

BIENNIAL REPORT
OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE

IOWA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

To His EXCELLENCY, RALPH P. LOWE,

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

Sir—In compliance with the act of the Legislature of Iowa, granting two hundred and fifty dollars annually to the "State Historical Society," the Executive Committee of the Society beg to present herewith the report of the Treasurer, for the past two years, exhibiting the financial condition and extent of expenditure of the Society, with the accompanying vouchers. The total receipts of the two years, including the balance on hand on the second day of December, 1857, have been *seven hundred and sixty-eight dollars and thirty-seven cents*, and the expenditures *five hundred and three dollars and twenty-six cents*—leaving a balance in the Treasury of *two hundred and sixty-five dollars and eleven cents*. [See Appendix A.]

In presenting their third annual report, the Executive Committee are happy to congratulate the members of the Society, and the citizens of the State, in view of the progress made by the Society since its organization, an advancement, we believe, unprecedented by any similar organization, either east or west.

Not only have the additions to our library and cabinet been comparatively large, but a sympathy for the Society, and a proper appreciation of its object and utility, is being felt, not only by our own enlightened citizens of Iowa, but by men of letters throughout our own country and in Europe, from whom in many instances we have received substantial proof of their interest in our prosperity.

The report of the Librarian shows that during the past year, fourteen hundred volumes have been added to the library, besides papers and pamphlets.

These works may be classed in the following manner:

- I.—"History."
- II.—"Government," "Jurisprudence" and "Politics."
- III.—"Arts" and "Sciences."
- IV.—"Belles Lettres."
- V.—"Theology."

We have desired especially to obtain copies of all publications of our own State, and believe we have to a very great extent succeeded in this, excepting some of the early *New paper files*, which it is feared in a few instances have been destroyed. We have received however, as will be seen by the report of the Librarian, several files of the early newspaper publications of our own State. Of recent newspaper publications of our own State, it will also be seen by the Librarian's report, that we are in receipt of about one hundred, and our warmest acknowledgments are due to these editors and publishers, who so generously responded to the request of the committee to send to the Society regular files of their papers.

There are few instances in which this call has not been responded to—as desired, but in those few, we believe the parties did not properly comprehend the object of the committee in making the request.

The value of such a collection of newspapers and periodicals cannot be too highly appreciated, for in it is contained almost a complete *history of the State*, at least of all the most important events, and they are recorded as they pass, and for convenience of reference they are invaluable. Already have these files been consulted in numerous instances for information that could be obtained from no other source; and the importance of this collection is being felt more and more daily. We therefore hope that all newspaper publishers who have not already sent their publications to the Society, will not fail to do so without delay.

Our collection of pamphlets and documents numbers about one thousand.

The value of collections of this character, comprising as has justly been observed "the elements of history," cannot be too highly estimated; and it has been the object of the committee to augment the number as much as is practicable. To our collection of maps, many additions of much value have been made during the past year, so that we have copies of nearly all that have been published of the State, from the first settlement by the whites to the present time, and one that dates back as early as 1650, which in connection with the description of the country accompanying it forms a very interesting volume of our library. In addition to this, we have the promise of a very full set of the earliest maps of the Mississippi Valley by "Joliet & LaSalle," from George H. Yewell, Esq., an artist of our State, at present residing in Paris.

Within the past year we have obtained two autograph letters of Gen. Washington's; one of Benj. Franklin's; one of Dewitt Clinton's and a large number of papers and books of an old date, among which is a copy of "Cicero" written on parchment in the year 1253—one of those rare curiosities that seldom finds its way into a modern library.

Owing to the want of an artist perhaps as much as any thing

else, our picture gallery contains but one painted portrait—a half length picture of Gen. Washington, by a western artist. We have, however, a large number of Daguerreotypes and photographs. Among which are those of the members of the last Constitutional Convention and a number of our State officers. We have also a number of Lithograph pictures of interest.

We have promises of a large accession to the number of painted portraits, among which are those of all our ex-Governors now living, and from Geo. H. Yewell, Esq., a half length painting, (from a photograph) of Robt. Lucas, first Governor of Iowa Territory. And we are happy to report, that Antoine LeClaire, Esq., of Davenport, has promised the Society a full length portrait of himself, so soon as a suitable artist can be procured to do the work. This will probably be done within the coming year, so that before another annual report is made, our picture gallery will contain not only the fulfillment of the promises we now have but many other paintings of interest.

Many additions to our cabinet of curiosities have been made within the past year, among which are two Indian war clubs; the powder horn worn by Black Hawk, when taken prisoner; a quantity of pottery from an Indian mound in the north-west portion of the State; a large number of arrow heads, stone hammers, pipes and other instruments used by the aborigines; some very choice geological specimens from our own State; the grinder of a mastadon, found in Davis county and presented by D. D. Waynick, Esq.; a large number of ancient copper coin of American, European and Asiatic stamps; a number of bills of continental currency and old currency of the commonwealth of Penn.; with others of old date. In the department of Natural History but comparatively little has been accomplished; yet we have a few of the rare species of birds of our own State, and several species of fishes, and modern shells from our own rivers. To this collection we expect to make large additions during the coming year, and we have promises from a number of gentlemen of assistance in this department.

Additions to our library are promised by Rev. Henry Giles, Hon. Theodore Sedgewick, Henry Bohn, Esq., London; Geo. H. Yewell, Esq., Paris; Hon. Geo. Bancroft, Wm. Cullen Bryant, Esq., C. Childs, Esq., Hon. Lewis Cass, Prof. Jeremiah Day, Amos Dean, L. L. D., G. W. Ellis, Esq., Hon. Millord Filmore, Rev. Francis Hawks, D. D., Rev. J. T. Headley, N. Y.—Dr. J. G. Morris, Baltimore; Hon. E. D. Morgan, N. Y.; Wm. C. Noyes, Esq., N. Y.; Prof. D. Olmstead, New Haven; Rev. S. I. Prime, N. Y.; Rev. J. Spear Smith, Balt., Md.; E. Sargeant, Esq., Boston; Mrs. L. H. Sigourney, Hartford; Prof. Silliman, N. Haven, Ct.; Prof. Jared Sparks, Cambridge, Mass.; Hon. Laurel Summers, LeClaire, Iowa; Hon. M. Van Buren, N. Y.; H. A. Wiltse, Esq., Dubuque; Maj. Wm. Williams, Ft. Dodge, Iowa; Lambert A. Wilmer, Esq., Phil.; Rev. Francis Wayland, D. D., Prov.

We had received the promise from the lamented Prof. W. W. Mather of Columbus, O., of a MSS. History of a Military Survey of Iowa and Missouri made by him in 1832 under the direction of the War Dept., but his sudden death prevented our obtaining the work as soon as we anticipated. We hope, however, to secure it at no distant day, and make such use of it as may then be deemed advisable.

The above list contains the names of but a small number of those who have promised donations to our collections, for there are many persons in our own States and others who are waiting for an opportunity to send collections which they have already made for the Society; and the words of encouragement and promises of assistance, which we receive, not only from citizens of our own State, but from those of other States, with whom the Society is in correspondence, lead us to hope much for the future prosperity of our organization.

We have reliable promises of MSS. histories of nearly one half the counties of our State, to be written by men who are fully competent for the work, which they have undertaken, and who will enter upon it as soon as practicable.

In the appendix to this report will be found the history of Scott county, from its first settlement by the whites to the present time by Hon. Willard Barrows. The history of Dubuque co., from its first settlement to 1840, by C. Childs, Esq. The history of Davis co., from its first settlement by the whites to the present time, by H. B. Horn, Esq. The history of Wapello county from its first settlement by the whites to the present time, by G. D. R. Boyd, Esq.; accompanied with a history of the Indians of the Des Moines Valley for a number of years prior to the settlement of the country by the whites, gathered from their traditions by Hon. Uriah Biggs. The history of Boone county, by S. C. Daniels, Esq.; of Cerro Gordo county, by A. B. Tuttle, Esq.; of Wayne county, by John Hays, Jr.; of Madison county, by W. W. McKnight; of Jefferson county, by Hon. Chas. Negus; of Johnson county from its first settlement to 1841, by M. B. Cochran. Also a lecture on the discovery of the Mississippi river, delivered at the annual meeting of the Society, December, 1857, by Hon. T. S. Parvin.

To all of the above named gentlemen, the Society is under special obligation for their zealous efforts to promote its objects and interests.

The Society is also under special obligation to the following named gentlemen for donations made by them: Hon. James Lawrence, Boston, for a full set of the works of Wm. Hicking Prescott, Danl. Webster, and Benton's thirty years' view. To Rev. Albert Barnes, D. D., for a full set of his own publications. To Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, for Congressional Documents and Smithsonian's Reports. To Hon. Jas. W. Grimes, Hon. Jas. Harlan, Hon. G. W. Jones and Lieut. Maury, for valuable Congressional documents. To Messrs. Sheldon Blakeman & Co., N.

Y., for ——— miscellaneous books. To I. A. Lapham, Wis., for works relating to Wisconsin history. To Messrs. Fink & Marquardt, Iowa City, for a copy of the life and writings of Wm. Penn. To Easton Morris, Esq., for a copy of his reports of cases in Supreme Court, and for a number of vols. of "State Papers." To Hon. W. Penn. Clarke for copies of his reports of Supreme Court decisions, and for a complete file of the N. Y. Tribune from 1840 to the present time. To R. H. Sylvester, Esq., for an autograph letter of Gen. Washington, and valuable Congressional documents. To Geo. S. Hampton, Esq., for an autograph letter of Gen. Washington, Franklin and other valuable papers. To Messrs. Henn & Williams for a full set of their maps of the State. To R. M. Prettyman for the powder horn taken from Black Hawk, when taken prisoner at the battle of Bad Axe. To S. H. Fairall for a MSS. copy of Cicero, written on parchment during the thirteenth century.

The Society is also under obligation to the Western Stage Co. for furnishing the corresponding Secretary a pass over their lines free of charge, and to many other gentlemen in our own and other States, the names of whom, if given, would swell this report to a greater length than would be desirable.

The act of the Legislature providing for the organization of the State Historical Society, designates that eighty bound copies of all reports and documents published by and under the authority of the State, be appropriated to the use of the Society for distribution in other States and in Europe. The committee has secured the specified number of copies of the acts of the General Assembly for 1858; Senate and House Journals, and Report of State Agricultural Society for same year. Also, the specified number of the Census Report for 1856, and debates of the Constitutional Convention; Geological Report; Journal of Board of Education; Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and thirty-five copies of the acts and resolutions of the Board of Education. The Journals of the House and Senate, and acts and resolutions for 1857; reports of all State Officers and State Institutions, and messages of the Governor for 1857 and 1858; forty-five copies of the acts and resolutions of the Board of Education; thirty copies of the Agricultural Report, and some other State papers are yet due the Society from the State. The reason assigned for their not being furnished to the Society is, that there were not enough left after the distribution to counties.

None of the volumes which the Society has received, except Geological Report and Debates of the Constitutional Convention, were bound, as was provided in the organic act of the Society; a matter which was probably overlooked by the proper officer having it in charge. This matter should have been attended to, from the fact that most of the volumes which the Board have received from other societies, and especially State Institutions, were bound when received, and it is desirable to reciprocate that favor; and

further, it is highly important in order to preserve books of that character that they should be properly bound. The binding may be of a cheap description, so that it would not cost over thirty or forty cents per volume. The Board would have had the work done at the expense of the Society, had the appropriations been equal to meet the expense—but from the limited resources of the Society, this was wholly out of the question. We can only hope that this matter may not be neglected by the State hereafter, or that the appropriations to the Society may be large enough to enable the Board to pay for it from its treasury.

The committee are happy to report that during the past year, no meeting of the Board of Curators has failed for want of a quorum, and that the meetings have been regularly held each month, and there has been that degree of interest manifested by the members of the Board that augurs well for the future prosperity of the Society. Not only have the local members attended the meetings in most instances punctually, but in many cases, members residing at a distance from Iowa City, have met with us and greatly assisted in carrying out the objects of the Society—and to such an extent are the citizens of the State becoming interested in its prosperity, that several applications for membership have been received from persons residing in remote portions of the State.

It was, at the organization of the Society, a somewhat difficult matter to find earnest, active members, who fully appreciated the importance of an institution of this character, but that has now changed, and our citizens are becoming alive to the vast and important results which are sure to grow out of a properly conducted State Historical Society, and proffers of assistance are received from every portion of our State. This is what we need, and what we must have in order to fully carry out the objects contemplated by our organization.

We want books, pamphlets, catalogues of schools and colleges; reports of meetings of religious, political, benevolent and scientific organizations and societies of every description; old newspaper files, letters, manuscripts; paintings, photographs, lithographs and Daguerreotypes of prominent individuals of the State; maps, plats of towns and cities, distinct and extinct; biographical sketches, and pictures of localities, towns and counties; manuscript or printed lectures, speeches, &c.; Indian traditions, portraits, and curiosities of every description; description of Indian mounds, earth-works, &c.; constitutions, by-laws, rules, regulations and lists of officers and members of societies and associations of early organizations in this or other States.

From publishers of newspapers and periodicals, we solicit regular copies of their publications, and from authors and sister societies we solicit copies of their publications—promising in all cases to make return of our own publications, and those which we may have for exchange.

We also solicit from the citizens of our own and of other States,

prepared specimens of Natural History—such as birds, fishes, reptiles, insects, wild animals of all kinds, and botanical specimens.

These are designed to exhibit as far as may be the fauna and flora of the State. There is no doubt many species of both are becoming extinct every year, and to preserve them while we may, is an object which we deem well worthy of our attention, and especially as there is no organization in the State of which the Board has any knowledge engaged in making a collection of this kind.

At the last meeting of the Board of Trustees of the State University, on a petition presented to them by the Board of Curators, the use of the former U. S. District Court room, in the University buildings, was granted to the Society for a library and cabinet room; which is sufficiently large for the present uses of the Society.

Appropriate cases and shelving have been constructed and the room generally has been fitted up in a neat and appropriate manner.

The books up to this time had been permitted to occupy the same room with the University library—much to the inconvenience of both the Society and the University. But by this grant from the Board of Trustees all difficulty in this respect is passed, and the accommodations of the Society, for the present at least, are all that we could desire.

To show the comparative progress of the Society during the past year, we make the following extract from the second annual report of the Wisconsin Historical Society, published in 1856:

The Massachusetts Historical Society, the pioneer institution, of the Union, which was founded in 1791, has 8000 volumes in its library and has published thirty-one volumes of collections; the New York Historical Society was founded in 1804, has 25000 volumes, and has published about thirteen volumes of collections and proceedings; the American Antiquarian Society, founded in 1812, has twenty-two thousand volumes, and has published three volumes of collections, a catalogue volume, and several pamphlets; the Rhode Island Historical Society, founded in 1822, has 2500 volumes, and has published five volumes of collections; the Maine Historical Society, founded in 1822, (number of volumes unknown), has published three volumes of collections; the New Hampshire Historical Society, founded in 1823, has 1500 volumes, and has published six volumes of collections; the Connecticut Historical Society, founded in 1825, has 8000 volumes, but has published no collections; the Pennsylvania Historical Society, founded in 1825, with 2000 volumes in its library, has published five volumes of collections and several bulletins and pamphlets; the Virginia Historical Society, founded in 1818, has 1200 volumes, and has published one volume of collections, and about seven volumes of an Historical Register; the Ohio Histori-

cal Society, founded in 1831, has 1000 volumes and has published three volumes of collections, and several pamphlets; the Kentucky Historical Society, founded in 1838, has 1000 volumes in its library, and has issued no publications; the Georgia Historical Society, founded in 1839, has united its library with that of the Savannah Society, and has published three volumes of collections; the Maryland Historical Society, founded in 1814, has 2128 volumes, and has published several pamphlets; the Missouri Historical Society, founded in 1844, has 300 volumes, and has issued one pamphlet of proceedings; the New England Historic-Geological Society, founded in 1844, has 3000 volumes, and has published nine volumes of an Historical and Genealogical Register and some pamphlets; the New Jersey Historical Society, founded in 1845, has 1930 volumes, and has published four volumes of collections and six of proceedings; the Minnesota Historical Society, founded in 1849, has 300 volumes and has published four pamphlets of collections."

"There are other Historical Societies extant, such as those of Vermont, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama—whose libraries are small and which have issued no publications."

The State Historical Society of Iowa, was organized Feb. 3d, 1857, our library contains about 2,000 volumes, a large number of pamphlets, maps, manuscripts, engravings and curiosities; we have published one annual report, and the present year will issue our first volume of collections—a progress and as before remarked, unprecedented by any similar institution in our country.

But although our progress has been thus rapid, and our collections for the time our Society has been in operation so numerous, but a moiety has been accomplished, to what might have been, could the undivided attention of a single individual been given to this work, whose salary would have been an adequate compensation for services rendered. It is rare to find men who will engage in any labor or enter upon any work, especially as arduous as the duties incumbent upon the office of Corresponding Secretary of a Society of this character, who feels the responsibilities of his office, and who has sufficient capacity to engage in work of this kind, without some security or promise of pecuniary reward; such an one it is rare to find in the older States of our commonwealth, and especially in the West.

What we need then, is an appropriation from the State of an amount sufficient to compensate a man who will devote his whole time to the duties of the work of collecting the materials for a complete history of the State, and to arrange them in proper form for publication. The materials are abundant, and could easily be obtained if there was some one to go over the State and collect them.

To meet this want an appropriation of not less than fifteen hundred dollars per year is necessary, for that amount would no more than pay for the time and travelling expenses of such an agent.

Other States have wisely made provisions for a work of this kind, and our own should not be behind—for the time is fast passing away, when very many important incidents of the early history of our State will be lost forever.

We ask this appropriation with more confidence, from the fact that the zeal that has already been shown by the members of the Society, is a good earnest that the work will be done and the appropriation will not be lost.

We have thus endeavored to lay before your Excellency, the history, growth, prospects and wants of the State Historical Society of Iowa, with the hope that the labors of the Committee may meet with the approval of yourself and those to whom the Society is indebted for that material aid which has enabled us to accomplish what has been done, and with the assurance that the enlightened wisdom of our Legislators will never suffer its interests to flag for want of proper encouragement from the State.

J. W. GRIMES,
THOS. H. BENTON,
T. S. PARVIN,
J. C. TRAER,
D. P. PALMER,
J. D. WILSON,
E. W. EASTMAN,
C. CHILDS,
C. B. SMITH,
W. H. BARRIS,

MORGAN RENO,
G. W. McCLEARY,
D. F. WELLS,
W. REYNOLDS,
K. PORTER,
S. W. HUFF,
G. H. JEROME,
W. A. SALE,
M. B. COCHRAN,
Ex. COMMITTEE.

Iowa City, Dec. 1, 1859.