

Iowa Centennial Anniversary

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IOWA CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

The Centennial anniversary of Iowa statehood is near at hand. The admission date fixes December 28, 1946 as the time for celebration of the one hundredth birthday recurrence; but it was March 3, 1845, that the first Congressional act authorizing the new state was signed by a president, just as he was to leave his office; so, the candles might properly be lighted for any day of the year and four months that Father Iowa was kept in suspense by the political doctors.

Why a birthday anniversary celebration anyway? To what purpose and for what good should we, who are participants in one of the most momentous eras of all time, plan to hark back to the small beginnings and petty controversies of the state that we all love. Birthday celebrations are generally glorified by youth and shunned in old age; but really Iowa is young as states come and go, for 28 had been organized and only 19 since Iowa secured an admission ticket. Birthday cards, dinners, reunions, reminiscences, are of definite service in linking youth and maturity and, for men or for states, shaping the chain that binds the wisdom of the past to the duties of the future.

Consideration of their noble ancestry and honorable progress through the years, fairly compels this generation of Iowans to celebrate the Iowa Centennial anniversary year in the grand manner of a proud and patriotic people.

As the anniversary time approaches more and more the people of Iowa come into the mood for celebrating, and that trend doubtless will be accelerated as escape is sought from the troubles that beset a world in chaos. The other day, the Iowa Society Sons of the American Revolution, appointed a committee to join with others in furthering the celebration plans; and this is only a symptom of what is in the minds of many Iowa people. The history-minded folk took early steps looking to a general state celebration,

to be sponsored and directed by the state itself, and secured adoption by the Forty-ninth General assembly of a concurrent resolution as follows:

In view of the approaching Centennial of the statehood of Iowa, the state having been admitted to the Union on December 28, 1846, the Governor of Iowa is hereby authorized to appoint a committee of nine persons for the purpose of considering and preparing plans for a proper celebration of the Centennial of Iowa statehood during the year 1946, at the capital of Iowa and in various parts of Iowa, such program for celebration to be of a character suitable to advance the educational and historical interest of the people of the state in development of our state during its first hundred years. Said committee is hereby instructed to prepare plans and programs for such celebration and submit the same to the Fiftieth General Assembly for such action as it may deem proper.

This formal initiation of the proposal for a statewide celebration was introduced by Representatives Henry Wichman of Poweshiek, X. T. Prentis of Ringgold and Leo O. Lampman of O'Brien, was promptly passed by both houses in the early part of the year 1941, and Gov. George A. Wilson appointed the committee authorized. That was before Pearl Harbor. The outbreak of the war caused some change in the general plan, but the committee functioned and submitted to Gov. Bourke B. Hickenlooper, and through him to the Fiftieth General Assembly, on February 4, 1943, the following report and recommendations:

HON. BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER,
Des Moines.

Dear Mr. Governor:

The Forty-ninth General Assembly of the state of Iowa adopted House Concurrent Resolution 23 providing for the appointment by the governor of Iowa of a committee of nine persons for the purpose of considering preliminary plans for the proper celebration of the Centennial of Iowa statehood during the year 1946. Under said resolution, the governor appointed the committee making this report to you, and whose names are signed hereto. The last paragraph of said resolution provided that said committee prepare plans and submit the same to the Fiftieth General Assembly for such action as it may deem proper.

Said committee has had two meetings, and as a result of careful consideration of the provisions of said resolution, and in accordance with the instructions contained therein, we hereby respectfully submit to you, and to the Fiftieth General Assembly through you, our report as follows:

There is no intent of diverting any particle of the thought or energy of the people of Iowa from the great main purpose of helping to win the war.

The celebration of the Centennial anniversary of the State of Iowa is, however, an important and worthy object in itself.

Hope is entertained that victory in the war may come at a date considerably in advance of the time for the actual celebration of the Centennial. In such case, the celebration should be planned to combine with the anniversary theme the additional theme of honor to the fighting men who have helped to win the victory.

It is entirely possible that the end of the war, releasing the energy of our people for a Centennial celebration, might come midway between sessions of the legislature. In such case, it would be advisable to have the machinery for the purpose set up in advance, so that a commission could start to function at once, instead of having to wait for a half year or even a year for the activity to be authorized.

It is for this last reason that we offer at this time a general outline of tentative plans for the celebration of the Iowa statehood Centennial in 1946.

The actual date of the admission of the state of Iowa into the Union was December 28, 1846. The date is most inconvenient, for three reasons: Business activities are congested then, at the close of the calendar year; everyone is busy with holiday festivities and observances; and the weather is likely to be anything but favorable, certainly prohibitive for any outdoor program. Therefore, it is suggested that the entire Centennial year of 1946 be devoted to widespread local observances of the anniversary, in which every community of the state can join, and emphasize its own particular part in the progress of Iowa for the 100 years; with perhaps an official recognition of the exact anniversary date, at the state capitol. We assume that the Iowa State Fair will signalize the anniversary at its annual exhibition in its own way.

To this end we suggest that every county, every city, every town, every church, lodge, club, association, or other group of any kind, plan to observe, in a manner fitting to its own line of activity, its own anniversary, whether that be for the exact 100-year period or for a greater or less period of time. Many such observances will be held before the year 1946, but when that year comes, then all

celebrations should have special reference to the Centennial year.

It also is suggested that, in addition to the public schools, all study clubs and other groups in the state which meet regularly should include in their programs of study from now until 1946 something with reference to the history of the state and to its progress in all lines.

There are numerous books which in whole or in part cover the history of the state quite fully and ably. But from these more extensive works it would be well to make a compendium of the main facts in the state's history, to be published in economical form for the use of teachers and pupils in the public school system.

The State Department of History and Archives, the State Historical Society of Iowa, and the Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies should be expected to give direction to much of this study, as part of their regular activity. The Centennial series of Iowa historical books published by the State Historical Society will be drawn upon for material, including those already published, and the remaining volumes of the series which are to follow.

The purpose is not to promote a merely academic study of state and local history, or a merely commercial advertisement of Iowa, but to represent faithfully all the activities, material and moral, which have gone into the making of a great state; to stimulate state pride; to stir a lively gratitude for the providential and human influences which have made Iowa what it is today; and to strengthen the purpose of all Iowans to learn from the lessons of the past in order to build Iowa institutions and character even better as the state's second century begins.

Our suggestion is that the observance of Iowa's statehood Centennial should be an all-Iowa affair, covering every branch of legitimate activity, past and present.

To place in effect the preliminary plans and program referred to above, and to consummate other plans that might be prepared in the future, the undersigned committee hereby make two definite concrete recommendations:-

1. That if the governor and the Fiftieth General Assembly approve the general program and plan above submitted, the governor should be authorized to appoint a Centennial commission to prepare and frame definite plans and programs and to have full charge of the directions of Centennial observances in the state. The committee suggest that said commission should consist of between fifteen and twenty members, one of each members to be appointed from and to represent each of the following organizations or lines of activity:

Agriculture.
Education.

Patriotic organizations.
 Labor.
 Industry and Commerce.
 The State Department of History and Archives.
 The State Historical Society of Iowa.
 The Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies.
 Women's organizations.
 Religious interests.
 Transportation.
 Daily newspapers.
 Weekly newspapers.
 Radio stations.
 And any other activity which seems advisable.

Our second definite and concrete recommendation is as follows:

2. Your committee feels that it would be well for the Centennial commission to be supplied with a small fund, say one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the biennium, with which to meet actual expenses such as postage, printing, telephone calls, and clerical work. The commission appointments should be completely honorary, with no allowance for time or expense.

Respectfully submitted,

IOWA STATEHOOD CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE.

Ora Williams, Chairman, Des Moines	Ethyl Martin, Iowa City
Walter H. Beall, West Union	Frank Miles, Des Moines
Bob Burlingame, Des Moines	Mrs. H. E. Narey, Spirit Lake
John W. Carey, Sioux City	Henry K. Peterson, Council Bluffs
Wm. G. Kerr, Grundy Center	

The report was printed in the journals of the legislative assembly, received general commendation, and in accordance with the recommendation there was adopted the following joint resolution sponsored by Senator Paul P. Stewart of Fayette. It was made a joint resolution because of the appropriation for incidental expenses and was printed in the session laws of the Fiftieth General Assembly.

Section 1. That in view of the approaching centennial of the statehood of Iowa, the state having been admitted to the Union on December 28, 1846, the Governor of Iowa is hereby authorized to appoint a committee of fifteen persons for the purpose of con-

sidering and preparing plans for a proper celebration of the centennial of Iowa statehood during the year 1946 at the Capitol at Des Moines, Iowa, and in the various parts of Iowa, such program for a celebration to be of a character suitable to advance the educational and historical interests of the people of the State of Iowa in the development of our state during its first one hundred years. Said committee is hereby instructed to prepare plans and programs for such celebration and submit the same to the Fifty-first General Assembly of Iowa for such action as it may deem proper.

Sec. 2. There is hereby appropriated from the general fund of the state of Iowa, the sum of five hundred dollars for each year of the biennium from July 1, 1943 to July 1, 1945, to be used by the committee above named for stationery, postage, printing and clerk hire and other miscellaneous expenses.

The Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies, representing nearly all sections of the state, affiliated with the State Department of History and Archives, was active in promoting the movement for a statewide celebration. Its officers were: President, Henry K. Peterson, Council Bluffs; vice president, Walter H. Beall, West Union; secretary, Gertrude Henderson, Sioux City; treasurer, Remley J. Glass, Mason City. The death of the vice president, who had been quite forceful in the work, and the calling two of the committee of nine into the military service, did not abate the interest of the history-minded people, and lists of persons willing to serve on the committee of fifteen were prepared and submitted. It was at all times borne in mind that any appropriation by the Fifty-first General Assembly to assure the success of the proposed Centennial anniversary celebration would have to be subject to war conditions as they might be in the centennial year. The character of the celebration, or series of anniversary events, and the times and places thereof, would be determined by the members of the Fifty-first General Assembly.

The legislative session for 1945 adjourned on April 12, and before doing so, passed the following house joint resolution, introduced by Representatives TePaske of Sioux, Datisman of Lyon, Walter of Pottawattamie, Blatti

of Chickasaw, Sloane and Burkman of Polk, Pritchard of Hancock, Van Eaton of Woodbury, Wormley of Plymouth, Heffner of Hamilton, Hedin of Scott, Watson of O'Brien, Less of Dubuque, Whitehead of Dallas, Lane of Carroll and Gardner of Bremer, namely:

WHEREAS, the State of Iowa was admitted to the Union December 18, 1846, and

WHEREAS, the year 1946 will mark the centennial of that event, and

WHEREAS, it is proper and highly desirable that the occasion be properly observed and celebrated, and

WHEREAS, the Fiftieth General Assembly did on April 5, 1943 approve a Senate Joint Resolution providing for such observance and celebration and appropriating funds therefor as shown by Chapter 310, Acts of the Fiftieth General Assembly of the State of Iowa, and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the said Senate Joint Resolution have not yet been fully carried out,

Now, therefore,

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

That the time for the performance of the said Senate Joint Resolution be extended to January 1, 1947, and the Governor of Iowa is authorized to carry out all the provisions set out in said Senate Joint Resolution of April 5, 1943, not already performed and carried out, and that the appropriation provided for in said Senate Joint Resolution is hereby made available for that purpose.

And further that a report hereof be made to the 1947 regular session of the General Assembly.

The state of Texas and the state of Florida were admitted just before Iowa and they have already done some celebrating, despite the war, and in the case of Florida this included an elaborate ceremony in the Coolidge auditorium of the Library of Congress addressed by the senior senator from that state. Wisconsin will come along a year later. The opening of the Oregon Trail has been duly commemorated, and Hollywood helped to remind us of the Golden Spike anniversary. There is much more to Iowa than acres of corn and herds of baby beef. The California society of Iowa expatriates will not forget to

sound long and loud the praises of the mother state on her great birthday.

The answer to the question, why celebrate a birthday, received a different approach at the national capital. Congressman Karl M. Le Compte, backed by his colleagues, secured the definite promise from the postoffice department for the issue of an Iowa Centennial postage stamp, which was done for Florida, and sought of the mint the stamping of a Centennial coin. In support of these bright ideas the Iowa General Assembly adopted a resolution, which was put into the Congressional Record by Congressmen Talle and Dolliver, as follows:

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 22

Whereas, on December 28, 1946, the State of Iowa will have completed its first century of statehood, and the year will be celebrated in Iowa as the State's centennial year; and

Whereas, there is general desire on the part of the people of the State that the centennial year of Iowa shall be made the occasion for renewed interest in and acceleration of the study of the entire history of Iowa, by appropriate ceremonies in the schools, the churches, and all civic societies, in every city and town of the State, to the end that Iowa people shall have finer appreciation of their own State and the achievements of her people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the house (the senate concurring), That the fifty-first general assembly hereby endorses and approves the movement made by HON. KARL LECOMPTE, and other members of the Iowa delegation in Congress, to secure the publication by the Postal Department of a special stamp commemorative of the event, serving to remind all the people of the fact that Iowa was the first free State of the Louisiana Purchase, and of its growth and greatness; and the similar effort to secure the coinage of a special commemorative coin of special Iowa significance, and we hereby add our indorsement to the effort to make not only Iowa but all the world more history-conscious as a background for the higher patriotism affecting all things American.

HAROLD FELTON,
Speaker of the House.

KENNETH A. EVANS,
President of the Senate.

We are come upon a time of rejoicing. The Iowa Centennial year is in fact two years, 1945 and 1946. The battles for liberty are nearly won. The tumult and the shouting for the downfall of slavery might well be blended with the peans of praise for Iowa's century of peaceful home making. Whether with flags and banners, with stamps and medals, with poems and oratory, with stories of adventure and epics of heroism, Iowa people will heartily celebrate the one hundredth birthday of their great state.

A THEATRE SCENE—INDIAN GALLANTRY*

Washington, D. C., Sept. 30, 1837—I have just returned from the theatre, and before I turn in I will give you a sketch of one of the most interesting scenes I ever witnessed. Understanding that the various tribes of Indians now here were to be present there this evening, I wended thither with a double curiosity to see the fascinating Miss Nelson and the effect of her acting upon the minds of the savages.

In one of the stage boxes were seated a party of Iowas, who are small-featured and more richly dressed than any other tribe I ever saw, but less gaudy than the Sioux. In the adjoining box were the Foxes, who appeared to me more Indian-like than the rest. They wear red blankets, save one who had a black one. Probably he is the chaplain to the embassy. They wear no shirts, and their blankets being thrown open they show their forms in naked majesty. They wear no trinkets like the other tribes, about their heads, which they shave closely, leaving only the scalp, from which a mass of bristles runs back to their necks, like the crest of a horseman's helmet. This with the savage simplicity of the other parts of their bodies, gives them a peculiarly antique appearance, far

*Clipping from the *Spirit of the Times*, New York, dated as above and printed Oct. 7, 1837; contributed by Gurney C. Gue, Merrick, N. Y.

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