Four years later, he was a delegate to the National Convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln for president. Up to the time of the attempt of the Republicans to remove President Johnson by impeachment, Noble had been a prominent leader of that party. But approving of the policies of the President, he left the Republicans and from that time became a Democrat.

In 1866, Noble was nominated by the Democrats for Representative in Congress but was defeated by William B. Allison. In 1886, he was one of the organizers of the Pioneer Lawmakers' Association and was its first president, never missing a session during the remainder of his life. Noble was the leader of the bar of northeastern Iowa beginning in 1850. As a compliment to his high standing and eminent qualifications as a jurist, the citizens of the Tenth Judicial District elected him to the office of district judge in the fall of 1874.

(History of Iowa from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century/Volume 4)

COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

The World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago from May 1 to October 30, 1893, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the new world. The Exposition featured about 200 new but purposely temporary buildings. More than 27 million people attended. All of the buildings were painted white and were neoclassical in design. This resulted in the name "White City" for the exposition grounds in Jackson Park. The Twenty-Fourth General Assembly appropriated \$125,000 for the Iowa exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1892.

Judge Reuben Noble Praises the Iowa State Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

The following are comments of Judge Reuben Noble speaking at the occasion of the Pioneer Lawmakers' Association of Iowa reunion of 1894. The members of the Association were assembled at the Young Men's Christian Association Building in Des Moines, on February 14, 1894.

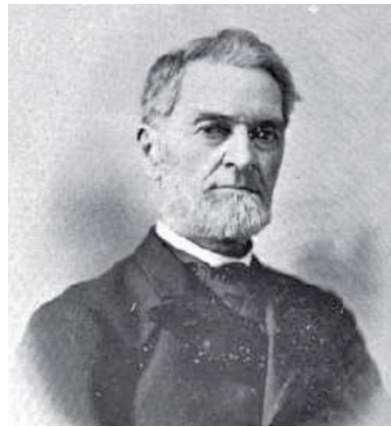
MR. SPEAKER—

Two years ago I had occasion, in that Senate chamber, I think, to address the members of the Senate for a few moments upon a subject, that in my mind, was one of vast importance to Iowa, and although I thought at the time that it might be regarded as not in my particular sphere to speak on a subject of that character, yet I made an appeal to the members of the legislature to be liberal in providing for the comfort of the people of Iowa, and for the education of Iowa, in a liberal appropriation for the World's Fair.

And I thank every member of both houses of the legislature that they did make that happy provision. I thank them, too, that the Governor of our State selected a commission to manage the affairs of Iowa in that great educating arena of the world that has conferred an honor upon the State such as has not been conferred upon any other so far as my knowledge goes, and that is that they have provided for the comfort and convenience of the people of Iowa and have not exceeded the appropriation which the legislature gave to their disposal. I apprehend that Iowa is the only State that has the honor of spending less money for that great object and purpose than was appropriated.

I will say I was at that Fair a great many times. I believe more people visited the Iowa State Building than any state building upon the ground. I believe they were provided for there most comfortably. I believe that the people of Iowa owe a debt of gratitude to the commissioners, especially to General Ed Wright, who was at home with everybody, and who made everybody comfortable who visited the Iowa State Building. Each seemed to vie with the other in providing for the information and comfort of her people.

I am proud of Iowa on account of her exhibit at the World's Fair. While there was nothing about it that was very gorgeous, nothing about it that was very expensive, it presented the best educational lesson upon the leading staples of Iowa that was ever produced in this country or probably ever will be again, and all things considered we have reason to be proud of the action of the last general assembly of Iowa, and I hope we will be of the general assembly that is now in session. However, we have not reached that period in history that we want to talk about that. We can only hope for the best that we may have those results in the future.



Judge Reuben Noble
(b. April 14, 1821 - d. August 8, 1896)



Iowa State Building at the World's Columbian Exposition—1893
(Picture Usage Courtesy of The Field Museum, GN90799d_CON_138w)