

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the legislative session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All historical publications are reproduced here with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

February 8, 2017

This Week: Reviewing the Forty-Seventh Iowa General Assembly

Background:

This year begins the 87th Iowa General Assembly. The first eight *Pieces of Iowa's Past* articles this year will briefly examine the work of the 7th, 17th, 27th, 37th, **47th**, 57th, 67th, and 77th general assemblies.

Forty-Seventh Iowa General Assembly

The 47th General Assembly convened for 100 days from January 11 to April 20, 1937. Governor Nelson Kraschel was inaugurated January 14, 1937, at the age of 47.

Iowa had a 158-member Legislature. There were 22 Democratic members and 28 Republican members in the Senate. The House of Representatives had an even split with 54 Republican members and 54 Democratic members.

Lieutenant Governor John Valentine presided over the Senate. La Mar Foster served as Speaker of the House.

Iowa's population was 2,538,268 in 1940, according to the federal census.



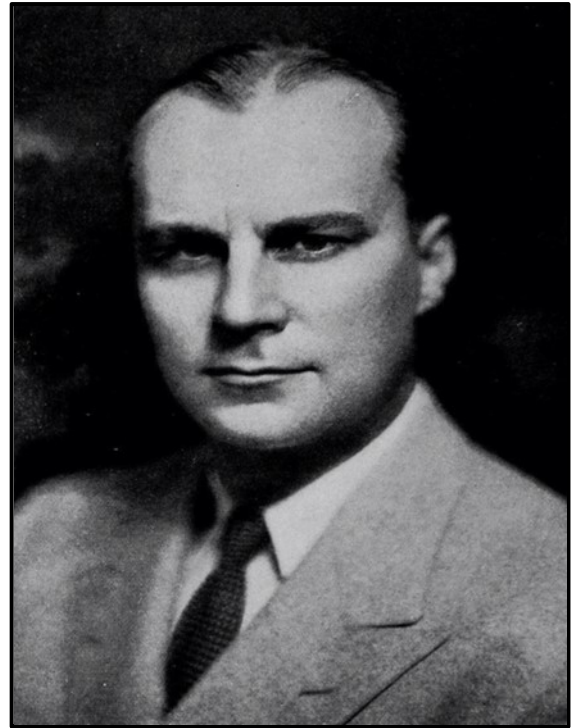
From the Senate Journal, 1937:

Senate File 530 appropriated \$125,000 toward Iowa's participation in the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Works Progress Administration. This bill allowed for the purchase of distressed or tax delinquent lands to be used for reforestation, game development, grazing or other soil conservation purposes. It also allowed for the purchase of supplies, materials, equipment and the employment of necessary personnel.

Other appropriations approved were compensation made to individual State Employees due to the Salary Reduction Act*, and claims paid to wives due to the death of their husbands working for the Iowa Emergency Relief Administration.

**The Salary Reduction Act passed by the Forty-fifth General Assembly in 1935 was found to be unconstitutional by the Iowa Supreme Court.*

Senate File 519 appropriated \$56.00 to the Bezer Lodge number 135. The Civilian Conservation Camp was peeling logs near the lodge. A log rolled down the hill and into the Lodge's Community room damaging the room and the furniture.



**Lieutenant Governor
John Valentine**

From the House Journal, 1937:



**Speaker of the House
La Mar Foster**

The House of Representatives having an equal number of Republican and Democratic members worked for about a day and a half to elect a Speaker.

Dancer of Decatur presented the name of Honorable Floyd J. Sours of Floyd County as candidate for Speaker of the House of Representatives. Curtis of Cherokee presented the name of Hon. Leroy S. Mercer of Johnson County, as candidate for Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Alesch of Plymouth presented the name of Hon. La Mar Foster for Speaker of the House. Blue of Wright presented the name of Dewey E. Goode for Speaker of the House. After many votes and the other candidates withdrawing their names La Mar Foster was elected Speaker of The House. Foster served in the Forty-fifth

General Assembly, the Forty-sixth General Assembly, and the Forty-seventh General Assembly as Speaker and the Sixty-first General Assembly. Each time representing Cedar County.

WITH IOWA ASSEMBLY

DES MOINES, Ia., January 25—
The opening of the third week of the 47th Iowa General Assembly session witnessed the legislative machinery ready for action, following nine days of hectic effort on the part of the House of Representatives to get its working parts oiled and in gear.

An equal division of political party representation in the house was the principal cause of much backing and filling on the part of members seeking political advantage and control of that branch of the legislature. Each party had its slate of candidates for patronage jobs comprising clerks, janitors and pages. Neither side was willing to yield in entirety and ultimately this led to the extreme resort of a call of the House for full presence of members to decide this vital (?) issue.

HOUSE RESOLUTION 1 Whereas, The Forty-seventh General Assembly of the State of Iowa has convened in the State Capitol and

Whereas, The Legislators and the Legislators' clerks will be at their duties in the State House for a considerable time and

Whereas, It has been customary in the past for the Executive Council to arrange for an eating room in the State House and

Whereas, It is inconvenient for the members at all times to leave the building for their meals,

Therefore, Be It Resolved by the House, That we respectfully petition the members of the Executive Council of the State of Iowa to attempt to arrange for such accommodations in the State House at least for the duration of the Legislative term.

Unanimous consent having been obtained for its immediate consideration, Maniece of Emmet moved its adoption. Motion prevailed and the resolution was adopted. Maniece of Emmet asked and obtained unanimous consent to have the Chief Clerk mail a copy of this resolution to each member of the Executive Council.

Statehouse Highlights

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Legislators were irked at the delay in reaching the food counter the first day the new statehouse cafeteria was opened.

As a result Representative C. G. Johnson (D) of Marathon, suggested that members of the house arrange to relief their clerks a half hour early each day so "they can get through with lunch and be out of the way at recess."

The Mason City Globe-Gazette, January 20, 1937

Governor Clyde Herring's comments from his Biennial Address before leaving office appeared in the Senate Journal on January 13, 1937:



**Governor
Clyde Herring**

EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION The Iowa Emergency Relief Administration, established for the purpose of administering funds granted by the federal government for relief purposes and continued for this purpose, and, continued also, for the administration of appropriations made by the Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth General Assemblies, has continued through 1935 and 1936. Federal funds granted to Iowa and administered through this agency during 1935 and 1936 totaled \$13,862,471. State funds received and administered during this same period amounted to \$5,344,417, and local funds administered by this agency during this same period totaled \$7,108,744.

This money was all expended for direct relief of persons in need because of unemployment, and to help pay the cost of such relief in those counties in which local funds were not sufficient to meet the need. In November of 1935, the Federal Works Progress Administration took over the responsibility for employable relief cases. Several thousand projects throughout the state, of considerable value to the state and communities, were carried on under this administration, and during 1935 and 1936, \$23,793,418 was expended by the Federal Works Progress Administration in Iowa for work upon such projects. This work cared for many thousands in Iowa willing and able to work rather than accept direct relief. Approximately one-half of the employable persons in Iowa receiving relief were given an opportunity to work in exchange therefor.

A full and detailed account of activities in the drought area, the supply of surplus commodities distributed, the educational program and student aid program, the supplying for seed purposes of corn and soy beans purchased late in 1934, the distribution of some forty thousand hogs turned over by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to this agency, the medical program, the certification of young men for employment in the Civilian Conservation Corps, the treatment of tuberculosis patients in state and county institutions, and many other worthy activities, are fully set forth in a detailed report by the administrator, Mr. J. C. Pryor.

Senate File 509, while not related to any government relief program, another claim for relief was made to the 47th General Assembly by Lydia Pearl Riesland as a result of her husband's death "having drank from a bottle which he supposed to contain beer but in reality contained grasshopper poison, which he had purchased from the Farm Bureau, which bottle was unlabeled."

This bill failed to pass.

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/shelves/billbooks/47GA/SF%200509.pdf>