

William J. Petersen (1901-1989) Leland L. Sage
(1899-1989)

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In Memoriam

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN (1901–1989)

LELAND L. SAGE (1899–1989)

The cause of Iowa history lost two friends and advocates earlier this year: William J. Petersen died on February 2 at the age of 88, and Leland L. Sage died on February 16, just two months shy of his 90th birthday.

William J. Petersen was superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa and editor of the *Palimpsest* from 1947 to 1972. He earned the nickname "Steamboat Bill" for his extensive research on transportation on the Mississippi River, which led to the best-known of his ten books, *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*. Much more than a scholar, Dr. Petersen was a historical evangelist to the state of Iowa. Along with his wife, Bessie, he traveled to all corners of the state in search of the remnants of Iowa's past and support for the cause of history in the state. His legacy will be long remembered by those who share his enthusiasm for the history of the state of Iowa.

Leland L. Sage began teaching at what is now the University of Northern Iowa in 1932. He officially retired in 1967, but continued to teach until 1981. Trained as a European historian at Vanderbilt University and the University of Illinois, he became the dean of Iowa historians. His 1956 biography of Iowa Senator William Boyd Allison is a classic. In 1974 Iowa State University Press published his *History of Iowa*; its reprinting in a paperback edition in 1987 is testimony to its wide use and acceptance. At the time of his death, he was compiling a history of the State Historical Society of Iowa. For all who knew him, he represented in the best sense the gentleman and the scholar. His work as a scholar—and as a gentleman—leave us all in his debt.

A memorial has been established in the name of Leland Sage to benefit the State Historical Society of Iowa. Donations will be gratefully accepted and should be made payable to the Iowa Historical Foundation.

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