

Origin of a Beneficent Law

ISSN 0003-4827



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Recommended Citation

"Origin of a Beneficent Law." *The Annals of Iowa* 4 (1900), 550-551.

Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.2633>

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obtained. Though one year ago this month, but one small frame building had been erected at this place, now Mitchell and Eureka contain not far from fifty frame buildings, while several more are to be erected before winter sets in. This will be a busy winter for hauling logs, and next season will witness a vast improvement in the appearance and size of our town.

Prairie chickens are very abundant upon our prairies, and deer, in various sized herds, are not unfrequently seen, affording ample sport for huntsmen, as well as quite an item of food.

ORIGIN OF A BENEFICENT LAW.

A short time ago Mr. Ira Cook, of Des Moines, gave a friend an interesting account of the origin of the Iowa law for the adoption of children, kindly consenting to put it in writing for these pages. This wise and most humane measure passed the house by a unanimous vote. (Jour. H. R., 1858, p. 527.) Eight senators voted against it, and twenty-three for its passage. (Senate Journal, 1858, p. 434.) There has never been a voice raised for its repeal. The original act may be found on page 102, Laws of 1858. It was published in the Revision of 1860, and in the Codes of 1873 and 1895. Its provisions are so acceptable to the people of Iowa that it may be regarded as one of our permanent laws:

Editor of The Annals:

SIR: Referring to a conversation with you a few days since, in which I gave you a bit of history regarding the origin of the enactment of the present statute regulating the adoption of children and your request to put the same in writing, I have to say: That in the summer of 1857, while my wife was on a visit in Davenport, she had given to her a little girl, some three or four years of age, by the child's father, it being understood (and a written contract made to that effect), that she should rear the child as her own. We became very much attached to the little one, and after she had been with us eight or ten months, I became uneasy because we really had no legal claim over her, as against her father. One day along in the winter of 1858, I asked Hon. John A. Kasson if there was any law by which we could obtain legal authority over the person of the child? He replied: "No, only by the apprentice law; but there ought to be a statute regulating the adoption of children." He said further: "We will have one right now." He then and there drew up a bill of two sections, afterwards

increased to five, and the legislature being at that time in session, he asked Hon. John Clark to introduce it. After the usual preliminaries it was passed, unanimously by the house and with a few opposition votes in the senate. It was ordered to take effect upon publication, which was done immediately. In the meantime I sent a copy to Cook & Dillon, at Davenport, and John F. Dillon drew a deed of adoption in accordance with the law. He caused it to be executed by the father and returned it to me. My wife and I executed it and I put it on record. It now stands as the first deed recorded under that law.

IRA COOK.

DR. SALTER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO IOWA HISTORY.

We have had no more welcome contributor to the pages of THE ANNALS than the Rev. Dr. William Salter, the distinguished pastor of the Congregational Church of Burlington, Iowa. He has written much relating to the history of the Territory and State of Iowa, always with the highest purpose in view, and his accuracy has never been questioned. He is a thorough and careful student and investigator, going to original sources, where such are accessible, and sparing no pains to verify any statement for which he is responsible. Whatever historical studies he may bequeath to coming generations will be accepted as the truth. His most considerable undertaking and one which will undoubtedly have a permanent place in the history of the West, is "The Life of James W. Grimes, Third Governor of Iowa." This has been widely accepted as an invaluable historical work, not only as a deserved tribute to one of the greatest American statesmen of his time, but as throwing much light upon Iowa history, when our State, as well as the Nation, were breaking away from the control of "the Slave Power," in all of which Governor Grimes bore a part that has made his name illustrious. But all of Dr. Salter's works possess great value to students of Iowa and western history. We have, therefore, secured the following bibliography of his writings, on Iowa history, from which the reader may readily locate and

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