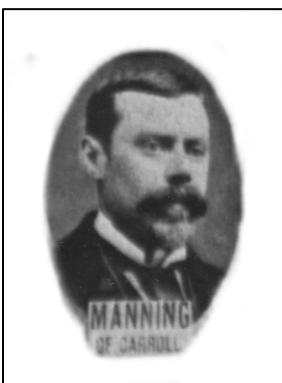


*Pieces of Iowa's Past*, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides monthly, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

## **Examining the Zeros: A New Capitol**

This year begins the 90th Iowa General Assembly. Some of this year's *Pieces of Iowa's Past* articles will briefly examine the work of the 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th, 70th, and 80th General Assemblies, or observe interesting events that happened during those years.

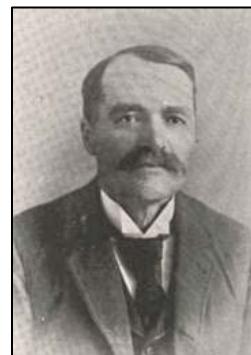
The 20th General Assembly convened January 14, 1884, and adjourned April 2, 1884, an 80-day session. The 20th General Assembly had a total of 150 members.



**Lieutenant  
Governor  
Orlando H. Manning**

Among the Senate members, there were 11 Democrats and 39 Republicans. Lieutenant Governor Orlando H. Manning presided over the Senate. Manning's memorial resolution in the [Senate Journal](#) reads: "Twelfth Lieutenant-Governor of Iowa. Born at Abingdon, Wayne County, Indiana May 14, 1848. Came to Iowa in 1854. Treasurer of Carroll County 1874-1876. Represented Carroll and adjoining counties in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth General Assemblies. Lieutenant-Governor 1882-1885. Died at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 19, 1909. A town in the county of Carroll perpetuates his name."

The House of Representatives had 42 Democrats, 52 Republicans, and 6 Greenbacks. Speaker of the House William P. Wolf presided over the House of Representatives. An [obituary](#) from the Annals of Iowa reads that Wolf "was born December 31, 1833, at

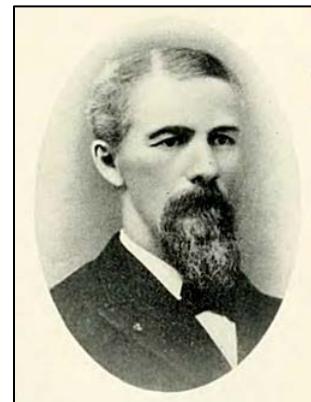


**Speaker of the House  
William P. Wolf**

Harrisburg, Stark county, Ohio. He was of Quaker parentage. The family removing later to a farm near Marlboro, he attended the common school and seminary, and afterward taught in the Union School and at Lunaville. ... In 1863 he was elected as representative in the State Legislature. In 1864 he formed a law partnership with Hon. J. H. Rothrock, which continued until Mr. Rothrock went upon the bench. In May, 1864, Mr. Wolf assisted in raising Company 'I,' Forty-sixth Iowa Infantry, and was elected Captain. ... He was elected State Senator in 1867, serving until 1870, when he was chosen to Congress to fill an unexpired term. In 1881, he was again elected representative in the State legislature—re-elected in 1883, and at the opening of that session chosen speaker of the house."

Governor Buren R. Sherman, a Republican, won the 1883 gubernatorial election and was sworn into office on January 17, 1884. Notably, in his [inaugural address](#), Governor Sherman highlighted the importance of equality of men. He said "On the general subject of the civil rights of the people, a few words will suffice. If it be true that the several acts of Congress respecting this all important matter, are not upheld by the Constitution, and that because State action in denial of the application of the principle to all its citizens is first necessary to authorize the National Government to affirmatively interfere, then I am in favor of such legislation in our own State, as will secure these rights to every class of our citizens, and determine their status beyond all question of doubt."

The federal census in 1880 put Iowa's population at 1,624,615.



Governor  
[Buren R. Sherman](#)

## A New Capitol

In 1884, the General Assembly met in our current Capitol building for the first time. As the start of the 20th General Assembly was approaching, legislators were growing impatient to move into the new Capitol. After all, they had been watching the building's construction for about 13 years. It was determined that, although the entire building had not been wholly

completed, the legislature would move in since the second and third floors were ready for business.

On January 17, at 2 p.m., the procession to the new Capitol began. Beginning at the Kirkwood House, the procession began its way via carriages from 4th and Walnut streets to the Old Brick Capitol, which was located just south of the new Capitol building. Upon arriving at the Old Brick Capitol, the group then made its way by foot to the new Capitol, entering through the east door. The joint session of the legislature convened around 2:30 p.m. for the inauguration ceremonies, which did not take place in the chambers but rather in the rotunda.

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**Excerpt from the Oskaloosa Herald, January 17, 1884**

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—To-day, at Des Moines, there will be fine doings, in the dedication of the Capitol and inauguration of Gov. Sherman. The editor of THE HERALD left on Monday for the Capitol, and it is expected will be heard from on the event. This evening there will be an informal reception by Gov. Sherman, Lieut. Governor Manning and party in the rotunda of the Capitol, to which the public generally will be invited. This will be one of the most brilliant features of the day's ceremonies. The immense building is to be lighted from foundation to dome, not one of the hundreds of elegant chandeliers to be left unlighted. That sight alone will be worth a trip to Des Moines to see. It will be a day Iowa people will never forget.

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A select number of ticketholders from the public were allowed in to watch the proceedings. While there were a limited number of spectators allowed in the building and thousands were turned away for the joint convention, the evening reception was a different story. A news article at the time estimated that the evening program, hosted by Governor Sherman and Lieutenant Governor Manning, attracted 10,000 to 15,000 people to the building. It was reported that the amassed crowd agreed on one sentiment: the building inspired pride and awe.

## Temperance Begins in Iowa

Four decades before the passage of the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution, a temperance movement had been long underway in the state of Iowa. Prior to the 20th General Assembly, Iowa enacted laws outlawing "dram shops," a similar type of establishment to a bar today. After a previous failed attempt at a constitutional amendment, the state legislature passed one of the strictest temperance laws in the country.

### Excerpt from the Muscatine Weekly Journal, April 11, 1884

#### Closing Acts and Scenes of the Session.

Special Correspondence of the JOURNAL.  
Des Moines, April 2, 1884.

At high noon by the capitol clocks and 12:55 by central time, the gavel dropped, and the 20th General—Assembly was launched upon the sea of history, taking its place alongside of the nineteen gone before, there to be remembered and judged by its acts and actions, its laws, resolutions, concurrent and joint, as they each and all suit the judges.

As usual, the old story of "the best legislature every assembled in the State has just adjourned," is going the usual rounds, but I do not believe it.

The fact of its being the first in the new capitol will attract attention toward it and when it is remembered that many men in the State were ambitious to represent the State in the 1st Assembly in the new building, and of course left nothing undone to secure such ends and then the novelty and splendor of the surroundings led many away from the ability of its members, no fair opinion can be expressed as to its greatness, ability or goodness. The 20th did nothing bad, committed no great overt act, made as few mistakes as the average and was as long at it as any. But the crowning act was the passage of prohibitory legislation.

This [law](#) effectively placed a ban on the sale and consumption of "intoxicating liquors" within Iowa's state borders. According to the signed legislation, "intoxicating liquors" included "alcohol, ale, wine, beer, spirituous, vinous and malt liquors." Interestingly, however, there was a loophole for those residents who still wished to imbibe. The law provided for a "local option," which meant that each individual community could decide for itself its own liquor laws. The law went into effect on July 4, 1884. This legislation was in place until January 1, 1916, when the local option was removed by the 1915 legislature.