

William F. Coolbaugh

ISSN 0003-4827



Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.

This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

Recommended Citation

"William F. Coolbaugh." *The Annals of Iowa* 7 (1906), 467-469.

Available at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/annals-of-iowa/vol7/iss6/9>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

sailor. His service in the Far East was useful to his country and highly creditable to himself, meeting in all respects the approval of the naval authorities and the President. Soon after its conclusion he was placed upon the retired list and took up his residence in Washington, D. C.

Admiral Remy is a son-in-law of Charles Mason, pioneer Chief Justice of Iowa Territory, having in 1873 married his daughter, Mary J. While in command of the Navy Yard at Portsmouth, N. H., he interested himself in aiding the writer to procure the obsolete guns which now stand in front of our Capitol, and later on was instrumental in sending many valuable items to our Museum from the Far East. A fine oil portrait of the Admiral has been placed in the Iowa Historical Art Gallery.

WILLIAM F. COOLBAUGH.

The part Mr. Coolbaugh took in the early political and legislative history of Iowa was of signal importance. It was an invaluable contribution to the honor and credit of the State in a momentous national crisis. It antedates the very interesting recollections of Mr. Coolbaugh's life contributed to *THE ANNALS* by Mr. John T. Remy.

Milton D. Browning, a brother-in-law of Mr. Coolbaugh, was a member of the Senate in the First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth General Assemblies. He was a leading member of the Whig party, as Mr. Coolbaugh was a leading Democrat, and the brothers-in-law sometimes had sharp words in the political conflicts of the time. It was a period of party disintegration and reconstruction. Mr. Coolbaugh was elected to the State Senate the same year James W. Grimes was elected Governor.

While of opposite political parties, they were close personal friends, and enjoyed each other's confidence and respect. In Mr. Grimes' mind the cause of Freedom transcended party considerations, as in his whole public life he sunk the partisan in the patriot. Mr. Coolbaugh adhered strenuously to Stephen A. Douglas as a political leader, and Mr. Grimes as stren-

uously opposed him, but their personal attachment continued unbroken.

In the fifth General Assembly Mr. Coolbaugh was Chairman of the Committee on Internal Improvements, and a member of the Committee on Ways and Means. He early gave notice of a memorial to Congress to repeal the duties on sugar, and later presented a memorial from citizens of Burlington for a law providing that in all additions to towns and in all new towns a portion of land should be set apart for public parks. A letter shows his enlightened views on the subject and his genial mind:

IOWA CITY, Jan. 18, '55.

REV'D WM. SALTER:

DEAR SIR: I am just in receipt of your valued favor of 16th inst. I think your suggestions are excellent and entitled to the favorable consideration of the General Assembly. I will take great pleasure in laying the memorial enclosed before the Senate where I know it will commend itself to favor. I doubt, however, whether at this late time of the session we can get the bill through. In anticipation of an adjournment on the 23d the Senate resolved a few days since that no *new* business should be received after this date except by unanimous consent. I will, however, if a favorable opportunity occurs try the temper of the Senate and endeavor to introduce it.

Yours truly,

W. F. COOLBAUGH.

Mr. Coolbaugh's service in the Senate continued from 1854 to 1861. He supported Governor Grimes' administration in the great matters of Land Grants to railroads, the Constitution of 1857, the investigation of malfeasance in office by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (James D. Eads), Public Schools, the Geological Survey of the State, and the establishment of a Hospital for the insane, and institutions for the blind and the deaf and dumb. Though neither Mr. Coolbaugh nor the Governor were members of the Constitutional Convention, their counsels were of great weight in shaping the Constitution of 1857. Upon the outbreak of the civil war Mr. Coolbaugh gave his firm support to the course of Senator Grimes in Congress, and to Governor Kirkwood. In August, 1861, he joined with a number of citizens of both political parties in Burlington in a congratulatory letter to Mr. Grimes (Life of Grimes, p. 147).

Soon after the close of the war, Mr. Coolbaugh asked the good offices of Mr. Grimes for Henry Dodge Clark, son of the last Governor of the Territory, to obtain an appointment for him in the Regular Army. During the war he had been a soldier in the Eleventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, and was now made a second lieutenant in the Eleventh U. S. Infantry. Mr. Coolbaugh wrote to Mrs. A. C. Dodge, "I feel very grateful to Grimes, to whom we owe the appointment."

The Honorable Peter A. Dey gives these reminiscences of Mr. Coolbaugh and Mr. Grimes in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April, 1903, pp. 253-'4:

When I first knew them they roomed together at the Clinton house in Iowa City. In general matters of state policy they were in accord. Mr. Coolbaugh afterwards told me that when it became apparent that Senator Grimes would vote in favor of acquitting President Johnson, he went to Washington for the special purpose of advising him against such a course. He said to Mr. Grimes: "You are the idol of your party in Iowa. The party is radical in the extreme and wrought almost to frenzy by the murder of Lincoln and the apostasy of Johnson. You are the most sensitive man I ever knew. By the course you propose you will bring upon yourself the vengeance of your party, and your state will disown you. You will not outlive this action a year." The reply of Senator Grimes was: "I have considered all this. But my position is right, and if I die tomorrow I shall vote as my convictions dictate. I have no respect for President Johnson personally and less for his policies. But I believe each department of the government is independent; and so long as his official acts are not in violation of the constitution and the laws, the president cannot be removed by the joint action of the house and senate merely for a difference of views or for official acts that are entirely within his jurisdiction."

W. S.

DR. CHARLES A. WHITE.

Ponce de Leon sought the fountain of perpetual youth in the Everglades of Florida. His search was bootless for his particular wish was vain. He sought bodily vigor and insurance against its decadence. His wish mortal man never has realized, and alas never can realize. But had the proud Cas-

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.