

Department notes

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"Department notes." *The Annals of Iowa* 23 (1942), 322-324.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.6156>

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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

END OF VOLUME TWENTY-THREE

With the April issue of *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, volume twenty-three comes to a close. This change, which cuts in half the old two-year eight-issue volume, a change long desired by the editor, has been made further advisable by the adoption of the new and improved quality of paper on which the magazine has been printed since July, 1941. The old two-year, eight-issue volume would have been too unwieldy for convenient use. The editor hopes the change, together with the more frequent indexing of the volume, will make *THE ANNALS* of even greater utility to its readers.

DEPARTMENT NOTES

THE IOWA STATE ARCHIVES, long a victim of neglect and careless attention, and suffering from the dangers of dampness, heat, and dirt, have finally in the past eighteen months begun to receive the attention they deserve. The Forty-Ninth General Assembly amended and improved the state archival law. The same legislature provided the means for a more economical shelving of the stored documents of state, a plan, however, war production curtailments have caused to be postponed.

The most pressing demand of the Department in its care of the archives has been the need for added storage and working space. This need has been partially met by the renting by the state of a moderately sized brick constructed community hall, known as the "John A. Kasson Memorial Hall" at East Thirteenth and Des Moines streets, one block from the Historical Department. Little used in late years, the building has been rennovated and prepared for the storage and handling of the state records upon which the Historical Records Survey had been working. The acquisition of the

building was timely, for that project has now been abandoned due to war restrictions on WPA activities. While this building will not approach a solution of the problems of storage and administration of the archives, it does offer a welcomed relief to the conditions formerly existing.

Through a grant of the retrenchment and reform committee of the last General Assembly, a temporary staff was made possible to handle the work of transfer.

The steady increase in applications for census records noted in the October issue of *THE ANNALS* is reflected in the certification figures for January, February, and March, 754, 965, 993 respectively.

THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION was fortunate to receive during the past quarter a letter press book of Reuben Noble, an influential political figure in both the Democratic and Republican parties in the middle and later years of the last century. The book was presented to the Department by Miss Iola Quigley, whose father was a former law partner of Reuben Noble.

Another important accession in the manuscript division was the fourteen large folio-sized scrap books of the military records and reports, together with military maps and miscellaneous letters of General Samuel Ryan Curtis, member of Congress from the second Iowa Congressional district from 1857-1861, when he resigned to join the Union forces. A graduate of West Point, General Curtis held commands in Missouri, the Southwest, and on the western plains in the later Indian troubles. A number of letters relate also to his pre-war railroad activities. These valued papers came as a gift of his granddaughter, Mrs. Lynn Curtis of New York City, N. Y.

BY THE AID OF the Veterans of the Rainbow Division, and the assistance of the State of Iowa, the Department has recently received 16 mm. and 35 mm. films, rephotographs of the original motion picture film of the Iowa members of that division, the 168th National Guard, taken from the official films of the war department. A sound tract was dubbed in in the rephotographing job. After preliminary showings

the last of March and the first of April, these films have been presented to the Department for administration.

Many communities and organizations have sought the use of the films for patriotic gatherings or for fund raising projects. The films may be borrowed upon the filing of an application and its approval by the Curator under certain standard conditions.

THE MUSEUM DIVISION of the Department has completed a twenty-five minute colored film of water fowl of Iowa, ducks and shore birds. Prepared by Jack W. Musgrove, museum director, with the aid of Maynard F. Reece, museum assistant, this is the second film made by the museum division, the first being an experimental film of big game animals of the western plains states.

The museum plans to make a film of historical sites in Iowa this spring and summer, also to be a colored film.

AN EVENT of considerable interest to friends of the Department was the completion of an excellent oil portrait of Curator Ora Williams in mid April by Maynard F. Reece, staff artist in the museum division of the Department. Although completed after the formal observance of the semi-centennial of the Department, the painting is an excellent contribution to the celebration of that occasion and the recognition of Mr. Williams' service to Iowa history. The painting will later be hung in the portrait gallery of the Department.

E. F. PITTMAN, director of the newspaper division, who has been making motion pictures of scenes typical of farm life in the 1870's, showed portions of his film before the Madison County Historical Society, April 21.

PICTURES OF IOWA HOMES in each county of Iowa are wanted by Kenneth E. Colton, for the photograph collection of the Department. Particularly desired are pictures of homes built in the 1860's and the following three decades. All friends and interested photographers are urged to contribute what they may. Dates of the erection and the names of architects are desired too, if this is obtainable.

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