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Legislative Information Office

Pieces of Iowa's Past

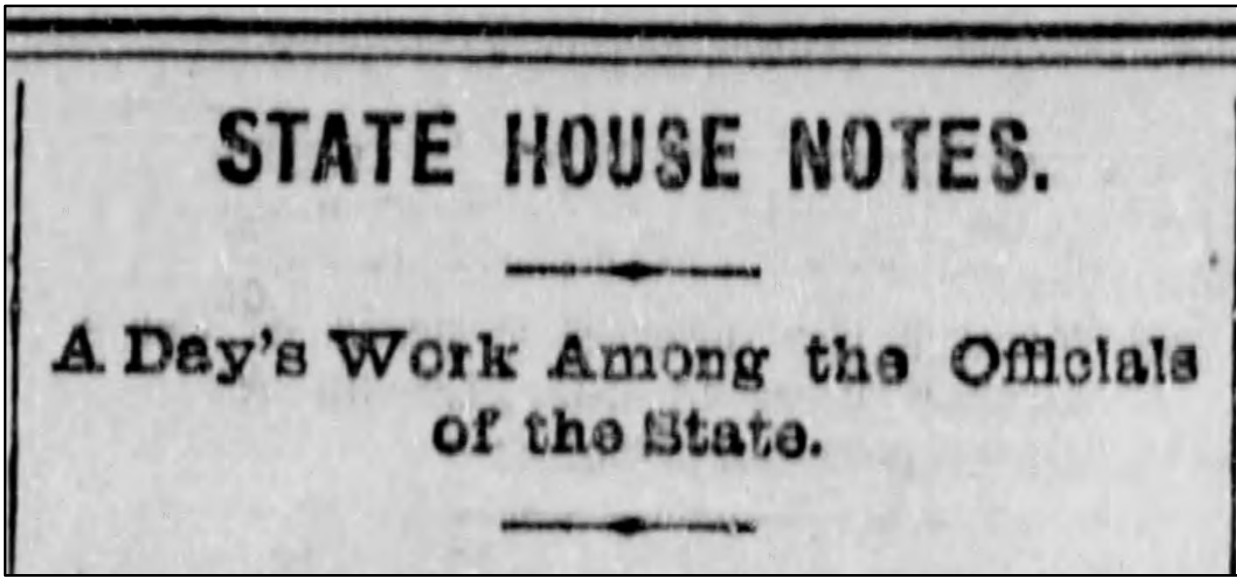
Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa Legislative Information Office monthly, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government.
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# State House Notes in the Iowa State Register 1886

November 2026

In the Iowa State Register historical newspaper, a dedicated column provided a digest of daily activities and updates from inside the Iowa State Capitol. Entitled State House Notes, this column was the primary way citizens stayed informed about their elected officials.

It was common to find legislative updates and brief summaries of bills introduced, debated, or passed during the legislative session. But these columns, written by reporters stationed directly inside the Statehouse, were also an interesting peek into daily life at the Capitol.



STATE HOUSE NOTES.

A Day's Work Among the Officials of the State.

Senator Bloom sent pages in all directions for his glass (eye-glass) mislaid somewhere in the building.

January 29, 1886

There came near being trouble in the room of the sergeant at arms of the Senate yesterday. The lock on the door became unruly and would not yield to the key for an hour or more.

*February 17, 1886*

One of the Capitol employes, a young girl whose pride has been a very fine head of waving hair, met with an accident yesterday which might have been much more serious. Some children were playing with matches near her, and one of the urchins playfully threw a lighted match into her hair. Her head was at once enveloped in flame, which was readily put out, but not until her hair was so badly singed that it had to be cropped short.

*February 17, 1886*

One of the pleasantest features of the session is the presence of a large number of ladies, wives and relatives of members, who are spending a few days or a portion of the session in the city. Their presence makes smoothe the rugged pathway of a legislator's life, and tempers the cross fire of argument and conflicting interests. Many of the ladies have appeared in Des Moines social gatherings, and add to the social life of the city.

March 7, 1886

The Doorkeeper and the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate will in a few days be the envy of all other Capitol employes, as they are to be provided with their new badges. The badges are now finished, and are of silver and gold in the form of a shield, beautifully chased and ornamented. The central design is an eagle, worked in gold, supporting a ribbon with the motto of Iowa engraved thereon. The name of the office is engraved beautifully, and the whole badge is a jewel of rare design.

*March 17, 1886*

From the small room adjoining the post-office in the Capitol, Colfax mineral water is now disperned to the members of the Legislature free of charge.

*March 19, 1886*

The Capitol employes will be paid to-day. The pay roll for the month of March, as made out by Superintendent of Finance Foote, amounts to $3,416.66 for the construction and account and $2,479.37 on the care of building. There are now forty-three persons employed in caring for the Capitol.

*April 4, 1886*

Placards have been placed in the State House requesting the members, officers, reporters and others to deposit their keys with the Sergeant-at-Arms or other proper official before going home. This seems to be a very necessary request, as it is well-known that many are forgetful about such small matters.

*April 8, 1886*

Yesterday as Capt. Beall was cleaning out the rooms, he accidently opened the box where mail is deposited, and found a number of letters which had been posted there during fair week. They might have remained there until the next legislature, but for his chance observation,

*September 29, 1886*

Gen. Wright, custodian of the Capitol, is engaged just now in a scout among ex-State officers and deputies for the combination to an old safe standing in the former Capitol.

*October 21, 1886*

A bluebird and a woodpecker laid claim to the same spot in one of the Capitol's eaves the other day, and a bloody conflict ensued, which the Capitol officials enjoyed hugely. The bluebird, after some sparring, succeeded in knocking the woodpecker senseless, and then retired, with praiseworthy magnanimity, to a neighboring telegraph wire, awaiting his adversary's recovery. Geueral Wright and G. B. Pray picked up the unconscious pugilist, and after applying restoratives, got him on his feet, when down swooped the bluebird and went at him again.

May 10, 1887