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## A Note Regarding the Present Status of the Iowan Drift Problem

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## A NOTE REGARDING THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE IOWAN DRIFT PROBLEM.

**GEORGE F. KAY.**

Among the many persons who, by their publications, have made known to the world the Pleistocene history of Iowa, no one has had a greater part than Doctor Calvin, who spent his life endeavoring to interpret the geological phenomena of the state. For many years, but chiefly from about 1895 until his death in 1911, important papers were written by him in the reports of the Iowa Geological Survey, of which he was Director, and in other channels of publication. None of these publications are of greater interest than those which describe the characteristics, relationships, and age of the Iowan drift. It was he who, after he had done detailed work on the Pleistocene of the northeastern and north-central parts of Iowa, became convinced that in this part of the state the evidence indicated that the ice had invaded the region not twice only, as had been held by earlier workers in this field, but three times. It was he who gave to the uppermost of these drift sheets the name "Iowan," and presented arguments in favor of recognizing the Iowan as a distinct epoch in the Pleistocene.

For a number of years the conclusions of Doctor Calvin were accepted, but a few years before his death in 1911 some Pleistocene geologists, particularly Mr. Frank Leverett of the United States Geological Survey, raised the question whether or not there was sufficient evidence to justify the recognition of the Iowan as a drift sheet separate from the Kansan. In defense of his interpretations Doctor Calvin prepared a paper entitled "The Iowan Drift," which he read at the Pittsburgh meeting of the Geological Society of America, in December, 1910, and which was published after his death in the *Journal of Geology*, volume XIX, No. 7, October-November, 1911.

Since the death of Doctor Calvin, a co-operative study of the Iowan problem has been made, especially during the field seasons of 1914 and 1915, by Dr. W. C. Alden, Chief of the Pleistocene Section of the United States Geological Survey, and Dr.

M. M. Leighton of the Iowa Geological Survey. Their investigations have confirmed the contention of Doctor Calvin that in northeastern and north-central Iowa there is an Iowan drift. In September, 1915, after the completion of the field work of Alden and Leighton, a conference was held in the Iowan area, in which conference Dr. W. C. Alden, Mr. Frank Leverett, Dr. R. D. Salisbury, and the writer participated. After a critical study and discussion of the main lines of evidence in the field, agreement was reached by all that there is a post-Kansan drift to which the name "Iowan" was given by Calvin.

A report of the investigation of Doctor Alden and Doctor Leighton is now being prepared for publication by the Iowa Geological Survey.

Much of the evidence in connection with the Iowan is very elusive, and the fact that Doctor Calvin, who was regarded for many years not as a Pleistocene geologist but as a paleontologist, correctly interpreted the evidence indicates his keen powers of observation and his ability to discriminate evidence which one geologist has said "defies the experts."

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