The Reunion of 1882

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THE REUNION OF 1882.


The officers were as follows: Francis Springer, President; W. Blair Lord, Reporter; Dr. Thomas J. Saunders, Secretary; Ellsworth N. Bates, Assistant Secretary; S. C. Trowbridge, Sergeant-at-Arms; Francis Thompson, Door Keeper; James O. Hawkins, Messenger.

This convention gave the people of Iowa the Constitution which, with sundry amendments, is still the fundamental law of our State.

Twenty-five years afterward, January 19, 1882, the surviving members of the convention held their only reunion in the city of Des Moines—meeting first in the United States District Court Room and afterward in Moore's Opera House. Eight of the members were dead, and eight of the survivors were unable to be present and sent letters of regret. Hon. Francis Springer, as was most appropriate, presided, and Dr. T. J. Saunders acted as Secretary. Hon. T. S. Parvin was chosen Assistant Secretary. Probably the most important portions of the proceedings were the address of Judge George G. Wright and the response by the President. Hon. Francis Springer. These addresses we present in full in this number of The Annals. Judge Wright's is from the report in the Daily Register, of the next morning, where it was no
doubt printed from his own written copy. Judge Springer’s has had the benefit of his own revision.

This reunion, a portion of which the writer was privileged to attend, was an interesting and notable affair, and attracted much attention at the time. A beautiful programme was issued, of which copies were printed on white satin. Alderman J. J. Williams, in the absence of the Mayor, extended a cordial welcome to the freedom and hospitality of the city to the distinguished guests. The roll was called by the Secretary, letters were read from absent members and invited guests, and eloquent addresses were delivered by Hon. Messrs. James F. Wilson, D. H. Solomon, Aylett R. Cotton, R. L. B. Clarke, D. W. Price, Edward Johnstone and others. The honors accorded the surviving members were rounded out on the evening of the 19th, following the exercises in the Opera House, by a splendid reception and supper at the home of Mr. L. Harbach, at which there was a large attendance. On the whole, the occasion was thoroughly enjoyed by these eminent pioneer lawmakers, as well as by those who had the good fortune to attend this memorable reunion. Especial mention is often made by members of the convention who are still living, of the kindness and hospitality of the Capital City on that occasion, and of the attention bestowed upon them by Gov. B. B. Sherman, Hon. Messrs. George G. Wright and P. M. Casady, Mr. L. Harbach and others. It is a distinct loss to the State that the proceedings were not carefully reported in full and published in pamphlet form.

Of the convention the following memorabilia have been secured by the Historical Department: Two copies of the full stenographic reports of its proceedings, one the gift of Hon. W. J. Moir, of Eldora, and the other from the State Historical Society; one copy of its new very scarce official journal, the gift of Hon. John Mahin of Muscatine, who printed the volume; and a set of original daguerreotypes of its members and officers. The official copy of the Constitution, signed by its makers, is preserved intact in the office of the Secretary of State. The records left by the two preced-
ing constitutional conventions are unfortunately very meager. As a part of so much of this record as refers personally to Judge Springer, we copy the following expressions of the press at the time of this memorable reunion. The Iowa County Record of January 26, 1882, said:

Judge Springer has become a household name, forever to be household. He has fought the battle, and now, at the head of the state, he reaps the fruits of his labor. His name is accepted by the people and his influence is felt throughout the state. He has been a statesman for many years, and his words have been listened to with the greatest respect. His wisdom and counsel have been of the greatest value to the state, and his services have been invaluable. We wish him many more years of usefulness and happiness.

We take the following from an editorial in the Des Moines Daily Register of January 20, 1882:

The speeches of the members of the Iowa Constitutional Convention of 1857 were not long ago published, and they have been read by many. The advice given by these gentlemen was full of wisdom and good sense, and it has been carried out by the people of Iowa with great success. The result of these speeches will be of great benefit to the state, and we hope that the people of Iowa will not forget their benefit.

We will only add that Judge Springer has spent the past winter at his long-time home in Columbus Junction, in excellent health for one of his years, his perfect habits of living having enabled him to withstand an attack of the grip which came upon him in the winter. All who enjoy the acquaintance of the venerable statesman, as well as those who read his personal recollections in the last number of The Annals, will join in the hope that he may long be spared to his kindest and the State he has served with such fidelity and distinction.

THE BATTLE OF PLEASANT HILL.

It has been well stated by some writer that no correct realization of the war of the rebellion would be possible until the private soldiers should write their recollections of the