

The Election of Julia Addington

An Accidental Milestone in Iowa Politics



by Cheryl Mullenbach

Susan B. Anthony. Amelia Bloomer. Elizabeth Cady Stanton. All women widely recognized as notable figures in the women's suffrage movement in the United States.

Julia C. Addington?

A name not likely recognized in any circles today. But an Iowan known to Anthony, Bloomer, and Stanton for the role she unwittingly played in the suffrage cause in 1869. And an educator who helped advance the right of women in Iowa to hold office.

A clue to Addington's legacy appears in a small, 55-page book preserved in the State Historical Society of Iowa library. *The Women's Columbian Souvenir of Mitchell County, Iowa, 1492-1893* tenders a glimpse of her and her place in history. The women of the Mitchell County World's Fair Association published the souvenir book as their contribution to the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In their words, the book was an attempt to render an "account of the public activity of the ladies of the county in their various societies." Almost as an afterthought in a section titled "Additional Items," the women noted the following: "Julia C. Addington of Stacyville, Iowa, was the first woman elected to an office in the United States. In 1869, she was

elected Superintendent of Schools in Mitchell county and served during 1870 and 1871 so acceptably, that she was called to fill the office again—ill health alone preventing her doing so."

First woman elected to an office in the United States?

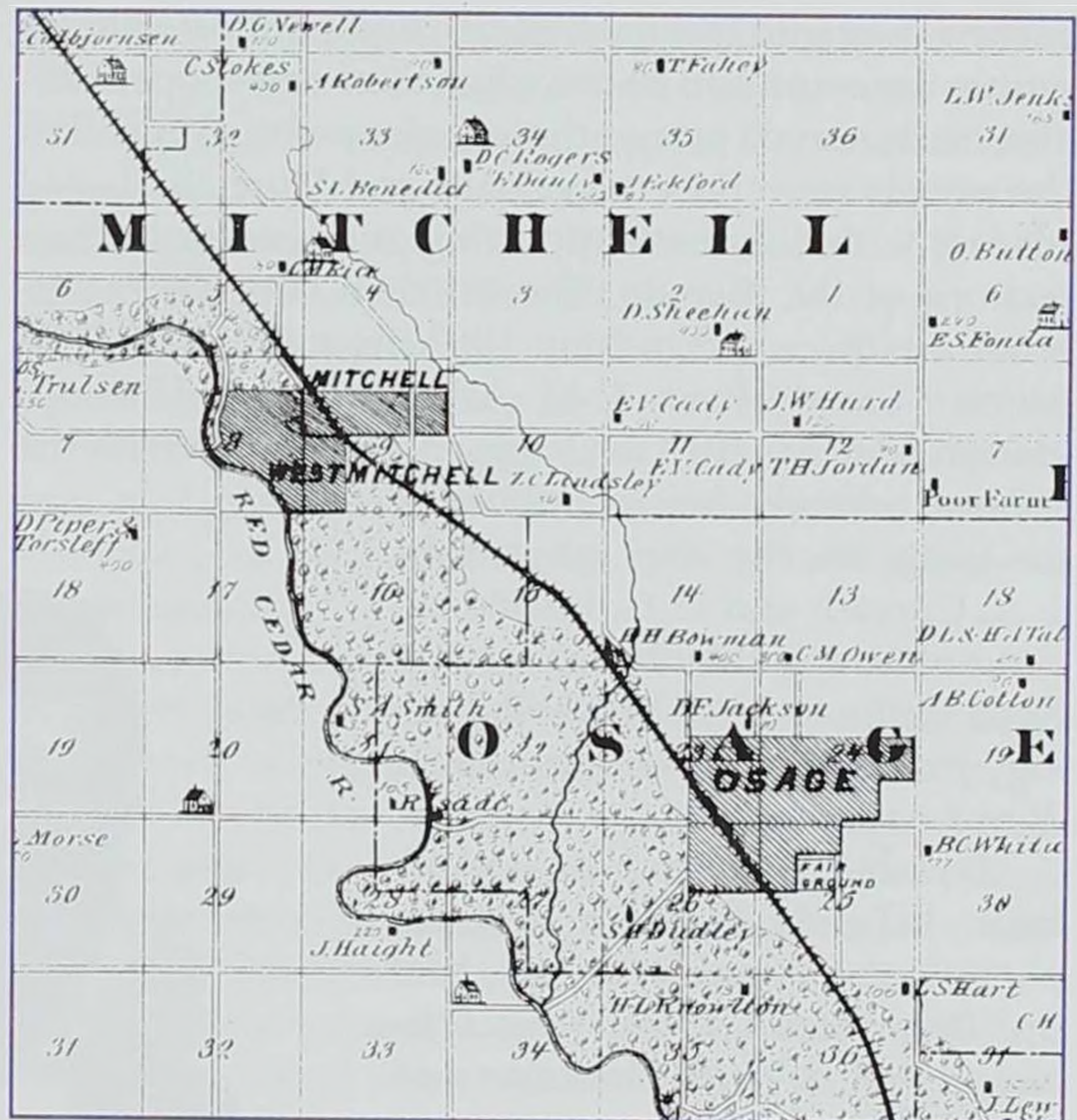
The statement is a questionable one. Nor does it begin to recount the events that swirled around the Mitchell County election of Addington in 1869.

Women were still decades away from winning the right to vote in national, state, or local elections. Although Iowans amended the state constitution in 1868 to grant black males the vote by striking out the word "white," the amendment didn't include women of any color. Certainly, the women's suffrage movement was under way—the first national women's rights convention had been held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. In 1868 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony launched their women's rights newspaper, *The Revolution*, in New York City. The next year, the first women's suffrage association in Iowa was formed at Dubuque,

soon followed by others in the state. So the election of Julia Addington to a public office in the fall of 1869 was certainly a milestone—even if it was the result of a rift in the Republican Party of Mitchell County and a war between two competing newspapers. Whether the participants paid any attention to their somewhat accidental role in women's suffrage history is questionable.

Central to the 1869 election in Mitchell County was the long-standing feud over the location of the county seat. Two rival towns five miles apart—Osage and Mitchell—fought for the coveted title. County seat status brought certain advantages to the victor. As residents from all over the county traveled to town for business at the courthouse, they inevitably spent time at the local businesses—thereby making the county seat a hub of commercial and social activity. County seat designation could make or break a town. The struggle in Mitchell County erupted in 1855 when the town of Mitchell was named the county seat by commissioners appointed by the state legislature. A series of events including special elections, court injunctions, and appeals to higher courts over the years tossed the designation back and forth between Osage and Mitchell several times and finally resulted in the establishment of Osage as the county seat in the fall of 1870.

Throughout the intervening years the feud had



Five miles and bitter feelings separated the towns of Mitchell and Osage as they battled over which would become the county seat in the years up to 1870. Osage won, but bitterness continued and was manifested in local politics. (Map and view of Osage date to 1875.)

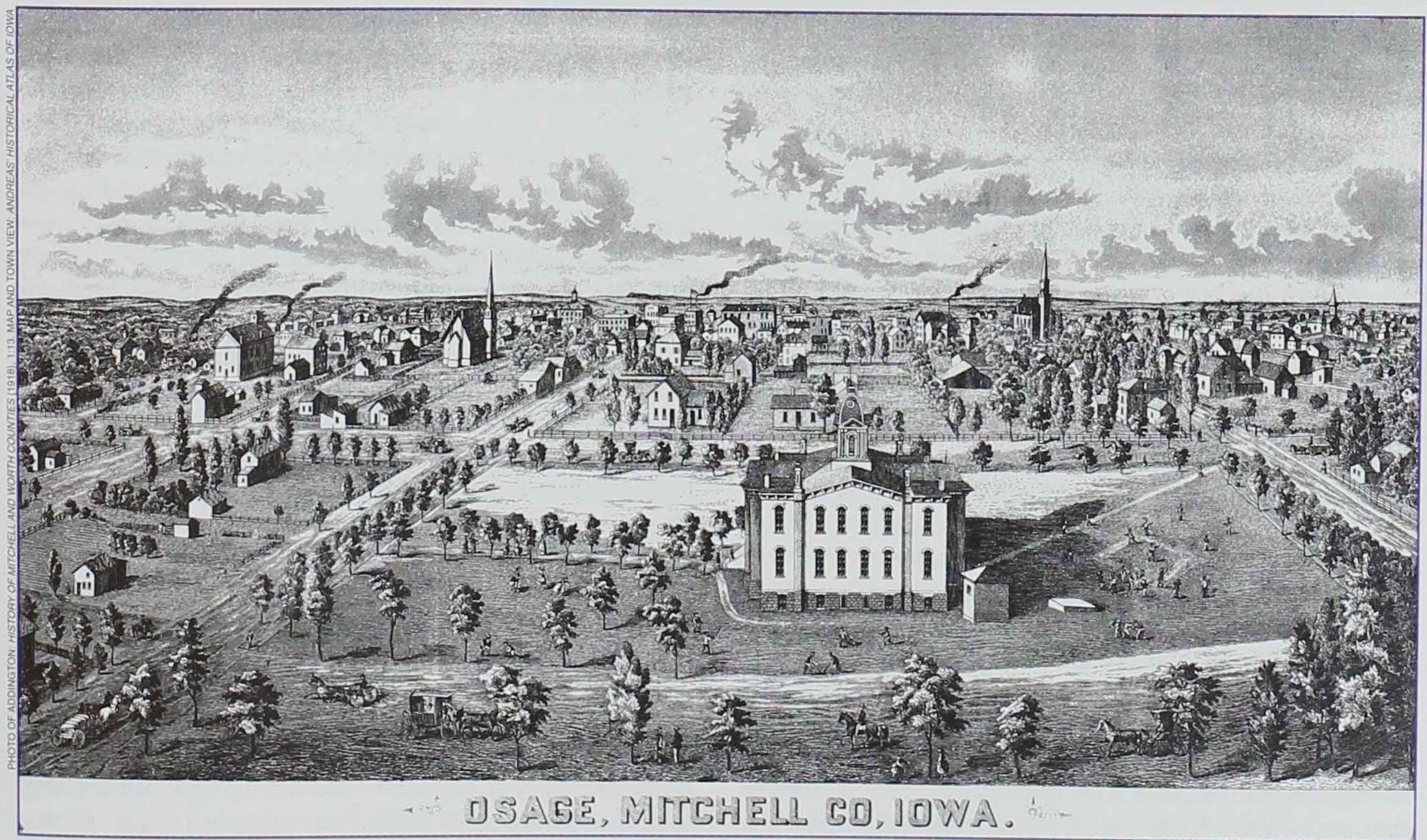


PHOTO OF ADDINGTON: HISTORY OF MITCHELL AND NORTH COUNTIES (1916); 1-13. MAP AND TOWN VIEW: ANDREAS' HISTORICAL ATLAS OF IOWA

carried over into business, social, and political spheres within the county. In an era when local newspapers unabashedly served as mouthpieces for political agendas, the weekly newspapers in Osage and Mitchell blasted readers with diatribes supporting or opposing the two factions of the dispute. The Mitchell supporters suffered a blow when in May 1869 the publisher of the *Mitchell County Press*, T. M. Atherton, moved his operation from Mitchell to Osage and combined with the *Tribune*, already being published in Osage. Shortly after, physicians S. A. Cravath and D. G. Frisbie began publishing the *Mitchell County News* in the town of Mitchell, having purchased Atherton's abandoned equipment.

It didn't take long for competition between the two newspapers—both Republican—to heat up. Publishers Cravath and Frisbie, as well as W. W. Blackman and A. S. Faville (prominent citizens of Mitchell), would frequently be the subjects of Atherton's journalistic vitriol, and vice versa. In one fracas, Frisbie and Cravath lashed out at the county treasurer for awarding publication of the county tax lists to their rival, the *Mitchell County Press*. Atherton, who as its publisher would be compensated well for printing the long columns of tax lists, vehemently defended the treasurer's actions and called upon fellow Republicans to join in his defense.

As the Republican county convention drew near, the bickering between the competing Republican editors was in full force, and Julia Addington would soon find herself in the midst of this wrangling. The business of the Republican county convention in Osage was to nominate a slate of candidates for county treasurer, sheriff, coroner, auditor, surveyor, and superintendent of schools. The state representative seat for the 56th District was also up for election that year. Because Mitchell County and Howard County were both in the 56th District, Mitchell County Republicans would vote by ballot for their choice for representative at their September 18 convention, and then join with Howard County Republicans on September 23 for the district convention in Riceville (located on the county line).

On September 18, W. W. Blackman, Mitchell physician and chair of the Republican Central Committee,

convened the county convention. Atherton and rival editor Cravath were both in attendance. Once the convention officers were elected and township credentials reported, the men recessed for nearly an hour before tackling the more important business.

When they reconvened, the Republicans couldn't settle on delegates so they moved on to choose the nominee for state representative. Blackman, Faville, and Atherton were among the half-dozen contenders.

After two ballots, Atherton was chosen by acclamation. He then selected 12 delegates to the Riceville district convention. None of the Mitchell men was among his group.

Atherton's *Mitchell County Press* described the convention as "harmonious and passed off with the best of feeling. It lacked the usual excitement attending such gatherings in this county." Atherton believed that the citizens of Mitchell County were tired of "the strife, turmoil, bitterness and enmity, aroused in the past" and would "frown down" attempts to "revive the local fights heretofore existing" in the county.

Atherton humbly informed his readers that he had been nominated for representative—emphasizing that he had not solicited the nomination—and assured them

that he had "no doubt" that his 12 delegates to the district convention, along with the Howard County delegates, would "ratify" him as the nominee. Furthermore, anticipating his win over the Democrat in the general election on October 12, he promised to "promote the best interests and welfare of the [56th] District" in Des Moines.

Atherton also assured his readers about the Republican nominee for county superintendent of schools. Osage lawyer Milton M. Browne, in Atherton's words, was "eminently qualified to well and truly fill that important position. . . . Having been a teacher for several years, he has had ample opportunities to become conversant with all the essential facts required to properly discharge the duties of that place."

Not all Republicans had found the convention so harmonious. In the following days, a splinter group from the town of Mitchell—including Cravath, Frisbie and Blackman—put forth their own selection of can-



HISTORY OF MITCHELL COUNTY (1883)

Editor and politician T. M. Atherton

didates. To oppose Atherton, the group chose A. S. Faville. To oppose Browne for county superintendent of schools, they nominated Julia Addington.

Six years earlier, Addington had moved from Wisconsin with her parents and siblings to Stacyville in northern Mitchell County, where they farmed. Her father, William H., Sr., was also an "agent" for the McCormick and J. I. Case farm machinery companies. (He was described as "an intimate acquaintance" of McCormick's and Case's.) He and his wife, Alvira, divorced around 1867. He moved to Missouri, and she remained in Stacyville with Julia and her other adult children.

By the time 40-year-old Julia Addington was chosen as the Mitchell faction's candidate for superintendent of schools, she owned land in and around Stacyville and had a successful teaching career—having taught in Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Des Moines and at the Cedar Valley Seminary, a private high school in Osage. In the fall of 1869 she was already serving as the county superintendent, having been appointed to complete the unfinished term of the previous male superintendent, Rev. Alva Bush.

Incensed by the actions of Cravath, Frisbie, Blackman, and Faville, Atherton labeled them "renegades" and "bolters." "No efforts will be too desperate for the bolters to secure their ends," he proclaimed on the pages of his *Mitchell County Press*.

On September 23, the Mitchell and Howard county delegates met at the Riceville schoolhouse. Atherton was "by acclamation, declared to be the unanimous choice of the convention as candidate for the office of Representative to the State Legislature." However, five of the seven Howard County delegates, under the impression that Atherton was *not* the choice of Mitchell County, had refused to go into the convention.

A few days after the convention, Atherton and two fellow Republicans traveled to Riceville to meet with the five Howard County delegates, including I. A. Hoxie, the owner of the *Cresco Times*. They convinced the five that Atherton was indeed the choice of Mitchell County and left with promises of support from Howard County delegates. To dispel any lingering doubts, they invited the Howard County delegates to travel to Mitchell County to "see the people, as well as the delegates." Hoxie did just that and returned to Howard County "fully satisfied with the choice of Mr. Atherton."

In a letter published in Atherton's paper, J. L. Chase,

an Atherton delegate, described what happened next: "When the *Bolters* became aware that Howard county had decided to support the regular nomination, religious services were dispensed with, Sabbath School concerts postponed, and W. W. Blackman, A. S. Faville, A. Vanderpool and C. Sweatt, armed, as report says, with an old mortgage against the [Cresco] *Times* office, hurriedly left on Sunday for Howard county, where they arrived late at night, and early Monday morning, took possession of the *Times* office, and hoisted the name of A. S. Faville as 'stump' candidate for Representative."

As for the nomination of Julia Addington for county superintendent, a letter reportedly from Addington's hometown of Stacyville appeared in the same paper a week before the election: "Mr. Editor—I learn from the last issue of the Mitchell Co., *News*, that the people of Mitchell have become the earnest and zealous supporters of 'Women's Rights,' in as much as the *bolters* and *sore heads* of that place have originated a *Bolter's Ticket*, and placed in nomination, Miss J. C. Addington, of Stacyville, as a candidate for the office of County Superintendent.

"If the people of Mitchell intended this as a joke, it appears to me that they ought to have been more considerate, than to thus wound Miss Addington's feelings, by making her the subject of jest and ridicule throughout the entire county.—If they are in earnest in the matter, it seems to me that Miss Addington can consider it in no other light than a gross insult to her and her friends."

The letter writer cited three reasons to vote against Addington. "In the first place Miss Addington is ineligible, she could not hold the office if elected. The constitution, and the laws of this State expressly declare, that none but white male citizens of the United States, who have become residents of this State, shall be entitled to the right of suffrage, and to hold office in our State.

"In the second place, Mr. Browne, of Osage, the regular nominated, is better qualified by education and experience, to discharge the duties of the office. Mr. Browne is a graduate of one of the oldest Colleges in New England [Dartmouth], and is a thorough and finished scholar. He has been a practical teacher for several years. He taught the school at Stacyville for two winters, and [former county superintendent] Prof. Bush gave him the credit of teaching the best school in the county.

"In the third place, Mr. Browne is an Attorney, legal questions pertaining to school matters, are constantly arising, which must be decided by the Superintendent.

Trials and legal investigations will occasionally arise, in relation to the charge of district boundaries and other matters, and the Superintendent will have to act in a judicial capacity. How important then, that the Superintendent should have the necessary legal qualifications [to rule] intelligently upon matters that may be submitted to him, and to discharge the duties of the office, in a manner that shall be creditable to himself, and satisfactory to the people of the county.

"In conclusion, I would say to our Mitchell friends, that the good people of Stacyville do not feel very much flattered with the compliment which the people of Mitchell have seen fit to bestow upon them." The letter was signed, "Yours Truly, COMMON SENSE."

As the general election approached, Atherton again cautioned readers to beware of "a Bolters faction . . . backed only by the local interests of Mitchell, which have combined to secure the defeat of the regular nominated . . . county ticket." He warned voters to be alert on election day. "Spurious Tickets" with the bolters' names were already printed and were being circulated. "The bolters will make a desperate effort to elect their candidates on their mongrel Ticket." Voters were warned to "carefully examine" their ballots before depositing them in the ballot box to "see that every name is correct, and that they contain only the regular State and County ticket."

Meanwhile, over in Howard County, W. R. Mead, the editor of the Democratic *Iowa Plain Dealer* published in Cresco, reported a visit to his office by Atherton, "who we had supposed was the republican nominee for Representative from this district." But, he added, since his rival, the *Cresco Times*, "omits to make mention of the matter, perhaps our surmises are all fictions of the brain." He described Atherton and Faville as "two bats, instead of one, buzzing about the ear of power to regale themselves upon the insects that have fattened off the filth of opulence." Mead had reason to be amused by the split in the Republican Party in his district as he was the Democratic nominee.

The general election on October 12 delivered wins for most of the "regular" Republican ticket. Atherton headlined his coverage, "The Bolters Scooped!" and a "Glorious Victory for the Regular Ticket." However, he was a little premature in his report. He wasn't including the Howard County tally. When that total was added to the Mitchell County vote, Faville had defeated Atherton by 133 votes for the 56th District seat. The bolters' work seemed to have paid off in Howard County. Atherton came in last, even trailing the Democrat Mead.

Their work had also paid off in the election of county superintendent. Atherton's candidate Milton M. Browne had garnered 633 votes, but the bolters' candidate, Julia Addington, had also garnered 633 votes. Browne offered to let Addington assume the office. She declined. A solution was found in a "cast of lots." The winner was Addington.

In New York, suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony reported the outcome in their suffrage paper, *The Revolution*, in November and again in December: "Miss Addington is Superintendent of common schools in Mitchell County (Iowa). She was nominated by a convention in opposition to a Mr. Brown [sic]. When the vote was taken, lo! there was a tie. Mr. Brown offered to yield it through courtesy, but she said no; so they drew cuts and Miss A. was the victor."

Not willing to assume office in January under any clouds of uncertainty, on November 22 Addington wrote to the state superintendent of public instruction, A. S. Kissell:

"Sir—Having been elected to the office of county superintendent of common schools of Mitchell county, I am desirous of obtaining your opinion in regard to certain questions connected with the office before I shall assume its responsibilities, or attempt to perform its duties.

"1. Have I a legal right to hold the office, and could I collect pay for my services, in the performance of its duties?

"2. In the case of an appeal, would my decision be valid?

The Revolution.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, \$3 A YEAR.

NEW YORK CITY SUBSCRIPTIONS, \$3.20.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, Editor.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, Proprietor.

OFFICE. 49 EAST TWENTY-THIRD ST.

The national suffrage newspaper *The Revolution* published a notice of Addington's election.

"3. Do you think there would necessarily be any occasion for trouble to arise to the annoyance of myself, or the county?"

"The position is not one I should have chosen for myself, but since my friends have shown so much confidence in me and many of them are desirous that I should accept the office, I feel inclined to gratify them, if it be found there is nothing incompatible in my doing so."

Kissell consulted the state attorney general, Henry O'Connor, for his opinion on Addington's "first and second interrogatories." Kissell added, "I am personally acquainted with Miss A., and know her to be a successful teacher. If she can legally assume the duties of county Superintendent, the office would be filled with efficiency, and doubtless to the satisfaction of a large majority of the citizens of Mitchell County."

O'Connor issued his opinion within two days. "Rights and privileges of persons (citizens) are frequently extended, but never abridged by implication," he began. "The soundness and wisdom of this rule of construction is, I believe, universally conceded. Two clauses of the constitution only contain express provisions excluding women from the rights and privileges in said provisions named.

"Section 1, of article 1, as to the right of suffrage, and section 4, of article 3, which provides that members of the legislature must be *free white male citizens*. Free and white have lost their meaning, if the words in that use ever had any suitable or good meaning, but the word male still retains its full force and effect.

"If this express restriction exists in the constitution as to any other office it has escaped my notice. It is true that the words 'person' and 'citizen' frequently occur in other parts of the constitution in connection with eligibility and qualification for office, and I fully admit that by usage—'time honored usage,' if you will—these phrases have in common acceptation, been taken to mean men in the masculine gender only, and to exclude woman. But a recent decision in the court exchequer, England, holding that the generic term *man* included women also, indicates our progress from a crude barbarism to a better civilization.

"The office of county superintendent was created by chapter 52 of the acts of the seventh general assem-

bly, laws of 1868, pages 52-72. Neither in that act, nor in any subsequent legislation on the subject, have I been able to find any express provision making *male* citizenship a test of eligibility for the place, or excluding women; and when I look over the duties to be performed by that officer—as I have with some care, and, I trust, not without interest—I deem it exceedingly fortunate for the cause of education in Iowa that there is no provision in the law preventing women from holding the office of county superintendent of common schools.

"I know that the pronoun *he* is frequently used in different sections of the act, referring to the office; but, as stated above, this privilege of the citizen cannot be taken away or denied by intendment or implication; and women are citizens as well and as much as men.

"I need scarcely add, that, in my opinion, Miss Addington is eligible to the office to which she has been elected; that she will be entitled to her pay when she qualifies and discharges the duties of the office, and that her decisions on appeal, as well as all her official acts, will be legal and binding."

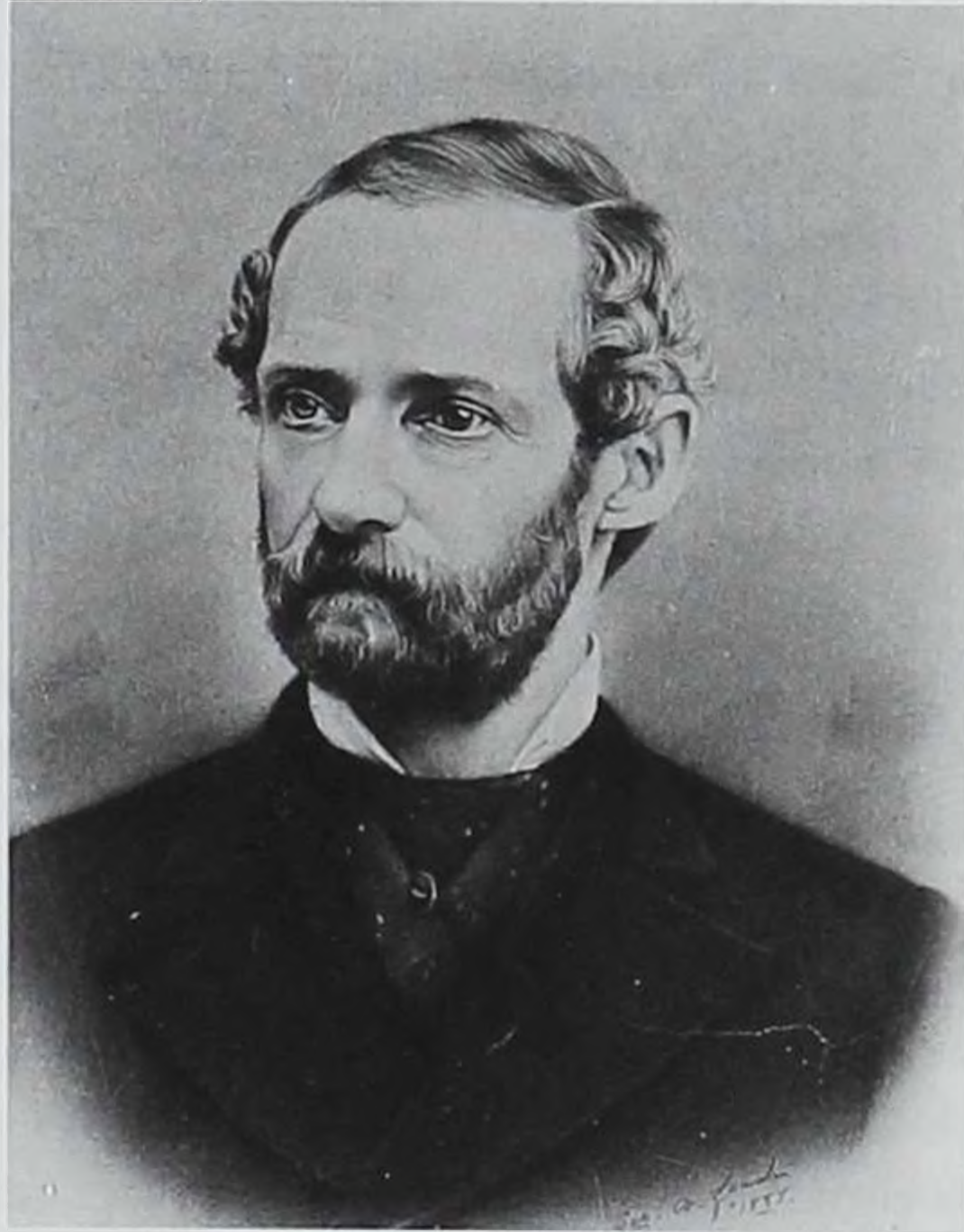
O'Connor concluded with an intriguing remark: "It is perhaps proper to state that an opinion on this question, substantially in agreement with the present one,

was sent from this office to a gentleman writing from Osage, in Mitchell county, several weeks ago, which, for some reason unknown to me, seems not to have been made public in the county."

O'Connor's final comment raises some interesting questions. Who was the "gentleman writing from Osage" who had already sought an opinion from O'Connor? And why had the mystery man not made O'Connor's opinion public when he received it "several weeks ago"? The answers to those questions have been lost to history.

On December 7, Superintendent Kissell wrote to Addington, apologizing for his delay and congratulating her on her election. "The Attorney General, who, we are glad to know, agrees with this Department in the opinion, that you can collect your salary, if you qualify for the office of county superintendent to which you were elected, as well as, that your opinions on cases of appeals will be valid in law."

SHSI (IOWA CITY)



Attorney General Henry O'Connor

He ended, "No better opportunity could be afforded you for elevating the schools, and the vocation which you have chosen, and in which you have labored for a number of years so successfully. Be assured, this Department will do all in its power to aid you in your efforts to advance the cause of education in your county."

Atherton published Addington's letter and O'Connor's opinion without comment. Two weeks into the new year, he also reprinted a long letter sent to the *Iowa State Register* by Osage's correspondent. It began this way: "Dear Register:—This letter comes to you from one of the best little towns in Iowa—a town that is an honor to be the first county in the State that ever elected a woman to office. Nobody here now can see any reason why Miss Julia C. Addington is less qualified to discharge the duties of County Superintendent of Schools *because* she is a woman, and indeed, we think that many who saw proper to cast their votes for her very worthy competitor, are now well enough satisfied with the result. Miss Addington is one of the most competent and successful teachers of Mitchell county, and about the first Monday in January next, will take her official place at the head of its public schools. From all we can hear we feel sure she will honor the position."

The news of O'Connor's ruling in Iowa was reported at the national level on December 30 when *The Revolution* ran this brief item, headlined, "Can Women Hold Office?" "Recently, the right of woman to hold office has been more directly declared in Iowa than in any other state, the Attorney-General having given an opinion in the case of a young woman elected Superintendent of Common Schools."

Addington assumed her duties in January. But resistance to her election surfaced at the state convention of county superintendents in Des Moines, as noted in the proceedings. When a severe March snowstorm prevented her from attending, most of her colleagues there issued a resolution of regret to their "worthy co-laborer" for her absence and with it a "cordial welcome to this field of labor." However, the "ungallant attitude of some members" was expressed when 5 out of 20 voted against the resolution.

As county superintendent, Addington oversaw 76 schools—including 3 log schoolhouses—with 2,231 students and 122 teachers scattered across the county. Male teachers earned \$8.57 per week. Female teachers earned \$5.63 per week (less than what a farm laborer

earned). The total school budget was roughly \$20,000.

The position of county superintendent was a two-year term and carried a variety of duties: testing applicants for teachers' certificates, issuing certificates to those who qualified, examining plans for new school buildings, holding meetings with the presidents of school districts, making an annual report to the state superintendent, visiting and inspecting each school in the county at least twice a year, and spending at least half a day in each visit. The most "agreeable" part of Addington's job, she reported, involved her visits to "nearly all the schools of the county—some of them as often as four or five times."

Under her leadership, 17 new schoolhouses were built and "a commendable spirit of liberality in regard to school accommodations is the rule in our county," she stated in 1872. "There is less frequent change of teachers than formerly," and teachers were better paid. She hoped that "the time is near at hand, when teachers will be paid according to the service they are capable of rendering." Her teachers were encouraged to read educational journals, and one teacher attended the Normal School at Winona, Minnesota—something she predicted would be attractive to more teachers in the future. Annual teachers' institutes, week-long events with lectures and discussions, were well attended. Addington saw her role as an observer—watching, examining, and commending. Rather than criticizing, she gave advice and made suggestions that she believed were an "encouragement to the teacher and a benefit to the school."

She recommended a more "suitable compensation" for county superintendents—making the position more attractive to well-qualified professionals. The average salary for county superintendent was \$550 (about \$9,000 in today's dollars). The office was currently "considered a burden and often given to him who will consent to take it, while too little regard is paid to his qualifications for the position."

As for Milton Browne, Addington's opponent in the election, he could again be found "dispensing law and justice, as he has fully recovered from the depressing effects caused by the triumph of 'Women's rights,' at the late election," Atherton reported. "'M. M.' is now a firm believer in 'strong-minded' women, and will hereafter give all such a 'wide berth.'" Browne died in 1892 at age 57.

History has remembered Henry O'Connor for his accomplishments as a Civil War hero and politician, but

in several biographies he is also recognized for his 1869 opinion as attorney general regarding Addington. Although earlier he had publicly advocated for women's suffrage, his ruling launched him as a sought-after spokesperson for the cause. When the first Iowa women's suffrage convention was planned for June 1870 in Mount Pleasant, organizers—including Amelia Bloomer—invited him to speak. (Bloomer described him as "a warm friend.") He replied that "nothing would give me more satisfaction than to see that good cause advanced." At the convention he "for half an hour spoke in his usual eloquent and forcible manner." But he later distanced himself from the movement when it became a liability to his political career. Susan B. Anthony met him in 1871 in Des Moines and sniffed that "he cares as do the *men* champions much more for his and Republican party success than for Woman Suffrage." In 1872, President Grant appointed him solicitor of the U.S. Department of State, a position he held for nearly 14 years. He spent his final years in the Iowa Soldiers' Home in Marshalltown, where he died in 1900.

Editor T. M. Atherton is remembered in county history books as "instrumental in bringing about the change in the county seat." He is described as "upholding in every possible way the highest standards of civic virtue and of civic pride." When he died in 1891 at the age of 62 he was cited for "the part which he played in the upbuilding of Mitchell county."

A. S. Faville, who had won the state representative's seat over Atherton, died in 1900 at the age of 76. Local histories note his accomplishments in Mitchell County politics, as well as his days as a gold miner in California and Australia.

Undoubtedly Addington's landmark election led the way for other women. Elsewhere in Iowa, two other women were elected county superintendent in 1871, and by 1874 five women were in the position. A year later ten women held the post. In 1876, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* remarked: "The women are county superintendents of schools in Iowa, and no person is deemed ineligible on account of sex to any school office in the State. Any woman there can practice law, sue and be sued, and do business in her own name, if she likes. The males will doubtless gradually drift back to agriculture, wander off to the Black Hills, or marry the lawyers and school superintendents."

Addington served for two years. Poor health prevented her from serving a second term. In 1871 she re-

corded a will in which she left her estate to her mother. Four years later she was dead.

Whether Addington was the first woman elected to public office in the United States—as the souvenir booklet claims—is not certain. There is little doubt that she was the first woman elected county superintendent of schools in Iowa, as well as the first woman elected to a county office in Iowa. And the opinion issued by Attorney General Henry O'Connor related to the eligibility of women to hold public office is cited as the first of its kind in the United States.

Over the years Addington's contribution to history has been ignored and ultimately forgotten. She is buried in a small country cemetery west of her hometown of Stacyville in northern Mitchell County. Her grave is marked by a simple stone marker. The inscription offers no hint of the pivotal role she played in history. It reads simply: "Julia C. Addington. Born 1829. Died 1875." But as the women of the Mitchell County World's Fair Association wrote in 1893, "In the early educational history of our county, she was a force for good, and the impress of her work still remains." ❖

Cheryl Mullenbach, a freelance writer, grew up in Stacyville and now lives in Panora.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Many sources identify Julia C. Addington as the first woman elected to the post of county school superintendent and/or the first woman elected to public office in the state of Iowa. Only the *Women's Columbian Souvenir of Mitchell County, Iowa, 1492-1893* makes the statement that Addington was the first woman elected to public office in the United States. However, in the author's e-mail survey of state librarians and historians in the states that were a part of the United States in 1869, none were able to identify the election of a woman to public office in their state as early as 1869.

Several sources, including *The Revolution* and Benjamin Gue's *History of Iowa*, make the claim that the opinion issued by Henry O'Connor was the first of its kind in the United States.

The following sources were used to compile this article: Mitchell County (Iowa) Souvenir Book Committee, *Women's Columbian Souvenir of Mitchell County, Iowa, 1492-1893* (Osage: H. E. Tuttle & Company, 1893); Mitchell County histories published in 1884 and 1918; *Mitchell County Press*, September 1869-January 1870; *The Revolution* (Nov. 18, Dec. 3, Dec. 30, 1869); *Iowa School Journal*, vol. 11, pp. 218, 146; Clarence Ray Aurner, *History of Education* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1914); Ruth Gallaher, *Legal and Political Status of Women in Iowa* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1918); Benjamin Gue, *History of Iowa* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1903); Jay J. Sherman, "History of the Office of County Superintendent of Schools in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, 21 (1923), 3-93; and Louise R. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women: The Emergence of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in Iowa* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969). For an extremely detailed narrative of the movement in Iowa, see Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage* (Rochester, NY: Susan B. Anthony, 1886), vol. 3, chap. 45, especially pp. 627-28. The Dec. 7, 1869, letter from A. S. Kissell to Addington is in Letterbook, Box 7, Dept. of Public Instruction, State Archives, State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines). A letter from Amelia Bloomer to Joseph Dugdale, which asks him to consider inviting Henry O'Connor to speak at the 1870 Mount Pleasant women's suffrage convention, is in the Iowa Women's Suffrage Records, 1866-1951, State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines). O'Connor's reply to Dugdale (5/10/1870) is at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.