

July 9 1869

Mr Parker Esq

As I rec'd your letter a few days ago  
and can only say I applaud your under-  
-taking But at the present the

**GRINNELLIANS IN THE ERA OF**

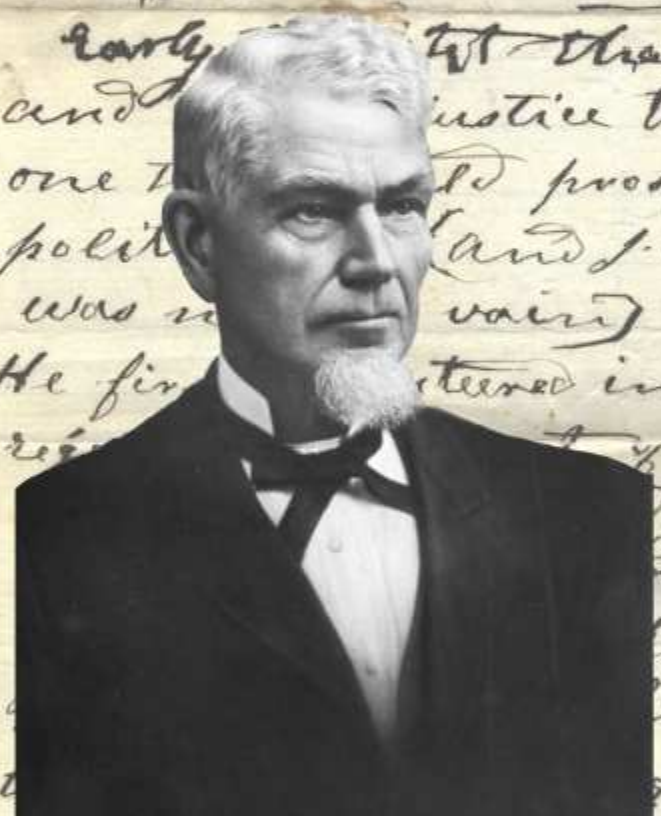
**DIS UNION**

family And to the military life  
of 13 It only say from  
the commencement of the rebellion  
it seemed to be his determination  
to bear some part in putting it down  
It would be hard for me to say what was  
the ruling motive in his determination

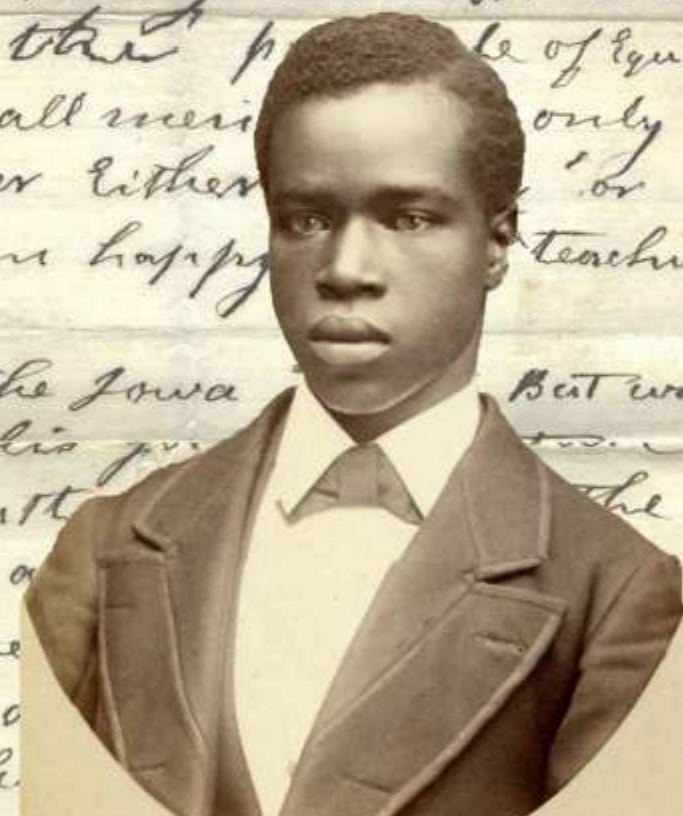
But there is one thing certain he was  
early in that the people of equal  
and justice to all men only  
one to prosper either 'or  
polit (and I am happy teaching  
was vain)

He first entered in the Iowa But was  
as to his conduct & bravery while in the  
army I rec'd many letters of commenda-  
-tion & would refer you to Captains Carr  
Elzy Shely James Tilton & others in the  
company with him

Yours with respect John Casiday



S.H. Herrick



Hannibal Kershaw

Grinnell College Libraries  
Department of Special Collections & Archives  
December 2011 – March 2012



Though it may not have been the center of the conflict, the Iowa Civil War experience was emblematic of national divisions. Iowans contributed greatly to the Union War effort both on the battlefield and home front. Many men from the town of Grinnell and students from Iowa College joined the Union Army. In fact, the majority of the freshman class of 1861 left the college to go to war. This exhibit explores not only how Grinnellians engaged in the actual war, but also how they were involved in the debate over slavery before the war and how they commemorated veterans after the War.

## **Case 1**

### **War Frenzy at Iowa College:**

#### **Reactions to the Conflict**

This case explores how students and faculty engaged in the war effort. The vast majority of the freshman class of 1861, which would have graduated in 1865, left the college to join the Union Army. Professor L.F. Parker was especially involved in the war effort and in collaborating with veterans after the War. He is a central focus of several of these documents, including his typed account of the college during the War.

Several names are mentioned throughout these documents, including S.H. Herrick and R.M. Haines. Herrick, after whom the chapel is named, was a member of the 1861 freshman class, and later served as mayor of Grinnell. Haines was the husband of Joanna Harris Haines, after whom the residence hall is named.

#### *List of enlisted students compiled by L.F. Parker*

This is a list of Iowa College students who served in the Civil War. The list was compiled by professor L.F. Parker, and this particular copy includes his personal notes. It also includes

where each veteran resided, or where they died. Among those listed are Jesse Macy, S.H. Herrick and R.M. Haines.

*L.F. Parker's Description of the College During the War*

This page is an excerpt from professor L.F. Parker's typed account of the college and students during the Civil War. On this page, he provides a list of officers from Grinnell and describes the mood at the start of the War. Parker later discusses the campaigns in which Iowa College students took part and where many of them were killed, including the siege of Vicksburg and Sherman's march to the sea.

*Subscription list of Iowa College students  
who served in the Civil War, 1862*

List includes: R. M. Haines, S.H. Herrick (total of 15 names)

*Petition by the freshman class in support of professor  
L.F. Parker's resignation in order to join the Union Army*

This is a petition from the freshman class to the trustees of Iowa College, asking that they accept professor L.F.

Parker's resignation so that he might join the war effort. These men believed that it was the duty of all who were willing to join the Army in order to save the Union. The petitioners reaffirm their belief in Parker's teaching abilities, though they make it clear that they considered the War more important than their schooling. S.H. Herrick and R.M. Haines are among those who signed the document.

### *Cap*

The forage cap was a standard issue headwear for Union soldiers fashioned after the popular French military design. Many men, however, preferred a broad-brimmed slouch hat for better protection against sun and rain.

### *Letters from Iowa College veterans to L.F. Parker responding to reunion invitation*

These are letters written by former Iowa college students in response to L.F. Parker's invitation to the upcoming reunion of "Soldier Students" in Grinnell. As these letters demonstrate, many veterans were enthusiastic to attend the reunion, as the letter on top states, "I shall certainly be there."

The War continued to hold great importance for these men long after their service had ended.

*“College Dead Not Forgotten” Newspaper article  
by L.F. Parker about commemorating  
students killed during the War, 1878*

In 1878, L.F. Parker authored this newspaper article about the College’s efforts to commemorate students killed during the Civil War. He discusses efforts to commemorate these students on campus with a tablet. At the end of the article, Parker calls for any information or donations that will aid in creating the tablet. Today, the tablet hangs in Herrick chapel.

*Newspaper article about a reunion of Grinnell veterans, 1889*

This newspaper article discusses a reunion of Company E veterans in Grinnell in 1889, which was organized by L.F. Parker. The company was largely comprised of men from the Grinnell area, including several men from the Iowa College freshman class of 1861. The second column of this article outlines Parker’s address to the veterans, in which he expressed

gratitude for their service and discussed the men's various experiences in the War.

## **Case 2**

### **Students Join the Cause:**

### **Experiences in Battle**

The Civil War experience of individual Iowa College students is the central feature of this case. Whereas other sections of this exhibit have addressed the student experience more generally, this case addresses the war stories of two Grinnellians whose name should be familiar to most people affiliated with the college. Jesse Macy '70 (Macy House) and James L. Herrick '65 (Herrick Chapel) were two men who both attended and spent a large portion of their professional careers at Iowa College. Although neither man fought in any of the major battles of the war, both men witnessed the war first hand in the military hospitals and occupied towns of Sherman's famed "March to the Sea." Together, these artifacts and accounts help to tell the story and recount the experiences of students in the era of disunion.



### *Jesse Macy's war reassignment, 1864*

This letter, signed by the Assistant Adjutant General, relieved Jesse Macy of his duties at the front and reassigned him to work in a hospital. Macy was drafted into the 4<sup>th</sup> District of Iowa in the Union Army and assigned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Iowa Volunteers. However, as a Quaker, or a member of the Society of Friends, he did not believe in fighting in the War and was thus reassigned to peaceful work in a hospital. Because of his pacifist views, Macy was an early example of a conscientious objector.

### *Chronology of Jesse Macy's life*

This is the first page of a typed chronology of Jesse Macy's life. This page outlines his early life and experiences during the War. Macy was drafted into the Union Army in 1864 and sent on Sherman's infamous March to the Sea across Georgia, which destroyed much of Southern property so that it could not be used for the Confederate war effort. However, because he was a Quaker, he was reassigned to hospital work. After the War, he returned to and graduated from Iowa College.

*“How Lincoln Saved Jesse Macy”*

*Newspaper article on how Abraham Lincoln intervened on  
Jesse Macy’s behalf, 1921*

This newspaper account from the *Des Moines Register*, dated February 8, 1921, recounts the story of how Abraham Lincoln intervened personally on Jesse Macy’s behalf. According to the story, Macy had found himself assigned to combat duty, but as a Quaker such a position was incompatible with his religious beliefs. In response, an organization of Iowa Quakers sent David Morgan, a close friend of Macy, to speak to the president and request Macy’s transfer. After a personal meeting with Lincoln, Macy was immediately transferred to non-combat duty at a hospital in Illinois

*Picture of S.H. Herrick*

Stephen L. Herrick was a professor and trustee of Iowa College. A member of the class of 1865, Herrick served in the 46th Iowa infantry during the war. This regiment, raised in 1864 as part of the “hundred days,” a last recruitment push to defeat the Confederacy, was largely employed in garrison duty. Like many Iowa College students, Herrick served in Sherman’s

Georgia campaign of 1864. Following the war, Herrick became a dedicated member of the Grinnell branch of the Grand Army of the Republic, the leading Union Veterans organization.

*Letter from Jesse Macy to L.F. Parker  
about his war experiences, 1899*

In this letter to Professor L.F. Parker, Jesse Macy describes his experiences during the War. He describes marching from Chattanooga to Savannah in 1864 and later being reassigned to work as a medical nurse in a hospital in Springfield, IL. This was one of many letters sent from student veterans to L.F. Parker.

*Pictures of Jesse Macy*

Jesse Macy was a Grinnell Professor and alumnus of the class of 1870. Macy originally served in the regular army, but was transferred to a position at a hospital on the personal orders of Abraham Lincoln. He saw firsthand the brutality of the war, serving in a military hospital and in Sherman's famed "March to the Sea" of 1864-1865.

*Letter from John Cassiday to L.F. Parker, 1869*

This is a letter from John Cassiday to L.F. Parker, describing the war experiences of a deceased relative, named B.H., who was an Iowa College student in the War. Cassiday was responding to a call from L.F. Parker for veterans to write to him describing their experiences. Cassiday explains that he cannot say what B.H.'s motivation for joining the War was, except, "I can only say that from the commencement of rebellion...he wanted to bear some part in putting it down."

*Iowa College veteran letters to L.F. Parker  
about their war experiences*

In an attempt to compile information about the war experiences of former Iowa College students, L.F. Parker wrote to many of these students asking them to tell him about their time at war. These letters are some of the responses to Parker, in which the students describe where and when they fought. For example, the letter on top is from a student who enlisted in 1861 and fought at Spottsylvania Court House in 1864 before spending 5 months as a prisoner of war.

## *Jesse Macy's journal from the Siege of Savannah*

These Diary entries dated from December 17, 1864 to March 6, 1865, detail the experiences of Jesse Macy and his service in the final phase of Sherman's Georgia campaign. The diary offers interesting insights in the life of a common Iowa College student during the Civil War. Macy's account provides a sense of the daily routines and concerns that faced regular enlisted men. From discussion of attempts to find coffee, to concerns over the weather and proper observance of the Sabbath, the journal offers a fascinating insight into both the mundane and tragic aspects of a Grinnell student in military service in the era of disunion.

### **Case 3**

#### **A State of Feeling:**

#### **Grinnellians Answer the Slavery Question**

For those familiar with the history of the town of Grinnell and its College, it comes as no shock that the area has a rich abolitionist legacy. As a famed stop on the "Underground Railroad," Grinnellians sympathized not only

with the Union war effort, but also championed the underlying progressive ideals of the Northern cause.

Undeniably, Grinnell accepted social change far easier than other areas in Iowa and throughout the country. But search beyond tales of John Brown and J.B. Grinnell and additional truths also emerge. The Brown-Grinnell link suggests the town's disavowal of slavery. But what was to happen after the slaves were freed? Akin to many places grappling with the state of race relations, Grinnellians struggled to answer that very question.

### *Macy's Views on Slavery*

Jesse Macy dictated his tales of Grinnell during the prewar period, paying particular attention on the state of race relations and treatment of fugitive slaves. The record places the familiar narratives of the Underground Railroad into tighter focus. Macy's account depicts the fugitive slave experience in Grinnell. The text captures the tension between the apparent safety for fugitive slaves in a place like Grinnell as well as the inevitable suspicion felt by fugitives during their stays in unfamiliar towns.

## *Newspaper Clippings on John Brown's Visit to Grinnell*

During the months leading up to his raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia, John Brown passed through Iowa with fugitive slaves and took shelter in the home of J.B. Grinnell. Pieces from the Des Moines Register highlight the public's fascination with the pairing. The language employed by the press illustrates the gravity that Brown's stay offered to Grinnell's abolitionist lore.

### *Photo of John Brown*

This photograph depicts the legendary John Brown, who used violence against pro-slavery men in Kansas in 1856 and led his followers on a raid of the arsenal at Harper's Ferry in 1858, in addition to executing other insurrectionist tactics to protest the institution of slavery.

### *Photo of Hannibal Kershaw*

The first African-American graduate of what was then called Iowa College, Hannibal Kershaw (Class of 1879) is pictured here in his younger years. Although elected to the

South Carolina legislature during Reconstruction “by an overwhelming colored vote,” Kershaw was apparently “‘counted out’ by methods peculiar to that section of the country” and denied his seat in the legislature.

*Hannibal Kershaw’s obituary, 1883*

This is the alumni newsletter obituary of Hannibal Kershaw, the first African-American graduate of Iowa College, who died at a young age. He is described as “an earnest, conscientious student, a fluent society speaker, and a man whom all respected for his high moral and religious character.” Kershaw was a promising young leader and the writer of the obituary explains, “The great need of the colored people of the south is the influence of educated and devoted men of their own race; and Mr. Kershaw’s death seems the untimely end of a career that promised great usefulness.”



## **Case 4**

### **Grinnellians at War:**

#### **Life at the Front**

This case explores the participation of citizens of the town of Grinnell in the Civil War. Often when we discuss Grinnell we limit our conversation to the college. However many residents of Grinnell enlisted in the Iowa Infantry and kept record of their participation. Many residents had family in the war and showed concern for them in letters from home. In this case you will find diaries of two soldiers who marched with the Iowa Infantry along with items that were used at the front, such as a canteen, eating utensils and a sewing kit.

#### *Civil War Diaries*

Diaries were kept by many soldiers, who wrote about both the tragic aspects of the conflict and the mundane daily experiences of life on the front. In this case are two such diaries belonging to residents of Grinnell, Daniel F. Hays and James S. Rollins. Hays moved with his family and a freed slave to Iowa. He kept this diary during his travels with the 4<sup>th</sup> Iowa Company. Rollins enlisted in the 24th Iowa Infantry,

Company B, on August 13th, 1862 as a Wagoner. He was a native of Maine but resided in Wilton, Iowa. This was the diary he kept in 1864 of his travels.

### **Acknowledgments**

This exhibit was curated by Amanda Borson '13, Ethan Drutchas '13, Sara Lowenburg '13, and Christian Snow '13 as part of a History MAP project on the Civil War in History and Memory directed by Prof. Sarah Purcell '92. The curators would like to thank The Grinnell Historical Museum and its board for their generous loan of artifacts and documents to the exhibit. Thank you, also, to Catherine Rod, Christopher Jones, and Helen Lewandowski '12 from Grinnell College Special Collections for all their help and support in forming this exhibit.