
JUNE 1982 NEWSLETTER

RECENT ACTIVITIES: The Executive Council met at Barb Rasko's on the evening of June 10, with all officers except Historian present. Tentative plans were made to visit the Historical Museum at Corydon in July, the date to be decided later. If you wish to go, let Molly know. Many other matters were discussed and decided which will be reported at the June meeting.

Peg Hutcheson and Twilla Dillard attended the Everton workshop at Newton June 12 and report it was very interesting and worthwhile.

Pauline Baxendale, Louise Pilmer and Roberta Smith left June 12 for a week of research and sightseeing in Washington, D. C. and Williamsburg. Look for their report in next month's newsletter.

Several members served as attendants at the Book Table during the Historical Society's SHOW AND SELL days, June 13th and 14th.

MORE LIBRARY HOURS: The Iowa Genealogical Library will now be open
Tuesday - 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Wednesday - 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Thursday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Friday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Our Society will man the Library Saturday July 10. Please volunteer!

If you missed Ruth Hall's program on early Indianola homes at the May meeting, as your editor did, we suggest you take a drive down East Salem, notice house No. 309, then 408, 500, 508 and 610. Then to 102 South 8th, then past 500 South Fourth, and on over past 501 East Fourth, and west to 501 West Fourth. To complete the tour, go down West Ashland, many old homes there, but notice particularly 605 and 809. The Schooley house at 101 West Third was built in 1852 by Perry Crossthwait. The 809 West Ashland house was built in 1860, builder unknown. Wesley Cheshire built the house at 408 East Salem in 1886. One wonders if anything built today will survive as long!

The Census Bureau reports that the last census reveals that about 52 million Americans consider themselves to be at least partly German, compared to 44 million Irish and 40 million English. Germans played a key role in the settling of Iowa. They came from all 26 states of the former German empire. They tended to come directly to Iowa, with few stops along the way, a pattern which sets them apart from immigrants from other countries. No doubt the booklet, IOWA, published about 1869, acquainted them with all the good points (and none of the adverse) of Iowa. Although it was published in Dutch, English, Swedish and Danish as well as German, the most copies were printed in German. This was because it was felt the Germans, were the best people to attract because of their frugality, thrift, and hardworking nature. The 1940 census shows Germany among the three nations with the most immigrants in all counties of Iowa except in Appanoose, Marion, Monroe and Polk. Those of you with German ancestry will be especially interested in the diary of an early German immigrant which we will be including in future newsletters.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: To date, we have 49 1982/83 paid members. Only nine of last year's members have forgotten to pay their current dues.

CREWS/CREWSE: Mrs. Fred Butterfield, 6619 Austin Way, Sacramento, CA
CALDWELL 95823, is seeking information on her second great
grandparents, John Crews, b. 1824, Carroll Co., IN,
married Jane Caldwell, b. 1825 Vego Co., IN, married 5 Oct 1846,
Carroll Co., IN. Lived in Richland Twp., Warren Co., IA in 1850;
and in 1860 and 1870 lived in Union Twp., same county. Left Warren
Co. sometime after 1871, the year their son, George and daughter,
Mary died. They are buried in the Sandyville cemetery.

TRANSLATING SERVICE: I am now offering a service which can be of
value to you who may have old papers, documents or letters from their
family's past which have not yet been translated into English

Whether they are in German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or French,
as a free-lance translator, I can offer you accurate and insightful
translations at very reasonable rates. Contact Dean K. R. Syverson,
3371 Irvingham, Topeka, Kansas 66604, phone 913-267-4095.

(From the S.W. Nebraska Genealogical Society Newsletter)

FREEBIES!

ILLINOIS - Richland Roots by Barbara J. Craddock appears about twice
a month in the Olney Daily Mail, Box 340, Olney, IL 62450.
Covers the counties of Richland, Lawrence, Olney, Jasper, White,
Edwards, Crawford, Wabash and Wayne. Each query should be on a
separate page, using double spacing and limited to 50 words, plus
your name and address. Do not abbreviate. FREE

IOWA - Ancestor Queries, by Mrs. Robert Handley, 410 North First
Street, Greenfield, IA 50849, appears in the Adair County
Free Press of Greenfield, and the Fontanelle Observer of Fontanelle
about three times a month. Query should have Iowa connection and be
limited to 50 words or less. Only one query per sender at a time.
A FREE service of the Adair County Ancestors Genealogical Society.

INDIANA - Free Indiana connections queries, typed or printed surnames.
35 words plus dates and sender's name and address to:
Indiana Ancestors, c/o The Indianapolis Star, 307 N. Penn Street,
Indianapolis, IN 46206.

N. CAROLINA - Free queries with N. Carolina connections. Write to
"Relatively Speaking", Cary News, Box 243, Cary, N.C.
27511

NORTHERN INDIANA & SOUTHERN MICHIGAN - FREE queries of ancestors from
northern Indiana and southern Michigan. "Michiana Roots",
South Bend Tribune, 225 W. Colfax, South Bend, IN 46626.

As yet, the Warren County Genealogical Society publishes queries in
the newsletter, free of charge to members and non-members alike.
We are here to serve, and who knows, perhaps a query from a non-
member will link up a member to a 'missing link'.

MURPHY'S LAW: Nothing is as easy as it looks, everything takes
longer than you expect, and if anything can go wrong, it will, and
at the worst possible time!

The conclusion of Barbara's "Trails Through Southern Iowa" follows.
Hope you get out your colored pens and mark the IOWA map as suggested.

Unfortunately, once the pioneers crossed the Mississippi they were not done with rivers. Crossing southern Iowa was a matter of crossing rivers.

Often the early settlers would use flatboats to pole up the rivers. They would build rafts by tying logs together. The rivers were an important trail for the pioneers, just as they had been for the Indians.

The Des Moines River was important in the settlement of Iowa because it took the people inland. About 1843 steamboats ran as far up the river as Des Moines. Between 1843 and 1870, 40 steamboats came to Des Moines. In 1846 Congress made large land grants to improve the Des Moines River from it's mouth to the Raccoon Forks. The wharf in Des Moines was at the foot of Court Avenue. The residents of the city were excited about improving river service to and from Des Moines. In 1858 a steamboat was built in Des Moines and christened "Denoine Bell". In 1859 it made one trip to Ft. Dodge, Unfortunately it sank a couple years later near Ottumwa. The plan to improve traffic on the Des Moines River was abandoned after several years of work and a good outlay of cash because of the coming of the railroad. River traffic to Ottumwa and Des Moines was never steady nor dependable because of insufficient depth of water and too many obstructions. The Des Moines River was navigated by the Hero and the Pavilion in 1837. In the spring of 1843 the Agatha carried troops and supplies to the new military post, Ft. Des Moines. Thirty steamboats plied the Des Moines to the Raccoon before the Civil War.

Settlers located along the minor rivers and streams of Iowa. They built flatboats to transport their produce downstream to market and to bring supplies from river towns. Rivers such as the Mississippi were also used to transport furs, lead and the pioneers' produce down the river to St. Louis and to bring much needed supplies to the settlements. Steamboats, often with two or three decks, took passengers up and down the rivers on pleasure trips. One famous Mississippi River line, the Diamond Jo, even carried a musical band. Here is an account of a steamboat out of Ft. Dodge.

"To show the buoyant optimism that once prevailed in Iowa about steamboat navigation we refer you to Fort Dodge in April, 1859. The steamer Charley Rodgers had arrived in town. After unloading its cargo of sheet iron, dried fruit, salt, coffee, sugar, barrels of molasses, kegs of nails, general merchandise and a few passengers, Captain Beers was ready to take 'the first steamboat pleasure excursion on the upper Des Moines River'."

J. F. Duncombe, editor of the Fort Dodge Sentinel, describes it thus: 'The steamboat left the landing at Colburn's ferry about two o'clock. * * * The steamer passed over the rapids in perfect ease. * * * At the mouth of the Lizzard the boat rounded to and passed down the river at race horse speed. * * * The scene was one of intense interest. The beautiful plateau on which our town is built was covered with men, women and children. * * * The steamer passed down the river about six miles and then returned. * * * We had always believed the navigation of our river was practical, but to know it, filled our citizens with more pleasure than a fortune.' In the evening a mass meeting was held in the schoolhouse to celebrate the event.

The Boone County News of that spring tells about the Charley Rodgers bringing freight and passengers to the landing opposite Boonesboro, and then proceeding on to Fort Dodge. Captain Beers was very optimistic about navigation. 'She (the Charley Rodgers) passed down on her return trip Sunday afternoon, carrying passengers for the south and east.'

On June 20, 1941, the steamboat Ripple docked at an improvised dock at Iowa City on the Iowa River. In 1842 the Maid of Iowa reached Cedar Rapids on the Cedar River, and the Agatha and Ione came to Raccoon Forks in 1843. The Agatha was 119 ft. long and 19 ft. wide. These steamboats brought great joy to the early settlers, and someone called their shrieking whistles "the greatest music ever heard".

The steamboats were great for north-south travel, but good east-west transportation came with the railroads. Until 1850 lead was the dominant cargo on the Mississippi. From 1850 to 1870 the steamboat lines capitalized on the passenger traffic, and from 1870 to 1890 they cashed in on the grain trade.

The Iowa and Cedar Rivers were navigated by steamboats only during the high water season, although pioneer settlers used them all the time. A steamboat called the Black Hawk made 29 round trips between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo during 1859. Council Bluffs was a very important river town until about 1867. The heyday of steamboating along the Missouri River lasted from 1846 to 1866. Council Bluffs was one of the principal outfitting places, preparing pioneers to enter the wild and woolly west!

Besides covered wagons and steamboats, pioneers used stagecoaches. After getting off the boat at Muscatine, Davenport or Burlington, the traveler could take a stagecoach to many parts of the interior. They were the only means of public travel from east to west.

In 1836 the stagecoach entered Iowa at Dubuque. In 1837 a line left Burlington and went to St. Francisville, Missouri, where it connected with the St. Louis-Galena route. In 1838 Burlington and Davenport, Burlington and Macomb, Illinois, and Burlington and Mt. Pleasant were connected. The first one to reach Ft. Des Moines was known as the Stephenson No. 7, and arrived on July 1, 1849. It is interesting to note that the pioneer farmers were likely to use the covered wagons as they brought their families and possessions west, but the stages were often used by business men, teachers, preachers and professional men seeking doors of opportunity in the ever expanding Westward Movement.

Stage routes were established in all parts of Iowa, but the main line was the State Road that ran from Davenport to Council Bluffs, going through Iowa City and Ft. Des Moines. Branch lines were run off to many widely scattered points. This State Road was developed over the years and is now I-80!

In 1860 lines of the Western Stage Company ran from Davenport to many Iowa towns and to St. Joseph, Missouri and Ft. Kearney, Nebraska. It operated altogether in seven states and was headed by Col. E. F. Hooker of Des Moines, having been started in 1855. The Des Moines stopping place was on Fifth Street. The regular fare was five to six cents per mile, but that could be drastically cut by keen competition. Sometimes free meals were given. There was a station every ten or fifteen miles where horses were changed.

The trails which followed the ridges and went around hills and swamps were good roads for the coaches, but streams were a problem. Gradually bridges were built and ferries were operated at strategic points on the major streams.

By 1852 southeastern Iowa had quite an extensive network of stage lines. There were three lines through southwestern Iowa, but all led to Council Bluffs.

In one year the Western Stage Company cleared \$100,000. Business fell off during the Civil War but the companies did transport soldiers and supplies. After the war, railroads quickly over-

spread Iowa and this signaled the end of stage lines, just as it brought steamboating to a halt. Remote places were served up to 1870. Coaches that had cost \$1,000. were sold for \$10. and stage-coaching was over in Iowa.

Now we will consider a few selected roads and trails. The first one, the Oskaloosa Road, will give us a good idea how the roads were planned. Originally called "the angling road", it was a diagonal road extending southwest from Iowa City to Wellman, 20 miles long. In February 1844, an act providing for a Territorial road became law. The road was then built to connect Sigourney, the county seat of Keokuk County, then went on to Oskaloosa, the county seat of Mahaska Co. The road was being used by April 5, 1845. "The record states that the road commenced at the west door of the Capitol in Iowa City, Johnson County, Iowa Territory; thence west across Iowa River, thence down said river under the bluff on the west side, thence across large bottom prairie, thence up a ridge, thence over rolling prairie across Seahorn's Creek on bridge; thence across bottom prairie across Old Man's Creek on a bridge; thence up a ridge of timber; thence through timber to William Fry's; thence across prairie to Deer Creek timber; thence across Deer Creek; thence up a ridge in prairie to County Line, as per field notes herewith returned."

Colton's Township Map of Iowa, for 1855, shows the road passing through Franklin Pierce, South English, Sigourney, Rose Hill, and thence into Oskaloosa. On maps before 1857, the road missed Wassonville, which was located on the English River in northwestern Washington County. The road on Chapman's map of 1857 misses that village too, but the map by Henn, Williams and Co., of Fairfield, for the same year, has the highway passing through Wassonville. Colton's Map of 1863 shows the road passing through Franklin Pierce, Amish, Wassonville, South English, Webster, Sigourney, Rose Hill, and into Oskaloosa. This is now Highways No. 1 and No. 92.

The Bluffs Road was an important east-west connection. In the 1860's it entered Madison County in the northeast corner of Lee Twp., 8 miles from Ft. Des Moines. The settlement of Kansas and Nebraska was going on during this time also, and the Bluffs Road was the main thoroughfare through Southern Iowa. This is now Highway No. 92.

In Monroe County there was an early trail from Albia to Eddyville that is now Highway No. 137.

In 1838 the Legislative Assembly established a road from Keokuk to Iowa City. It would hook up with the Military Road at Mt. Pleasant, and is now Highway No. 218.

In 1840 the Legislative Assembly approved a road from Fairfield to Mt. Pleasant and this became the beginning of the famed Oregon Trail. This road, to stretch from the Mississippi River to the Missouri River was to be the route for the mail to Oregon. It crossed the Mississippi at Burlington. The section from Ottumwa to Chariton was approved January 13, 1849. This trail west, flooded by immigrants made southern Iowa an important part of this country's history. In the 1850s, the Oskaloosa Times declared that the town was almost always thronged with movers' wagons and herds of cattle. This is now Highway No. 34.

One of the first recorded trips through Iowa occurred in 1822 and blazed a trail later used by immigrants. Two men, named Dixon and McKnight, entered what is now Iowa along the northern border by Lake Okoboji. They followed a southeasterly course, crossed the state and went on down to what is now Trenton, Missouri.

One of the most famous trails through Iowa was blazed by the Mormons. Brigham Young led the Saints out of Nauvoo on February 9, 1846. There was a skiff of snow, bitter winds, shivering women and children and ferries carrying the faithful across the swollen winter river with cakes of ice swirling in the current. They were leaving behind two thousand neat, sturdy houses for a gruesome trip across Iowa. Quotes from their diaries can give us an indication of what that trip might have been like for any of our pioneer ancestors. "Until spring came the animals fed on limbs and bark of trees. Heavy spring rains turned the trails into quagmire. The wagons settled in the mud and at night froze down."

On March 22nd, this entry, "a gust of wind ... blew the tent flat to the ground... The rain came down in torrents so fast that it put out the fire. In a few minutes it was all darkness, and I was so cold that it seemed as though I must perish," Orson Pratt.

The Mormons were the best organized migration in American history. They were divided into companies of 100 families, with a captain and skilled artisans included in every wagon train. They established fifteen camps of Israel across Iowa and compared themselves to the Hebrews fleeing Egypt.

In 1856 thirteen hundred European converts arrived at Iowa City with the intention of going to Salt Lake. They could not afford wagons, so the church organized a trip in which they pulled wooden handcarts carrying their possessions. A two-wheel cart was furnished for every five persons and one wagon with three yoke of oxen was available for every one hundred. This was a brutal trip and the loss of life was staggering.

Pioneers flocked to Iowa drawn by many forces. There were obvious attractions such as the beauty of the country, the fertility of the soil, and the array of personal reasons each settler had. One major drawing card was the Guides to Iowa Territory. These were handbooks with colored maps and contributed to the popularity of the West. Promoters wrote enthusiastically about the beauty and fertility. Military explorers wrote of their journeys and newspaper editors wrote enticing descriptions of the new land.

"Lieutenant Lea, a dragoon from Ft. Des Moines wrote, 'upon the whole I can say we have had a pleasant Campaign'

'no place could be better adapted to the erection of buildings'

A General Smith wrote of the 'growing prosperity of the western side of the river Mississippi'

The Guides included commentary upon land and weather.

John Plumb, Jr. published Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin, with the purpose of "directing the attention of emigrants and others to a portion of the United States which is one of the finest domains that nature ever offered to man".

Is it any wonder, with this type of encouragement, that our pioneer ancestors crossed the Mississippi and started over the trails through Southern Iowa?