Some Memories

Of Austin Meigs

I remember very well the first time I saw Austin Meigs. It was April 1st, 1891, the day of the funeral of Rev. J. B. Grinnell. The roads were never worse than they were that day. There had been rains, followed by a hard freeze and the streets were cut into, ruins and cross roads and travel by team was impossible. The roads were so bad that Mr. Grinnell's body was carried to the cemetery by men on the side-walk. It was impossible for a team and coach to reach Grinnell for the funeral.

The writer was an usher that afternoon and somewhat like two men, strangers to him, came into the church and it was the writer's task to guide these strangers a seat. The church was crowded to the limit but two seats were found in a fairly comfortable place. These two men were Austin Meigs and Merrill Meigs who was Austin's senior in age. After the service was over they stepped up to the usher and thanked him for the service and it was at least. They stated they were friends of Mr. Grinnell and appreciated the opportunity of being present at the service and hearing the kind words said of him. As they were unable to drive they came on the afternoon train, thus causing them to come late.

Of the two men Austin Meigs was perhaps forty, large, well built, striking in appearance and could be called anywhere a hand-some man. Merrill, was hitherto but more heavily built and often were appreciative of the countenance.

It may seem strange that the writer lived sixty years in the town and had not met any of the Meigs brothers. He knew of them, all of their standing in the Malcom community but their path had never crossed until that day. In after years we met all of them weekly and it was always a pleasure to meet and to talk with them as personal, honest and just men.

At that time there was a controversy between Grinnell and Malcom over the recent relocation of the banks. Many Malcom people were very bitter towards the Grinnell people who were active participants in the purchase of stock in the Agricultural Society. The writer had just come into the Grinnell Herald and ad refused to be drawn into the controversy over a matter which we had no part in, and no particular interest.

There was probably some feeling using the Meigs boys in Malcom over this purchase but they were all so fairminded and too just to feel at the place where this stock in Grinnell was unfair. Many times in after years we met Austin Meigs, always glad, always with a warm heart and the feeling that he and the other Meigs brothers were among the noblemen of Poweshiek county.

The original Meigs homestead was on No. 32 just northwest of Malcom. The building of the Rock Island railroad changed the location of this community and the business men of the hamlet on the hill on the old state road moved to the new Malcom town. Beginning with the location of the railroad in 1863 for fifty years some member of the Meigs family was a resident and as long as they lived they were actively engaged in business.

There were four of these men, all sons of Church Meigs, a native of Londo, Vermont, who came here in 1862 and settled on section eleven in Malcom township, and his family.

Looking backward in the light of history we should say there would be no Malcom at all not the real Malcom of the earlier years, without the many integrity, honorable character and quiet determination of the Meigs Bro's.

The funeral of Austin was held at Malcom Thursday afternoon at the Presbyterian church at two o'clock. It was a large funeral. The old timers loved the Meigs family. The later arrivals could not help but admire their integrity, public spirit and frisky devotion to the rights of their fellowmen.

The burial was with Masonic ceremonies in charge of C. B. Hayes, a worthwhile master of the Grinnell lodge. A few others from Grinnell attending were O. Dale Smith, A. P. Swain, J. W. Rosebush, A. J. Neely and W. G. Ray.

The bearers were all members of the Malcom lodge. Mr. Meigs was a member of both the Blue Lodge and the Chapter.

Mr. Meigs was unable to accompany the body to Grinnell. In the death of Austin, P. Meigs has shared away. For a good many years his name has been a cherished memory to Malcom people and attractive manly form and character of Austin Meigs will be fondly remembered. All honor to his memory. We loved him because he was a man. It was a large funeral. Probably about forty large men and women were present. The church was crowded, so that it was necessary to be drawn into the church and hear the kind words said of him, which were remembered very well.

The body will reach Malcom Thursday morning or No. 8. The funeral will be in charge of the Malcom of which he was always a long member.

Austin P. Meigs

Passes Away

 Former Honored Citizen of Malcom
 to be Boly Buried Thursday at 3:00

O'clock With Masonic Honors

Word was received by friends in Malcom Sunday morning that Austin P. Meigs had passed away. He had been a resident of the Malcom school, now living in California. This body will be accompanied by his son, George, and the funeral will be held Thursday at 4:00 o'clock from the Presbyterian church at Malcom.

Mr. Meigs was born April 12, 1850, and with his father came to Poweshiek county. Malcom town was six years later. For sixty years he was a resident of the county and was one of the outstanding upright men, whom all respected and whose sterling integrity all admired.

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H. P. Meigs