

Speech By Perry Engle

ISSN 0003-4827

No known copyright restrictions.

Recommended Citation

"Speech By Perry Engle." *The Annals of Iowa* 16 (1929), 584-585.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.5299>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

There then followed reminiscences concerning legislative affairs, participated in by George M. Titus, E. C. Roach, and R. G. Clark. Former senator Perry Engle spoke substantially as follows:

SPEECH BY PERRY ENGLE

Gentlemen and comrades, we again have assembled in our biennial meeting. In the last two years death has levied a costly tribute upon our ranks; one by one at the beckoning of the silent messenger our comrades have passed through the gate to the land of the dead. We miss their presence and counsels. They bore the flag triumphant even to the gates of the sunset.

I congratulate you, comrade pioneers of Iowa, that you are here today to talk over and enjoy reminiscences of days that are gone. It must be satisfying to you to contemplate Iowa—the Iowa you have seen develop from a wilderness to the state it is.

We pioneers had battles to fight, great difficulties to overcome, but we passed to our worthy successors a gem of a state, inhabited by the best people on earth. We hope our successors will honor us by excelling us. We can put fear out of our hearts. This nation will survive, this state will prosper. Give the people free speech and free press, then we are saved. Reason never has failed men; only force has made the wrecks in the world.

You tell me that law is above freedom of utterance, and I reply that you can have no wise laws nor free enforcement of wise laws unless there is free expression of the wisdom of the people—and, alas, their folly with it. But, if there is freedom, folly will die of its own poison, and the wisdom will survive. That is the history of the race. It is the proof of man's kinship with God.

President Washington said: "My first wish is to see war banished from the earth, war and pillage have drenched the world in blood."

Hope, love, and fraternity have not deserted the world. We see in peace the morning dawn of a better day.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said:

"Along its front no sabers shine,
No blood-red pennons wave;
Its banner bears the single line,
'Our duty is to save'."

May around the earth the church bells chime, "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Were I a Raphael I would paint two pictures. In one I would paint the wails of dying men, the moans of weeping wives and mothers, the cries of suffering children; I would paint the background as black as Egyptian night; I would drape it in blood. I would call this picture "War." In the other I would paint the love, hope, and light in weeping eyes, the dimples and rose on the faded cheek; I would paint all that

lifts, saves, and loves; over it all I would paint the bow of promise, like a perpetual benediction. This picture I would call "Peace."

The last tattoo for us will sound ere long, and on "Fame's eternal camping ground" the silent tents of our pioneer host will be spread. Let us clasp the hand a little stronger. Let the smile last a little longer. May we all be brave, true and progressive until we reach the end of the trail.

Let us strive to have and maintain a "government of, for and by the people." I believe in the motto: "My country, right or wrong; if right, keep it right; if wrong, make it right."

At the opening of the session at 10:00 A. M. February 14, George H. Van Houten presented to the association a beautiful gavel made of olive wood in Bethlehem, Palestine, and secured by him when there recently. Governor Clarke, as presiding officer, in a felicitous speech accepted it in behalf of the association and assured Mr. Van Houten of the appreciation of the members, and promised it would be kept by the secretary for the use of the presiding officer at future meetings. Ora Williams then delivered the following address:

A REPORTER'S SURVEY

By ORA WILLIAMS

The source material for this hour off the main trail is but lightly covered by the dust of the upper shelves. It may be worth rescuing as an offset to our habit of deprecating today and forgetting yesterday.

Happily we may go back to the enchanted realms in memory. Only a little way and not half the record has been checked off by the great scorer against Iowa's allotment. I choose, just for the moment, to take you back to that time when I first contacted the Iowa legislature—the session of the Twenty-first General Assembly, which convened in January, 1886. From this let us make survey.

Capitol hill seems long and steep. The horses are weary that drag antique street cars up the way. A midwinter inaugural parade is a custom. A brass band strikes the notes for those who keep step in blue uniforms. Carriages are filled with bewhiskered men in silk hats and smiling ladies in flounced sleeves. It is very cold, exceptionally so, says the old settler. Parties of legislators come on belated trains. An all night vigil in cold and hunger is reported. The business of the state does not wait. The assembly ball is not postponed.

Board walks lead from the street. The new Capitol grounds are cluttered with unused stone. A deep gulley is only half hidden by a thicket of wild apple trees. State pride is not ready yet to clear the rubbish. But O, where is there another such a dome? It is our pride. Yes, really it is gold. Visitors glance at the glittering chandeliers or lightly touch the marbles that will never be duplicated. Inauguration is from a forum

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.