

4-1933

## The Alumnus, v17n2, April 1933

Iowa State Teachers College

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### Recommended Citation

Iowa State Teachers College, "The Alumnus, v17n2, April 1933" (1933). *The Alumnus*. 207.  
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# SEERLEY MEMORIAL

ISSUE

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# THE ALUMNUS

April  
Vol. XVII

of  
IOWA STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

1933  
No. 2

# Homer Horatio Seerley

Born at Indianapolis, Indiana, August 13, 1848.

Family moved to a farm near South English, Iowa, in 1854.

Educated in the rural schools and at the State University of Iowa.

Degrees: Ph. B., 1873; B. Di., 1875; A. M., 1876; LL. D., 1901, University of Iowa; LL. D., 1898, Penn College.

Married Clara E. Twaddle, Oskaloosa, Iowa, July 9, 1878.  
Children: Clement Clifford, Bozeman, Montana; Mrs. Claude Culley, LeMars, Iowa; Mrs. A. B. Clark, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Marian, died 1899 at age of seven years.

Teacher, 1873-1875; Superintendent, 1875-1886; Oskaloosa Public Schools.

President, Iowa State Teachers College, 1886-1928; President-Emeritus, 1928-1932.

President, State Teachers Association, 1884; Normal School Department, N. E. A., 1898; National Council of Education, 1919-1921; American Association of Teachers Colleges, 1919.

Author of History and Civil Government of Iowa (with L. W. Parish), 1897; The Country School, 1912; Geography of Iowa, 1916.

(A somewhat more complete biographical sketch will be found on page 16.)

SEERLEY MEMORIAL EDITION  
OF  
**THE ALUMNUS**  
IOWA STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Vol. XVII

Cedar Falls, Iowa, April, 1933

No. 2

*We Pay Tribute To His  
Monumental Contributions  
Toward The Development  
Of This College*

**President Seerley,  
Of Matchless Courage,  
Faith, And Vision**

Memorial Address by President Latham

**P**RESIDENT Emeritus Seerley was taken from our midst during the recent Christmas vacation period, when students and most of the members of the faculty were absent from the campus. It has seemed altogether fitting, therefore, that we should assemble at some hour of some day and pay tribute to his eminence and to his monumental contributions toward the development of this college for whose future, and for whose welfare, we all aspire.

President Homer Horatio Seerley arrived on this site, which has since witnessed his most heroic struggle and the fruition of his fondest aspirations, forty-six years ago. Forty-two years later, or four years ago last August, he relinquished the duties and the responsibilities which he had carried in an illustrious manner during the entire period of his stewardship. From that time until the beginning of his last illness, he enjoyed in full measure the rest and peace and quiet that can come only to those who have lived the good and faithful way. Life can hardly be complete unless one has the time and opportunity to pause at the end of the long and wearisome road and ponder the path that one has trod. This is especially so if the ledger of one's achievements has an overwhelming balance on the credit side. Dr. Seerley's had just that!

Very few of man's prized possessions have been acquired without a struggle. In delving into the history of institutions, one can not escape the conviction that the real founders and builders have been the men

in whose veins surged the blood of the true pioneer—men with vigorous souls, courageous hearts, and sacrificial spirits. The University of Michigan had its Angell, Minnesota its Northrup, and Chicago its William Rainey Harper. The greatness of these institutions, as we know them today, is traceable in no small part to the sublime patience, the indefatigable labors, and the matchless vision of those pioneers in the realm of university building. What those men were to these institutions, Dr. Seerley was to the Iowa State Teachers College.

Poor as we think we are today, distressed as we may be over the world-wide social and economic conditions that confront us, hopeless as the immediate future may appear, we are richer in every way than Homer H. Seerley as he took up his work on this campus nearly a half a century ago and on faith and hope and courage laid the foundations for the physical, intellectual, and spiritual blessings which we now enjoy. Judged by every known criterion, he was a pronounced optimist. One has only to pause and listen in order to hear his "I can" and his "I will" come ringing clearly down through those forty years and more.

It takes time for us to know who make the most distinctive and significant contributions to human welfare. Comparatively small matters obscure our vision and dull our insight when we are in close proximity to a man's work. Over the long stretches of time, trivialities of human nature fall by the wayside, insignificant things pass from view,

### IN MEMORIAM

*This Issue of the Alumnus we humbly dedicate to the Master Editor who conceived, founded, and nurtured this publication, and to the Master Builder,—builder of character and builder of men.*

little characters become smaller, selfish natures receive their proper condemnation, and the un-inspired critics of progress lose themselves in the dark, jungle-like recesses of the unknown and the forgotten. But those who aspire and sacrifice to advance civilization, who toil for the public good rather than self-interest, who venture to stand for the things that make life sweet and beautiful rather than narrow and bigoted, and who strive to strengthen the warm and sympathetic bonds of knowledge, truth, and understanding rather than the cold and unrelenting chains of fear, prejudice and ignorance—these are the men who gain increasing recognition with the onward march of time. No one can tell who there is among us today who will be regarded as a saint, a public benefactor, or an educational statesman a generation or so hence. Nor can any one tell who there is among us today whose name or names will be cut deep in stone in the history of this college fifty years from now. Of this we can be certain: it will be those who seek by every proper means to develop on this campus a college of the most substantial type, a college that exemplifies in its program mankind's historic and traditional confidence in learning and teaching and an abiding faith in their value during these trying hours.

Made of such stuff and endowed with such faith was the man whom we are assembled to honor. May his spirit linger about this campus and throughout the halls of this institution forever and a day. May that spirit serve to strengthen our hands and our hearts to be correspondingly fruitful, diligent, and courageous in providing educational advantages for the students of today and tomorrow as superior to those he was able to provide for his students as our times are to his. Knowing as we do of the presence of that spirit this hour, let us rise in our places and in grateful and reverent thought silently salute.

### Articles In This Issue

The introductory address by President O. R. Latham appearing on the first pages of this issue of the *Alumnus* as well as the text of the address on Page 3 by G. W. Walters, professor of education, second oldest member of the faculty in point of service, and the text of a talk by Dr. Eva May Luse, head of the Department of Teaching, were delivered on the program of the Seerley Memorial Services held in the College Auditorium, Sunday, February 12.

The one-hour services beginning at 1:00 o'clock were broadcast over radio station WMT of Waterloo and several minutes in advance of the opening of the program the College Auditorium was packed to capacity by students, faculty members, and townsfolk.

President Latham presided at the services and introduced the various speakers. Benjamin Boardman, financial secretary of the College, read several eulogies from among the many that were received from prominent educators and alumni in all parts of the United States, and the Minnesingers and Cecelian glee clubs, organized during the first decade of Dr. Seerley's presidency, sang two numbers.

Olive Barker, instructor in voice, directed the combined glee clubs. W. E. Hays, assistant professor of voice, was soloist, and George W. Samson, Jr., professor of organ, played the prelude. Reverend Floyd D. Reeves, pastor of the Congregational Church of Cedar Falls, pronounced the invocation and benediction.

Previous to the institutional services at the College, the Cedar Falls Rotary Club held a program in honor of Dr. Seerley, January 4. C. A. Fullerton, head of the Music Department at the College and professor of music since 1897, a graduate of the College in 1889 soon after Dr. Seerley became president, gave a talk entitled, "Early Days with Mr. Seerley On the Campus." Mr. Fullerton's address will be found in another part of this issue of the *Alumnus*.

Roger Leavitt, treasurer of the College since 1919, local Cedar Falls business man, and a close friend of Dr. Seerley, gave a talk entitled, "Mr. Seerley As I Knew Him in His Relation With the Board of Education." Mr. Leavitt's article will also be found in this issue of the *Alumnus*.

President Latham gave a talk at the Rotary Memorial services on "Mr. Seerley and the Development of the Iowa State Teachers College."

### ALUMNI NEWS

In order to give all space possible for the many alumni and friends of Dr. Seerley to present their memories of this great leader of the College who was so of much a friend as well as a teacher, it has been necessary to greatly curtail the alumni news in this issue. Information concerning the Century of Progress Reunion and banquet in Chicago, Thursday, July 6; the Drama Conference at the College on April 22, the Reunion of the Twenty-Five Year Class, Class of 1918, and the Commencement Dinner and Party, and Alumni Tea in connection with the Commencement Week Program, May 21 to 29, will be found on the last pages of this issue.

*His Guiding Principle: Know The People Of Iowa And Their Needs; Then Prepare Teachers To Meet Those Needs.*

## President Seerley In Normal School And Teachers College

By G. W. Walters, Professor of Education  
Since 1895.

**A**N institution absorbs the life of a man into its intimate structure. His ideas, his ideals, his acts become immanent for the advancement of society—"The individual withers, but the world is more and more."

In the early development of Iowa, we were specially fortunate in having pioneers of high courage, great industry, and abiding faith in American ideals, to form the framework of the young state. Homes were lacking in luxuries—even comforts,—but they had the spiritual core of high standards of conduct, honesty, industry, neighborliness, resourcefulness, and faith in the West. Without these things we would not have the Iowa of to-day.

Our early institutions were meager but correct in theory, forward-looking in purpose. They were planted in faith; we reap in abundance and look to yet greater harvests. When we complain and fret, we should consider their standards of living and their sacrifices for us.

Our educational system came from New England. The prairie schooner carried much of the spirit into the wide places of the Northwest Territory, then across the great river into the "Beautiful Land" on its western bank, there to grow like the mustard seed—"And it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Preparing teachers for the education of all the children of all the people was a great task for the young state. A few thought it quite a useless expenditure of money—a few think so yet. But from right doctrines and thrifty practices in the early years has come the steadily rising demand that every child must be given a chance by the state to equip himself for the fullest possible service to society. It is education of the masses—and yet more education—which points the permanent way out of our difficulties.

The little log schoolhouses, small but forward-looking, built often by contributed labor, where a few settlers gathered; or a group of children in the home of some settler constituted our first schools. The means were meager; the vision was splendid.

I knew well one of the men who acted on

the committee appointed by the Legislature to locate this campus—forty acres in the country as a home for soldiers' orphans. The three orphanages were later merged into the one at Davenport. The one at Glenwood was converted into the school for the feeble-minded and this one became a normal school for training teachers for the public schools of the state in 1876. For ten years the school was small, not on account of any lack of efficiency, but because the state had not as yet come to appreciate the value of the trained elementary teacher.

### His Guiding Principle

In 1886 President Seerley came as Principal of the School. He was a graduate of our state university, where he had taken work along lines of pedagogy. The university was the second school of its kind in the United States to offer such courses. He had taught in our rural schools, was a country boy, and knew rural conditions. He had been a high school principal promoted to city superintendent. He came here sensing the needs of the state. He mixed with the people, the teachers, the men of affairs, the members of the Legislature. His guiding principle was: Know the people of Iowa and their needs,—then prepare teachers to meet those needs. His faculty was selected with this end in view. They were, almost without exception, from the field of active education in the state. He created public confidence. He met his problems with honesty and courage. He made the legislators face their responsibilities in support of the school. When he asked for appropriations, he asked for what was necessary without exaggeration and placed further action upon their consciences. The result was that the state believed in him and gave him what he needed. With this came the demand for the graduates of this school as teachers, and students came in steadily increasing numbers.

From an intimate association of more than thirty years one gets an abiding impression of a man and of the things which make for his success. With some men, what they seem to accomplish appears out of all proportion to their personality. They seem to stand outside of their work. We seek some extraneous condition to ac-

count for results. With other men, their accomplishments seem to come naturally as an overflow of what they are. These latter men attain leadership without effort. They have a following without seeking it and leave their accomplishments under the shadow of their character. They live immanent in their work. Where Arthur sits is the head of the table. President Seerley was of this latter kind.

I think I can speak for the faculty of those years when I say our contact with him was not that of persons working under his direction, carrying out his purposes. We cooperated freely without feelings of restraint. Yet there was system, purpose, and order. The same was the feeling of the student body. I think one of the finest compliments I ever heard paid this school was by the president of another teachers college who had been here several days inspecting the work, going about almost incognito. He said to me, "It seems peculiar here that there are no visible signs of discipline—order is out of sight—yet students and faculty go about their work without apparent supervision." I said to him that discipline could be found if occasion arose.

#### Teacher A "Free Spirit"

President Seerley left his teachers largely to their own devices believing that the teacher must be a free spirit—not held in check by a lot of restrictions which made the normal school of early days a laughing stock among the colleges. He thought that the teacher should be a person of the highest character standards—mere scholarship was not nearly enough. He said so often that failures among teachers were more often due to lack of proper standards of conduct than to any other thing. To this end he stressed the moral and religious factors as specially important in teacher training. This school became noted for its high ideals along this line. It created an atmosphere in which all lived.

He had profound religious convictions—reared in a family where religion was fundamental, committing to memory a large part of the New Testament as a boy, trained by a father who steadfastly upheld righteous living—that vigorous father and little mother gave to Iowa and the nation three sons who sustained and widened the tradition, and one is yet carrying on.

When sorrow came—as it always does—he would say, "But we are Christians, be strong." At our State Teachers Association several years ago, he was chairman of the committee on necrology. He stepped to the front of the platform before that great audience and said, "Let us pray."

Because of this he had a great influence over students who were inclined to be careless in their daily lives. I could instance several cases, some now men of prominence, who, careless of time and opportunity, were recalled to duty by his quietly saying to them, "My boy, you cannot afford to do this. Don't be thoughtless." The advice was not official; it was more than that. Mark Hopkins and the boy on the log—not much difference about the log—but it is of tremendous consequence who is on the log with the boy. Who Hopkins is and what they are discussing determines whether it is a university worthy of the support of the state.

We did not think of President Seerley as our president, but just as a fellow man with whom it was a joy and a privilege to work, who sympathized with our efforts, was patient with our shortcomings, appreciated our successes, and who attributed the success of the school to the aid of a devoted faculty.

There was a feeling at times—as I suppose occurs in all faculties—of conservatism in salaries, equipment, and policies. As a careful business administrator, he kept out of the red and I have heard board members commend this quality which saved them embarrassment and kept the confidence of business members of the legislature.

President Seerley was very social in his make-up. He would not be secluded from students and faculty. Any body at any time was welcome. I used to wonder when he did business when his office was full of students and faculty. He was in the halls, classrooms, offices, shops; he knew the men and their work. He carried details without the least effort. In over thirty years going to him hundreds of times about things connected with my work, when he said he would attend to a matter, I considered it settled. Only once in all that time did he forget a small item until he saw me in the hall next day. He instantly recalled it and apologized. I submit this as a valuable quality in an executive.

But the quality in his character which impressed me most was his humaneness. He loved his fellow men. He believed mightily in the perfectibility of human nature. He sought to inspire to higher and nobler effort. He was tolerant and very sympathetic. He knew that education is largely inspiration and believed that great things would come to him who strove. He enjoyed intensely the success of his students and for years they wrote him love letters of appreciation and he answered in kind. This living in the lives and hearts whom you have touched in the classroom is the great reward of the real

teacher. It is a species of backpay which the school mechanic never gets, nor realizes his loss. He saw human nature in its crude strength, and saw in young life unbounded possibilities. He retained confidence in young life when others lost it, and gave the erring and careless another chance.

The man eclipsed the scholar. He saw through the superficial gloss of pedantry—of which there is much in education. He went direct to the solution of his problem whether it was in accord with accepted theory or not. Of later years his administrative duties kept him from those talks to outgoing graduates which they so much appreciated. His insight, experience, and common sense made these very helpful. In this he was the victim of our American system, which takes the successful teacher away from students on account of administrative duties.

This same humaneness kept him in close and sympathetic contact with the people of the state. His acquaintance was wide and with all classes. Knowing the people and having thousands of graduates teaching in the schools, we can under-

stand why the school kept substantial reputation and patronage. We can understand why Iowa did not start other teacher training schools when surrounding states were so doing. When the school advanced from a normal school to a Teachers College, it was largely a spontaneous movement among the students. They demanded an enlarged school. They almost compelled the legislature to so act. They sang—

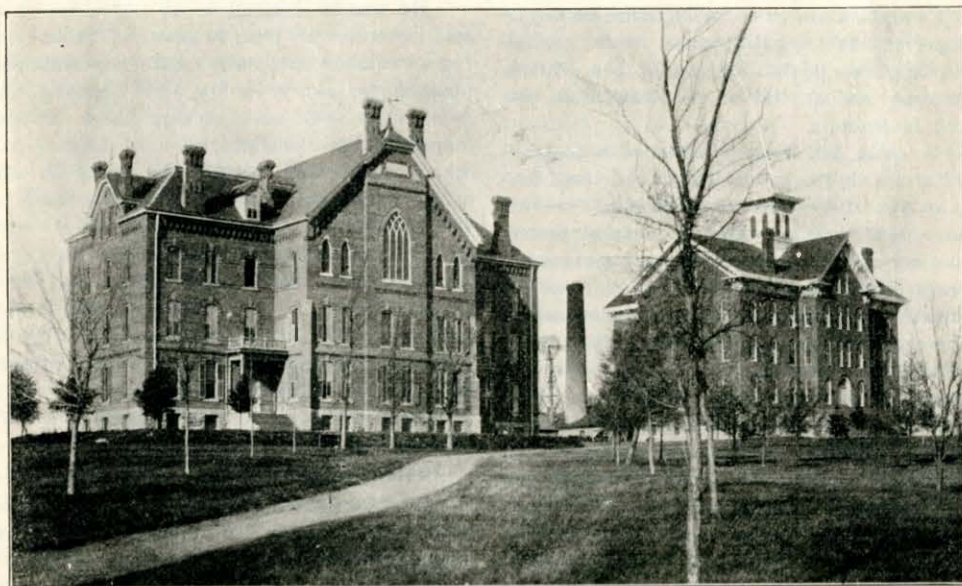
“We’re still on the hill,  
And stand by you we will.”

It was an evolution from preceding conditions. I would prefer to call it a benevolent revolution.

The workers pass on—their work remains. This is the glory of a life, that it give largely and well to those who follow.

“To live in hearts we leave behind,  
Is not to die.”

We regret their going, but did we not do so, their lives would have been awful failures. President Seerley’s life and work mark an epoch in Iowa Education.



### South Hall, Now Gilchrist Hall, and Central Hall

Pictured above is the way the campus of the Iowa State Normal School appeared when Homer Seerley, Superintendent of Schools at Oskaloosa, Iowa, came to Cedar Falls to become president of the institution. In 1886 there were only three buildings on the campus.

At the left above is Gilchrist Hall, formerly South Hall, built during President Gilchrist’s administration, and at the right, above, is the original Soldier’s Orphans Home, known successively as the Iowa State Normal School, North Hall, and later Central Hall. Central Hall is now completely hidden by the Auditorium and Administration Buildings, which are connected and joined with Gilchrist Hall to form what are now known as the main buildings.



*"Truly The Normal Schools  
Needed A Leader And This  
Leader They Found In  
Homer Seerley--"*

## In State And National Teacher Training

By Dr. Eva May Luse,  
Head of the Department of Teaching.

THE history of a nation is written in the lives of its great men, men of insight and foresight, of courage and faith and patience. Such a man was Homer Horatio Seerley. The story of his life is the story of teacher training in the State of Iowa and in the United States.

He saw our present educational system evolve from a primitive beginning, an independent, isolated school here and there, supported voluntarily by the neighborhood, with an untrained teacher and a curriculum depending upon whatever texts the pupils happened to have. When he was thirteen years of age there were only twenty-five city superintendencies in this country, only ten states with the office of County Superintendent, only nine state normal schools, and in all the colleges of the United States there was a total of not more than one hundred instructors.

As a child Mr. Seerley attended a district school for which the community taxed itself because as yet there was no authority for the creation and management of tax-supported schools. He always spoke with appreciation of this early school and the debt that he owed to the Iowa State Teachers Association for inspiring its organization and providing him with educational opportunities.

Seventy-five years ago the Iowa State Teachers Association was the chief and almost the only educational influence in the state. It awakened public interest in education, stimulated the founding of schools, developed a system of graded schools and later of public high schools, sponsored state certification of teachers, county normal institutes, and a state normal school. From one to four Iowa State Teachers Association meetings were held each year in every county and in many counties in every township. It was at one of these meetings held in Muscatine that the settlers of English River Township were inspired to open their first school.

Great as Doctor Seerley considered his debt to the State Association he repaid it many fold, during his fifty-nine years of membership, by his wise counsel, his sane leadership, and his per-

sistent endeavor to further its educational policies. For fifty-six years in succession, beginning with the date of his graduation from the University of Iowa, he never missed a meeting of the association. He honored it and was honored by it. He appeared on its programs, worked on its committees, inaugurated its Reading Circle, formulated its policies, acted as its president, served on the Educational Council, and worked for many years as a member of the Board of Educational Examiners. All of the schools and all of the children of the state profited by his foresight and good judgment in cooperating with the state department in revising curriculums, in setting up standards for certification, and in training teachers.

He was in demand as an instructor in normal institutes in their sessions of from two to four weeks which early state superintendents planned for every county. By reaching school patrons as well as teachers these institutes helped to lay the foundation of Iowa's public school system and brought the young President of the State Normal School into close touch with the problem of teacher training which was to be his chief interest for more than forty years.

Just as he knew personally every member of every family in the Oskaloosa schools, every secretary of the State Association from the time of its organization, every state superintendent, and many of the teachers in Iowa so, with his widening interests, he came to know the leaders in education in the United States.

Always modest about his own attainments, he was accustomed to belittle his success as a college student and his influence in state and national meetings, but my father was only one of the younger college men of those days who even then looked upon his accomplishments with respect and admiration. Doctor Seerley often remarked that beginning with the Baltimore meeting of 1876 he attended the sessions of the National Education Association for ten years before he made any acquaintances, that no one ever knew that he was there. But it was not many years until everyone knew that he was there, and no project in the field of teacher training was undertaken without his guidance. At

the Lenox Hotel in Boston, the Randolph or the Willard in Washington, at headquarters wherever they were, there was President Seerley surrounded by a group who welcomed him as a friend and as an adviser.

He was an active member of the American Council of Education, of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and of the Simplified Spelling Board of America, an elector of the Hall of Fame, president of the National Council of Education, president of the Department of Normal Schools, and president of the American State Teachers College Council. His chief interest came to be centered in the meeting of Normal School Presidents which preceded the association meeting. A paper given on the program of 1898 comments that "the variations in Normal Schools could not be more marked if the plan was to put forth as many theories and experiments as the human mind could invent, with no willingness to cooperate or to plan, but only a desire to oppose one another." Truly the Normal Schools needed a leader and this leader they found in Homer Seerley. Instrumental in organizing the American Association of Teachers Colleges, he became its president and led the way in establishing strong collegiate curriculums for teachers.

Presidents Kirk of Missouri, Cook and Felmley of Illinois, McKenny of Michigan, Minnich of Ohio, Superintendent Greenwood of Kansas City, A. E. Winship, Henry Sabin and Wm. T. Harris—these were his co-workers, and with them he watched the membership of the National Education Association climb from 220 to 220,000. He saw the importance and the need of educational research to create a profession of teaching, the general acceptance of the theory of biological and sociological evolution and the consequent educational philosophy that brought about curriculum revision and expansion in various directions, vocational and technical schools, the junior high school and the junior college.

The common salutation of President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University to a member of this faculty is, "How is Doctor Seerley's school?" Whenever this school is represented on state or national programs, particularly through the West, superintendents come to the speaker to comment on the superiority of Iowa-trained teachers. So common is the remark that "Cedar Falls teachers make good" that it has become a slogan. "Cedar Falls teachers made good" because President Seerley made good—in his professional vision, his personal sincerity, his faith in humanity, his greatness of heart and intellect and character.

He touched directly the lives of seventy thousand students who have been enrolled at Cedar Falls and indirectly through their influence and through his national leadership the lives of countless thousands more. As Massachusetts honors Horace Mann, as Michigan honors James Burrill Angell, so Iowa and the nation honors Homer H. Seerley.

## One Of The Best Friends

Roger Leavitt, treasurer of the Iowa State Teachers College.

(A tribute delivered at the Rotary Luncheon, Cedar Falls, Wednesday, January 4th.)

Mr. Seerley was one of the best friends I ever had, though for quite a few years after coming here I found him hard to get acquainted with. At Mr. Townsend's death, I was selected as his successor on the Normal Board, and so met Mr. Seerley constantly. As I was the only local member of the Board, I had plenty to do. I went out to Mr. Seerley's office every day. C. A. Wise was a member of the House of Representatives at Des Moines, and was trying hard to secure money for the Auditorium Building, and increased appropriations for teachers and general expenses. Mr. Seerley and I went to Des Moines once or twice a month to interview members of the Legislature.

I greatly enjoyed watching him meet the members. He had a wonderful memory for names. If he had met persons even several years before, he usually remembered them, and could speak their name. People like to be remembered. He was just as cordial to the humblest man as to the most exalted. The members of the Legislature had a profound respect for him, and confidence in his word. I can still hear him say, "Well, gentlemen, we could use to advantage such an amount; but we will live on what you give us. It is your school, not mine. Do what you think is best." One day as we got up to leave a joint appropriation committee meeting, the chairman of the Senate committee said, "Before Mr. Seerley leaves, I want to say that I have served on the Appropriation Committee a good many years; but I never knew him to ask for a cent he did not need." It is needless to say we got what we asked for.

That winter of 1900, the State Superintendent, who was President of the Normal Board, was against us. The Board had voted to ask for \$100,000 for a new building. The chairman told the committee that we could get along with \$50,000, making it very hard to secure the \$100,000. One member from Davis County was es-

pecially aggressive in opposing us. Mr. Seerley and I had been in Des Moines most of the week. His nerves were all on edge. As we were leaving the hotel to take the Saturday night train home, we met the Davis County member. It was the only time I ever saw Mr. Seerley really mad. He went up to the man, shook his fist in his face, and said, "Young man, you will live to regret your vote against our bill." We finally secured the \$100,000 asked for, thanks to Mr. Seerley's standing and to the tireless effort of C. A. Wise, and we built the Auditorium Building. For fifteen years I went with President Seerley to Des Moines, and never saw him ruffled again.

When the Board voted to cut the course of study in two and make it a two year school, he turned pale. He aged ten years in a week but he said nothing. He never said a word criticizing the Board, and kept their friendship and respect.

He won the confidence of the whole state, as very few of its citizens had done. He was so unassuming in his way; so common, as it were, that our home people hardly realized the profound respect in which he was held all over Iowa. I think it is safe to say that in his prime he was considered the leading citizen of Iowa, and was known and respected all over the United States. At National and State educational meetings he was a leading figure, and served on many important committees and commissions.

I enjoyed going to Des Moines with him. We usually had a room with two beds, and after retiring we usually talked for an hour or so. He told me about his life on the farm when times were hard and money scarce. His father was too poor to send him to the university, but he went anyway. He earned his way through school by the hardest kind of manual labor. He walked the 40 miles to Iowa City to save carfare. He said he could walk four miles an hour. At the end of an hour, if he had gained five minutes, he threw himself on the ground for a five minute rest. If he had not earned the five minutes despite, he did not take it, but trudged on another four miles. If we had all learned that rule of his to earn first, the world would not be suffering so much today.

He had one interesting experience at the university. They would not let him enroll in the Normal Department. They said he would never make a teacher. Some ten or twelve years ago he was invited to Iowa City, as the special and most honored guest of the University at a banquet. He had lots of fun telling them about it; and they were glad that they had another guess coming.

For the first eight years I was on the Board, Mr. Seerley picked all his teachers. In selecting

a new teacher, he insisted on two qualifications. Other qualities he wanted, but these two he demanded. The first was character; not the negative kind that refrains from gross sin, but the positive kind. He always inquired particularly about the moral and spiritual qualities of the candidate. They were to train teachers of children, and he wanted only the best.

He demanded that the members of the Faculty had already proved themselves successful teachers and administrators. The men teachers were outstanding public school superintendents; the women teachers were largely successful high school teachers. The kind of teachers the school produced during his forty years of leadership showed that his requirements were practiced.

The growth of the school from 300 students when he came to over 3,000 students at one time; and the constant demand for the graduates to fill positions not only in Iowa, but in surrounding states, and as far away as the Pacific coast; and the acceptance of its credits by such universities as Harvard and Columbia, showed his methods were not without merit.

At an Alumni Banquet at the College a few years ago, I heard one of the leading Congregational ministers of America, pastor of a large church in Brooklyn, New York, say, "All that I am, I owe to President Seerley. When I was a student at the Iowa State Normal School, I was called to the President's office to be notified that I was fired. He gave me a severe talking to, to show me how wrong I had acted. Then he offered me another chance, and I took it." Mr. Boyd of the State Board said a few years ago that "No man in Iowa has touched so many lives to help them as has President Seerley."

If President Seerley all his long life did not illustrate Rotary principles, I do not know who has done so. The Good Book says we should have the faith of a little child, just as a child has faith in a parent. At a Faculty Banquet, seven or eight years ago, I heard President Seerley say, in closing an address, "Men and women, I learned long ago to put my hand in the hand of God, and be led by him." His life was not dominated by blind or narrow creed, but by simple faith in the goodness of God, and trust to His guidance; and that was the secret of his power.

He had a strong physique, a brain trained to think, excellent judgment, was accustomed to work, unselfish, unspoiled by success, interested in the other man's problems. With high ideals of right and wrong, led by the hand of his Maker, he lived a rarely beautiful, useful, and successful life. He left the state better than he found it.

# Tributes In Memory of Homer H. Seerley

*A Leader Had Come, Wise, Persistent,  
Kindly---He Won Men To His Way  
By Force of Character, By Charm of  
Candor, By Being Simply What He Was*

## The Iowa State Board of Education

Resolutions of Respect and Appreciation by the  
Iowa State Board of Education for  
Homer H. Seerley,—

The State Board of Education cannot by resolution or any other action add to the fame of President Emeritus Homer H. Seerley of the Iowa State Teachers College, who, in the eighty-fifth year of his age passed from the scene of his earthly labors and entered into rest December 23, 1932. But we should be untrue to ourselves and unfaithful to our trust if we did not take formal note of his departure and enter upon our records an expression of our appreciation of him as one of the great educational figures of our country, and our affection for him as a man and as a friend.

Though born in Indiana, President Seerley was a product of Iowa. Here he grew up from childhood to manhood. Here he received his education. Here he did his life work. His career was marked by progressive advancement—no setbacks, no retreats, ever onward and upward—his influence ever widening and deepening like the flow of a mighty river as it proceeds from its source to the sea.

A boy, helping his parents on the farm; a country school teacher; a student at the University, boarding himself. From the state's university he was graduated, decided to make teaching his life work, married a noble woman who through all the years has been an inspiration to him and a genuine helpmate, and established a home. Then began that progressive advancement which knew no interruption. High school teacher, principal, superintendent, a call to the presidency of the State Normal School at Cedar Falls—an institution with few students and meager equipment in 1886.

But a leader had come to that institution, wise, persistent, kindly, a leader who won men to his way of thinking by force of character,

the charm of candor and the art of being simply what he was.

The State Normal School grew in influence and prestige. The president became not only a state but a national figure. President Seerley missed no opportunity to become personally acquainted with educational leaders everywhere, nor did he neglect to cultivate the rank and file of the profession. Ere long he was the most widely known, the most influential, and the best beloved educator in the State of Iowa.

He enlarged the boundaries of the Normal School, so to speak, and made it a teachers' college; and when he retired at eighty years of age in 1928, after forty-two years of service, it was perhaps the best known teachers' college in America.

President Seerley's place in the educational world as an educator needs no comment. Neither does his place as a leader of men. But he was more than an educator in the ordinary sense of that term. He was a builder of character. When on the campus, he never missed a chapel exercise and he always had something to say that was worth while. He knew his students personally and followed their fortunes with the watchful eye of a father after they had graduated. We doubt if any other man in the State of Iowa ever personally touched and blessed as many individual lives as did Homer H. Seerley, and if we mistake not this transcends any other service that a human being can render his day and generation "and the future in the distance."

On his retirement from the presidency, he was made President Emeritus. He resided upon the campus, was interested in everything, and took an active part in many things up to the day of his last illness. He sought to help his successor in the best way any successor can be helped; namely, by making his retirement an actual fact.

It would be difficult to imagine a life and

### Throughout The Country

Tributes honoring Dr. Seerley came to Cedar Falls by mail and telegram from almost every part of the country following news of his death. Printed here are many of the tributes from prominent educators, state officials, alumni, and other friends of the grand old man in Iowa education.

a service fuller, richer or more satisfactory. He is gone now—yes,

“Gone, but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own, being here;  
And we believe him something far advanced in  
state,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him.”

Mr. J. H. Anderson.  
Mr. E. P. Schoentgen.  
Mrs. Pauline L. Devitt.

**GEORGE T. BAKER, President of The Iowa State Board of Education,—**

The days of the youth of Dr. Seerley were the days of the early pioneer; his passing came during the period that will build another pioneer class the world over.

Opportunity is helpful, but individual effort is the road to success.

Dr. Seerley grasped the opportunity and by individual effort made a success of his life. I was fortunate to have had an intimate acquaintance with him since he was a student at the University of Iowa. His 42 years of service in the developing of the Iowa State Teachers College is his monument.

## Presidents of State Schools In Iowa

**O. R. LATHAM, President of the Iowa State Teachers College.** (A tribute delivered at the Cedar Falls Rotary Club Memorial Program),—

Dr. Homer H. Seerley, highly esteemed and greatly beloved President Emeritus of the Iowa State Teachers College, has been freed from care and relieved of responsibility. Having given the last full measure of devotion to the development of the institution which was at once his fondest dream and his greatest inspiration, he has lain down to rest amidst all the satisfaction of a life well spent and nobly lived. It would be only just if, somehow or other in the great scheme of affairs, he went to sleep with a full realization that the sons and daughters of a great commonwealth would pass before his bier with naught else upon their lips save, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant!”

Truly he lived the good, the useful, and the beautiful life! He was a true SOLDIER OF DEMOCRACY. Reared amidst the most humble surroundings and inured to the hardships of the boundless prairie, he was educated at the lowly kitchen table of his pioneer home and in the crude halls

## A Town Some Day

One evening in 1890 after a day's work on the construction of the first president's home on the campus, J. E. “Jim” Robinson, then Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, was standing talking with Dr. Seerley about the general progress of the building. Said Dr. Seerley, with a wide sweep of his arm, indicating the “howling wilderness” that was then College Hill, “Some day we're going to see a town out here.”

At that time there were no houses on the east side of College Street and only three on the west side.

of a then struggling university that was striving to spread culture among the stubborn tree stumps and along the seemingly hopeless corn rows of western pioneer life. Toil and hope and heartbreak and faith and courage and strength and defeat and poverty and accomplishment,—only such words can summarize the story of his life from those obscure beginnings to distinctive and triumphant achievement. Throughout the years he never lost sight of the fact that amid all the follies and triumphs of the human race the sun shines, the rain falls, and the wind blows, and that there are eternal simple values in the world for which there are no substitutes.

And so by original nature and the fortuities of environment, he was prepared to become a GENTLE GARDENER for the protection of a struggling tendril until it could fasten itself sufficiently upon the imagination of the body politic to enable it to receive the nourishment necessary for its subsequent growth and development into one of the fairest and loveliest flowers of Iowa's civilization. It was a long and arduous struggle against the merciless elements of a not too enlightened political life,—indifference, sectionalism, jealousy, intolerance, and vested interests. No pioneer ever waged a more heroic battle against sod and stumps, weeds and pests, hail and frost, or cholera and glanders. Had Dr. Seerley enriched educational literature with his memoirs, it is certain that no small part would have been devoted to that discouraging period covering approximately the first twenty years of his stewardship.

The victory won, he became a MASTER BUILDER of a great educational plant. There arose in rapid succession a monumental library to house countless volumes, a laboratory school

where students could observe and imitate superior teaching, a vocational education building for instruction in home economics and the industrial arts, separate gymnasiums for men and women, and a commodious, sanitary, and livable dormitory for women. The buildings were simple, spacious, and substantial. There were no fads or frills. Every dollar was wisely and economically expended. But it was not all brick and mortar. There were thousands upon thousands of precious books, hundreds of beautiful pictures, scores of stately and magnificent trees, and endless inventory of instructional equipment, and a labyrinth of interesting class rooms, studios, workshops, and laboratories. Twenty years of such endeavor produced a physical plant which has become the envy of the teacher training world.

But Dr. Seerley did not achieve leadership and distinction in his profession as a figurative laborer with hoe and shovel or hammer and trowel. He was an EDUCATIONAL STATESMAN. It was his most cherished hope that his temple of learning should be a haven of truth and righteous living in which the development of a sterling character, an unbiased understanding, a sympathetic heart, and a fine sense of relative values should take precedence over the mere accumulation of knowledge and information. He invited to his faculty men and women of experience who were primarily interested in students rather than subject matter, who were helping spirits rather than drill masters, and who would exemplify in their social, business, and institutional relationships the highest type of moral integrity. On such a foundation was his house built and on such a foundation it cannot

fail to stand until the end of time—a lasting monument to the patience, the fortitude, the vision, and the nobility of an eminent man.

**W. A. JESSUP, President of the State University of Iowa,—**

When in 1912, a stranger in the State, I came to the University, I was almost immediately welcomed by President Seerley. An alumnus of the University long recognized as a leader in the training of teachers, he soon made me feel that I could depend upon him for all the cooperation and helpful service which one man could render another. When, a little later, I took up my present administrative duties and we were brought into still more intimate relations, my friendship for him deepened into sincere affection. In his retirement from active service, I experienced a very definite loss, and in his death, I join with thousands of others in mourning.

Few men have had such opportunity for service as had Homer Seerley, and none has served more faithfully. At a time when the training of teachers seemed of relatively slight importance to our Board of Regents, he saved the Department of Education for the University. At a time when the standards of education in the common schools were low, he began a work which transformed in half a generation the ideals and practices of the State. Our debt to him is beyond measure, beyond estimate. Those of us who knew him intimately, loved him; those who had professional dealings with him, admired and respected him; all recognized in him the qualities of manhood and leadership without which we should be poor indeed.

### "The President Bell"

When the Campanile, dedicated to the founders and builders of the Iowa State Teachers College, was completed and the committee in charge of the opening ceremonies was considering, with President Seerley, suitable names for the huge bells which were hung in the chime loft, it was proposed that the largest bell be named the "Seerley Bell." Said President Seerley with characteristic self-effacement and vision, "There were presidents before me and there will be presidents after me. What you need is a general term which will take in all leaders of the institution both past and future." Thus it was the great bell, weighing some 50,000 pounds, was dedicated as "The President."

### State Superintendents of Public Instruction

**MISS AGNES SAMUELSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Iowa, former member of Teachers College Faculty,—**

No one can measure the influence of those forty-two years spent by Dr. Homer H. Seerley in the training of teachers at Iowa State Teachers College. No one can measure the effect upon young lives of contact with his ideals and character. No one can measure the value of his work in the development of this commonwealth. No one can measure the extent of his contribution to the cause of education in general. He was a great man, and the influence of his life work will continue for years and years to come. These

## Clear Objectives

At one time during his administration, because of a period of slightly failing health, Dr. Seerley took up golf as a means of recreation. His tactics on the fairway and greens were exactly those which he used in his methods as educational administrator. He always used iron clubs, carefully tested equipment, and never attempted to make long, spectacular drives. He always set his aim for the green ahead and drove straight down the fairway toward the objective. He won many games from superior players merely because he wasted no shots, seldom over-reached a swing, and concentrated his attention upon accurate and clean-cut drives rather than upon fancy shots and attempts at great distance in his drives.

lines from the poet Longfellow may well be used to eulogize his work:

“Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still traveling downward from the sky,  
Shine on our mortal sight,  
So when a great friend dies,  
For years beyond our call,  
The light behind him lies  
Upon the path of all.”

**A. M. DEYOE**, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Des Moines, Iowa,—

It is one of the great privileges in life to have known and to have been associated in some way with great men and great women. Our lives are made better for such contacts. President Seerley had those characteristics that challenged others to prepare for the most useful service possible. It was his strongest desire to help others. He loved his special work as an educator because it gave him an opportunity to meet those who were preparing to teach in the schools. The influence of his life in this way will not pass for many years.

He was always a welcome visitor at the State Department of Public Instruction during the writer's experiences in that department. Frequently, we asked his advice because his knowledge and judgment were always to be depended upon. He was loyal to every duty and we do not remember of his failing to attend a meeting of the State Board of Educational Examiners where his counsel meant more than that of any other member of the Board. A ruling motive of his life was fidelity of service in every responsibility.

His friendships were as numerous as his acquaintanceships. Homer H. Seerley was eminent-

ly fitted for distinguished leadership during the many years of his active life.

**JOHN F. RIGGS**, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction and ex-officio President of the Board of Trustees for the Iowa State Normal School,—

I recall with deepest gratitude the intimate association I had with Mr. Seerley.

For seven years I served with him on the State Board of Educational Examiners and for five years I was president of the Board of Trustees of the State Teachers College. In those contacts I came to know Mr. Seerley as a master builder. He was always sound in policy and most tactful in securing the assistance of those whose cooperation was essential in bringing his plans to fruition.

Mr. Seerley's wonderful success in dealing with the Iowa General Assembly has been often remarked.

As president of the governing body of his institution I was often with him before committees of the Legislature where his consummate tact was so in evidence. He would present the needs of the College for the ensuing biennium in the simplest and clearest manner and in addressing the Committee he would always refer to the College as “**your school**” while he was the servant eager to do the most possible with the appropriation it was the will of the General Assembly to provide. And it is a matter of record that almost without exception every dollar he asked for was provided.

In my work as Superintendent of Public Instruction I consulted Mr. Seerley often and his assistance was invaluable to me. I shall always remember him as a trusted friend and treasure the memory of my years of association with him.

## Former Governors of Iowa

**JOHN HAMMILL**, Britt, Iowa, former Governor of Iowa,—

Homer H. Seerley made a contribution to the educational field not alone of Iowa but of the world. He was a keen educator, a splendid citizen, and typified all that was best in American ideals.

To have known and associated with him in his capacity as President of the State Teachers College was a privilege. As Governor of Iowa it was a pleasure to cooperate with him in an educational program for the college during each biennium.

His influence in Iowa and his example will live on forever.

**GEORGE W. CLARKE**, Adel, Iowa, former Governor of Iowa—

When President Seerley died, the State lost one of its finest and best men, a good man, a man in the largest meaning of the word. Long, long will his memory be cherished. The teachers in the schools of Iowa and elsewhere and students in general of Iowa State Teachers College for more than a generation will hold him in loving memory. The contribution a life makes to human good, measures its value whether it be in a humble, or a large sphere. President Seerley made a most notable contribution to public education and along with it presented throughout a long life, finest, noblest human qualities entirely worthy of emulation by all of us. Iowa State Teachers College and President Homer H. Seerley—names never to be dissociated.

Dear Mr. President, we refuse to think of you as gone. You shall abide with us still.

## The American Association of Teachers Colleges

**CHARLES McKENNY**, President of State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Michigan,—

It will be impossible at any time in the future to adequately write a history of teacher training in the United States without giving a conspicuous place to the distinguished contributions of Homer H. Seerley. His forty-two years as President of the Iowa State Teachers College would give him distinction if his services in that field had been but ordinary, but they were not ordinary, they were outstanding. During a large part of these forty-two years at Iowa State Teachers College he was a recognized leader in the movements which characterized the teacher training field. He was an undiscouraged advocate of organization among the teachers colleges when such proponents were few. And when the battle was joined between the forces who believed that teacher training institutions should develop courses four years in length, in other words, become colleges, and those who believed they should be confined to the junior college field, the battle ground was his own institution in Iowa. He won.

He was one of the founders of the Council of Normal School Presidents and Principals, and was one of five to establish the American Association of Teachers Colleges.

As President of the National Council of Education of the National Education Association, he featured programs dealing with the teacher training field. Scores of men will remember Dr.

Seerley as a clear thinker, a fearless advocate of what he believed to be right, broadminded and generous, helpful to colleagues, a loyal friend and an inspiring and resourceful leader.

**JOHN R. KIRK**, President Emeritus of Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, Kirksville,—

Homer H. Seerley wrought a mighty work in the transformation of the facilities and the ideals for the education of American teachers.

In the 80's and the 90's the standards of normal schools were very low in all America. It was about 1903 when less than a half dozen presidents began open advocacy of four year curricula for the education of teachers. The group comprised Presidents Felmley of Illinois, Seerley of Iowa, Snyder of Colorado, Kirk and Craighead of Missouri.

The universities and colleges, most of them, sought restriction of the normal schools to "pedagogy" and only two years of that. But it happened that one grand old university president in expressing his contempt for the "puny normal schools" spoke "wiser than he knew." He said, "The preparation of a professional teacher excepting in connection with a college of liberal arts is unthinkable." That was what the Seerley group wanted. They were already intertwining liberal arts college studies with professional studies and holding out for four year courses.

Then about 1915 an idea came to President Seerley. He became the first proponent of the "American Association of Teachers Colleges."

### From Letters To Magazines

The deep and abiding interest which President Seerley had for his students and the great influence which he had upon their lives led them to write many letters to their teacher who had become almost a father to them. The graduates wrote to him telling of their difficulties and even hardships, and of their failures as well as their success. Always, Dr. Seerley answered them. At first he wrote hundreds of such letters, always rewarding the confidences of his students with advice and inspiration. The ever-growing correspondence led to the establishment of the Alumni News Letter, which, under President Latham's administration, has become *The Alumnus*. Even after his retirement from the presidency of the College, Dr. Seerley continued to receive and make reply to a great many letters from alumni.



## He Knew His Professor

To get his first teaching job the young Homer Seerley felt that it would be necessary to have a recommendation from his German professor at the State University, since the position at Oskaloosa required someone who could teach the language. Dr. Seerley felt that he didn't stand so well in the German class, and he was a bit reluctant to ask his professor for a recommendation. Finally, getting up his courage, he called upon the professor, only to find him in overalls perched upon a ladder and very much concerned over the trouble he was having with his grape arbor.

Here was the young graduate's chance. As a boy working with his father on a farm he had learned the grape raising business from beginning to end. Inquiring about the trouble with the grapes instead of the recommendation, the young teacher-to-be so astounded his professor by his knowledge of grapes that when the psychological moment came the professor replied, "Certainly," to the request and wrote a warm recommendation.

In March, 1917, it was at Seerley's suggestion that the organization was effected. Now that organization comprises more than 100 institutions, all on the accredited college basis and many of them having graduate departments.

I knew Dr. Seerley more than fifty years, had professional correspondence with him almost forty years, tramped through the great Cedar Falls buildings and campus with him many times and was with him at the National Education Conventions in many states while the assaults upon the advancing normal schools and Teachers colleges had to be met.

Little the typical present day Teachers College men know of the warfare and the suffering and the persecution endured by the men of Seerley's type whose creative ideality and fortitude and generalship and endurance brought the Teachers Colleges into the realization of their present day functionings and powers.

In the long struggles and contentions for the Teachers College movement I think Homer Seerley suffered more and was persecuted more than anyone else. But I never heard him complain. I have lost a long time friend. I shall miss him more than I have any other friend in a quarter of a century.

## ALEXANDER C. ROBERTS, '01, President of San Francisco State Teachers College,—

President Seerley brought national and international recognition and lasting fame to Iowa education. He was thinking ahead of the crowd throughout the long span of his active career. At Cedar Falls, acute problems were debated and settled, and constructive programs were organized and established long before his contemporaries recognized either the problems or the programs. He said once that the conventions of a famous educational organization wearied him, for the members insisted on arguing through long programs on questions that had been settled for twenty-five years at Cedar Falls. He was an educational prophet and statesman.

He was a giant in body as in mind. Physical toughness and resiliency carried him unwearied through long educational campaigns and years of intense application to administrative problems. He could stand the ceaseless impact of people.

Above all, he was human; he knew casually and intimately probably more people than any other citizen of Iowa in the last half century. Second only to Dr. Winship of Boston, probably he knew more people throughout the nation than any other educational leader. He believed in the essential worth of the hordes of small-town and country boys and girls who crowded the halls at Cedar Falls, and he taught them to believe in themselves.

## W. P. MORGAN, President of the State Teachers College, Macomb, Illinois,—

President Homer H. Seerley, of the State Teachers College at Cedar Falls, Iowa, has been a pioneer in teacher training in the United States. He had a vision of the work which enabled him to anticipate the needs of his state and of the nation, accompanied by judgment and wisdom which inspired him to forecast with accuracy the policies which should be used in meeting the future needs of education. He likewise had the courage to pursue his convictions.

A quarter of a century ago he joined with Presidents Snider of Greeley, Kirk of Kirksville, Felmley of Normal, and other outstanding men of the normal schools of this country in advocating higher standards and longer curriculums which would lead to a real college atmosphere in our teacher training institutions.

He, with them, shaped the policies of the North Central Council of Normal School Presidents and Principals, the National Council of Normal School Presidents and Principals, and joined with President Crabb, of Greeley, President McKenny of Ypsilanti, and a few others in

launching the American Association of Teachers Colleges, which later absorbed the National Council of Normal School Presidents and Principals.

President Seerley was keen in the analysis of a situation, wise in his understanding of the essentials, and judicious in his policies and procedures.

His personality made him many friends among his peers, an excellent leader of educators, and a fine administrator of his institution. His personal interest in the affairs of his friends made him sympathetic, kindly, and courteous. He worked hard and continuously, and by conserving his time, accomplished more than most men have accomplished even in a life exceeding four score years.

We shall all miss him greatly.

## National Education Association

**J. W. CRABTREE, Secretary of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C.,—**

I was intimately acquainted with Dr. Seerley for more than a quarter of a century. I drew heavily on him for advice and help when I was president of the State Teachers College at Peru, Nebraska, 1904 to 1910, and again when I was president of the State Teachers College at River Falls, Wisconsin. He seemed to take a personal interest in my welfare and success.

Dr. Seerley was the type of friend who would point out mistakes as well as commend, though it almost made him sick to criticize a friend adversely. He only did it as a duty he thought one friend owed to another. He helped me over many a bad place. On one occasion, when the ten teachers colleges of Wisconsin appointed me to look after the appropriations before the legislature, I was advised by him at every step. I tried to deal with the Wisconsin legislature as he had dealt with the Iowa legislature. That was the year when each of the colleges added new buildings. Some of them almost doubled their plants.

He had the affection of the teachers of the nation. He had the confidence of men of affairs. His leadership in the whole teaching field was most pronounced. It is of great help to me as secretary of the National Education Association to be able to say that Dr. Seerley was my friend.

## Institution Associates In Iowa State Normal School—Former Faculty Members

**ANNA E. MCGOVERN, '80, 521 South St. Andrews Place, Los Angeles, California, formerly Professor of Methods at Teachers College,—**

When we consider the dominant qualities in the life and character of this eminent educator,

undoubtedly **two** characteristics will stand out in bold relief in the mind of every one acquainted with the stupendous difficulties and the opposing forces he encountered in the upbuilding of Teachers College.

Dr. Seerley's remarkable force of character and his unswerving faith in Divine Providence enabled him to accomplish a great work. With zeal and devotion that seemed without bounds, this exemplary leader worked in season and out of season for the advancement of the school he loved so dearly—worked as though everything depended upon work, and prayed as though everything depended upon prayer.

Dr. Seerley's life was a genuine source of inspiration and blessing to the great army of students who came under his kindly influence for nearly half a century, and his death unquestionably brought real sorrow to the thousands who recognized and appreciated his remarkable ability, his loyalty and devotion to his profession, and his consistent Christian character.

It is to be hoped that members of the teaching profession will never cease to honor and revere the memory of Homer H. Seerley.

**GEORGE S. DICK, '88, at one time Registrar at Teachers College, now Supervisor of Rural Schools, Madison, Wisconsin,—**

Homer Horatio Seerley was a great man—great as a man whether one thinks of him in his private life or in his public service. He came to us at Cedar Falls as a young professional man just entering upon a very difficult, important

(Continued on Page 19)

## Hurry With Those Locks

In 1900, and before, the enrollment of students at the Iowa State Normal School grew so rapidly that Dr. Seerley was hard-pressed to find recitation rooms for the students. As a consequence, when the Auditorium Building was under construction, he asked the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds to finish off the first half of the building by September 1. On the day before school was to open the rooms were complete except for locks on the doors. Said Dr. Seerley after a hurried inspection, "Jim, you can't get it all done in time; there are no locks on the doors." "Yes, I can. It will all be done before morning."

Extra men were put on the job, and when school opened the next morning, eighteen new recitation rooms were available.

## Down Through The Years ~ ~ ~ ~

ON this page are pictures taken at three periods in the life of a young man of great vision who grew to be the "grand old man in Iowa education" because he kept his faith and hope and courage always young. This young man who started out to be an engineer of machines and things turned his course suddenly to become an engineer of men and ideas. At one time he was refused entrance in the Normal Department at the University where he studied because the authorities did not feel that he possessed the necessary qualifications for a teacher. Yet this same young man later came to the Iowa State Normal School to become principal of the institution in 1886 and president in the following year. Moreover, he came recommended as one of the best teachers and superintendents in the state. How completely in error his under-graduate advisers had been can be attested by every educator who knows the history of normal schools and teachers colleges in the United States.

The story of how he not only became a teacher of excellence, but an administrator and builder of education in Iowa as well as a leader in the cause of good teaching throughout the nation, reveals at every turn the magnificent qualities which he really did possess for the profession of teaching.

HOMER Horatio Seerley, for forty-two years president of the Iowa State Teachers College, and second administrator of the institution following J. C. Gilchrist, was born on a farm near Indianapolis, Indiana, on August 13, 1848, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Seerley. His father, a farmer, came to Keokuk County, Iowa, in 1854, where he farmed and taught school in the winter. The son, Homer, attended school there until 1866 when he entered the University of Iowa. He received the Ph. B. Degree from the State University in 1873, and the Master of Arts Degree in 1876.

Following a thirteen year period of service in the schools at Oskaloosa, Iowa, he became president of the Iowa State Teachers College and served in this capacity until 1928 when he resigned. Dr. O. R. Latham was elected as his successor, and the State Board of Education voted him the title of President-Emeritus and a residence on the campus, formerly the President's home, in view of his great contributions to education in Iowa. Dr. Seerley had passed his eighty-fourth birthday anniversary August 13, 1932, and

had been in quite good health up until the time of his illness which resulted in his death from complications attendant upon advancing years, December 23, 1932.



In 1892

The above picture shows Dr. Seerley just six years after he became second president of the College. Always serious, even as a young man, Homer Seerley forged ahead in his life work, steadily, surely, confidently.

As a young man, Homer Seerley had no easy time of it, especially in securing his education. He worked long hours on his father's farm and learned the problems of rural Iowa as only the son of an Iowa Farmer can know them. The hard, serious business of winning a living from the soil and a close comradely relationship with his father were two factors which profoundly in-

fluenced his entire career. It was here that he acquired that rugged simplicity and directness which marked all his educational ventures.

When he decided to go to college to study to become an engineer, he picked up his few belongings and walked the forty miles from his home to Iowa City. On arriving at college he earned his way through by the hardest kind of manual labor. Times were hard and money was scarce, and several times during the course of his college career he was forced to give up his studies temporarily in order to teach during the winter and

of a young man who at that early age was intensely interested in people and their problems. As a consequence, at an early period in his studies, he decided to change his course to take up the study of teaching. To make this change, however, it was necessary to get the approval of his professors. This approval was not easy to get. They advised him strongly against making the change, declaring that they did not believe that he possessed the qualifications necessary for a successful teacher. However, he finally convinced them that he should be allowed to make the change, and received his diploma after successfully completing his pedagogical studies.

When the young teacher started out in search of a job, he found himself in a panic-stricken world, a country in the throes of economic chaos. It was during the memorable Panic of 1873, that



In 1912

After twenty-five years of service as administrator Dr. Seerley had achieved state and national fame as a leader in the cause of good teaching. His alma mater awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.



In 1928

The grand old man in Iowa education. Dr. Seerley is shown here as he looked when he relinquished his duties as president after forty-two years of service.

thus earn funds with which to pay his expenses.

He had enrolled as a student in engineering, but the technical problems of materials, machinery, and things, could not long hold the attention

the young Seerley went about in search of a job as teacher, trying to find a chance to make his mark in the world at a time when Federal troops were being called out to suppress riots and strikes, when scores of railroads were going in the hands of receivers, when wages were descending to the lowest levels in years, and thousands upon thousands were being thrown out of employment. It was at this time that the young Seerley demonstrated the many qualities which made him the great teacher that he proved to be. It was then that the calm determination, infinite patience, and rugged faith in his own ability as well as in the future made it possible for him to keep on searching doggedly until he finally found his first permanent position at Oskaloosa, Iowa. Here again, the young teacher found himself face to face with the bitter realities of the nation-wide economic debacle. He received a salary of approximately \$30 a month, and was forced to take scrip in payment of even this small amount. This scrip could be cashed only at a great discount, and much of his salary he had to take out in trade at the local stores or in farm products.

The economic panic finally subsided, and in the strenuous and trying first years of his teaching career, the young Seerley served so successfully as instructor at the Oskaloosa school that in 1875 he was elected Superintendent.

When Dr. Seerley accepted the appointment as president of the Normal School in 1886 many of its courses were not recognized by other colleges and many public officials were antagonistic in their attitude toward the institution. For years the struggle was decidedly an uphill one. Forty-two years later, in 1928, when Dr. Seerley retired from his position as president, the College had become one of the finest teacher-training institutions in the United States and its credits were being accepted in all important colleges and universities. It was Dr. Seerley's foresight and his strength of personality and influence which prevented the establishment of many other state normal schools in Iowa. The vision which Dr. Seerley held for teacher-training in Iowa was one strong, well-equipped, and well-staffed institution offering such courses as would allow its graduates not only to compete successfully with teachers trained in other states, but to provide them with such courses of study as would enable them to have their scholastic credits accepted in any of the leading universities of the country. In this work he not only built up an institution which

was the envy of all other states, but he became a leader in the cause of good teaching throughout the country.

The influence which Dr. Seerley had upon the course of education and teacher-training in the state and nation is evident in the great demand which was made for his services as an expert in educational matters. He served upon a great many educational councils and committees and was a leader and member at various times of the most influential educational associations in the country. He was president of the Iowa State Teachers Association in 1884, and several years ago, in recognition of his great service, he was made a life member of the Association. In like manner he was made a life member of the National Education Association. He was a member of the National Council of Education, president of the Normal Department of the National Education Association in 1898, and a member of the committee on Normal Schools of the National Education Association in 1895-99.

In his teaching work, he was granted a state life certificate in 1873, and was granted the state diploma, the first ever granted by the new Board of Examiners of the state, in 1886.

When Dr. Seerley came to Cedar Falls, the physical plant of the institution consisted of three buildings, Central Hall, formerly the Soldiers' Orphans Home; a plain two-story building once used as the Chapel of the Orphans' Home; and South Hall, later named Gilchrist Hall. For nearly fifteen years after Dr. Seerley came to the Normal School as professor of psychology and didactics, he continued recitations himself from three to five classes a day. During all this time he carried increasing administrative duties almost unaided, doing much of his own secretarial work. In spite of these heavy duties, however, he was making plans and dreaming dreams of a great teacher-training institution that was to appear in mortar and brick on College Hill.

Beginning with 1895, the institution under Dr. Seerley's leadership showed a remarkable growth both in attendance and in institutional equipment. During this period, the Administration Building was completed in 1895, the Auditorium Building in 1900, the Women's Gymnasium in 1903, the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds' Home in 1906, the Science Building in 1906, the Library in 1907, the President's home in 1908, the Training School in 1912, Gen-

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**THE ALUMNUS** Published and issued quarterly by the Iowa State Teachers College. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Cedar Falls, Iowa, under the act of August 24, 1912.

Editor, G. H. Holmes, Jr.  
Business Manager, Benjamin Boardman

Owner, Iowa State Teachers College.  
Average number of copies, 13,000.

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## Tributes In Memory of Dr. Seerley

(Continued From Page 15)

position. As a young married man with a wife and four children, he came to live among us, giving us as young people, a real opportunity to see his active life as head of his family, as a model husband and father, as well as the president and manager in a great institution. As a teacher, he was a real "life sharer" with those of us who were fortunate enough to meet in his classes in those early days. He came directly from thirteen years of a devoted and very active life as City Superintendent of the city schools of Oskaloosa, having been previous to that time Principal of Oskaloosa High School, which position he entered upon his graduation from the State University. These years were a wonderful preparation for his forty-two years of great service in the Iowa State Teachers College. His wife, Mrs. Clara Twaddle Seerley, who proved a great woman for the position she so nobly filled during his long life of service, was one of his high school graduates.

In the Iowa State Teachers College upon the foundation laid ten years previous by J. C. Gilchrist, Homer H. Seerley builded much better than we knew—better than Iowa knew. As we

worked with him, and as we have worked in other states, we have seen his work tested and tried. Iowa is fortunate today on account of his work. She has advantage in her teacher-training situation in contrast with many other states where this work is so overdone by multiplied numbers of too many teacher-training institutions.

I have spoken of how Dr. Seerley in his work as a teacher was a "life sharer." This he really was to us—a close counselor—a safe guide. To know him was to love him. The influence of his aggressive Christian life was shown in the growth of the Y. W. C. A. and Y. M. C. A., and a strong organization of Catholic young people, in charge of Anna E. McGovern, all grew together in perfect harmony. Young lives were touched. They were graduated from the institution to teach children and youth in Iowa and in other states and countries. These children grew to be men and women. Seed was sown, grew, bore fruit, all due to the thousands of Seerley-inspired lives.

Well do we remember how our young lives were gripped and swayed by the life and works of this Godly man. No student ever knew him to do an unmanly act, speak an unclean word, utter an oath, drink a drop of liquor, or even use tobacco in any form. The faculty men and women chosen by him were like him, each doing his or her full part in the great work of Seerley.

The great state of Iowa is fortunate to have had so many thousands of her young people for forty-two years under the leadership, care, and teachings of such a character; forceful and fearless to live and to work.

The tie is broken, but Homer H. Seerley yet lives on in the thousands of lives, young and old, that he touched and inspired. We cannot estimate the value of such a life. Thankful are we to have known him and that we were permitted to call him our friend, our teacher, our inspiration."

**ABBOTT C. PAGE**, formerly a member of Teachers College Faculty, 169 W. 7th Street, Claremont, California,—

It is difficult to write a tribute in this memorial that satisfies the mind, much as all have failed to paint the face of the Great Teacher. We have tried again and again. One can simply ask, "Did you know him?" As the poet at Niagara said: "I came to write, I thought to speak, I am but dumb."

To have daily association with Homer H. Seerley was a great privilege. His personal charm and magnetism were delightful.

### First Graduate Pays Tribute

From the pen of the first graduate to receive a degree from the Iowa State Normal School, Mary Flagler Scott, '77, comes the tribute printed below.

Mrs. Scott, into whose hands was delivered the first sheepskin to be awarded by the school, did not study under Dr. Seerley. However, her husband, Mr. Orion C. Scott, of 3422 Kenilworth Avenue, Berwyn, Illinois, followed Dr. Seerley as Superintendent of Schools at Oskaloosa, Iowa, and the two families established an intimate and long-standing friendship.

Mr. Scott writes the following: "I knew Homer Seerley intimately for a long time. Our families were intimate when our children were very young.

"'We live in deeds, not years' has often come to my mind. Not many live in both so full as he did.

"The multitude of young people that he influenced intellectually, were also influenced by a righteous life constantly before them. That influence will continue and grow broader as time goes on."

He inspired one to outdo himself. He was responsive and appreciative and loyal. He was original, quoting almost never. His aims were high as "he who aimeth at the sky shoots higher far than he that means a tree."

No student ever had a truer friend. The pebbles that rolled upon his beach at Cedar Falls he sought not so much to polish as to stamp "genuine." By personal loans urged upon them, he never allowed students to miss notable lectures and entertainments, harking back to privations in his own experience.

When Mr. Seerley spoke upon the platform he needed no "loud speaker." His Baccalaureate sermon in Gilchrist Hall in '93 on the text, "Quit You Like Men," was typical. It could have been heard by thousands beyond the walls of the small hall.

His sense of humor was under control, but you may remember how little flames would come into his eyes, as Bess Streeter Aldrich would say. Though tender and gentle, he was not effeminate, and he had great physical strength.

There will long abide the sense of his presence somewhere about us. "He is not dead, he's simply gone away."

Our memory of him will ever be a most sacred possession. For memory is the only friend that grief can call its own.

**MARION McFARLAND WALKER, '12, former member of Teachers College Faculty and Dean of Women under Dr. Seerley's Administration,—**

To those of us who worked with President Seerley, one of his outstanding characteristics was his ability to see ahead the effect of any course of action. And rarely indeed was he mistaken in his forecast. Whether in faculty meeting, teachers' association, or student conference, he dominated by strength of vision.

Equally strong was his hatred of sin combined with most merciful and generous judgment for the sinner. One could go to him in trouble with confidence that his sympathetic common sense would help to find the way out. Years ago at a college party where guests were asked to come representing books, a young woman carried away first prize by presenting a photograph of President Seerley as "Our Mutual Friend." All who came in touch with him in the various relations of college life felt his friendliness.

His interest in the lives of his students, his devotion to his wife and children, his sincerity in his religious life, all were elements in the sterling character of the man who merited—and

received—the respect and love of all who knew him.

To work with him for over twenty years was a privilege and an education.

**J. O. PERRINE, formerly member of Teachers College Faculty, now with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, 195 Broadway, New York City,—**

Mr. Seerley's love of his fellowmen touched my life and thousands of others who worked under him as young instructors or students. I shall ever cherish his memory. He was one of Iowa's greatest men because he gave of his talent and his character to Iowa's young people.

**ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL.**  
 Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)  
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
 And saw within the moonlight in his room,  
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
 An angel, writing in a book of gold,  
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
 And to the presence in the room he said,  
 "What writest thou?" The vision raised its  
 head,  
 And with a look made of all sweet accord,  
 Answered, "The names of those who love the  
 Lord."  
 "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"  
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,  
 But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,  
 Write me as one that loves his fellowmen."  
 The angel wrote and vanished. The next night  
 It came again, with a great wakening light,  
 And showed the names whom love of God had  
 blessed,  
 And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

## Institution Associates— Former Secretaries

**KATHERINE SCHELL HEARST, wife of Charles Hearst, of the Federal Farm Bureau Service, for many years Secretary to Dr. Seerley,—**

My first meeting with Dr. Seerley might easily have been a discouraging one for me. I was a young girl, his first secretary, with no knowledge of my position beyond a course in shorthand. I well remember my nervousness and trepidation during his first dictation. After it was over and I was trying to transcribe my incoherent notes, I watched some women working in a field at what is now 24th and College Street, and thought to myself, what a formidable person he seems and how kind and considerate he really is. That first meeting firmly established my admiration for Dr. Seerley.

I learned later, as I came to know him better, that he had the simplicity that goes with greatness in his encouragement and direction of young people. He and Mrs. Seerley really made the Normal School a second home for the stu-

dents. During the years I spent in his office, I never saw him indifferent to the affairs of a student or faculty member, or fail to show a just consideration for their problems. Fair and generous, he always made a large allowance for the vagaries of human nature. I think no one will ever realize the trouble and trials he met as he guided the College through the critical periods of its growth. But he never complained or criticised harshly, and ultimately the force of his integrity overcame refractory legislatures just as it became the major influence in the lives of thousands of his students. His interest in his students was unlimited, and I have always been amazed by his memory of them and the contact he maintained with them after they left school. For the most part, they returned this loyalty, and I know he had many pleasant evidences of it in the later years of his life.

**LILLIAN GOODWIN PECK, former Secretary to Dr. Seerley,—**

Every life has beautiful and satisfying memories. The office people who worked with Doctor Seerley have such a recollection of the hours spent in his employ.

In my experience of fifteen years in the college office, I do not recall a single instance when any of us were reprimanded by him. His treatment of the students was friendly and just. A restless young man or woman was called to the office and given something responsible to do in chapel or literary society or class room and emerged proud of the interview with the President instead of chagrined by a lecture.

One never to be forgotten morning the students, carried away by the charms of the spring weather, milled about the front campus instead of entering the class room. Doctor Seerley glanced from his office window and without an instant's hesitation stepped out on the campus among the crowd. He held up his hand for silence while they all gathered around him as he told them in a few words what it would mean to them and the school spirit if they refused rebelliously to attend classes. In immediate responses, all class rooms soon had their usual quota of students. Before the week was out, a spring frolic day was inaugurated as a regular holiday for all.

Under such a leader we were filled with enthusiasm for our work and the hours were happy and busy. When the tasks were difficult, his confidence in our ability helped us to succeed. We were humble under his leadership, for we realized where we could plan from day to day he wisely planned from year to year.

In recalling past days, I remember he allowed us to do our work in our own way with only necessary suggestions, saving himself for the greater plans which he alone could execute.

## The Iowa State Teachers Association

**IRVING H. HART, President of the Iowa State Teachers Association; Director, Teachers College Extension Division,—**

Now that we have lost from our midst the inspiration of the physical presence of Homer Seerley, the real worth of the man becomes daily more evident to those whose privilege it was to live and work with him. And as we pause to ponder upon his influence upon our lives, it is the character of the man rather than his really great achievements which stands out. After all, education is not a thing of books nor of tests nor of activities, but of the reactions of personalities upon each other. Homer Seerley was a man who lived his faith. His life was a concrete exemplification of practical idealism. He has built for himself "a monument more lasting than bronze" in the lives and characters of thousands of people, young and old, with whom he came in contact. In these days of challenge to all idealism, his example of "plain living and high thinking" continues to be an inspiration to carry on in the confident hope that in the end right will triumph.

He was truly

"One who never turned his back but marched breast-forward; never doubted clouds would break; never feared, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph; held we fall to rise; are baffled to fight better; sleep to wake."

**CHARLES F. PYE, Secretary of Iowa State Teachers Association,—**

It is a great privilege to have known a great man.

As a very young Superintendent I received from the lips of President Seerley, words of commendation, encouragement, and inspiration that have gone with me through all the years from then until now.

When I was called upon to take up the duties of the Iowa State Teachers Association, no one was more interested and helpful than President Seerley. He was the best known, the best beloved, and most useful member of our Association.

President Seerley's living has released and set to work energies, powers, and influences, that will go on into eternity. Iowa is a better Iowa because of him.



## Alumni of the Iowa State Teachers College

**G. T. COWAN**, President of the Alumni Association of Iowa State Teachers College; Principal of High School, Iowa Falls, Iowa,—

Iowa State Teachers College is truly the brain child of Homer H. Seerley. It stands today a monument to his loyalty and service to man and God. May his unselfish loyalty and service forever guide the policies of those who are called upon to determine the destiny of this great institution.

The world has lost a great mind, and eternity has gained a great soul.

**C. A. FULLERTON**, '90, Head of the Department of Music at Teachers College (A tribute given before the Cedar Falls Rotary Club),—

On the sixth of September in 1886 I was one of the 232 students who greeted Principal Homer H. Seerley on his first day in the Normal School. I had attended school three terms under the leadership of Principal J. C. Gilchrist. During the three following years that I was a student in the institution I had the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with Mr. Seerley and his family. I remember him on the opening day as a sturdy, plain-spoken man who disappointed us by not making a speech in chapel. He had no artificial dignity. The students felt free to talk with him. As I look back upon those years it seems to me that the informal conferences that he had with groups of students about the buildings were very significant. He was frank about thinking out loud on what his plans were concerning the future of the school. The natural result was the development of a feeling of cooperation among the students. He knew that the morale of a school is never any better than the students want it to be. In those days we were handicapped by the absence of any organized play in athletic lines. But he did much to encourage the various organizations among students, such as literary societies and the Christian Associations, the latter being organized at his suggestion. He secured the cooperation of enough students so that problems in discipline were practically unknown.

One thing that helped Mr. Seerley in increasing the respect for the school on the part of the students, the faculty, and the general public, was his improvement of the physical plant. When he came here there was no running water on the Hill. The buildings were lighted by kerosene lamps, and the equipment was very limited and unsatisfactory.

While Mr. Seerley was developing the co-

operative attitude of the students he was doing the same thing with the state. He had spent thirteen years in the schools of Oskaloosa, Iowa. This helped him to see a normal school from the standpoint of the people it was supposed to serve. He immediately prepared a curriculum for high school graduates which won favor from the superintendents. These students were exempt from the entrance examination. This showed confidence in the work done in the high schools. Students holding teachers' certificates were also exempt from entrance examinations. This showed confidence in county superintendents.

In these present days when education is becoming a science, educators can be guided into safe paths if they will put forth the effort to find them, but a generation ago the teacher did not have so much assistance in choosing. The progressives were in danger of following up every wind of doctrine that blew their way, and later as a result of their folly, spending considerable time in blind alleys. The conservatives were in danger of ignoring the progress that had already been made in education and living a generation behind the times.

Mr. Seerley had many of the virtues of each of these groups. I took several courses in Education with him, and in those days I would call him a Conservative-Progressive. The evidence that he was a Progressive is to be found in the institution that he developed. As a teacher he was unique. He thought in large units and never got lost in labyrinths. He did not concern himself so much with interpreting the thoughts of the authors as he did with giving the class the benefit of his bird's eye view of the field under consideration.

I remember one occasion when he was substituting for Professor Bartlett in a class in Physics. There came a lull in the progress of the discussion and one cordial young fellow, with a cooperative spirit and a vocal habit, thought to make a contribution by asking a question. In the text book used there was a list of chemical elements which included "barium." It probably meant nothing to this young man, and it is a good guess that 43 years later it still meant nothing to him. I can still hear him saying, "Mr. Seerley, what is barium?" The answer that he got was probably the best that could have been made. After a slight hesitation, Mr. Seerley said, "That is something that isn't used very much in ordinary matters," and went on with his discussion. A teacher at that time was supposed to be embarrassed when it was discovered that he didn't know all the answers. Mr. Seerley did not pretend to know them all

and in that respect he was a pronounced modernist. His answer to the young man was rather characteristic. As an educator, he was not interested in isolated facts as such, and he was not the kind of teacher who would be willing to fritter away much time on discussions that could lead nowhere. If he had been, he probably would never have been called to the position as the head of the Normal School, and certainly would not have become one of the leading educators of the nation.

**J. HERBERT KELLEY, '97, Executive Secretary of Pennsylvania State Education Association, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania,—**

As president of the Iowa State Teachers College, Homer Horatio Seerley laid the broad and sure foundations of the institution and developed its superstructure, including its physical plant, its faculty, its academic and professional courses, and its student body. Because of the unquestioned value of the Cedar Falls institution to the State of Iowa, he had no difficulty in securing ample fiscal support from the Legislature. In fact, he did not have to ask for appropriations. Finance committees of the Legislature asked him how much he needed for his work.

His most unique quality as a teacher was the ability to discern budding excellence in his students, and the will to give a timely word of encouragement which stimulated them to do their best and to continue their work after graduation in institutions of higher learning. His reward consisted of a great army of successful teachers throughout the state, the nation, and the world, who are carrying on after the manner he taught and inspired them. Their foundation training was so sound that they had no difficulty in obtaining satisfactory academic standing in our colleges and universities.

Doctor Seerley was the outstanding figure in state and national education associations. He received many honors at their hands and was recognized by both the University of Iowa and the Pennsylvania State College with an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

It is a high tribute to Doctor Seerley that Iowa was so well satisfied with the teacher training work at Cedar Falls that, unlike most of the states, she never established another State Teachers College, but developed that one and made it easily the most outstanding State Teachers College of the nation.

**FRED C. GILCHRIST, '91, son of the first President of the Iowa State Normal School, member of Congress,—**

In the year 1887 and shortly after he had succeeded my father as president of the Iowa

State Teachers College and while I was yet a boy I met President Homer H. Seerley for the first time. I approached the interview with some awe, but left it with an appreciation of the great kindness which always attended and actuated him. After this I met him occasionally, but more often during the years when he was accustomed to come before my committee in the State Senate to tell us about the needs of the great college at Cedar Falls and to ask for appropriations.

He did not appear there as a mendicant in supplication nor did he practice the arts of a politician; rather did he come in the power of righteousness as one profoundly convinced of the rectitude of his own purposes, and without elaboration or circumlocution he presented his cause in a simple, direct, and modest way. Thus he was always able to convince a rather reluctant group that his askings were reasonable, practical, and for the best interest of the state.

President Seerley came to the head of the most influential institution in our state at a time when the world was emerging from a sort of austerity which marked the thought of the Victorian era. For half a century he played a most important part in the progress of education and civilization within the state and nation. And it may truly be said that no man has done more than he has done to point out the way by which our boys, our girls, our young men, our young women, our whole people might be led into a happier, more generous, more useful, and more Christ-like life.

He was a great man because he was plain, unaffected, sincere, and not given to stratagem or artifice. Men loved him because he was gentle, kind, and true. Tens of thousands cherish happy memories of him because his life was an inspiration just as it now has become a benediction.

**CARL C. MAGEE, '94, Editor of the Oklahoma Daily News, Oklahoma City,—**

With the passing of the years I have increasingly realized the influence of President Seerley upon my outlook on life. At sixty I am aware that this man, then in the fifties, was the most powerful human force of my youth, barring only my father and mother. I came under his influence at the age of nineteen. The school was small then, with plenty of opportunity for contact between president and student. President Seerley manifested a special interest in me—perhaps because of his friendship for my parents. Many were the opportunities he gave me to see the workings of his mind and to know his stal-

wart Christian philosophy. Many were the pieces of sage advice which he gave me.

I left school feeling that President Seerley was the greatest man in the world. Today, knowing personally many of America's greatest men, I still think he had the then best unified personality, the most concrete objectives in his work of any man I have ever known. And with it all he had a calm courage and quiet persistence which is unexcelled.

President Seerley steadied my life at its most chaotic period. An evolution was going on in my thinking which left me uncertain. He helped me think through to an outlook which has formed the basis for a life-time of behavior. His personality has accompanied me through life, although I have seen him infrequently in the last thirty years.

I thought I had the arrangements made years ago which would give me telegraphic news of his death. For thirty years I have said that I would cross a continent to attend his funeral, if I outlived him. My arrangements failed, and he was buried before I knew of his death. I regret that I did not have the chance to fly to the last services, that, a mature man, I might pay the homage of a boy to the one who had done so much for him.

I realize that this tribute is personal. My relations with him were personal. His death is a personal loss. I feel constrained to speak of my personal mentor rather than of the great and impressive public character whom President Seerley was. Educators in Iowa and the nation owe him much. Thousands of men and women who contacted his personality owe him more. If ever a public man died who is entitled to the welcoming words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord," President Seerley was that man.

**J. PERCIVAL HUGET, '92, Pastor of Tompkins Avenue Congregational Church, Brooklyn, New York,—**

Homer H. Seerley was unquestionably the most useful and influential citizen of the State of Iowa. It is true that his fame and influence were nation-wide, especially in the field of Education, yet it is equally true that he belonged uniquely to the Commonwealth within the borders of which he spent his entire life and to the service of which he gave himself throughout that long and notable career.

He was a life-long pioneer. His early years were spent among those who were the actual first settlers. He knew the history and traditions of Iowa from the beginning. He was pre-eminently a pioneer in the field of teacher training.

Not only did he build one of the greatest Teachers' Colleges in America, but he led the way in many fields of educational theory and practice.

Through the contacts of his profession and by the strength and nobility of his own character Dr. Seerley influenced the life of the entire state more widely and lastingly than any other one man in all its history. His ultimate greatness and his supreme service were in himself, and so, while he will deservedly be remembered and honored for what he did, he will be revered for what he was.

**FOREST C. ENSIGN, '95, Professor of Education at the University of Iowa, Iowa City,—**

It is not possible to evaluate the services of Doctor Homer H. Seerley. He built a great Teachers College, he was a leader in the formulation of educational ideals in state and nation for more than half a century, yet his greatest contribution to the world he so enriched was in service so intangible, so impossible of measure, so intimately personal, that we who profited most at his hands, are left inarticulate, knowing only that a very great spiritual force that had long sustained us, has been withdrawn. To me, President Seerley has been teacher, personal friend, counselor, and never-failing moral bulwark. All this and more he was to thousands. He served his state during a critical, formative period. He was a master builder in materials which do not perish. It is well, for we are not likely to find in our times another possessing so richly the qualities that made him great.

**CHARLES F. JOHNSON, '97, Superintendent of the Industrial School for Boys, Kis Lyn, Pennsylvania,—**

The death of President Seerley has shocked and grieved me, and my heart is heavy, for he was dear to me as one of my own flesh and blood. Three men helped to make me the man I am today. The first of the three was Homer H. Seerley, who came into my life in 1893 when I went up from a country farm to the old Normal School. His homely wisdom, his sterling integrity, and his never-failing good nature made him to me a loved figure. A warm friendship begun at that time ripened and followed me in my years as secretary of the Y. M. C. A. in Des Moines and at Wilkes-Barre and still followed me by friendly letter during the twenty-one years I have been in my present position. Like hundreds of others, I was a "first name" friend, and his faith in me has helped me to carry on when the clouds have had no silver lining.

Farewell, President Seerley, loving father, faithful friend, loyal citizen, maker of men.

**MARY D. REED, '20, State Teachers College,  
Terre Haute, Indiana,—**

The passing of Homer H. Seerley marks the passing of a man whom every alumnus was glad to name as the President of his Alma Mater; proud because of the personal integrity and human qualities of the man; proud because of his educational leadership and vision. These qualities served well in building a Teachers College which has fulfilled the high purposes of his years of administration. That the institution will continue to serve this same high purpose under other leadership is the greatest glory of Homer H. Seerley.

**BESS STREETER ALDRICH, '01, Elmwood,  
Nebraska,—**

A great and good man has gone. The things he accomplished in his long and influential life can never be measured or weighed or counted. For he dealt with human souls.

When I entered the school many years ago as a girl of seventeen, President Seerley seemed to my youthful mind a rather awesome person,—a big man with a big resonant voice and unlimited authority. I had no thought of ever knowing him personally. Sometime during those first new weeks he stopped me in the hall, called me by name, spoke of the course I was taking, and commented on some little amateurish thing I had written for the Alpha Literary Society. It was an astonishing thing to me. And always afterward it remained in my mind that one of the amazing things about him, in spite of his distinctly administrative work, was an infinite capacity to know personally the plans and ambitions of so many students.

After all of these years I think of him still as the personification of the word, Strength,—as though he were the embodiment of Jessie Welborn Smith's beautiful lines:

“A lightship set in an inland sea  
With frontier strength built into me.”

**E. J. FEULING, '04, Editor of the New Hampton  
Tribune, New Hampton, Iowa,—**

Homer H. Seerley has been my ideal of what a great man should be in life, in occupation, in the office of President of the Iowa State Teachers College. The kindly, yet firm suggestions he made to the Student Body at Chapel in my day, never left my mind or memory. If it can be said that the world is better for my having lived, I attribute much of the credit to the personal advice given to me by Mr. Seerley, and the suggestions he made to all of us students.

I recall his statement at Chapel one morning in which he said, “The student who does not

have such a good time in school, generally has a good time always after he is out; and the student who has an extra good time in school will never have a good time when he gets out.” Another quotation from him which stuck with me was, “Whatever you do in life, strive to be the best in that profession.”

He was big and clean, mentally, morally, and physically, and we respected him and loved him much. His memory is sweet to me, and I dare say to all his students. He will live in the glory of Iowa State Teachers College so long as history lasts.

**BESSIE B. BUCHANAN, '99, Girls Adviser,  
Junior High School, Des Moines,—**

While a student at Iowa State Normal School, now Teachers College, I was fortunate in having “Lectures,” under President Seerley. Shortly after 1898, executive duties completely claimed his time, and the lectures were carried by other members of the faculty. I have always felt that the students who were permitted to have a class with him were particularly favored, for Homer H. Seerley was a gifted teacher.

I remember well, how eagerly we looked forward to his class hour. The lectures were comprehensive and far-reaching in their scope. They were also so very practical and concrete that they were of immediate value to the student. Many of his statements, based upon his own experiences and wisdom in meeting social situations, are remembered to this day, because of the assistance they have been in my own work.

Both the vocational and the academic phases of education were of vital concern to President Seerley. He was an advocate of domestic science and manual training as public school subjects long before many of the school men of this section could see the need for these subjects in the public school curriculum.

A family friendship led to my being often in the Seerley home. Here I observed President Seerley as father and husband. I feel that their home life was ideal. I have the happiest recollections of conversations between Clem and his father regarding matters of local interest. He always talked with Esther and Helen concerning the events of the day. Last, but not least, do I recall the playtimes with Marion, the baby of the family, who died in 1899.

President Seerley was never too busy to give freely of his time and services, whenever they were needed. Letters written to former students, extending sympathy or congratulations, testified to his continued interest in their welfare.

How many times in group discussions centering around qualities of leadership essential for success in life the words earnestness, steadfastness, integrity of purpose, fearlessness, modesty, sense of humor, breadth of vision, and consideration for others have been noted. Yet how rare it is to find them all combined in one personality—as they were in Homer H. Seerley,—great leader, who stood head and shoulders above the crowd, yet was always one of it. Of him it may well be said, he was one who could walk with kings, and not lose the common touch.

**CASPER SCHENCK, '99, Attorney at Des Moines, Iowa,—**

The passing of Doctor Seerley has been like the passing of a summer of fruitful abundance. To us who knew him best in the full vigor of his distinguished prime, he was something more than a father, something more than a teacher, something more than a priest. Through him, we absorbed the very essence of the majesty, the richness, and the beauty of life itself.

The classes who graduated under him, during the closing years of the last century, could not fail to be impressed by what he had wrought. But still more deeply, we were stirred by what he was. He personified sincerity, good sense, and good nature. His wisdom, his strength, and his goodness of heart enfolded us like a cloud.

Cedar Falls must remember him largely as a neighbor, an administrator, and a mold of youth. Iowa remembers him as a prophet, a statesman, and a master of men. It would be possible to write volumes on what he did for his community, his state, and his country. What he did for us, as individuals, could never all be told. Many, like myself, must feel that his influence was the most potent force that ever touched our lives. I have seen very many of the great and of the near-great of my time. But in all humility and sincerity, I say of him

“He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.”

**L. H. MINKEL, '95, General Agent of the Mutual Trust Life Insurance Company, Fort Dodge, Iowa,—**

President Seerley was a great executive. The beautiful campus and splendid buildings housing thousands of eager students on College Hill are ample evidence of this fact. He was greatest, however, in his personal influence over those with whom he came in contact.

During the early days, he knew every student. When he called you by your first name, he did not condescend. He lifted you up.

In his association with outstanding educators of the state and nation, his words were always

impressive, because they were backed by a solid personality and a record of outstanding achievement. It is not going too far to say that Iowa has not produced his equal as an educational influence.

**MABEL A. CHRISTIAN ARTHUR, '06, Redvers, Saskatchewan,—**

President Seerley has passed on to a higher service, but he still lives on in the lives of thousands of alumni over this land and others. It was with a feeling of personal bereavement that these heard of his call.

His name and the Iowa State Normal, and later Teachers College, are inseparable. One cannot think of one without the other. His wonderful executive ability to build up such an institution is surpassed only by his idealism for its students and his power to create in them a strong desire to live up to those ideals. Character building was the first and highest requisite in teacher training.

He showed his interest by attendance often, at the various activities of the school, especially the Student Christian organizations, and always there offered a helpful word or prayer.

Never missing a Sunday morning church service, he had an unconscious influence for good. All felt he both preached and practised his religion.

My admiration for President Seerley grew greatly in the six years I was connected with the Normal and has grown still more since I left it. I have always felt a strong urge to strive to live up to his ideals and expectations of me. The personal contacts I had with him then and a few since are tender memories and abiding influences.

**CAP E. MILLER, '13, Professor of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo,—**

All students attending Iowa State Teachers College came to feel that they belonged to one great educational family of which Doctor Seerley was father, leader, counselor, and adviser. This was especially true while we were on the campus and during our college career, but that same advice and inspiration has followed us all through life—guiding us and spurring us on to greater activity in our chosen fields. One of the last letters I received from him said, “Make hay while the sun shines.” That statement might not have appealed to some graduates of Iowa State Teachers College, but it meant a real challenge to me. He seemed to know us all individually so as to give to each one just the advice he needed. How he did it is more than I

know. I have never known his equal in this matter.

I have always been proud of the fact that I came from the same little Iowa country town and vicinity as Homer H. Seerley; that I knew his father, mother, and brothers; that my dear mother and Homer attended the same country school; that my grandfather, Doctor Nathan C. Miller, was the Seerley family physician when Homer was a baby; that the Seerley and Miller families were neighbors and very close friends.

And so a great man, a friend, a neighbor has passed on. Few will miss him more than I. Just the thought that Homer H. Seerley was down there at Cedar Falls where I could call upon him at any time—that has been a consolation to me all these years. But while he has gone from our midst, yet we can never forget his teaching and advice. His example set before us, his challenge for us to do our best to serve humanity, will live with us forever.

**M. L. FULLER, '98, United States Weather Bureau Service, Peoria, Illinois,—**

What we call greatness may appear in various forms.

Some men have capacity for large vision, for constructive planning.

Some are great politicians (in the nobler sense) and able to enlist and hold for worthy objects the united support of many and diverse groups.

Some are great executives, competent to organize or manage resources, equipment, personnel, or institutions, for the most effective service or accomplishment.

A few are great in their personal influence, in their definite chosen policy of inspiring others to higher ideals and more worthy effort.

Rarely is one found who combines all these types of greatness. Mr. Seerley had them all in recognized measure, and through them earned universal respect and regard. The character and quality of his personal influence among the teachers and students of his state has not only given him their honor and their abiding affection to an extent seldom attained, but has also in thousands of instances launched upward trends of mind and spirit that shall go on through countless generations for the betterment of man.

**AGNES E. HEIGHTSHOE, '03, Superintendent of Schools, Perry, Iowa,—**

Mine was the privilege to be a student in Iowa State Teachers College at a time when Mr. Seerley, then president of that institution, taught some of the classes in Education, and

mine was the privilege to be a member of several of those classes.

To those sitting under his instruction, he was regarded as more than an instructor; he was a real teacher and a genuine friend whose every word was based upon sound experience and one whose earnest desire was to give to the future teacher an inspiration and a vision for the great work which he had chosen.

In the passing of Homer H. Seerley, our country has lost one of its foremost benefactors; Iowa has lost her most beloved educator; the teacher, a most inspiring co-worker and a loving friend.

**REVEREND M. M. RIES, '04, Pastor of St. Vincent's Church, Chicago, Illinois,—**

Ever since my enrollment in the beginning of this century in my Dear Alma Mater, I came directly under the great influence of Doctor Seerley. His sincere and fatherly interest in his students made a deep and lasting impression upon me. No matter how heavy his responsibility, or how grave his undertakings, the good of his students and his interest in them came first. And what a joy and appreciation it gave to us students to know that we were personally acquainted and a friend of our president. That feeling was always intensified when meeting us he always found time for a word of encouragement and would address us by name.

During the twenty-seven years which followed my graduation at Cedar Falls I always found Doctor Seerley the same. He always showed that same paternal interest, and that same sincere devotedness. I know that his feeling toward us, his alumni, has always remained the same as that extended to us, his students.

I am not flowery in my wordings and I feel that it is not necessary, but I wish to leave with you the impression uppermost in my mind. To me Doctor Seerley has ever been outstanding as a powerful and influential friend keenly interested in the success of my life's work. As a representative alumnus and friend of the Iowa State Teachers College I can frankly state that I have always very thoroughly enjoyed that placid influence of Doctor Seerley.

**MINNA M. MERRIAM MADILL, '03, Long Beach, California,—**

President Seerley! There is no other name that brings such memories! What a wealth of preparation to teach he gave us! What confidence he inspired as he addressed us "Teachers"! How he urged us to be worthy of the dignity and trust of that title! How he made us see the responsibility of the guidance of boys

and girls in their impressionable years—responsibility not only in the development of the intellect, but in the growth of the things that are eternal. How by precept and by his life he taught us to be genuine!

I see President Seerley as he tells us that our success rests more on our dependability than on our ability; I see him telling the seniors that in life, as in writing orations, they must get their message before they can give it; I see him in his office as he tells of homesick students or wayward ones who need Christian association.

I hear President Seerley address us and I believe him. I no more question his word than I question the Bible; I see President Seerley as he stands in chapel, one hand behind him, the other holding the hymnal as he announces:

“If on a quiet sea  
Toward Heaven we calmly sail  
With grateful hearts  
O God, to Thee  
We'll own the fav'ring gale.

But should the surges rise  
And rest delay to come  
Blest be the tempest  
Kind the storm  
That drives us nearer home.”

I see these things in memory. Simple memories, perhaps, but precious to me. I rejoice that in those years (1903) we came so closely under the influence of his teaching and administration. Iowa State Teachers College can have no richer legacy than the life of President Seerley, no happier memory than the reflection of his sterling, upright character.

**DAVID LEE SHILLINGLAW, Chairman of Chicago Area Alumni Unit,—**

It was my privilege to know President Seerley intimately when in College and after I left. Always upon a visit back to my home at Cedar Falls I would drop around to his home for a friendly chat.

President Seerley certainly belonged to that group of the past generation who were fundamentally religious, filled with an ideal for unselfish service, and whose daily life really exemplified their beliefs.

I can remember one time being met by President Seerley when he was on the way to chapel. He knew I had no intention of going and made this remark: “If you can't attend chapel, you better go home.”

One year I was engaged by the head of the History Department to teach history at the next Summer School of the Iowa State Teachers College and I told President Seerley how pleased I was. He replied: “I don't think very much of

the idea. You haven't taught yourself and you will be trying to instruct experienced teachers.” Having accepted the appointment I went ahead. After the term was over, he came around and told me that he would be the first to invite me back for the next summer. Always frank.

His words and statements always made plain that education was not merely training the mind, an education to be complete must be founded on a moral basis. There lingers in my memory the feeling that if “firm as a rock” could be spoken of a personality, to him it would apply.

The worth of his institution was in the life of its graduates and he followed with interest their careers. Upon my visits back home I would inquire as to the doings of old graduates and he took a delight in speaking of their accomplishments. He must have given a lot of time to them. During my two and one-half years war service in Europe he wrote me many letters in long hand, sending on lots of local gossip, news of old friends, and always added a few words of encouragement.

He had a devotion to high ideals which to him, when carried out faithfully, meant a better America and a better world. Education to him was a means of love, of faith, of justice, of freedom. In looking over his life I can see in its history a ministry to the higher things of life. As I look I am filled with wonder at its completeness in devotion to duty. He was fine of soul, broad in sympathy, noble in spirit. We, who have seen his life, knowing its work, and its high purposes, realize that he devoted his energy to lifting and ennobling the souls of his students: Patiently and quietly he sought to inspire them with the noblest ideals and aims in life. We all would glorify the name of this departed friend, because his ideals were not a mere thought, they were a stimulus to right action.

**CLARENCE E. STEELE, '97, General Secretary, The Community Young Men's Christian Association, Hagerstown, Maryland,—**

Looking back over almost forty years I am profoundly impressed by the far reaching influence of the services rendered to the educational and religious life of our times by Doctor Homer H. Seerley.

I cannot help but visualize the thousands of students who came to be blessed by his inspiring personality and are now serving in places of trust and responsibility. Through them Doctor Seerley's influence is being spread to the uttermost parts of the earth. These students for the most part came from the country and villages

of every county of Iowa and found in him a friend and a wise counsellor. His abiding faith in Jesus, the Saviour of men, led so many to dedicate themselves to His services. Fortunate, indeed, were those who were privileged to attend the Iowa State Teachers College during the presidency of Homer H. Seerley.

**REVEREND LAURA BOWMAN GALER, '00,**  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa, Second Vice-President  
of the Universalist Church,—

Homer Seerley was above all an honest man. In his relations with students there was no concealment of purpose, no yielding of principle to secure good-will, no avoidance of pain when truth required hard speaking. Yet in his very bluntness there was kindness, and a security for the humblest student. We all learned to rely with comfort upon a president who kept his word. Students found the example of promises made slowly and fulfilled accurately one of the most valuable lessons taught at "Seerley's school."

Those who went from student's bench to faculty chair knew from experience that their head gave and demanded honest work, true loyalty. New members of the teaching staff soon learned that work well done was the key to advancement. His speeches had much of this blunt, unadorned character, and the buildings of the college have taken on a sturdy, square, serviceability as if manifesting Mr. Seerley's thought of full return for every dollar of tax-payer's money.

It was a part of this honesty to remember every kindness, every help that lesser personalities give to a great man on his road. I think Mr. Seerley never forgot a word of cheer that lifted his load in moments of discouragement, nor the loyalty of students and faculty when the school was fighting for a place. He was honestly humble, sincerely grateful to his friends and assistants, publicly dependent upon God.

## City Superintendents of Schools

**J. J. McCONNELL,** formerly Head of the Department of Education at the University of Iowa, and later Superintendent of Schools at Cedar Rapids contemporary with much of President Seerley's active service,—

Homer Seerley was for a generation Iowa's leading exponent of public education. There was no competition for leadership between him and any other man.

He achieved this standing by virtue of his character, ability, loyalty to his ideals, and by

his untiring devotion to the discharge of his duty as he conceived it.

When these things can truthfully be said about a man not much more needs to be said.

He was neither a dreamer of dreams nor a rider of hobbies, but he was a believer in the realities of life and he was thoroughly committed to a course of educational procedure, which in his judgment, would best fit the youth of the nation to realize life's best values. Few men have succeeded better in the attainment of their objectives.

**GEORGE H. SAWYER,** Superintendent of Osage Public Schools, Osage, Iowa,—

While I am not an alumnus of the Iowa State Teachers College, I, in various ways, came into contact with Doctor Homer H. Seerley and felt his sympathetic touch in my early teaching days. So genuine was his greeting, so sincere his interest, and so wide his sympathy that I felt at home in his presence. I know of no better tribute one could pay to the greatness of a man like Doctor Seerley.

He was an inspiration at all times, whether as a host in his office, a visitor in the home, a lecturer on the platform or on occasions of casual meetings.

I am but one of hundreds who, while not having had the close personal touch of the classroom, yet felt the benediction of his touch and influence.

**R. L. REID,** Superintendent of Schools, Keokuk, Iowa,—

I hereby wish to acknowledge the influence of an educator whose great leadership has stabilized the policies of school people in Iowa. In Iowa and outside, Doctor Homer H. Seerley has made a lasting contribution to the growth and perpetuity of educational stimulus. To know him was to have your faith in child-life strengthened and directed.

**J. W. STUDEBAKER,** City Superintendent of Schools, Des Moines, Iowa,—

Doctor Homer H. Seerley was one of the first educators of this state with whom I formed a personal acquaintance. Although I was in no way directly connected with the great institution which his vision and energy had built, I was from the beginning of our acquaintance conscious of his interest in me as a young man trying to get a start in the teaching profession. I shall always be grateful to Doctor Seerley for his friendly interest in me and my work and for his inspirational leadership as an educator of great vision and superlative executive ability.



## Newspaper Editorials

Extract from an editorial in the Des Moines, Iowa, Register,—

### HE BUILT WELL FOR HIS STATE

Whatever advantage there has been in maintaining a single teachers college in Iowa, with the resultant maximum of scholastic standards and splendid equipment, the credit is due very largely to Homer H. Seerley. It was his foresight and his perseverance that prevented the enervation of the state's teacher-training resources by spreading them among a handful of small normal schools.

For more than 40 years, until his retirement as President-Emeritus a few years ago, Doctor Seerley had devoted his genius and energy to the building of a nationally recognized state teachers college from what had previously been a weak and poorly equipped normal school. That he had passed his eightieth year when that retirement came is itself evidence of the great respect in which he was held, both as an educator and an executive, by the people of Iowa.

So Doctor Seerley had become in a very literal sense the "grand old man" of education in Iowa. ....

Man could hardly hope to live a fuller life or one more influential toward the fine things than that of Homer Seerley. It was with immense regret, despite his years, that Iowans recognized the wisdom of his retirement, for the sake of his own health, a few years back. That he has passed now beyond the reach of voice and smile will be felt keenly not alone by his thousands of intimate friends throughout the nation's educational world, but also by the host of Iowans who have sensed his ability and earnest service during these many decades.

W. CLAUDE JARNAGIN, '99, Editor of Storm Lake Pilot Tribune, Storm Lake, Iowa,—

### A FOREMOST CITIZEN GONE

The death of Homer H. Seerley removes from the educational field, one who may rightfully be classed as a foremost American. The influence of this great man extended far beyond the confines of the state in which he spent his life. Doctor Seerley had opportunities to accept places of leadership in educational institutions in other states. But he felt that his life's work was tied up with the institution at Cedar Falls over which he presided for 42 years. And to that school, he gave the last full measure of devotion.

It was our privilege and pleasure to know Doctor Seerley in an intimate way, not only because we attended the State Teachers College

and graduated there during the days that the late president was in his prime, but more because it was through the efforts of our dad, the late J. W. Jarnagin, that Doctor Seerley was called to the presidency from his place as superintendent of the Oskaloosa schools. Dad was a member of the Board of Directors of the old State Normal School, now the State Teachers College. He suggested and recommended Seerley for the place that he filled so admirably.

To associate with a man of the type of Doctor Seerley was an inspiration. The influence that he exerted is boundless. Like the waves of the ocean, it spread far and wide, touching the lives of thousands of children through their contact with teachers who had caught the vision of usefulness so perfectly exemplified by President Seerley.

We confess to a feeling of strangeness now when we visit the halls of our old Alma Mater at Cedar Falls. It's all so changed from the days of the gay nineties. It was there that we first met the young lady who in the passing years has presided so faithfully and graciously over our home. Intermingled with our remembrances and memories of those days, are always recollections of Doctor Seerley and his dominant personality.

"And when he fell, in whirlwind he went down  
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,  
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills  
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky!"

JOHN E. McKEE, '85, Editor of Spencer Reporter, Spencer, Iowa,—

### HOMER H. SEERLEY

To have played the part that the late Homer H. Seerley, president of the State Teachers College of Iowa, for more than forty years, did in educational affairs of Iowa is no mean achievement. To have built the present State Teachers College to the national and international standing it had attained when he left it was a wonderful work, but President Seerley was always building with a far look ahead and the light he left behind will fall on generations yet to come. He never forgot or neglected the spiritual element in his work and it was this element that bound him so closely to the lives of the young men and women with whom he came in contact. He had a wonderful faculty for remembering the names and faces of the young people with whom he came in contact. His life was given to his work with an intensity and singleness of purpose that accounts so largely for what he was able to achieve in building up the wonderful institution he committed to the hands of President Latham.

The writer recalls a conversation with A. B. Funk, then a resident of Spirit Lake and a member of the State Board of Education, relating to President Seerley's ability to get the things he wanted for his school. Mr. Funk said that when he came to present his needs before the Board of Education the big-hearted, unselfish interest of the man in his work was something that the Board could not resist.

The passing of Mr. Seerley will cause many men and women to pause and pay a sincere tribute to the wholesome and helpful influence this man had upon their lives.

His life came to a fitting close in the home upon the campus which he had occupied for many years and amidst the wonderful transformations that had taken place in the forty-six years since his coming to Cedar Falls.

### Iowa Alumni Honor Dr. Seerley

At the annual dinner of graduates and friends of the State University of Iowa in Des Moines last November during the State Teachers Association Convention, and just a month before Dr. Seerley's death, the following toast adopted by the assemblage was given by Dr. E. W. Goetch, director of the Placement Bureau at the College.

A Toast: A graduate of the State University of Iowa in the Class of 1873; a man whose fame became unexcelled in the field of teacher-training throughout the civilized world; a man whose strength has been the strength, not of ten, but of ten thousand because he knew how to inspire others in the great cause which he himself made his own; a man whose moral courage and ethical character are beyond reproach; a man whose leadership in the cause of education has been unchallenged; in behalf of the sons and daughters of the Old Gold, I dedicate this toast to the honored and beloved Homer H. Seerley, President-Emeritus of the Iowa State Teachers College, and extend to him and to Mrs. Seerley a most cordial greeting.

### Down Through The Years

(Continued From Page 19)

eral Hospital in 1913, with additions in 1925, the Vocational Building in 1915, the Women's dormitory, Bartlett Hall, in 1914, with additions in 1925, and the Men's Gymnasium in 1925.

Dr. Seerley was author of several books, including the "History of Civil Government in Iowa," written in 1897, "The County School," in 1912, and the "Geography of Iowa," in 1916.

Dr. Homer Seerley was married to Miss Clara E. Twaddle of Oskaloosa, in 1878. They were the

### A Tribute

Homer Horatio Seerley, sent of God,  
A soul inspired to love and serve thy  
fellowman.

Thy noble life we now presume to scan,  
As hushed in heart we pass beneath the rod.

Thine was a life, big, clean, plain, rugged,  
kind;

A life at once so humbly great nor earth  
Nor heaven need blush to own its ster-  
ling worth,

Rooted in righteousness, in sober mind.

Thine was a life that knew not fear save  
fear

Of God—that knew not hate save hate of  
wrong.

Courage, patience, hope did to thy  
strength belong,

To thy daily living, open and sincere.

Noble son of toil, thy race is run.

Dauntless keeper of the faith, thy crown  
is won.

—By Ida Catherine Rohlf, '15, assistant  
professor of English at Teachers College.

parents of three children, Dr. Clem C., M. Di '01, a physician of Bozeman, Montana; Helen, M. Di. '06, Mrs. A. B. Clark, of Cedar Rapids, and Esther, M. Di. '01, Mrs. Claude Culley, of Le Mars, Iowa.

In addition to his wife and children, Dr. Seerley is survived by two brothers, John J., a lawyer of Burlington, Iowa, and Frank Newell, a psychologist and instructor in Y. M. C. A., Springfield, Massachusetts. Mrs. Seerley has a sister living, Mrs. C. D. Cowgill, of Lawrence, Kansas. A brother, George Twaddle, formerly Associated Press correspondent of Cedar Falls, died a few years ago.

There are six grand-children of the Seerley family. The daughter, Helen, Mrs. A. B. Clark, is the mother of two children, James Seerley Clark, a mid-shipman at Annapolis, and Elizabeth Clark, a student in the Cedar Rapids High School. The daughter, Esther, Mrs. Claude Culley, is the mother of two sons, Homer E. Culley, and Robert I. Culley, both students in the high school at Le Mars, Iowa. Dr. Clem Seerley is the father of two daughters, Marjorie and Phyllis. Marjorie is attending college in Seattle, Washington, and Phyllis is a student in the high school at Bozeman, Montana.

## On To Chicago!

### Reunion and Banquet, Thursday, July 6th, At Lake Shore Athletic Club

Registration Desk and Courtesy Headquarters at Stevens Hotel All Week, July 1-7 During N. E. A.

See the Century of Progress Exposition and Meet Your Chicago Alumni Friends and Others From All Over the United States. The Most Pretentious Effort of Teachers College Alumni Reunions Ever Attempted.

The Chicago Area Alumni Unit invites you to the Reunion and Banquet at the Lake Shore Athletic Club in Chicago, Thursday, July 6.

All Iowa State Teachers College alumni, former students, faculty, and friends are urged to time their Chicago 1933 trip during July 1-7. Side attractions are the Century of Progress Exposition and the National Education Association!

#### Registration at Stevens Hotel

The Chicago Area Alumni Unit will maintain a registration desk in the main lobby of the Stevens Hotel July 1-7 and assist all out of town alumni to make plans to cover effectively the most interesting features of Chicago, the Century of Progress Exposition, and the National Education Association. These headquarters will be especially helpful in making appointments to meet friends.

The banquet is to be held at Lake Shore Athletic Club, near north side on the lake, Thursday evening, July 6. Everett Mitchell, of the National Broadcasting Company, will be master of ceremonies, and an array of talent from the same company will provide entertainment. There will be favors for everyone.

#### Get Tickets Early

Tickets will be \$1.50 each. It is almost imperative that reservations of tickets be accompanied by the money. However, the club will be generous in providing for late comers. It will be of great assistance to make reservations early. The Chicago alumni deserve the fullest cooperation and need your heartiest support in carrying out these auspicious plans.

### Fifty-Seventh Annual Commencement Program of Exercises

May 21—May 29, 1933

SUNDAY, MAY 21

7:00-10:00 P. M.—President's Reception for Graduates, Alumni, and Faculty—President's home.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

3:15 P. M.—Baseball Game, Luther.

7:30 P. M.—Band Concert, College Band—Library Steps.

THURSDAY, May 25

8:15 P. M.—Commencement Play—College Auditorium.

FRIDAY, MAY 26

8:15 P. M.—Commencement Play—College Auditorium.

SATURDAY, MAY 27

5:00 P. M.—Commencement Dinner for Graduates, Alumni, and Faculty—Women's Gymnasium.

8:30 P. M.—Commencement Party for Graduates, Alumni, and Faculty—Men's Gymnasium.

SUNDAY, MAY 28

10:30 A. M.—Baccalaureate Services, Speaker, Dr. Charles H. Judd, Chicago University—College Auditorium.

12:30 Noon—Dinner Reunion for Class of 1908.

5:30 P. M.—Alumni Tea.

MONDAY, MAY 29

9:00 A. M.—Academic Procession.

9:30 A. M.—Commencement Exercises, Speaker, Dr. Charles H. Judd, Chicago University—Men's Gymnasium.

### The Minneapolis Reunion

The Twin-Cities Alumni Unit arranged a reunion and dinner Tuesday night, February 28, which was an outstanding success. Bruce Francis, as chairman of the local unit and his able committee, attended to all the details and graciously acted as hosts in the beautiful lobby and assembly hall of the Y. W. C. A.

One hundred and twenty persons were present, and half of this number were from outside the Twin-Cities.

### Play Production Conference

Alumni, teachers, and students interested in the drama are invited to attend the Annual Conference on Play Production to be held at the College, Saturday, April 22. Guests will register at the College in Room 103 in the Auditorium Building beginning at 9:30 A. M.

# Alumni Calendar of Events

- Annual Drama Conference . . . . . April 22
- Mother's Day Celebration . . . . . May 12, 13, 14
- Commencement Week . . . . . May 21-29
- Commencement Play . . . . . May 25, 26
- Commencement Dinner for Graduates,  
    Alumni, and Faculty Members,  
    5:00 p. m., Saturday . . . . . May 27
- Commencement Party for Graduates,  
    Alumni, and Faculty Members,  
    8:30 p. m., Saturday . . . . . May 27
- Baccalaureate Sunday . . . . . May 28
- Dinner for Class of 1908, 12:30 p. m.,  
    Sunday . . . . . May 28
- Alumni Tea, 5:30 p. m., Sunday . . . . . May 28
- Commencement Exercises, 9:30 a. m.,  
    Monday . . . . . May 29
- Summer Term Registration . . . . . June 5
- Century of Progress Reunion  
    Banquet (At Chicago) . . . . . July 6

