

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OF

IOWA

FOR THE YEAR 1857.

DES MOINES:
J. TEESDALE, STATE PRINTER.
1857.

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OBJECT OF COLLECTIONS DESIRED BY THE SOCIETY.

1. Manuscript statements of pioneer settlers—old letters and journals relative to the early history and settlement of the State; biographies and notices of eminent citizens deceased; and facts illustrative of our Indian tribes, their history, characteristic sketches of their prominent chiefs, orators and warriors, together with contributions of Indian implements, dress ornaments and curiosities.

2. Files of old newspapers, books, pamphlets, college catalogues, minutes of ecclesiastical associations, conventions, conferences and synods, and other publications relating to the history of the State.

3. Information respecting any ancient coin, or other curiosities found in this State; drawings and descriptions of any ancient mounds or fortifications are especially solicited.

4. Indian geographical names of streams and localities in the State, and their signification.

5. Books of all kinds, and especially such as relate to American history, travels and biographies in general, and in the West in particular, family genealogies, old magazines, pamphlets, files of newspapers, maps, historical manuscripts, autographs of distinguished persons, coins, medals, paintings, portraits, statuary and engravings.

6. We solicit from historical societies and other learned bodies that interchange of books and other materials by which the usefulness of institutions of this nature is so much enhanced, pledging ourselves to pay such contributions by acts in kind to the full extent of our ability.

7. The Society particularly begs the favor and compliment of authors and publishers to present with their autographs copies of their respective works for its library.

8. Editors and publishers of newspapers, magazines and reviews, will confer a lasting favor on the Society by contributing their publications regularly for its library—or, at least, such numbers as may contain articles bearing upon Iowa history, biography, geography,

or antiquities; all of which will be carefully preserved for binding. We respectfully request that all to whom this circular is addressed will be disposed to give to our appeal a generous response. Donors to the Society's library and collections will be placed upon the list of exchanges, and receive equivalent publications of the Society, the issue of which will soon be commenced and regularly continued. It is very desirable that all donors should forward to the corresponding secretary a specification of books, or articles donated and sent to the society.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

To His Excellency, JAMES W. GRIMES, Governor of the State of Iowa:--

SIR: The undersigned Board of Curators, of the State Historical Society of Iowa, in compliance with the act of the General Assembly, granting two hundred and fifty dollars annually to the Society, beg to present our first annual report.

The total receipts of this year have been \$300.00, and the disbursements \$61.38, leaving in the treasury \$238.62.

The Society was organized in March of this year, and while we can show but little gain in the great and important work in which we are engaged, we are happy in being able to congratulate members of the Society, and the citizens of the State, on the fact that plans have been projected and comparatively matured, by which we hope to exhibit a large measure of success in future.

The Institution is of a permanent character, and its object is of such a nature, that its success must be the result of a well defined and comprehensive system. While it has been our study and labor to perfect such a system, we feel no little pride in the fact that the Society has already secured the cordial sympathy of men of letters abroad, and the warm approbation of many of our fellow citizens.

We have sought, and to some extent succeeded in obtaining, copies of the different papers published in the State. Many valuable pamphlets have also been contributed, together with a choice collection of maps and charts of the State. It is very desirable that those publishers of newspapers, who have contributed their respective publications, should continue to do so, and if possible send them from the commencement.

A collection of all the papers, pamphlets, etc., published in the State, carefully preserved, would not only be invaluable as furnishing material for the future historian, but the just pride of our people. Beginning thus early, we hope for success, provided we have the hearty co-operation of those interested. No paper is too trivial to be preserved, and we beg that everything published in the State—papers, periodicals, pamphlets, books, minutes of Ecclesiastical As-

sociations, and even handbills of every description may be sent to this Society.

We have made a good beginning in collecting books for a library. We have received many valuable works from members of the Society, from authors, from State, and other public institutions. We have made no purchases, but have plans that will when matured, we trust, result in securing a collection of historical works, that will be the pride of the State.

The daguerreotypes of a few of the early settlers and prominent men of the State, have been sent us, and we have the promise of the portraits of all the Governors of the State, from its first organization as a Territory. It is anxiously to be desired that the portraits of all the prominent and public men of Iowa should be obtained. Such a gallery would be interesting, not only as a work of art, but aid in no small degree to illustrate the history, and the representative men of the State.

We have means in train to secure personal memoirs of the Governors of the Territory, and of those historic men whose biographies would contribute to illustrate our history. We are searching also, for a class of men in the various counties and towns, who will contribute the history, or the more prominent facts, of their respective localities.

We are well aware that our annual publication is designed to be the repository of a large class of valuable historical and statistical matter relating to Iowa, and we hope in our succeeding reports, to secure this object. We have withheld in this report many facts and much historical information that we have obtained, from the fact that what we could print is not sufficiently full and accurate, to answer any wise purpose. The blade appears, the harvest is confidently anticipated.

But, for the purpose of securing, in this most noble enterprise what cannot be looked for, but by the most persevering and constant self-sacrifice, that but few men can be expected to make, our corresponding secretary should give his whole time to the work, which will require an annual appropriation of at least one thousand dollars from the General Assembly. We beg leave, therefore, to call your attention to this fact, and hope you will feel it of sufficient importance, as well as consistent with your opinion and views of

State policy to recommend to the Assembly in your annual message, an appropriation for this purpose.

In our older States, filled with men of wealth and leisure, such an appropriation might be uncalled for, but in our own State, where citizens are necessarily all absorbed in building homes, and securing fortunes, we cannot find a sufficient number of men, willing to give their time and money, that are requisite to success in this enterprise. We have men who love this work, and feel a deep interest in gathering up and preserving, whatever may serve to illustrate our history, but they cannot devote themselves to it. In our older states, however, the office is not filled for the honor of the position, but the requisite funds are usually contributed by members of the society, or obtained from a permanent fund, secured by liberal donations from friends of historical research.

In concluding this report, the board beg leave to call your attention, and that of our citizens, to a single paragraph in the annual report of the New York Historical Society. It expresses our own sentiments, and articulates our own feelings. "The advantages resulting from the study of history, and the collection of historical records, cannot be too strongly urged on the attention of the members of this Society. In order that history may be written the most authentic materials must be provided. No generation comprises within its own knowledge and experience all that is necessary to secure the integrity of its annals. It must rely upon records, it must examine and compare opinions, it must study the events of the past. It must have the means of investigation and analysis at hand. Collections like these by which we are surrounded, and which are designed to preserve the memories of other days, will be deemed of inestimable value by generations which are to come after us."

Such works are a blessing to mankind, since they furnish men with a true standard of character, excite them to noble emulation, keep alive the stimulus of honorable example and prevent that lapse of national reputation, which would be unavoidable without the incitement and influence of great names and great deeds?

In behalf of the Board of Curators,

Iowa City, Dec. 1st, 1857.

C. BILLINGS SMITH,
Corresponding Secretary.

SECOND BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

IOWA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TO THE

GOVERNOR

AND

EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

DES MOINES:
1860.