

The Allison Memorial Commission

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THE ALLISON MEMORIAL COMMISSION.

At the suggestion of General Grenville M. Dodge there was begun in 1908 the collection of funds for the purpose of erecting at the Iowa State capital a fitting memorial of the life of William B. Allison.

Organization was promptly perfected with General Dodge as chairman of a committee of well-known public-spirited men, one from each county in Iowa, and a number of Iowa men in other States. Funds were solicited and in the course of the effort, the Thirty-third General Assembly passed

An Act to create a commission authorized to locate and erect a pedestal for a monument to the memory of the late William B. Allison and making an appropriation to defray the expenses thereof.

WHEREAS, Certain patriotic citizens have undertaken to create by public subscription a fund to be expended in the erection of a monument at the city of Des Moines, Iowa, to the memory of the late Senator William B. Allison; and,

WHEREAS, It is necessary to provide a pedestal for said monument and a site for the same; therefore,

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

SECTION 1. *Commission—How Constituted.* A commission of five persons, to consist of the chairman of the Allison monument committee, the Governor of the State of Iowa, the Curator of the Historical Collections, a member of the Senate, to be named by the President of the Senate, and a member of the House of Representatives, to be named by the Speaker of the House, is hereby created for the purpose of erecting a suitable pedestal upon which shall be placed a monument to the memory of the late William B. Allison.

SECTION 2. *Powers.* Said commission is hereby clothed with full authority to locate and erect upon the capitol grounds, or any extension thereof, a suitable pedestal to be used by the Allison monument committee in erecting thereon a monument to the memory of the late William B. Allison, and such commission shall have authority to do all things reasonable and necessary to the location and erection of said pedestal, and the design for said statue shall be approved by said commission; provided, however, that said commis-

sion shall not expend in the erection of said pedestal a sum in excess of thirty (30%) per cent of the amount of the popular subscription made for the erection of said monument, and in no event shall said commission expend to exceed ten thousand (\$10,000) dollars.

SECTION 3. *To Serve Without Compensation—Expenses.* Said commission shall serve without compensation and shall be allowed only its actual expenses reasonably incurred while engaged in the discharge of its duties.

SECTION 4. *Appropriation—How Drawn.* There is hereby appropriated from the funds in the State Treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) or so much thereof as may be necessary to defray the authorized expense of erecting said pedestal and of said commission. The auditor of state is authorized to draw warrants against said appropriation upon the certificate of said commission showing that the several sums have, in good faith, been expended in the erection of said pedestal or in paying the necessary expenses of said commission.

In compliance with the foregoing act, there was appointed as a member of the commission on the part of the Senate, Hon. A. F. Frudden from Dubuque county, and on the part of the House, Hon. O. H. Holmes of Kossuth county. The commission assembled and organized in the office of the Curator of the State Historical Department in Des Moines. General Dodge was made the chairman, and the Curator of the State Historical Department, the secretary of the commission.

In January, 1912, Treasurer of State, Hon. W. W. Morrow, a member and the treasurer of the committee in charge of the raising of funds, advised the commission that he had in hand approximately the amount the committee had set out to raise, namely, \$40,000.00. This amount in hand rendering available the \$10,000.00 appropriated by the legislature, made a total of \$50,000.00. The commission issued its program asking for the submission of artists' models of a memorial to be erected at a cost not exceeding that amount.

By its program the commission endeavors at least by intimation to suggest the thought of the present generation as to the character of Allison. It hopes through the aid of the sculptor's genius to visualize in imperishable materials, and in accordance with correct forms of art, the meaning of his life. It hopes

to produce something of monumental nature, which by fairly depicting the character and individuality of the subject, will impart to any who did not know or understand the man, whether in our own or future generations, an adequate conception of him. With an offer of \$50,000.00 to him who shall best suggest the form of this expression, the committee believes it will be able to fully discharge its responsibility. In so doing, it hopes to set a standard in memorial expression to Iowa public men, pay respect to the most artistic tastes of cultured people, and erect to Allison a bronze or marble tribute equal in eloquence to those of him in literature.

The problem of the artist will be to depict the life of the one man of Iowa who more than any other was national in character; whose intimate association with every president from Lincoln down to Roosevelt is known and whose counsel entered into the executive judgment upon every crucial and many commonplace administrative matters during that period. The artist must conceive a life interlaced with the largest affairs in their trend through both legislative and executive channels—affairs of private as well as national and international character; a life in constant interposition to threatening aspects and often dangerous purposes; a force impelling beneficent results where disaster might have come. His influence dawned in the Civil war, and throughout the era following, with all its clash of interests, his was a masterful mind managing from equitable impulses and solely by peaceful means. That era, co-extensive with his life, bore fruits incomparable in gain to every American citizen from the very highest to the very humblest. Along the sky line of American accomplishment, with its hundred towers and spires of patriotic lives, none other is revealed in the Allison period holding to his steady level of high efficiency; none so much appears to be the bond uniting every element into one expanse of peace, prosperity and progress. If we are to know the big figures in American affairs by single words, one from Iowa should probably be known as the great harmonizer—Allison, the Harmonizer.

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