

# IOWA HISTORY



*Courtesy Library of Congress*

Education head resisted moving his office from the state capitol

## Schools Observe Iowa Day

“We are planning to observe Iowa day in the schools ...to place special emphasis upon the things of great importance in the state...,” wrote A.M. Deyoe, state superintendent of public instruction, in a bulletin sent to all Iowa schools in December 1915.

Deyoe had been appointed to the top education position earlier in the year by Governor George Clarke. He had served in the job for two previous two-year terms when it was an elected position. But in 1915 it became a four-year appointed post. The salary increased from \$2,200 to \$4,000 per year.

The superintendent offered recommendations to improve the state’s schools. He wanted to see every child attend nine months of school each year, and he advocated for a high school within a “reasonable distance” of every family. He believed each school should offer “well-trained” teachers, and he hoped to introduce industrial training classes for both boys and girls. Deyoe pushed for more “extended use of the school plant” for education and recreational purposes in the community. He envisioned “extending the public library idea” to make school libraries available to every home in the community.

In order to further his dream of offering industrial training courses, he formed a commission to investigate the current status of the vocational training field in the state. Representatives on the commission were from manufacturing, labor, business, education and social groups.

Deyoe expected “rigid observance” of Iowa Day. With the help of local businesses and industries, students would learn about the advantages Iowa had to offer residents. Deyoe

believed many students were not familiar with many of the state's industries, so the education department planned to distribute information about businesses.

At the end of the year the superintendent issued his annual report. Over the previous three years \$7 million had been spent on school construction throughout the state, with an average cost of \$37,000. The smallest amount was \$5,000 spent by one district; the largest cost was \$285,000. There were 145 consolidated districts in the state, an increase of 70 within the past year. Many districts built special adjoining "cottages" to house teachers.

In Kossuth County residents had built a new building of "good quality" brick. It was steam heated and consolidated six one-room schoolhouses. It was located on a six-acre tract of land near Swea City. One of the state's best primary teachers had been hired, and a landscape artist was in the process of completing the grounds.

With so many accomplishments to boast about, Deyoe was angered when he learned that his office was being moved out of the statehouse to make room for another department head. He argued the move was "belittling" education and was "unfair."

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