

## The Letters and Papers of Robert Lucas

ISSN 0003-4827

Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.



This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/publicdomain/1.0/).

---

### Recommended Citation

"The Letters and Papers of Robert Lucas." *The Annals of Iowa* 7 (1906), 547-548.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.3332>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](https://www.iowaresearchonline.org/)

in the reserves with Gen. J. A. Mower. Mr. Heath's article lets some light into the inner military circles of that place and time which will be of interest to many readers. It does not cover much of the history, but is quite lucid as to his little corner of the field.

Another article is the narrative of the escape of Private Ben Van Dyke, of the 14th Iowa, which is quite romantic and interesting. This old soldier is now living in Oklahoma.

NOTE.—Articles on the Battle of Pleasant Hill, by Col. William T. Shaw, ex-Judge Charles T. Granger, and Capt. Thomas C. McCall, may be found in Vol. III, 3d series, of *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, pp. 401-423. See also pp. 465-468 of the same volume for references to Col. Shaw. An article by Hon. A. J. Barkley, in the same volume, pp. 23-81, should also be read in this connection.

---

#### THE LETTERS AND PAPERS OF ROBERT LUCAS.

For many years the lack of original source material bearing upon the life and political activities of the first Governor of the Territory of Iowa has been the despair of collectors and students of Iowa history. Indeed, after many futile efforts to discover the precious manuscripts, the story that the letters and papers of Robert Lucas had long ago been accidentally destroyed by fire had come to be accepted as fact. This was the situation when in October, 1905, Mr. John C. Parish, a graduate student at the State University of Iowa, elected to write a thesis on "Robert Lucas, Governor of the Territory of Iowa."

Mr. Parish, of course, soon found himself embarrassed by the lack of source material. However, after conference with Prof. Benj. F. Shambaugh (under whose direction the thesis was being prepared) it was decided to make a thorough search for the missing letters and papers. Sometime in November, 1905, Professor Shambaugh called upon Robert Lucas, a grandson of Governor Lucas, and enlisted his interest in the renewed effort to bring to light the material that was supposed to be lost or destroyed. The first document discovered through co-operation with the grandson was the manuscript copy of the *Executive Journal of Iowa* for 1838-1841, which contains

a complete record of the official executive acts of Governor Lucas during his term of nearly three years.

After the discovery of the *Executive Journal*, Mr. Parish made several visits to the home of the grandson, Robert Lucas. With renewed zeal the search was carried into the attic of the old home of Col. Edward Lucas, a son of the Governor who had lived near Iowa City. There *The Robert Lucas Journal of the War of 1812* was found along with two boxes containing hundreds of manuscript letters and papers written by or addressed to Robert Lucas and covering a period of nearly fifty years. The entire collection, which has been carefully examined by Mr. Parish, is perhaps the richest and most extensive body of historical material that has thus far come to light in this State. With the discovery of the Lucas letters and papers comes the hope that the letters and papers of his successor, Governor John Chambers, are still in existence and will some day be accessible to students of Iowa history.

---

#### DEATH OF AN IOWA AUTHOR.

The poem, "There is no Death," has been made familiar to most readers by the fact that it has been reprinted hundreds of times, and copied in whole or in part in numberless obituary articles or addresses, since it was written by an Iowa journalist in 1863. The author was J. L. McCreery, who published a weekly paper at Delhi, Delaware county, Iowa, about fifty years ago, and was later employed on other Iowa papers. After his journalistic career in Iowa, he was appointed to a clerkship in the General Land Office at Washington, D. C., which he doubtless held up to the time of his last illness. He passed away at Duluth, Minn., after a surgical operation, Sept. 7, 1906. For some years after he wrote this poem there was a dispute concerning its authorship, as there was in relation to that of "The Burial of Sir John Moore" and "Ben Bolt." Mr. McCreery's right to it was made a matter of doubt by the fact that it was so often attributed to Sir Edward

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.