

Our Old and New Public Functions

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ANNALS OF IOWA

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

OUR OLD AND NEW PUBLIC FUNCTIONS

By final enactment of the Fortieth Extra General Assembly the legal status of our work after the Code of 1924 takes effect is to be determined by the duties of the Curator as therein set out. Staff equipment, support and housing space adequate are implied.

The statute provides that the Historical, Memorial and Art Department shall consist of the historical and art collections, materials gathered for historical research, and the museum and public archives, and that the department shall be under control of a board consisting of the governor, the judges of the Supreme Court, the secretary of state, and the superintendent of public instruction, which board shall have control of the Historical Building and shall appoint the Curator for terms of six years and by two-thirds vote. The duties of the Curator are then set out as follows:

4525. DUTIES OF CURATOR. The curator shall:

1. *Custody of historical building.* Under the direction of the board, be custodian of the historical building and collections therein, and shall keep the rooms assigned to the department and the collections open for inspection by the public during such hours of each day as the board may direct, but the curator shall cause the same to be kept open on Sunday afternoons during the sessions of the general assembly.

2. *Custody, display, and publication of material.* Under the direction of the board, collect, preserve, organize, arrange, and classify works of art, books, maps, charts, public documents, manuscripts, newspapers, and other objects and materials illustrative of the natural and political history of the territory and state and of the central west, and of the traditions and history of the Indian tribes and prior occupants of the region, and publish such matter and display such material as may be of value and interest to the public.

3. *Collection of memorials and mementoes.* With the approval of the board, collect memorials and mementoes of the pioneers of Iowa and the soldiers of all our wars, including portraits, specimens of arms,

clothing, army letters, commissions of officers, and other military papers and documents.

4. *Ethnology and archaeology.* Receive and arrange in cases, objects illustrative of the ethnology and prehistoric archaeology of this and surrounding states.

5. *Inventory of property.* As soon as practicable, prepare a classified index and inventory of all the property belonging to the department or in its custody, and determine through the aid of experts the money value thereof, so far as practicable, and when done a summary of the same shall be included in his biennial report, and thereafter such reports shall set forth all additions thereto with their money value, if any, and give a list of items lost or dropped from the collections. His report shall also contain a separate statement of materials obtained by gift and by purchase during each biennium.

6. *Subscription for newspapers.* Subscribe for and preserve files of at least two newspapers of each county in the state containing the official publications, and cause the same to be bound at the end of each four-year period.

7. *Custodian of works of art.* Except as otherwise specifically provided, be custodian of and care for and preserve the monuments, memorials, and works of art on the grounds and in the buildings at the seat of government, and report from time to time to the proper officer or board the condition and his recommendations in respect thereto.

8. *Report to governor.* Report to the governor biennially all collections made and the progress and condition of the department under his charge, and such other matters as he may deem of value in maintaining and building up the department.

9. *Report to board.* Report to the board semiannually or oftener as required, all matters pertaining to the condition of the department.

10. *Other duties.* Perform such other duties as may be imposed upon him by law or prescribed by the rules of the board.

4526. *GIFTS.* The curator is hereby authorized and empowered, as trustee for the state, to accept gifts of property, real, personal, or mixed, for the benefit or endowment of the historical, memorial, and art department, or for the commemoration of the lives of worthy citizens, or for the purpose of perpetuating records of historic events, or for scientific purposes. Any gift accepted shall be immediately reported to the board of trustees; but any gift imposing unusual monetary obligations on the department shall be approved by the board before acceptance.

4527. *INVESTMENTS.* The curator and the board of trustees shall have authority and power to invest, in accordance with the provisions of the trust, any such gifts or endowments, and establish and enforce rules for the purpose of governing and maintaining such endowments or memorials as may be created or established under and pursuant to the preceding section.

4528. ARCHIVES. The curator shall be the trustee and custodian of the archives of Iowa and of such county and municipal archives as are voluntarily deposited. The term "archives" shall mean those manuscripts and materials originating under or passing through the hands of public officials in the regular course and performance of their duties, over ten years old, and not in current use; but the executive council shall have power and authority to order the transfer of such archives or any part thereof at any time prior to the expiration of the ten years, or cause them to be retained in the respective offices beyond such limit if in its judgment the public interests or convenience shall require it.

4529. RECORDS DELIVERED. The several state, executive, and administrative departments, officers or offices, councils, boards, bureaus, and commissioners, are hereby authorized and directed to transfer and deliver to the historical, memorial, and art department such of the public archives as are designated in the preceding section, except such as in the judgment of the executive council should be retained longer in the respective offices, and the curator is authorized to receive the same.

4530. REMOVAL OF ORIGINAL. After any public archives have been received into the division of public archives by the curator, they shall not be removed from the custody without his consent, except in obedience to a subpoena of a court of record or a written order of the officer from whose office they were received.

4531. CERTIFIED COPIES—FEES. Upon request of any person, the curator shall make a certified copy of any document contained in said archives, and when such copy is properly authenticated by him it shall have the same legal effect as though certified by the officer from whose office it was obtained or by the secretary of state. Said curator shall charge and collect for such copies the fees allowed by law to the official in whose office the document originates for such certified copies, and all such fees shall be turned into the state treasury.

A LETTER FROM GENERAL BEAUREGARD

Mrs. Viola Soule Cooke of Des Moines recently loaned to the Historical Department a letter from the noted Confederate leader, General Beauregard, written just after the First Battle of Bull Run and dated August 10, 1861, and directed to the widow of the former president of the United States, John Tyler. We present in connection with this article a photographic reproduction of this letter.

Mrs. Cooke, who is the widow of the late Colonel John B. Cooke of Carroll, Iowa, tells us this rare and interesting document was sent sometime during the Civil War by Colonel Cooke

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