

## W. W. Chapman, Delegate to Congress From Iowa Territory

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ISSN 0003-4827

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### Recommended Citation

Colton, Kenneth E. "W. W. Chapman, Delegate to Congress From Iowa Territory." *The Annals of Iowa* 21 (1938), 283-296.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.6004>

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W. W. CHAPMAN, DELEGATE TO CONGRESS FROM  
IOWA TERRITORY

BY KENNETH E. COLTON

Destined by her geographic position to be but a temporary "far western" frontier, it was inevitable that of the men who made Iowa's early history, some remained to carve permanent careers in the state, while others followed the ever advancing frontier westward. Among those whose contributions represented but a portion of a busy lifetime was William Williams Chapman, first Delegate to Congress from Iowa Territory. With the wandering restlessness of the pioneer, Chapman, who spent but twelve years within the borders of Iowa, lived the major portion of his eighty-four years on the successive frontiers of Virginia, Iowa, and Oregon.

Born in the mountains of Virginia at Clarksburg, now West Virginia, on August 11, 1808, of parents of not more than moderate means, this tall spare-framed man of muscular build had the strengths of the frontier, but the limitations of those strengths as well. Dominated by an aggressive ambition coupled with an impulsive nature that little waited on reflection or considerations of logic, Chapman's public life frequently displayed an over anxiety to testify of his willingness to serve the interests of the settlers. His ambition and his ready understanding of the pioneer's problems enabled him to serve the settlers in the Iowa District under three successive territorial governments, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa, yet by 1840 he was in political retirement, a scant five and a half years after he first entered Iowa in March, 1835.

As is true of all men, Chapman's life was largely conditioned by his early environment. The death of his father when he was fourteen left him dependent upon his mother and his brother for the common school education he received in Virginia. Shortly after the completion of that education he obtained work in the law office of Chancellor Henry St. George Tucker, an eminent barrister of the Virginia courts. There

he "read law" evenings, his room often being kept warm and lighted by the thoughtful kindliness of the wife of the Clerk of the Court. After receiving a license to practice law in 1831, he immediately removed to Middletown, now Middlebourne, West Virginia. In the following year he was married to Margaret F. Inghram, daughter of Arthur Inghram, a well to do farmer and former legislator of the Dominion State, who a few years later was to serve in the first territorial assemblies of both Wisconsin and Iowa. It is probable that Inghram accompanied Chapman and his wife when they migrated to Monmouth, Illinois, in the fall of 1834. Quite likely it was Chapman who persuaded his father-in-law to hazard his fortunes in the west. Before they had hardly settled in Illinois, however, the families crossed the Mississippi in March of the following year, 1835, to establish homes in Burlington, then still under the jurisdiction of Michigan Territory. With this transfer began five and a half years of active, and at first successful, political activity on the part of W. W. Chapman, then twenty-seven years old.<sup>1</sup>

It speaks well for Chapman's ability and initiative that at the first court held in Des Moines County, April 13, 1835,<sup>2</sup> he was "appointed by the County Court of Desmoine County to prosecute in the name of the United States in the said court," duties which Chapman quickly entered upon.<sup>3</sup> Whether such a court had power to appoint a United States official is questionable, equally questionable is Chapman's accurate description of his office, for it appears to have been a local county jurisdiction only. Contemporaries of Chapman in later years spoke of his appointment as prosecuting attorney in the fall of 1835 by the acting governor of Michigan Territory, John S. Horner. It seems, however, that they confused the date of his appointment as District Attorney for Des Moines, Dubuque, and Iowa (Wisconsin) counties, on April 1, 1836, with the date of the resignation of his predecessor, Thomas Bur-

<sup>1</sup>T. S. Parvin in the *Iowa Historical Record*, II, 244 ff; *The (Portland) Oregonian*, dispatch of Oct. 19, in the *Iowa State Register*, October 26, 1892.

<sup>2</sup>*Burlington City Directory*, 1868, pp. 22-23. The resident lawyers attending that first court, in addition to Chapman, were Isaac Lefler, Joseph B. Teas, Robert Williams, "and an elderly man from Canton, Illinois."—William Ross, quoted in the *Semi-Centennial of Iowa . . . Burlington*, 1883, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>*Documentary Material Relating to the History of Iowa*, edited by B. F. Shambaugh (Iowa City, Iowa, 1897-1901), III, 279, 280.

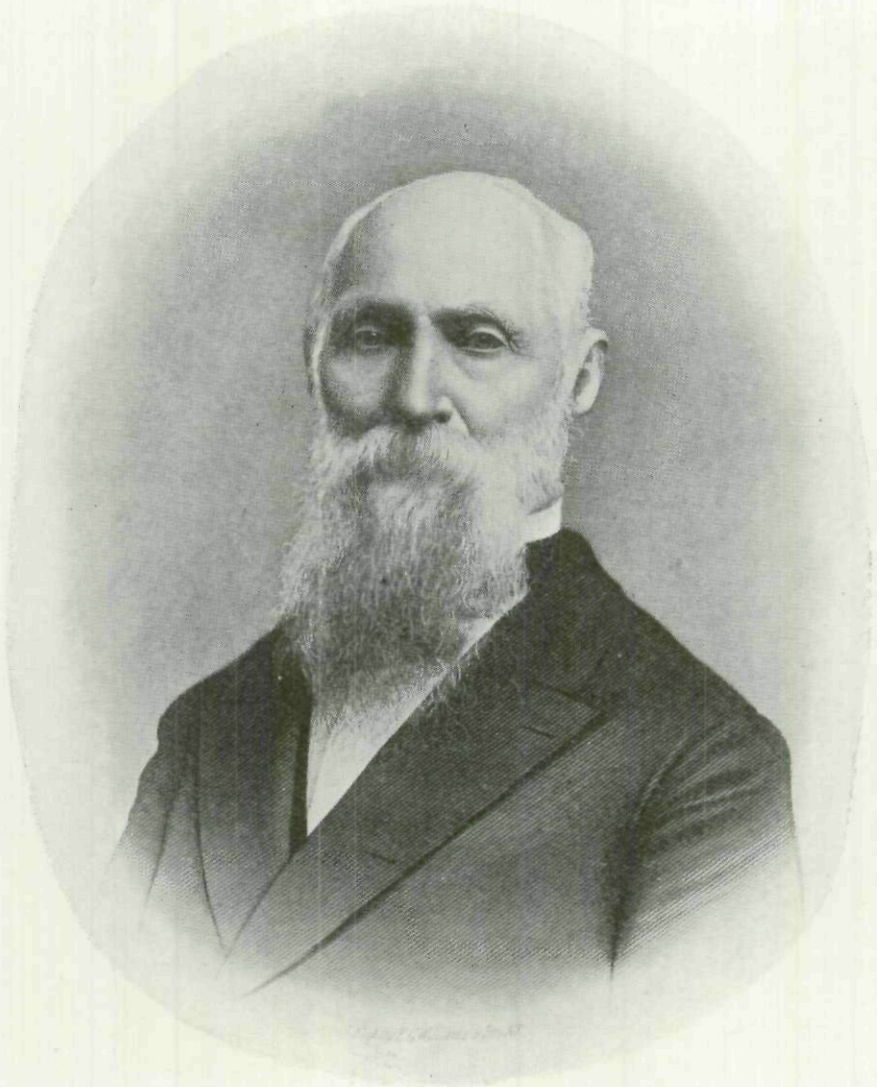
nett, October 5, 1835.<sup>4</sup> Chapman's first public position in Iowa was that of a "county attorney," his second, the one to which he was appointed in April, was that of a "district attorney." Even though it is assumed that the unpopular Horner was not on the best of terms with men of legal training in the mining regions east of the Mississippi, Chapman's appointment to the larger jurisdiction indicates some legal talent, regardless.

Evidence that Chapman was winning a place in the good opinions of the settlers in the vicinity of Burlington is found in the petition sent to Delegate George W. Jones signed by sixty-eight "Citizens of Desmoines in the Territory of Wisconsin (Michigan)," drawn up as a result of a meeting held on March 15, 1836, at Jones' suggestion, to recommend men for future appointments in the territory to be created. In urging the appointment of Chapman as "attorney general" of Wisconsin Territory, the petitioners declared that Chapman "has been an early Settler among us, we esteem him highly as a neighbor and as a man of private worth, in his political opinions he is the Strong friend of the Constitution and of the measures of the administration, and has been a practicing lawyer for the last ten years [sic] part of the time prosecutor for this County in which Character he has given general Satisfaction. He is now we consider a very safe and good Lawyer; and to our knowledge a man of untiring industry, in short we think the time not remote when he must Stand high in his profession." Isaac Lefler, who was recommended for a territorial judgeship at the same meeting, wrote of Chapman in much the same vein a day later. The striking feature of both recommendations is their curious moderation.<sup>5</sup>

These recommendations, however, did not introduce a total stranger to George W. Jones, for on the 26th of January, 1836, in a letter that indicated previous correspondence; Chapman wrote to assure Jones that duplicate copies of the lost certificates of the 1835 election in Des Moines County were being forwarded to the Governor of Michigan Territory post-

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270; *Historical Record*, *loc. cit.*; W. W. Chapman to G. W. Jones, April 7, 1836, *Correspondence of George Wallace Jones*, MSS. Historical, Memorial and Art Dept. of Iowa.

<sup>5</sup>*Correspondence of George Wallace Jones*, March 15, 16, 1836.



W. W. CHAPMAN

FIRST DELEGATE TO CONGRESS FROM IOWA TERRITORY

Picture shows Chapman at the time of his residence in Oregon, about  
thirty years after his service in Congress, 1838-40.

haste. Further confirmation of Chapman's rising eminence in his community is given in his own letter of March 17th, thanking Jones for his frequent letters and papers, and assuring the delegate that he esteems it a great favor to "receive . . . such marked attention."

To Chapman and to others living in the then "far west," one of the most important questions left unsolved by the congressional act of April 20th, 1836, establishing Wisconsin Territory, was the location of the seat of government. Both sides of the river feared that their interests would be prejudiced if the offices of government were not located on their side of the Mississippi. Not only actual towns competed for the honor, but paper towns as well. In the end the combination of Doty's warm buffalo robes, his judicious distribution of choice land sites among the legislators, together with the offer to the southern delegates from the Iowa District of the location of the temporary capitol at Burlington, brought defeat to Dubuque and victory to Doty's as yet uninhabited town of Madison.<sup>7</sup>

Dubuque's hopes had not been ill founded. When Michigan Territory set up a state government in 1835 which the federal government failed to recognize, the district west of Lake Michigan was left in an anomalous position of still bearing the name of a territory which the "state" tacitly assumed no longer existed. In seeking a seat of government for this new Michigan Territory, Dubuque had been seriously considered. With the passage of the Wisconsin Act in April, 1836, Chapman determined on removing to Dubuque, obviously with the expectation that it would be selected as the seat of government.<sup>8</sup> He arrived in that mining city sometime in June,<sup>9</sup> in time to add to the jubilant Fourth of July celebration commemorating the birth of the nation and of Wisconsin Territory the voluntary toast, "Des Moines and Du Buque Counties—They will locate the Seat of Government!"

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Annals of Iowa*, 1st Series, January, 1871, p. 452; see also J. Shafer, *The Wisconsin Lead Region* (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1932), pp. 57-73

<sup>8</sup>*Correspondence of G. W. Jones*, April 7, 1836. For an interesting account of Michigan's troubles in being both in and out of the Union, see L. T. Hemans, *Life and Times of Stevens Thomson Mason, the Boy Governor of Michigan* (Lansing, Mich., 1920), pp. 88 ff.

<sup>9</sup>Goodspeed, *History of Dubuque County* (Chicago, n.d.), p. 448.

A toast that suggests both his reason for moving to Dubuque and also the direct bluntness of his political technique.<sup>10</sup>

Aided by the prominence of his official position as U. S. Attorney for the territory, and abetted by his characteristic aggressiveness, Chapman soon established himself as one of the leading figures of Dubuque. Five days after his first pretentious advertisement soliciting private practice which appeared in the *Du Buque Visitor* September 14th, Chapman's future law partner and the future governor of Iowa, Stephen Hempstead, addressed a letter to Delegate Jones, urging on him Chapman's claims for consideration to a place on the territorial supreme court, in event Frazier either resigned or was removed.<sup>11</sup> In the warmest estimate by a contemporary of which we have record, Hempstead said that Chapman's

"legal requirements and practical knowledge should make him worthy of the Bench, worthy of the people and worthy of your influence and exertions . . . . I have for some time past been acquainted with this individual, have seen him employed in very important cases, and believe that as a Lawyer, few in this Western Country could surpass him, he has lived in this Territory and become the master of her laws, and the practice of her Courts: and what is still more worthy of his character is that he has embarked his talents, and his fortune in the cause of this Country, and will devote the remainder of his life, in the advancement of her best interests and prosperity . . . .

"We have already seen the effects of appointing Strangers to important offices in our Territorial Government. Look at Frazier! . . . . The people of this Country would pause ere they enter the Temple of Justice to receive Judgment from such a man perhaps on their lives . . . . In my humble opinion the appointment of Chapman would give great and almost universal satisfaction on this side of the River and I believe we would then have a judge who would do us justice and who at least would not let his prejudices control his judgment and reason.

" . . . Chapman could get strongly recommended on this side of the river if you should think it proper to recommend him to the President and support his nomination Be assured you will not be mistaken in Chapman he is a western man and will please the people of this country, he is generous and warm hearted and will be loved and respected. . . ."

That Chapman was generally popular with the citizens of Dubuque was demonstrated at the first political party conven-

<sup>10</sup>*Du Buque Visitor*, July 13, 1836.

<sup>11</sup>*Correspondence of G. W. Jones*, September 19, 1836.

tion in Dubuque County, when "on motion W. W. Chapman, Esq., was called to the chair" of "a meeting of the democratic citizens of Du Buque County convened agreeable to public notice at the mouth of Bee Branch, on the 26th instant [September, 1836]." This convention was organized to forestall a "non-partisan" convention the whigs hoped to put over October 1st. Again, at the general election held October 10, 1836, Chapman was easily declared the winner in the election of the Colonel of the 4th regiment of the Wisconsin Militia. Appointed by Governor Dodge and confirmed the same day, December 1st, Chapman took his oath before Justice of the Peace Warner Lewis on the 30th of that month. He continued to hold his commission until the fall of the next year, when a change of residence compelled him to relinquish it.<sup>12</sup>

While there is some doubt as to the exact date Chapman received his appointment as United States Attorney for Wisconsin Territory, it is certain that it was not as late as one writer would place it, sometime in 1837.<sup>13</sup> It is definitely established that he was actively engaged in his official duties at Burlington the early part of November, 1836, and it is probable that he had entered upon them long before.<sup>14</sup> In view of the prompt appointments made to all the other federal offices in Wisconsin Territory, there is little reason to assume an undue delay in the appointment of the U. S. Attorney; the plums of federal and territorial appointments were too scarce and valuable not to have been apportioned at the earliest possible date by the Jackson party, whose creed was that the deserving should be rewarded. The probabilities are that Chapman knew of his appointment when he moved to Dubuque, and that when he offered his toast at the Fourth of July celebration in Dubuque, he was already United States Attorney for Wisconsin Territory.

His official duties as U. S. Attorney, however, apparently did not take too much of his time, for in the middle of December he embarked upon a brief career in journalism with the

<sup>12</sup>*Du Buque Visitor*, September 28, and October 12, 1836; *Iowa State Register*, October 26, 1892; Shambaugh, *Documents*, p. 311.

<sup>13</sup>*Palimpsest*, XVII, 127-128.

<sup>14</sup>*Du Buque Visitor*, December 7, 1836.



purchase of the *Du Buque Visitor*, the first newspaper published in Iowa. Beginning with the next issue following that of December 21st, Chapman's brief career was concluded by February 9, 1837, with the sale of his interests to William H. Turner, who in turn sold the paper to W. Coriell, who assumed control May 24th. After a period of suspension the paper was rechristened the *Iowa News* and was first published by Coriell, King, and Russell June 3, 1837.<sup>15</sup>

Some have claimed that Chapman did not keep the pledge he made in the *Visitor* December 21st, to maintain a non-partisan paper and to keep it free from all that "savors of defamation and scurrillity," but instead made it an open and avowed Jacksonian democratic organ. His reward for his assumed unbridled attacks on the administration's critics, it is claimed, was his appointment as United States Attorney for Wisconsin Territory.<sup>16</sup> This, of course, could not have been true. It is true that his editorial on January 4, 1837, warmly eulogized Jackson's annual message; however, when Chapman's sympathies were those of the squatter settlers and opposed to the land policies of Clay, Webster, and Ewing, to have done otherwise would have made him untrue to himself and would have left him almost alone among the settlers at the Du Buque Mines. A more just appraisal of his six weeks career in journalism would suggest that his political views were no more pronounced than those of his fellow editors in Wisconsin and those soon to be in Iowa. Six weeks is too short a time in which to establish the value of one's political services, and six issues hardly time in which to establish a policy.

Whether Chapman quickly realized that the newspaper field was not for him, as a reading of his often ungrammatical and poorly organized letters might suggest, or whether he had already planned on a law partnership with Stephen Hempstead, his career as editor was brief. On the 17th of February the *Visitor* carried the first notices of the partnership of Chapman and Hempstead. The partnership was continued until at least August 12th, when the last notice of the firm appears in the Dubuque paper.

<sup>15</sup>*Correspondence of G. W. Jones*, February 9, 1837; *Du Buque Visitor*, February 8, May 17, 1837; *Iowa News*, June 3, 1837.

<sup>16</sup>Falimpset, *loc. cit.*

With the final defeat in the winter of 1836-1837 of every effort to upset the legislative enactment which located the government of Wisconsin Territory first at Burlington, then, for its permanent location, at Madison, Chapman's original reason for settling at Dubuque vanished. Whether it was for convenience or necessity, by the first of September, 1837, he had resumed his residence at Burlington, locating on a farm near the city where he continued to transact his official business and pursue his law practice.<sup>17</sup>

Chapman's predilection for forcing himself to the fore may be seen in the prominent part he took in the meeting held at Burlington on September 16th, 1837, from which issued the call for a Territorial Convention to be held in Burlington on November 6th, to determine on the steps best calculated to promote the separation of the Iowa District from Wisconsin Territory. Chapman, however, was not a delegate to the later convention that assembled in November.<sup>18</sup>

During the winter of 1837-1838 Chapman entered into a law partnership with James W. Grimes, then a youth of 21, fresh from Dartmouth College. At this later date it seems as though the honor was Chapman's, but in 1837 it was doubtless Grimes', for Chapman was a recognized man of standing in the community. The partnership continued until Chapman's election to Congress, when the firm of Chapman and Grimes gave way to Grimes and Starr.<sup>19</sup>

On the 14th of December, 1837, the Committee on Territories in the House of Representatives was asked "to inquire into the expediency of establishing a separate" territorial government for Iowa. Knowledge of this action and of the favorable report of that committee filed on February 6, 1838,<sup>20</sup> started the political fires burning in the Iowa District. If stimulus was needed, 1838 was also an election year. Among others in whom this intelligence raised hopes of political preferment was W. W. Chapman. Either pushed by his ambition or else deceived by his lack of political foresight, Chapman announced

<sup>17</sup>T. S. Parvin in *Pioneer Lawmakers Association of Iowa, Reunion of 1892*, p. 139.

<sup>18</sup>*Iowa News*, September 30, 1837.

<sup>19</sup>William Salter, *The Life of James W. Grimes, Governor of Iowa . . .* (New York, 1876), p. 13; *Historical Record*, II, 256.

<sup>20</sup>*Iowa News* April 14 1838.

his candidacy for delegate to Congress in the *Burlington Gazette* as early as February 24, 1838.<sup>21</sup>

The writer believes that the timing of this early announcement was a major blunder on the part of Chapman, and contributed much towards his 'retirement' in 1840 by alienating many of the leading men of the territory, who almost without exception were friends of George W. Jones. The prospect of a new territory also presented Jones with a dilemma; he hoped for, and expected to the last, the appointment as the first governor of Iowa, yet his caution insisted that he keep the road clear for his re-election as Delegate to Congress.<sup>22</sup> As the weeks and months rolled along towards summer and still no word from Jones, his supporters in Wisconsin and Iowa became still more restless and anxious. By his early announcement, made without consulting either Jones or his friends, Chapman drew upon himself their bitter hostility, no light thing when one counts the number of the friends of Jones in positions of influence. Furthermore, prior to the appointment of the new territorial officials and Jones' belated announcement, the openly announced candidates for Congress were all reputed to be hostile to the Dodge-Jones faction of Wisconsin and Iowa. If Chapman's ambition did not aspire to a contest with Jones, then the conflict and alienation of friendly relations with men of the stamp of James Clarke was entirely needless, for even though Chapman was *thought* to be interested in the Iowa District only, it was not until definite news of the eventual passage of the Iowa bill had reached the west that he clearly announced his intention to seek election from Iowa Territory.<sup>23</sup> Jones finally made his unsuccessful canvass in Wisconsin. Although Chapman was successful in 1838, two years later he had lost even the support of the mass of settlers. It is not too much to assume that his lack of political contacts with leaders in the territory does much to explain that loss.

Not only because he was the first in the field, but also because his premature announcement made him appear ungrateful to Jones for the help the latter had given him in securing

<sup>21</sup>*Correspondence of G. W. Jones*, February 24, 1838.

<sup>22</sup>*Correspondence of George W. Jones*, March-July, 1838.

<sup>23</sup>*Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, VII, 243.

his federal appointment, Chapman received the brunt of the early attacks of Jones' friends. They freely predicted his utter rout. W. H. Turner, Chapman's successor as editor of the *Du Buque Visitor*, believed that

"If he [Chapman] does not stand higher with the people in the Southern part of the territory than in this quarter, the chances are ten to one against him. At any rate, his election will be opposed by thousands on two distinct grounds: first it is not believed that he is friendly to the present administration, and second he is not supposed to be conversant with political affairs, which never appeared to have any charms for him."<sup>24</sup>

The *Iowa News* on March 31st, 1838, lashed out at him with the following announcement:

Awake Snakes—The last *Burlington Gazette* announces Col. W. W. Chapman as a candidate for delegate to Congress at the next August election.

Whether this uncomplimentary announcement is traceable to difficulties arising out of the sale of the paper, or resentment of his official acts, or to his 'desertion' of Dubuque in returning to Burlington, can only be guessed.

Stimulated by the congressional enactment and by a democratic convention held in May, in Brown County, Wisconsin, several new candidates entered the lists on the Iowa side. James Davis announced his candidacy June 27th, and Peter Hill Engle "the same day."<sup>25</sup> Prior to this, a convention of citizens in the northern counties had nominated Thomas S. Wilson of Dubuque, but this potentially formidable candidate withdrew upon receipt of word that he had been appointed to the territorial supreme court.<sup>26</sup> Early in the summer the editor of the *Burlington Gazette*, Cyrus Jacobs, an Engle supporter, attempted to persuade the territory to convene in a caucus to select the nominee or nominees. The idea was completely ignored, and the editor had to confine himself to a slashing attack on Chapman and Rorer, to which he probably owed the loss of his life.<sup>27</sup> Thus, by August, when Davis had withdrawn from the race, and Thomas Burnett had decided

<sup>24</sup>Correspondence of G. W. Jones, March 21, 1838, *et passim*.

<sup>25</sup>*Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, VI, 10.

<sup>26</sup>*Annals of Iowa*, 3rd Series, X, 440.

<sup>27</sup>E. H. Stiles, *Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa . . .* (Des Moines, 1916), p. 278.

to confine his campaign to Wisconsin, the field was reduced to four major candidates: Engle from Dubuque, B. F. Wallace from Lee County, and David Rorer and Chapman from Burlington.

The campaign was a vigorous one, the contest being carried into both portions of the territory. Although frequently meeting on the same platform, the four major candidates likewise carried their canvass individually into doubtful districts. On the whole, T. S. Parvin observed, "no national topics or political views were introduced, the discussion we well remember partook of matters relating to the territory, its wants and needs."<sup>28</sup> This did not prevent a local variant of a national issue from being introduced, however, for the sharp tongued Rorer reported that Engle had injected the sectional question into the campaign. This referred not to slavery, but to the jealousy towards Dubuque by the members from Des Moines County in the first Wisconsin legislature which defeated Dubuque's hopes for locating the seat of government. Although there seems to have been some justice in Engle's charge, the results of his poll in the southern counties raises the question of his political judgment.<sup>29</sup>

Buttressed by the prominence of his official position, Chapman's campaign was built around three simple 'planks,' pre-emption, the extinguishment of the remaining Indian title in the territory, and the development of inland navigation on the smaller streams.<sup>30</sup> These points he hammered home on every occasion with a prepared set speech from which he is said to have seldom varied. The speech was effective, but irritating to his opponents who had to hear it so frequently. At the final windup of the campaign in Davenport on the Saturday preceding the poll on Monday, September 10th, by arrangement with B. F. Wallace, Rorer in speaking first 'stole' Chapman's speech. Chapman countered by announcing Rorer's conversion to his own platform; Rorer, unrepentant, jumped

<sup>28</sup>Parvin, *Pioneer Lawmakers Association, 1892*, p. 140; *Historical Record*, II, 247.

<sup>29</sup>David Rorer to Laurel Summers, August 25, 1838, *Summers MSS.* Historical, Memorial and Art Dept. of Iowa. Engle received but 529 votes in the same six southern counties that gave Chapman 1079.

<sup>30</sup>Stiles, *loc. cit.*

up to declare that the speech he had just given was the worst he had ever delivered.<sup>31</sup>

The most surprising thing about the campaign was the result. No one expected Chapman to win, for Engle was admittedly the strong candidate, the man to beat. So general was the belief that Engle would win that when Chapman returned to his farm following the election he thought himself a beaten man. A rumor to the effect that Engle had drowned while crossing the Maquoketa River in the last days of the canvass obtained sufficient currency, however, to cause enough people to switch their votes from the "dead" candidate to give Chapman the election by a thirty-six vote margin. The final result was still uncertain for a long time, due to the slow returns from St. Peter's precinct, a Sioux Indian agency post located near Fort Snelling, Minnesota, then, however, attached to Clayton County. When Chapman was officially declared the winner, sometime in October, his trip to Washington was necessarily a hasty one. It was made by wagon first to St. Louis, then by stage and wagon to Frederick, Maryland, where he first met the western extension of the railroad, a far cry from the Centennial year, 1938.<sup>32</sup>

An untried man, Chapman faced formidable obstacles in his efforts to serve the 22,859 residents of Iowa Territory. Gone was the friendly support of Senators Linn and Benton of Missouri; in its place was their potent hostility, aroused by the beginnings of the Iowa-Missouri boundary line dispute. Gone too was the skilled technique of the suave George W. Jones; in its place were the only tactics known to Chapman, the blunt, bristling, smashing tactics of the frontiersman. Although in actual results the record is quite barren, the services of Chapman to the territory as Congressman have been too generally underestimated considering the odds he faced. This was due primarily to his short residence in Iowa and the general hostility of the leaders of youthful Iowa toward him.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.; *Historical Record*, II, 247.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 247-249.

## ORGANIZING THE TERRITORIAL COURTS

I, Charles Mason, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and well and faithfully execute the trust committed to me, as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Iowa.

Charles Mason

Sworn & Subscribed  
before me this 23'd  
of July A. D. 1838  
Wm. B. Conway  
Sec. of the Territory  
of Iowa.

Ottumwa Sept. 19. 1845

Mr Jas Hilton

Sir Enclosed you will receive an appointment as clerk of Kiskkekosh [Monroe] county. You are authorized to use the eagle side of an American half dollar as the seal of your court until further arrangements shall be made I should have made an appointment sooner but it has not yet been three weeks since I first saw the law organizing your county & authorizing me to make the appointment It will be impossible for me to hold a court in your county this fall. I shall endeavor to find time during the spring to visit you for that purpose

Yours truly  
Charles Mason

By virtue of the authority in me vested I hereby appoint James Hilton of the county of Kiskkekosh clerk of the District court of that county to hold his office from this date till the end of the first term of the District court in & for said county. Dated this 19th day of September A. D. 1845

Charles Mason  
Judge 1st Judicial District  
Iowa Territory

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Kiskkekosh County was set out February 17, 1843, organized on July 1, 1845, and re-named Monroe January 19, 1846.—Editor.

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