

Dr. Charles A. White

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](#).

Recommended Citation

"Dr. Charles A. White." *The Annals of Iowa* 7 (1906), 469-471.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.4599>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

Soon after the close of the war, Mr. Coolbaugh asked the good offices of Mr. Grimes for Henry Dodge Clark, son of the last Governor of the Territory, to obtain an appointment for him in the Regular Army. During the war he had been a soldier in the Eleventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, and was now made a second lieutenant in the Eleventh U. S. Infantry. Mr. Coolbaugh wrote to Mrs. A. C. Dodge, "I feel very grateful to Grimes, to whom we owe the appointment."

The Honorable Peter A. Dey gives these reminiscences of Mr. Coolbaugh and Mr. Grimes in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April, 1903, pp. 253-'4:

When I first knew them they roomed together at the Clinton house in Iowa City. In general matters of state policy they were in accord. Mr. Coolbaugh afterwards told me that when it became apparent that Senator Grimes would vote in favor of acquitting President Johnson, he went to Washington for the special purpose of advising him against such a course. He said to Mr. Grimes: "You are the idol of your party in Iowa. The party is radical in the extreme and wrought almost to frenzy by the murder of Lincoln and the apostasy of Johnson. You are the most sensitive man I ever knew. By the course you propose you will bring upon yourself the vengeance of your party, and your state will disown you. You will not outlive this action a year." The reply of Senator Grimes was: "I have considered all this. But my position is right, and if I die tomorrow I shall vote as my convictions dictate. I have no respect for President Johnson personally and less for his policies. But I believe each department of the government is independent; and so long as his official acts are not in violation of the constitution and the laws, the president cannot be removed by the joint action of the house and senate merely for a difference of views or for official acts that are entirely within his jurisdiction."

W. S.

DR. CHARLES A. WHITE.

Ponce de Leon sought the fountain of perpetual youth in the Everglades of Florida. His search was bootless for his particular wish was vain. He sought bodily vigor and insurance against its decadence. His wish mortal man never has realized, and alas never can realize. But had the proud Cas-

tilian only known the potency within himself he would not have fretted his spirit or gone far over seas to satisfy the restless desire of his soul. The spirit of youth is always man's possession if he wills it so. Let him seek truth and strive earnestly, continuously to increase human welfare by adding to knowledge those exact and orderly truths the sum of which we call science and perpetual youth with its buoyancy, exalted hopes and splendid purposes is his without limit and mankind with himself is the beneficiary in perpetuity.

The truth of this sentiment is exemplified in the life and work of Dr. Charles A. White who prepared for *THE ANNALS* the interesting memoir of Dr. Charles Christopher Parry, of Davenport. Dr. White, as our old time readers well know, was Iowa's State Geologist from 1866 to 1870, and Professor of Natural History in our State University from 1867 to 1873, when Bowdoin College in Maine enticed him away from us. From 1875 to 1892 Dr. White was intimately associated with the scientific work of our national governmental surveys as geologist and paleontologist. Since 1876 he has been closely connected with the work of the Smithsonian Institution, in which he is now an Honorary Associate.

Dr. White has always been an enthusiastic and indefatigable worker. Resting on his oars has never been one of his pastimes. His researches and writings have covered a remarkable range of subjects in science although they related chiefly to botany, geology, paleontology and zoology. The valuation placed upon his work by scientists is evidenced by the fact that in 1885 Mr. J. B. Marcou prepared for the Bulletin of the National Museum, an "Annotated Catalogue" of his published writings in which not only extended accounts, reports and treatises were listed, but also any of his "short published notes which contain any expression of his views upon scientific subjects." The catalogue made a pamphlet of 181 pages and contained 151 titles. In 1897 Mr. T. W. Stanton prepared a supplemental catalogue in which 60 new titles were added. Since then Dr. White has published at least twenty-two additional papers presenting either memoirs and appreciations of the lives and work of deceased associates in the promotion

of science or short studies of particular subjects in science. His writings altogether number at least 233 titles. Although his span of life has gone beyond four score years, his buoyant youthful spirit and active, energetic interest in science is strikingly shown by the fact that since January 1, *The Popular Science Monthly* and *Science* contain interesting and instructive articles on botanical subjects. Of late years Dr. White has been prevented by reason of age from making extensive explorations far afield, but it has not interfered with his active prosecution of first hand scientific investigations. In his garden at Washington he has for years had a place where pleasure and profit and science have been systematically pursued with some notable results. His observations of the development of his garden products, especially tomatoes, have aided materially in establishing certain theories of evolution advanced by Dr. White and Prof. De Vries relative to the origin of species and varieties of plant life by mutation.

From its inception nearly twenty years ago the Historical Department has had a fast friend in Dr. White. He has always been one of our most ardent and effective helpers. Several important articles have been contributed by him to **THE ANNALS** and collections of the Department have been greatly enriched by documents, records, reports and field specimens which he generously secured and forwarded or caused to be forwarded. It is largely by reason of such gratuitous assistance so readily and generously given by Dr. White and others that our collections contain the many rich stores they do today. May he live long and prosper is our wish!

Here is an interesting item concerning Dr. White which we have taken the liberty of extracting from a letter to the Editor of **THE ANNALS** written June 25, 1906:

I am glad to know that my memoir of Dr. Parry is soon to appear. * * * Your suggestion that I should write it was opportune, for I am almost the last one living who knew him well and also knew the character and scope of his work. Indeed, it has fallen to me to be a veritable "Old Mortality" to my contemporary naturalists, and I have written memoirs of no less than seven of them. There are only two now living who are older than I am—Professors E. T. Cox (85 years) and J. M. Safford (83 years).

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.