

The Public Archives

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ANNALS OF IOWA.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

THE PUBLIC ARCHIVES.

Every General Assembly makes more or less history; but the Thirty-first General Assembly has passed an act which is unique in that it *makes for history*. By the passage of "An act providing for the care and permanent preservation of the public archives," the first step has been taken in devising a plan for the better care and preservation of the public archives of the State. The significance of the act lies in the public recognition which it gives to the importance and value of the source materials of Iowa history.

The act as approved by the Governor provides that the Historical Department shall be given the custody of "all the original public documents, papers, letters, records, and other official manuscripts, of the state executive and administrative departments, offices or officers, councils, boards, bureaus, and commissions, ten years after the date or current use of such public documents, papers, letters, records or other official manuscripts. Provided, that the Executive Council shall have the power and authority to order the transfer of such records or any part thereof at any time prior to the expiration of the limit of ten years hereinbefore provided or to retain the same in the respective offices beyond such limit according as in the judgment of the Council the public interest or convenience may require."

The second section of the act authorizes and directs that the archives be transferred and delivered to the Historical Department except such as in the judgment of the Executive Council should be longer retained in the respective offices. Section three authorizes and directs the Historical Department to receive the public archives and properly arrange, label, file, and calendar the same.

Section four of the act authorizes and directs the Executive

Council to "provide, furnish, and equip such room or rooms in the Historical, Memorial and Art Building as may be deemed necessary" for the accommodation of the public archives; and "the room or rooms thus provided for shall be known as the Hall of Public Archives."

It is not so very difficult to interest men in museums and art galleries or even in books of history; but it is an almost hopeless task to arouse their enthusiasm over dry, dusty documents. And yet persistent effort and agitation on the part of the Historical Department has finally resulted in the passage of a law which provides for the establishment of a Hall of Archives in the new Historical, Memorial and Art Building which is now near completion. The establishment of the Hall of Archives will be recorded among the great achievements of the Historical Department. It will not only afford a suitable, secure, and permanent home for the public archives of the State, but it will make the archives accessible to students of Iowa history. This recognition of the value of the documentary materials of Iowa history and the establishment of the Hall of Archives may justly be regarded as the crowning accomplishment of the Historical Department. B. F. S.

INCREASING INTEREST IN LOCAL HISTORY.

There are many signs that local interest in local history, in the origins of local customs and institutions in our cities, towns and counties has increased with notable acceleration in recent years.

This is most gratifying to those who have so long urged the importance of preserving and studying the records of the life and deeds of the State's pioneers. Various causes have, of course, united to bring about the beginnings of this long-hoped-for consumation. Some of the causes are to be found in the evolution of social conditions that of necessity generate an interest in and demand for historical lore and records of the past. Another set of potent causes is to be discovered in the development of consciousness of kind. Other causes are

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