

# ANNALS OF IOWA

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## AN INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF SCOTT COUNTY, IOWA

THE PIONEER PERIOD  
1833-1865

By  
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Scott County comprises an area of about 455 square miles or 291,200 acres.<sup>1</sup> It is bounded on the south and east by the Mississippi River and on the north mainly by the Wapsipinicon. Political considerations at the time of the organization of the county drew the southwestern boundary, giving Muscatine County two townships which geographically speaking might be said to belong to Scott.<sup>2</sup>

The Scott County banks of the Mississippi vary from narrow bottoms to bluffs of moderate height, in places breasting the main current of the river. Several islands in the Mississippi belong to Scott County. These as well as the bottoms along the Mississippi and the wider bottomlands of the Wapsipinicon are sometimes flooded.

The hills back of the Mississippi rise to heights of over a hundred feet above the river. Farther west the landscapes are dominated by a succession of low hills and gentle ravines. Such topography is frequently described as "rolling prairie." In pioneer times the open prairie was broken by a number of beautiful groves which along the creeks and rivers frequently spread out into extensive woodlands. Buffalo and Rockingham townships were heavily wooded in pioneer times and parts of them have remained so to the present day. Older maps show one solitary lake.<sup>3</sup> It is located on the bottoms along the

<sup>1</sup>*Soil Survey of Iowa*, Report No. 9, (1919), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Harry E. Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa*, (1910), p. 338.

<sup>3</sup>A. T. Andreas, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa*, (1875), p. 165.

Wapsipinicon; and, being an ox-bow lake, was appropriately named, the Horse Shoe Pond.

Excepting minor sandy and deeply eroded tracts, Scott County has a soil of great fertility. Acidity, however, makes it necessary to add lime for the best results in farming and the use of phosphorous fertilizers is being recommended. Nearly 92 percent of the county is farmland.

The pioneers opened several coal mines in the southern part of the county near Blue Grass. The best veins were between four and six feet thick and mining was profitable throughout the 19th century, but the product was never large enough for any considerable export.

Quarries were opened in several parts of the county, but only those near Le Claire yielded any superior kind of building stone (lime stone), and the pioneers soon turned to brick-making for which there was an abundant and excellent quality of raw material near at hand.

Scott County has been the home of man for hundreds if not thousands of years. The pre-historic Indians, usually known as the Mound Builders, built mounds on the river bluffs and raised corn on the river bottoms and other easily worked tracts. They have left an abundance of bones and other relics many of which have been collected by the Davenport Academy of Science and placed on exhibition in the academy's museum. None of these relics have caused so much discussion as the famous elephant pipes found near Toolesboro, Louisa County, which, if genuine as they appear to be, point conclusively to the presence of man and mastodons in Iowa several thousand years ago.\*

The Iowa Mound Builders were probably a branch (or branches) of the Siouan people, who, before white contact, may have been forced westward and northward by the Algonkians coming from the east. This process certainly continued in historic times. After the Algonkian Chippewas, Sacs and Foxes had obtained guns from the whites they became more than the equals of the Siouans, still using bows and arrows. Accordingly the Siouans lost ground, but they continued to hold their ancestral seats in northwestern Iowa until the mid-

\**Proceedings of the Davenport Academy of Natural Sciences*, IV, (1886), p. 271.

dle of the 19th century. At the beginning of the 19th century there were Sac and Fox villages on the western banks of the Mississippi. A Fox village, named for the half-blood Morgan, was located on the site of the later city of Davenport. The war chief of this village was Maquopom, Poweshiek being the civil chief. These Indians adopted George L. Davenport, the son of Colonel George Davenport, and they permitted the half-blood Antoine Le Claire to build a house in their village early in 1833.

The Indians at the village of Morgan broke camp soon after the opening of the Black Hawk Purchase to white settlement. Thereafter, except for an occasional visit, especially to the home of Le Claire, we hear but little about them. One of their last exploits in the county was to set fire to the prairie in 1834, by which they also burned up the fence around a settler's corn field.

This area was, of course, known to the white man long before. In 1673 Father Marquette and the fur trader, Joliet, sighted the shores of what was to become Scott County. Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike and his expedition came in 1805. Within a short time thereafter the United States built two forts in the Upper Mississippi country—Fort Madison, on the site of the later city by that name, in 1808; and Fort Armstrong on Rock Island in 1816-1817. Fort Madison had to be abandoned, and was burned down during the War of 1812. Fort Armstrong ceased to be a fort in 1836, but Rock Island has continued to be federal property and ultimately became the site of a federal arsenal.

Antoine Le Claire sometimes referred to himself as the first white settler in Scott County, though he was a half-blood of a very dark complexion. By the terms of the Treaty of 1832, which closed the Black Hawk War, he received title in fee simple to a section of land on the Iowa shore opposite Rock Island and another at the head of the rapids<sup>5</sup> where in a few years the town of Le Claire was laid out. Le Claire had a wide knowledge of Indian tribes and affairs. Besides English and French he is said to have been familiar with a dozen Indian dialects of the Siouan and Algonkian languages. From

<sup>5</sup>Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, II, p. 254.

1813 to 1843 he served as interpreter for the federal government in its dealings with the Indians, and in the same capacity he also served the fur trader, Colonel George Davenport, an Englishman formerly in the United States army, who had come as sutler with the troops to Fort Armstrong. Having given up trading with the troops, he built up an extensive Indian trade. In some years he sold goods to the Indians for upwards of \$60,000 usually on credit. In addition to this Indian trade, both Le Claire and Davenport accumulated considerable wealth by speculation in land. Le Claire is said to have owned property valued at \$100,000 and Davenport owned twice that amount.<sup>6</sup> They were the first rich men in Iowa.

Following the Black Hawk war, into which Black Hawk and his band had been led by fervent hopes of aid from other Indian tribes and especially from the British in Canada, and which resulted in the destruction of the Sacs and Foxes as a military power, a treaty was made by which a large section of eastern Iowa, the Black Hawk Purchase, was opened to white settlement in June, 1833, which included Scott County. Early in the year Le Claire built his "shanty" at the Indian village, Morgan,<sup>7</sup> upon the spot where General Scott had made the treaty with the Indians in the previous year. In the spring of 1833 Captain Benjamin W. Clark broke ground on or near the site of Buffalo and raised the first corn and vegetables ever produced by white men in the county. In the fall Roswell H. Spencer built a log cabin on the Mississippi shore in the present Pleasant Valley Township. The next year George W. Harlan built a cabin within the limits of what was to become the town of Le Claire. The sites of Princeton and Rockingham were also settled in 1834.

Anxious as the pioneers were to stake out farms, they were even more anxious to found towns. In May, 1836, Captain Clark disposed of a two-thirds interest in a 90 acre tract of land to Captain E. A. Mix and a Dr. Pillsbury of Buffalo, New York, for \$20,000 partly in cash. The three men platted the town of Buffalo, naming it for Buffalo, New York. Lots were in demand in the new town until the county lines were

<sup>6</sup>*The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, XX, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>Nathan H. Parker, *Iowa As It Is in 1856*, pp. 170, 171.

drawn so as to blight all hopes of it ever becoming the county seat.<sup>5</sup>

Rockingham was laid out in the spring of 1836 by a townsite company consisting of J. H. Sullivan, James Davenport, Adrian Davenport and others. In the fall of the same year the town had thirteen houses and about one hundred people, and "no village of the Far West at that day could boast of a better class of citizens . . . both on account of their high-toned moral character, their social and friendly qualities and for their kind and liberal attentions to the sick and to the stranger."

The claim upon which the original city of Davenport was laid out was made in 1833 and contended for by a Dr. Spencer and a Mr. McCloud. LeClaire who owned an adjoining section, adjusted their dispute by buying them out paying them \$100 (or \$150) for the quarter section. A townsite company was formed composed of Major William Gordon, Antoine Le Claire, George Davenport, Major Thomas Smith, Alexander McGregor, Levi S. Colton, Philip Hambaugh, and Captain James May. This company purchased the claim for \$2,000 and in the spring of 1836 it was surveyed by Major Gordon. The town was named for Col. George Davenport.

The sale of lots began at once. In May, 1836, a steamboat load of prospective buyers came up from St. Louis. The boat remained at the levee for two days during which, the passengers enjoyed the best of "eatables and drinkables." As to the lot selling business, there was one serious drawback: only squatters' titles could be given since the land had not yet been brought into the market by the United States government, but in spite of this, fifty to sixty lots were sold at prices ranging from \$300 to \$600 each. The unsold lots were divided among the stockholders and the townsite company disbanded.

Davenport began to grow up, but not so fast as Rockingham. When James Brownlee came from Scotland to Davenport in the autumn of 1838, he found it to be a "city in prospect only, one small store and one tavern with two or three board shanties and one log cabin; the tavern contained more people than all the rest of the town besides."

<sup>5</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), p. 974.

The little hamlet, nevertheless, was up and doing and already aspiring to become incorporated. The next year, 1839, it was incorporated as a town by the territorial legislature and re-incorporated in 1842.<sup>9</sup> In 1851 it became a city under a special charter from the state legislature. It is still one of the few cities in Iowa under a special charter.

Scott County, named for General Winfield Scott, was organized in 1838.<sup>10</sup> At once there was a spirited contest over the location of the county seat, Davenport and Rockingham being the chief aspirants, each town claiming superior advantages.<sup>11</sup> Davenport was "high and dry" above the Mississippi and had a central location. Rockingham prided itself upon its favorable location for river traffic, being situated opposite the mouth of the Rock River in Illinois, its big saw and flour mill, its excellent hotel, and the moral tone and educational acquirements of its people.

In the contest both towns resorted to "tall doings," such as stuffing the ballot box, false oaths, and the importation of voters. Rockingham claimed victory in the first election and became temporarily the county seat but Davenport at once renewed the contest, and after two stubborn fights eventually won, mainly by the introduction of an economic factor of virtually immediate cash value: in the event of Davenport becoming the county seat Antoine Le Claire, George Davenport and others offered to build at an approximate cost of about \$6,000 a jail and courthouse to be presented as a gift to the new county. The economic factor proved effective and by the third and final election Davenport became the permanent seat of local justice.

Willard Barrows, a local historian writing in 1860, sums up the contest: "The battle was long and spirited. The contending parties withdrew from the bloodless field with happy triumph, each having outgeneraled the other, and found that even when a victory was won the laurels are not always sure. A peace treaty was held at Rockingham Hotel in the winter of 1840, where the most prominent actors in the last scenes

<sup>9</sup>*Laws of Iowa, 1838-1839*, p. 265.

<sup>10</sup>August P. Richter *Geschichte der Stadt Davenport und des County Scott*, (1917), pp. 108-117.

<sup>11</sup>Other contestants were Buffalo and Winfield, the latter a proposed town near the mouth of Duck Creek; and Sloperville, the "geographical center" of the county.

met as mutual friends; and buried the hatchet forever, ratifying the treaty as it was called, by a grand ball, where more than forty couples mingled in the dance and seemed to forget at once all the strife and bickerings of the past, and seal their friendship anew with earnest and willing hearts. During the whole of this controversy, singular as it may appear, the utmost good feeling and gentlemanly conduct prevailed. No personal feuds grew out of it, and to this day, it is often the source of much merriment among the old settlers, and is looked upon as only the freaks and follies of a frontier life."

Rockingham, however, did not long survive the defeat. In a few years its post office was closed and only three or four families were left of the former "happy, happy band on the banks of Rockingham."

The town of Le Claire was laid out in 1837. Princeton began to grow up at the same time, although the first recorded plat of the latter dates from 1853.<sup>12</sup> Other pioneer towns rose and some fell. Mississippi City and Bethany became East Davenport. Parkhurst became a part of Le Claire and the combination gave Island City a permanent setback. Pinnacle Point yielded to Princeton which also absorbed Elizabeth City, Gilbert, or Gilberttown. In the present century grew into Bettendorf. In the interior Pleasant Point and Sloperville did not get beyond the initial stage. Big Rock, Maysville, Dixon, Blue Grass, and Walcott are still thriving towns.

Although there were no white settlers in Scott County in 1832, in 1840 the population of Davenport and Scott County were respectively about 600 and 2,140; and in 1850, 1,848 and 5,986. The large immigration and general prosperity of the early and middle fifties brought these figures up to about 11,500 for the city and 21,521 for the county in 1857. In March, 1858, the population of Davenport had risen to 16,677 and of Princeton and Le Claire to approximately 1,000 and 1,800. The depression of the late fifties caused a sharp decline in these figures from which Princeton and Le Claire never fully recovered. Davenport had 12,113 inhabitants in 1862 and Scott County 26,113.

All the states of the Union excepting Florida, Arkansas,

<sup>12</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, p. 1205.

Texas, and California contributed their quotas to the population of Scott County in pioneer times. Of the southern states, Virginia and Kentucky contributed most, but the majority of the native-born pioneers came from the northern states especially Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio. Cincinnatians were so numerous in early Davenport that it was sometimes spoken of as a Cincinnati colony.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the countries of western Europe were represented among the pioneers of the forties and fifties. There were smaller numbers of Hollanders, Hungarians, Scandinavians, Bohemians, Scotchmen, Englishmen, and Frenchmen. The Frenchmen were given a hearty welcome by Antoine Le Claire some of whom were employed by him. The Hungarians were mostly political refugees of whom only a few stayed permanently. The largest groups of foreign-born were the Irish (Free State) and the Germans, and of the Germans again the Schleswig-Holsteiners. So many Schleswig-Holsteiners settled in Scott County in the fifties that it has sometimes been referred to as a new Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>14</sup>

#### TRANSPORTATION

The early explorers and military leaders going by water to the Northwest used mainly pirougues and keelboats. Colonel George Davenport in his dealings with the Indians and miners regularly sent keelboats up the river with cargoes of gingham, sugar, powder, and rum; bringing back furs and lead and later grain.<sup>15</sup>

Flat boats, which played such an important part in the economic life of the settlers in the Ohio Valley, also played their part in the life of the early Iowa pioneers. Ambrose C. Fulton, a distant relative of the inventor Robert Fulton, in 1842 loaded the first flat boat with produce for the New Orleans market that ever cleared from the port of Davenport.<sup>16</sup> In

<sup>13</sup>J. M. D. Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, (1888), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Schleswig (Danish Slesvig) was originally a part of Denmark and remained so until 1864. Holstein was always a part of Germany even when ruled by the Danish kings. In 1326 the two provinces were united in a permanent union, though each retained to a certain extent its separate identity, and thus they were ruled by the Danish kings until 1864.

In 1848 the German Schleswigers and the Holsteiners rose against Denmark in an attempt to set up an autonomous state under the German Confederation. They failed in this, but in 1866 Schleswig-Holstein became a part of Prussia. Northern Schleswig was reunited with Denmark after the World War.

<sup>15</sup>Mildred L. Hartsough, *From Canoe to Steel Barge on the Upper Mississippi*, (1934), pp. 31, 32.

<sup>16</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, p. 836.



1844, Jesse L. Henley, desiring to try out the Southern market, loaded a flatboat with onions, potatoes, and oats, which he floated down to New Orleans. He returned on the steamboat *Alexander Scott*, having sustained a loss of \$75 for the entire trip. The same year J.M.D. Burrows sent a flotilla of two flat boats to New Orleans, loaded with pork, bacon, lard, beans, oats, corn, brooms, and potatoes. The smaller of these boats had been built in Le Claire; and the larger, which was "the largest and best flat boat that was ever at our landing" was built in Davenport. While Burrows was on the way down the river prices on farm produce fell and he had to sell his cargoes at ruinously low prices. The potatoes, for which he had paid fifty cents a bushel, he sold to a Bermuda captain at eight cents a bushel, having to take coffee in payment at that.

In the early forties a third kind of river craft began to crowd the waters of the Upper Mississippi, namely the log raft. Jesse L. Henley and his associates brought the first raft of logs from the pineries of Wisconsin to this part of the Upper Mississippi country; this particular raft, containing 1,500 logs, going to Moline, Illinois.<sup>17</sup> Rafting became a common method of transporting both logs and sawed lumber down the river. Ultimately the rafts were pushed by steamboats.

The *Virginia*, the first steamboat to lay to at the island of Rock Island, arrived there in 1823. The event marked the beginning of the City of Rock Island (first called Stephenson) as an important river port and a distributing point for settlers going into the Northwest. In the following decades several steamship lines had their headquarters here. Tri-weekly packets ran from Rock Island to Keokuk; and daily to Muscatine, Iowa, and to Galena, Illinois, during the middle fifties. Other lines operated from Davenport. River pilots made their homes there as well as in Buffalo and Le Claire. At the latter place still stands the famous elm tree which shaded and sheltered river pilots, waiting for their chance on boats in need of expert service in going through the rapids between Le Claire and Davenport.<sup>18</sup>

When the water was very low in the river, even this expert

<sup>17</sup>*Biographical History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1895), p. 144.

<sup>18</sup>Fritiof M. Fryxell, *The Green Tree*, (1931).

service was without avail to carry the boats through. Freight, destined beyond these points, then had to be carried by wagons around the rapids.

There were no bridges across the Mississippi before 1856. All freight and passengers accordingly going west of the river had to be taken across on ferries. Colonel George Davenport began to operate a ferry in 1825 between the Illinois and Iowa shores. At that time it was the only ferry on the Mississippi for a distance of 500 miles. In 1834 Antoine Le Claire established a ferry line, using at first flatboats. Before long there were ferries operated from almost every little town, and would-be town, on the Scott County shore.

Owners of ferries, whether on the Mississippi or the Wapsipinicon, had to obtain licenses from the county and to charge fixed rates. On the Wapsipinicon the rates were only one-third of those on the Mississippi. Double rates were charged after 8 P. M.

Antoine Le Claire sold his boats and franchise to John Wilson in 1837. Wilson put a steam ferry on the Mississippi in 1842, but it was not used regularly until ten years later. To Wilson also is due the honor of having introduced the steel triangle. When this was pounded with a wooden club it might incidentally awaken the whole town, but in any event was sure to bring out the ferry-men.

During the middle fifties the ferry business shared in the current general prosperity. Some good-sized fortunes were made and several ferry-men retired in comfortable financial circumstances.

The county commissioners gave the development of land communications an impetus in 1838 by dividing the county into eleven road districts. Much attention was subsequently given to the laying out of roads, and some to road and bridge building. Usually the new roads followed the section lines, but several of the main pioneer roads radiated out diagonally from Davenport and came to be known by such names as the River Road, Lost Grove Road, Utica Ridge Road, Long Grove Road, Allen's Grove Road, Hickory Grove Road, and Blue Grass Road.

Poor as these roads may have been, they facilitated land transportation. The covered wagons of the new settlers followed them as did the lighter vehicles of travellers and joy riders. Regular stages in connection with and supplementary to the advancing railroads became profitable. Bennett and Lyter began to run stages from Davenport to Dubuque and Burlington in 1844. In the fifties the "Frink and Walker" line ran daily four-horse mail coaches between Davenport and points to the west. Later still, the Western Stage Company ran coaches tri-weekly between Davenport and Dubuque. Other lines operated between Davenport and DeWitt; and Davenport and Lyons.

Meanwhile Iowa had become railroad-minded. Already in 1842 A. C. Fulton had examined the bed of the Mississippi at Davenport and finding it suitable for a railroad bridge had enthusiastically advocated that both a bridge and a transcontinental railroad be built. Three years later Alfred Sanders, the editor of the *Gazette*, "urged the building of this road and argued its importance and the feasibility of bridging at this point. Fulton and Sanders were ahead of the times, but each lived to see the fruition of their hopes."

Nor was fruition long on the way. The very atmosphere was soon buzzing with railroad projects. In 1847 the Illinois legislature incorporated the Rock Island and La Salle Railroad Company to build a railroad between Rock Island and La Salle. In 1851 this company reorganized as the Chicago and Rock Island Company with a capital of not to exceed \$3,000,000. Meanwhile several railroad companies had been organized in Iowa. In 1850 the Davenport and Iowa City Railroad Company incorporated under Iowa law.<sup>19</sup> Two years later this company sold its "rights, franchises, and muni-ments" to another Iowa company, the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company, incorporated in 1852, to some extent by the same men and interests that controlled the Chicago and Rock Island Company. James Grant of Davenport was president of the Rock Island and La Salle, and vice-president of the Chicago and Rock Island. Ebenezer Cook of Davenport was one of the directors of each of these two companies, and final-

<sup>19</sup>*History of Johnson County*, (1883), p. 237.

ly became vice-president of the Mississippi and Missouri Company of which also Hiram Price of Davenport was treasurer.

The articles of incorporation fixed the capital of the latter company at \$3,000,000 in shares of \$100 each. Only five percent of the amount subscribed, however, had to be paid at once. The remainder might be paid in installments of not more than twenty percent at intervals of not less than three months. The company's indebtedness was not to exceed \$4,000,000.

In September, 1853, an election was held in Scott County on the question whether the county should buy stock in the new railroad. There were 309 votes cast and out of these all but two were favorable. The amount of stock taken by the county was \$50,000, but the city of Davenport took \$75,000 and individuals \$100,000 more.<sup>20</sup>

The Illinois company had its road built to Rock Island by 1854. The Iowa company began construction in 1853 and in the autumn of 1855 trains were running out of Davenport. The first station (siding) west of Davenport was named Farnam and the second Walcott, in honor of Henry Farnam the chief engineer; and William Walcott, one of the directors of the company.

The building of these railroads made the question of bridging the Mississippi acute. But who should build it? The Iowa company was authorized to build a railroad with the necessary bridges from the eastern boundary of Iowa, which, strictly speaking is the middle of the main channel of the Mississippi, to Council Bluffs.<sup>21</sup> But the Illinois company had no such implied powers to build its part of the bridge. The two companies, however, being interested in the project found a way out of the difficulty by incorporating in Illinois, a separate company, the Railroad Bridge Company, the bonds of which were guaranteed by both companies. The bridge was built at a cost of about \$500,000 and opened for traffic in the spring of 1856.

On April 23, 1856, *The Gazette* wrote:

The 21st day of April, 1856, can be set down as the beginning of a new era in the history of Davenport, as on that day the first

<sup>20</sup>Downer, *op. cit.*, I, p. 196.

<sup>21</sup>*Iowa Historical Record*, "The Pioneer Railroad of Iowa," XIII, (1897), p. 129.

locomotive crossed the great bridge which spans the Mississippi River at this point. The event occurred at dusk in the evening, very few persons being eye witnesses, the company, with their proverbial silence in regard to their operations, having kept everything quiet in relation to the matter. Slowly the locomotive Des Moines proceeded on the bridge, very cautiously crossed the draw, and then with accelerated speed rushed on to the Iowa shore where it was welcomed by the huzzas of those who had there assembled to witness the event.

The last link is now forged in the chain that connects Iowa and the great west with the states of the Atlantic seaboard. The iron band that will span our hemisphere has been welded at Davenport; one mighty barrier has been overcome; the Missouri is yet to be crossed and then the locomotive will speed onward to the Pacific.

Who can conjecture the effect of the completion of the road upon the city of Davenport! As it (the railroad) progresses business must continue to augment, and when at last a communication is effected with the distant and wealthy state of California, how vastly must that business increase. There is a future for Iowa that promises to make her the brightest star in the galaxy of states.

The bridge was made up of three parts—a bridge connecting Davenport and the island, a track across the island, and another bridge connecting the island and the City of Rock Island. Each bridge consisted of a wooden structure resting on stone piers. A draw in the middle of the bridge between Davenport and the island permitted the steamboats to pass up and down the river.

It could not be denied that the bridge would be somewhat of an obstacle to river traffic. Would it be a very serious one? The steamboat lines thought so and loudly protested that their investments were at stake. Southern sectionalism intensified commercial protestations, and political implications were unavoidable. The bridge, as an important part of the first transcontinental railroad, would give the North an advantage over the South in the development of the West—that West of which a large part had just recently been won by the united efforts and sacrifices of the whole country. Few, too few, saw that it might have been possible to have built one transcontinental railroad for the North and another for the South.

When the bridge company asked for a right-of-way across the island, Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, advised against it, and ordered trespassers off the island. Further-

more, he instructed the United States district attorney for the northern district of Illinois to apply for an injunction against the construction of a railroad across the island and of bridges across the river, but the court overruled the demand for the injunction and the bridge company proceeded with the construction of the bridge.

Jefferson Davis had appeared on the stage. Would Abraham Lincoln soon be there too?

Only fourteen days after the first train had gone across the bridge, the steamboat *Effie Afton* struck one of the piers in going through the draw. The boat caught fire and burned a part of the bridge. The owners of the boat promptly brought suit against the bridge company. The latter engaged Abraham Lincoln to represent it. The case was tried in the United States Circuit Court for Iowa in September, 1857. In his defense Lincoln pointed out that 12,586 freight cars and 74,179 passengers had passed over the bridge while the river below had been closed to navigation and of no use for transportation for four months of the year. He further contended that with due skill and care on the part of pilots and captains the bridge was no serious obstacle to river navigation. Enough of the jurymen were impressed by his arguments to prevent them from rendering a unanimous verdict, and the case was accordingly dismissed.<sup>22</sup>

But in a suit against the Mississippi and Missouri Company brought by a St. Louis steamboat owner in 1858, a United States district court declared the bridge a common nuisance and ordered it removed on the Iowa side. This decision was reversed by the United States Supreme Court in 1862, and so at last the bridge stood secure.<sup>23</sup> With pardonable pride the

<sup>22</sup>F. J. Nevins *Seventy Years of Service*, (1922), pp. 18, 19. Concerning the origin of the fire, Nevins queries: "Who can tell the true story of the *Effie Afton*, that Louisville-New Orleans packet sent north from St. Louis on her first trip? Who can describe the impelling thought that controlled this boat on the morning of May 6th—fourteen days after the crossing of the first train—when the boat proceeded some two hundred feet above the draw pier and then, one of her side wheels stopping, she swung in against the bridge? Who can tell just how the stove tipped over that set fire to the boat and which in its burning, destroyed the span where it struck? Is it possible that Parker, the pilot, might solve the riddle were he here?"

There is, however, no direct evidence that the burning of the bridge span was an act of an incendiary, as Mr. Nevins suggests. But infuriated raftsmen once tried to burn the bridge. See *The History of Clinton County, Iowa*, (1879), p. 499. Another attempt to set the bridge on fire in 1859 is mentioned by Willard Barrows in *The Annals of Iowa*, First Series, I, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup>*United States Reports*, LXVII, (1862), pp. 486, 496.

people of Davenport began to look upon their city as the "Beginning of the West."

Traffic over the new railroad went on briskly for a few years with two daily passenger trains between Davenport and Iowa City. When times became hard the trains were mixed to accommodate both passengers and freight. Construction work continued but at a slower pace. The main line reached Marengo in 1860 and Kellogg, forty miles from Des Moines, in 1865.

In the later fifties a desperate attempt was made to restore prosperity by voting several bond issues to promote the building of railroads to the north and the northwest and to continue the building of the main line of the Mississippi and Missouri. Scott County voted sums aggregating \$600,000. One issue was blocked by an injunction, and the other was declared unconstitutional, null, and void. A number of the voters probably had been motivated by a desire to give the unemployed work.<sup>24</sup>

#### FARMING

The pioneer farmers and the pioneer town-builders kept a pretty even pace. This is evidenced by the progress of rural and urban political organization. Scott County, originally a part of Dubuque County, was organized in 1838 and Davenport was incorporated as a town in 1839 and as a city in 1851. From 1838 to 1851 the county was administered by a board of county commissioners. A county judge exercised about the same powers as the county commissioners from 1851 to 1861. In the latter year the present system of county supervisors was introduced. This is still in use though in a somewhat modified form.

By 1843 the farmers had spread out sufficiently to warrant the board of county commissioners in dividing the whole county into townships. Changes were later made in names and boundaries of the townships but with the exception of the creation of the City of Davenport Township in 1875 and

<sup>24</sup>Downer, *op. cit.*, I, p. 911; August P. Richter, "A True History of Scott County" in the *Davenport Democrat*, 1920-1922, October 10, 17, 1920.

subsequent additions to it, no changes in boundaries have been made since 1866.<sup>25</sup>

The impatient squatters on the American frontier surged out over the public domain before any survey could be made. This was also the case in Scott County where the federal survey was not completed until 1837. The first public land sale in this part of the territory, held at Dubuque, did not occur until 1840. Up to that time all lot-holders and claim-holders held title to their lots and farms by the precarious but temporarily effective authority which squatter sovereignty exercised through a claim society—except those who had purchased lots from Antoine Le Claire in the sections to which he obtained clear title by the treaty of 1832.

A claim society, organized in March, 1837, allowed each squatter to stake off areas of not more than 320 acres, which, when registered with the society and improved according to its rules, was protected by it against any attempt to “jump” the claim.<sup>26</sup> Though there were some instances of claim jumping, this protection was usually effective. The society further protected the squatter at the federal land sale, as the following quotation will show, against speculators who might attempt to purchase the claim when the squatter had no money to buy or by bidding more than \$1.25 per acre at which price the squatter expected to purchase:

The land in this section was advertised for sale at Dubuque in 1839, but the sale was adjourned until July, 1840. There was a meeting largely attended by the settlers along the Wapsipinicon held at the house of Jacob Heller, in June, 1840, for the purpose of self-protection at the sale. Resolutions were passed, and James McIntosh selected as bidder for Scott and part of Clinton Counties. This was necessary as but few had the money to pay for their land, and there were plenty of sharks ready to take their improvements. The plan was for the settlers to attend the sale *en masse*, give the number of his land to the bidder, and when the auctioneer called that number the bidder let it pass,<sup>27</sup> but if a speculator was to bid, he was to be settled with on the spot. Only one had the temerity to bid on a claim belonging to another. The words had hardly passed his lips before he was lifted over the heads of the crowd and passed out of

<sup>25</sup>Richter, *Geschichte der Stadt Davenport und des County Scott*, (1917), pp. 202, 369, 372.

<sup>26</sup>Franc B. Wilkie, *Davenport Past and Present*, (1858), p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>And the land would not be sold until later when the occupant had the money to buy it.



Iowa in a hurry, and when they pitched him on Illinois soil he was in a demoralized condition.<sup>28</sup>

Some squatters turned speculators themselves, taking claims, selling them; and then repeating the process. Others, in spite of the claim society, managed to take and hold several claims. A number of the early settlers finally held considerable tracts of land, some owning a section or more.

For a number of years only a small percentage of the land could be cultivated and much of it remained unimproved until after the Civil War. In 1865 there were 40,000 acres of unimproved land held by residents and 125,000 acres held by non-residents.<sup>29</sup> Thus more than half of the total area of the county remained unimproved at the close of the Pioneer Period.

The squatters and early settlers built log cabins and broke the prairie. Breaking the prairie was "no snap," but work requiring strength and skill and frequently done by men who made it their special business. The cost of breaking ranged from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per acre.<sup>30</sup>

Sod corn, potatoes, and vegetables could be raised the first year, but spring wheat soon became the chief money crop. The first wheat in Scott County was raised in 1837. Three years later a load of wheat was sold in Davenport, and a shipment was sent to Cincinnati in 1841 selling at from 50 to 56 cents a bushel. Wheat yielded well, yields of from thirty to forty bushels per acre are reported, but half as much was considered a good crop. Wheat production increased rapidly in the forties and fifties. The amount of wheat shipped out jumped from 100,000 bushels in 1844 to 454,000 bushels in 1855-1856. Most of the wheat shipped East after 1854 went by rail. Prices were high on account of the Crimean War (1854-1856), topping at one time \$2.25 a bushel in New York City.<sup>31</sup> But prices fell as soon as the war closed.

Corn in general was the farmers' main standby, however. Next came oats, wheat, barley, potatoes, and other vegetables. Large quantities of potatoes, beans, and onions were raised on

<sup>28</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), p. 1151.

<sup>29</sup>Wm. Duane Wilson, *Description of Iowa and Its Resources*, (1865), p. 20.

<sup>30</sup>*ibid.*; *The Annals of Iowa*, First Series, I, p. 44.

<sup>31</sup>Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, (1888), p. 128.

the sandy tracts in the eastern part of the county. The pioneer farmers were alive to the value of new methods of cultivation, crops, and stock. They attempted to raise tobacco, pears, and peaches. In 1840 a Quaker introduced apple culture and Rockingham Township became noted for its fine apples. Successful experiments were made with drainage, hedges, sorghum, Hungarian grass, and timothy—blue grass was there when the pioneers came. A few farmers introduced blooded stock—horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs. The Civil War stimulated wool production and the establishment of a woolen mill in Davenport gave the sheep farmers a local market for wool.

Scott County farmers organized their first agricultural society in 1840. Adequate support appears lacking, for a new society was formed in 1853, which conducted a fair the following year. At this premiums were awarded to the amount of \$217. In the course of 1854 the Fair Ground Association of Scott County incorporated and purchased eight acres of land near Davenport.<sup>32</sup> A growing interest in gardens and orchards brought forth a horticultural society in 1859. This society also held fairs.

The Scotch farmers of Winfield Township organized a plowing society in 1858. The general aim of the organization was to "promote a more thorough and efficient system of cultivation of the soil by the best approved methods." Members of the society frequently took prizes at State and county fairs and the interest in the society was strong as long as the older members continued active.

Soil, weather, and cultivation are the chief factors of agricultural production. Man controls cultivation and to some extent the fertility of the soil. Weather is an uncontrollable factor. In pioneer times, as ever since, mild and cold winters, dry and wet summers, and more normal seasons have alternated in irregular and unpredictable fashion.

The pioneer farmers suffered as much if not more from wet weather than dry. The spring of 1851 was very wet, but the summer was dry. The summer of 1854 was hot and dry. The summer of 1858 was so wet that the wheat crop was almost a total failure. The corn crop was better, but still small. The

<sup>32</sup>*Fourth Annual Report of the Iowa State Agricultural Society, 1857, pp. 406, 407.*

summer of 1861 was very dry and that of 1862 so wet that wheat yielded on an average but seven bushels to the acre. The crops suffered from drouths in 1863 and 1864 and from wet weather in 1865.

Several winters were unusually severe, so much so that they gave point to the proverbial idea of severe old-time winters. The winter of 1842-1843 was one of the coldest on record. The Mississippi closed on November 26, 1842, and did not open until April 8, 1843. *The Dubuque Express* wrote that for four months, excepting about twelve days, the mercury had not been less than twenty degrees below and for several weeks it ranged between thirty-five and thirty-nine below zero. "Many cattle died for want of provender."

The winter 1848-1849 was very cold, and that of 1854-1855 was first mild and then cold. On January 2, 1855, the frost was out of the ground and the farmers were plowing. Then it turned bitterly cold and stayed cold until spring. The winter 1856-1857 was cold and snowy. A crust formed on the snow and made travel very difficult.

On July 20, 1854, a tornado tore up trees and unroofed houses. One life was lost. A slight earthquake occurred in December, 1842.<sup>83</sup> It may truly be said that this portion of pioneer Iowa had, as the Yankee saying puts it, "considerable weather."

#### RETAIL BUSINESS

The pioneer turned his hand readily to anything that promised returns: not only farming, ferrying, steamboating, but merchandising, banking, and manufacturing as well. The career of J.M.D. (John McDowell) Burrows, one of early Davenport's prominent business men, illustrates this. Burrows was born in New York City. At the age of fourteen he removed with his family to Cincinnati. As a youth of seventeen he entered Lane Theological Seminary, but concluded after two years of study that he lacked several essential qualifications for success in the ministry, and took up the trade of wood-turning at which he worked until he went West in 1838. Near Davenport he bought a tract of 40 acres of land for \$250.

<sup>83</sup>Weather data mainly from *History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), pp. 665-670, 709-714, and the reports of the Iowa State Agricultural Society, 1856-65.

Farther out on the prairie he took a claim of 320 acres. To protect himself against claim jumpers he hired a man to plow several furrows around the land, paying him \$15.00 for the work—exactly the amount for which he sold the half section two years later. In the spring of 1839 he began to farm on the smaller tract. The prospects for a good crop were bright until just before harvest when the entire crop was destroyed by cattle roaming at will over the prairie. Deciding then to go into merchandising, Burrows built a log store in Davenport and there he began a general store in partnership with Robert M. Prettyman.<sup>34</sup>

To promote their retail business it became profitable for them to go into forwarding and manufacturing. The absence of local banks before 1847 and subsequent monetary needs of the community put them into the business of banking. Burrows and Prettyman were not, however, the first retail merchants in Davenport, nor in Scott County. So far as the county is concerned, that honor belongs to a Mr. Lynd, who in 1834 began merchandising in Buffalo, also known in pioneer times as West Buffalo. This town had three stores in 1855. By 1838 Rockingham had become the leading town in the county with its half-dozen or more stores, some whiskey shops, and the best hotel on the Upper Mississippi.

The first hotel in Davenport was opened in 1836 by Edward Powers in a building put up by Colonel George Davenport and Antoine Le Claire. It was known as the Davenport Hotel. In June of the same year John Litch, an old sea captain from Newburyport, New Hampshire, opened the first saloon and store in Davenport. This became a very popular resort, for Litch was an adept in mixing and concocting drinks—punches, cobblers, juleps, and cocktails, all made from whiskey and all very appealing to frontier palates. That the matter of license was probably contrary to his convictions of justice may be judged from the circumstance that “he was on more than one occasion taken in hand by the board of county commissioners.” In October, 1836, James McIntosh offered a small stock of goods for sale in a log house built by Le Claire; and in Decem-

<sup>34</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), pp. 811, 812; *The Annals of Iowa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-113.

ber following, D. C. Eldridge opened a larger establishment with a well-assorted general stock of merchandise.<sup>35</sup>

For several years progress was slow. We hear, however, of a millinery shop being opened by Miss M. C. Cooper of Baltimore and a watch and jewelry shop by R. H. Kinney in 1838. Another watch and jewelry shop, a harness shop, a "butcher's stall," and a shoe store are mentioned in 1841.<sup>36</sup> Real progress came in the later forties and especially in the booming mid-fifties. The city directory of Davenport for 1858 presents a truly imposing array of retail establishments for so young a town. Counting hotels and other places serving food; shops such as boot and shoe shops, tailor shops, etc., where there were both retailing and manufacturing, Davenport in 1858 supported over four hundred retail establishments. Of these sixty-eight were saloons, twenty-four lager beer saloons, three ice cream saloons, thirty-one boarding houses, seventeen hotels, sixty-two groceries, fourteen dry goods stores, seventeen clothing stores, fourteen lumber yards, four furniture stores, seven drug stores, five millinery shops, seven book and stationery stores. Of the rest may be mentioned six country stores, two coal dealers, one ice dealer, three restaurants, and one Yankee notions store.

A. H. Davenport and Samuel Lyter of Rockingham became the pioneer merchants of Le Claire where they began retailing groceries and dry goods in February, 1837. Soon there were also stores at Parkhurst, Princeton and Pinnacle Point. In a few years Le Claire absorbed Parkhurst, Princeton did the same to Pinnacle Point. The business establishments of Le Claire in 1855 included eleven dry goods stores, two clothing stores, one hardware store, one boot and shoe store, one tailor shop, two shoe shops, five hotels, and "candy shops and oyster saloons in any quantity." In Princeton there were four boot and shoe shops, two tailor shops, seven general stores, one drug store, and two "public houses" (hotels) in 1859.<sup>37</sup>

Other early trading centers on the banks of the Mississippi were Valley City and Gilbert. In the interior of the county

<sup>35</sup>Wilkie, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35; *History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), pp. 720, 792, 1205.

<sup>36</sup>Wilkie, *op. cit.*, p. 96; *The Annals of Iowa, op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup>Downer, *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 260, 265, 266.

there were trading centers at Big Rock, Allen's Grove, Dixon, Mount Joy, New Liberty, Amity, Maysville, Round Grove, Blue Grass, and Walcott. Most of these places had a post office,<sup>38</sup> a general store, perhaps a hotel, and one or more mechanics' shops. At Blue Grass there was also a drug store, but no "grog shop was allowed" in that town.

Pioneer retail stores were owned and operated by single proprietors or partnerships. Some stores grew to such proportions that clerks had to be employed and sometimes bookkeepers. Lady clerks were rare.<sup>39</sup> All worked long hours. The stores would occasionally be open until midnight.

Advertising in the local press was being resorted to in an increasing degree to boost business. The merchants also used various other methods to attract customers. One favored method before prohibition was to give customers free drinks of whiskey. Burrows and Prettyman never did, and some people refused to trade with them on that account.

A temperance movement had begun to gain momentum in the county in the late thirties. In 1839 the Reverend Asa Turner of Denmark, Lee County, who might justly be called a latter-day Puritan, organized a total abstinence society in Davenport. The mayor of the city was president, and among its members were such noted Iowa temperance workers as Hiram Price, David S. True, and John L. Davies, who became the authors of the prohibitory law of 1855.

Locally the society had such an influence that the *Davenport Gazette* a few years later wrote that a visitor had searched all over town without being able to find a drop of whiskey. "Cold water has become all the go here," this paper exulted in 1846.

Under the local option law of 1847 all the counties of the state except Keokuk voted against licensing retail liquor establishments, which at that time were officially known as "groceries." The whole state by a large majority approved the prohibitory law of 1855. Davenport gave a majority against this law, but it was approved by the county as a whole.<sup>40</sup>

The prohibitory law of 1855 went into effect July 1, 1855.

<sup>38</sup>There is a list of early Iowa post offices in *Census of Iowa*, 1867, pp. 106-114.

<sup>39</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), p. 912.

<sup>40</sup>August P. Richter *Geschichte der Stadt Davenport und des County Scott*, (1917), p. 662.

There were rumors that enforcement would be resisted. Certain prohibitionists feared that their property and lives were in danger and prepared to defend themselves by borrowing some muskets and a cannon from a local military company. Feelings grew more tense when the authorities, charging illegal possession, seized a quantity of liquor. Twice crowds gathered in the streets, the prohibitionists led by the city marshal and a town constable; the antis by a German-American who had been an officer in the Mexican War. But an actual clash was avoided each time. The second time the crowds were dispersed by the sheriff, who announced to the embattled hosts that he had the sole right to call out a posse to suppress riots.<sup>41</sup>

These were not the only incidents in the Davenport "whiskey rebellion." More liquor was seized by the authorities during the summer of 1855, and this again was followed by an angry demonstration of a crowd of anti-prohibitionists. Strange weapons were in evidence on this occasion such as pitchforks and ancient muskets. In making the arrest of the leader of the demonstration, the sheriff received a severe blow on the head from a club.<sup>42</sup>

The acts of 1847 and 1855 were both ill-considered and impractical and could not be enforced. The act of 1855 contained loopholes and exemptions enough to permit the liquor business to continue, in a fashion, openly and under cover. This act permitted the manufacture of cider and wine from home-grown products and the sale of these beverages in quantities of five gallons or more. Soon beer was also added to the exempted liquors, and thus modified the act of 1855 was no bar to the retailing of alcoholic liquors in general. The pioneer tavern, grog or whiskey shop, however, did not come back, but the saloon came in. The city directory of 1856, published immediately after the approval of the act of 1855, lists three billiard saloons and nine ice cream saloons, but no regular saloons. The city directory of 1858, published about the time of the modification of the act of 1855, lists three ice cream saloons, twenty-four lager beer saloons, and sixty-eight regular saloons.

<sup>41</sup>Conflicting accounts of this are given by B. F. Gue in *The Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, I, pp. 590-593; and by August P. Richter, *op. cit.*, pp. 665-668.

<sup>42</sup>Downer, *op. cit.*, p. 976.

The defeat of prohibition came about to a great extent as a result of the contemporary influx of Irish and German immigrants who became the major element in the population of Scott County—and in some other counties. The Irish were Catholics, the Germans, Catholics and Lutherans, or liberals without any church connection. The latter group generally opposed prohibition and neither the Catholic nor the Lutheran Church took the definite stand against the use of alcoholic beverages that the Calvinistic Churches did. Moreover, there were ardent nationalists among these German liberals, some of whom had fought for a free and independent Schleswig-Holstein, and their fiery spirits rebelled against anything that savored of oppression. To them prohibition was just another form of tyranny, and their political affiliations were made accordingly.

The Republican party came into being at the same time that Iowa made the first experiment with state-wide prohibition. Leading Republicans were also leading prohibitionists, but as they needed votes to remain in control of the state government, they formally gave up prohibition to gain the votes of the German immigrants who were at one with the Republicans in their opposition to slavery.

One problem common to all business men was that the supply of acceptable money and cash was scarce in the back country. In lieu of coin the merchants received a good deal of farm produce including pelts and beeswax. Out-of-state currencies supplemented by occasional local currency relieved the situation somewhat, but the credit business remained large. Farmers often bought on credit from one harvest to another. This proved a dangerous practice to the merchants in the later fifties. On January 1, 1859, Burrows and Prettyman had on their books accounts due them totaling \$165,000 of which very little was ever paid. A. C. Fulton, another Davenport merchant, in consideration of the "love and affection" he had for his customers "blotted out all obligations" due him.<sup>43</sup>

In spite of such losses and such generosity, the pioneer merchant in many instances made his "pile." In the mid-fifties the piles grew so high that many a merchant dreamed, and

<sup>43</sup>*Biographical History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1895), p. 307.



realized his dream, of "more stately mansions." A number of store buildings, some of which in their days may have replaced log houses, then gave way to tall business blocks, several stories in height and ornamental and substantial enough in some cases to be in use today.

#### WHOLESALE BUSINESS

The exchange of store goods for farm produce gave the retailer the extra job of disposing of these products. As a produce man the pioneer merchant bought grain, dressed hogs, and sometimes vegetables. Usually there was a market for such products in the cities down the Mississippi or up the Ohio, but with the serious drawback that while prices might rise quickly, they might also drop to abysmal depths and ruin the merchant. Selling produce to the federal government for consumption by soldiers and Indians was not subject to such fluctuations in price and yielded substantial profits. The Davenport merchants participated in the latter business with very satisfying results.

The produce business required a considerable amount of capital and good business connections, thus only the largest merchants could engage in it. This was changed somewhat by the coming of the railroad to Rock Island in 1854, since smaller shipments could now be made by rail to the East, involving less outlay in money on the part of the shipper. Produce men then, says Burrows in his reminiscences, became "as thick as potato bugs."

The pioneer retailer also acted as agent or forwarder for those wishing to ship produce at their own risk; and for merchants in the interior who bought goods to be delivered in Davenport and from there to be sent on by the agent to their final destination. Such business was called forwarding, an initial stage in the wholesale business.

The first regular wholesale grocery business in Davenport was established by S. Hirschel in 1851; T. Close and Company opened a large wholesale hardware store in 1854. *The Gazette* for November 30, 1859, enumerates sixteen local wholesale establishments. More were added in the sixties, and in 1865

the wholesale houses of Davenport supplied merchants in every branch of retail trade."

#### BANKING

In 1836, a few years after the opening of the Black Hawk Purchase to white settlement, the United States went out of the banking business and from that time on until near the close of the Civil War no United States paper currency (excepting greenbacks) was in use. Various state and local currencies (around 10,000) replaced the national currency, but some states—notably Iowa until 1858—refused to charter banks of issue and even frowned upon banks in general.

Iowa, however, had experimented with banking in territorial times. In 1836 the Territory of Wisconsin, of which Iowa was then a part, had chartered the Miners' Bank at Dubuque. This bank's first published statement in 1837 showed that its capital consisted largely of notes given by the stockholders and of out-of-state currency of uncertain value. The institution at once became the object of suspicion and severe criticism, and, after several years of agitation, the Territory of Iowa in 1845 repealed the bank's charter.

Meanwhile attempts to charter banks of issue in Davenport and Iowa City had come to naught. Thus Iowa, upon becoming a state in 1846, had no currency of its own to give mobility to its rapidly growing land values and its mounting business turnover except the suspected out-of-state currency and a little coin of which there was some, both domestic and foreign, especially the latter. Pioneer annals, for instance, frequently mention the use of French, Spanish, and Mexican coins as medium of exchange. A contracted currency, furthermore, tended to become more contracted by the fact that the land offices of the United States accepted nothing but coin or its equivalent in payment for land. In this way specie was constantly being drawn out of the western country where it was badly needed.

It was then that Iowa capitalists undertook to supply the state with currency by organizing banks of issue in the Territory of Nebraska where the laws were favorable to such banking. Ebenezer Cook and other Davenport land agents obtain-

<sup>44</sup>*Weekly Davenport Democrat*, March 23, 1865.

ed a charter for a bank of issue at Florence (north of Omaha), Nebraska. Cook and his partner, Sargent, already had a land agency in Davenport. In 1847 they expanded this into a banking house through which, as well as through their branches in Iowa City, Dubuque, and Des Moines, they floated their Florence currency. Thus without an Iowa charter the bank of Cook and Sargent was in effect an Iowa bank of issue. Cook and Sargent at once put some of their Florence currency to good use by erecting a fine bank building in Davenport, built of Athens marble and said to have cost \$75,000. It was, at this time, the most pretentious bank building in the West.

Cook and Sargent are sometimes spoken of as the John Pierpont Morgans of early Iowa. In Davenport they did more business than all the other banks put together.<sup>45</sup> Their principal local competitors were Macklot and Corbin, who opened the second local banking house in 1852. The latter firm started with a capital of \$10,000 while Cook and Sargent had only "a few thousand dollars."<sup>46</sup> But Macklot and Corbin did not circulate any currency of their own.

Davenport had five banks in 1855 and nine in 1858, besides the branch of the State Bank of Iowa then being established. Outside of Davenport there appears to have been but one bank in the county. This was located at Le Claire, then a boom town with a population of nearly two thousand people.

Among the nine private banking houses in Davenport in 1858 has been included the firm of Burrows and Prettyman, founded in 1840. While mainly engaged in retailing, forwarding, and manufacturing, it early began to do some banking business, such as selling exchange and accepting money on deposit. In 1854 this firm undertook to issue its own currency to be used locally and known officially as Burrows and Prettyman's checks, though this was strictly speaking in contravention of the statutes and constitution of the state. The amount issued was \$110,000. The railroad, the steamboats, and people generally, accepted it. Cook and Sargent accepted it at their bank by special arrangement on the same basis as their Flor-

<sup>45</sup>Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, (1888), p. 114. Other "branch" bankers in Iowa were Greene and Weare, Cedar Rapids; and Henn, Williams, and Company, Fairfield.

<sup>46</sup>*The History of the First National Bank in the United States*, (1913), pp. 16, 17.

ence currency. In return for this favor Burrows and Prettyman promised to help distribute Cook and Sargent's currency and to sell them all the Eastern exchange that came into their hands. This arrangement worked well for several years. Burrows and Prettyman made about \$10,000 a year on their currency.<sup>47</sup>

Then came the panic of 1857 and the depressed years of the later fifties. Crops were poor in 1858, due to excessive rains. The wheat crop was almost a total failure. Interest rates ranged from thirty to forty per cent. Foreclosures in town and country were common, and a large number of merchants in the smaller towns and in Davenport—three-fourths of them according to one source—went to the wall.<sup>48</sup> Princeton, Le Claire, and Davenport lost large percentages of their populations. In Davenport the population during the panic fell from approximately 17,000 to 10,000.<sup>49</sup>

The close of the Crimean War (1854-1856), when wheat tumbled from \$2.25 to \$.50 a bushel, had done its part to bring this about. But the situation had been greatly aggravated by the hasty contraction of the local and Florence currencies. Matters came to a head when, assisted by *The Iowa State Democrat*, Macklot and Corbin "made war" on Cook and Sargent and stirred up the community to the point of drastic action against the paper currencies.<sup>50</sup>

On the night of August 10, 1858, an angry crowd marched through the streets of Davenport carrying banners inscribed with such slogans as: "Down with Shinplasters," and "We want good Money." Ebenezer Cook was then mayor of Davenport, but this circumstance did not deter the demonstrators from breaking the windows of his residence. Someone also shouted, "Now for Burrows!" But "a voice" prevailed "to let Burrows alone." For a while a local military company

<sup>47</sup>Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>48</sup>*Biographical History of Scott County*, (1895), p. 102.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 102; Franc B. Wilkie, *Davenport Past and Present*, (1858), p. 325. The municipalities, however, did not have the financial difficulties that individuals and partnerships had. In a speech before the Pioneer Settlers' Association in 1859, Laurel Summers said: "To say that any city, town, or even individual is prosperous and solvent in times like the present, may perhaps be regarded as a fiction—nevertheless, it can be demonstrated that the solvency of the cities and towns of Scott County is a fact beyond cavil." See *Proceedings of the Pioneer Association of Scott County, Iowa*, (1859), p. 28. Yet Scott County orders sold at from 65 to 70 cents on the dollar in 1860.

<sup>50</sup>Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 119; H. H. Preston, *History of Banking in Iowa*, (1922), p. 43.

guarded the marble bank. On November 22, a firebrand made an unsuccessful attempt to set it on fire.

Yielding under the strictures and mob-mindedness of the town-folk, Cook and Sargent hastily retired and burned \$200,000 of their Florence currency. There was still, perhaps, about \$100,000 of it in circulation,<sup>51</sup> all of which seems to have been redeemed ultimately.<sup>52</sup> Burrows and Prettyman redeemed all of their checks at par,<sup>53</sup> but neither the Florence currency nor the checks always circulated at par. Both firms were able to retire their circulation because wealthy friends came to their assistance with accommodation loans.

Nevertheless, Cook and Sargent did not long survive the forced redemption of their currency. The closing of an affiliated bank in Boston compelled them to close their bank on December 16, 1859. Burrows had his name on their paper and went down with them, losing his beautiful home, Clifton, and the Albion Mills which, however, he was permitted to lease at \$5,000 a year.

By this time most of the private banks in Davenport had either begun to liquidate or soon did so, with heavy losses to the depositors. About \$200,000 of Cook and Sargent assets sold for \$1,425; and about \$150,000 of Tallman, Powers, and McLean assets did not bring but a little over \$500. Corbin and Dow succeeded Macklot and Corbin and the new partners continued until the First National was organized in 1863.<sup>54</sup>

Austin Corbin served as president of the First National from its founding in 1863 until 1865. In the latter year he resigned from this position, sold his bank stock and other property including his fine residence on Sixth Street and removed to New York City where he made a name for himself as an outstanding railroad magnate.

Mr. Corbin had come from New Hampshire to Davenport in 1851 with certain earthly possessions mainly consisting of a legal education, a limited number of law books, a change of raiment, four hundred dollars in currency, together with a large and well arranged stock of Yankee energy and perseverance which was probably worth more to him than all the rest.

<sup>51</sup>Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>52</sup>Preston, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 69.

<sup>53</sup>Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>54</sup>August P. Richter, "A True History of Scott County," *Davenport Democrat*, January 9, 1921; *The History of the First National Bank in the United States*, (1913), p. 24.

In the great crisis of 1857-1858 which sent nine-tenths of the banks in the country and about the same proportion of mercantile concerns whirling to destruction, the Bank of Macklot and Corbin, which was only second in bulk of business . . . outrode the storm, almost unconscious of its existence—owing solely to perfect management.

In further eulogy of Mr. Corbin the *Weekly Davenport Democrat* for June 22, 1865, from which has been quoted above, continued:

In point of financial ability—careful and successful management in monetary affairs, it is but simple justice to Mr. Corbin to say that he is justly entitled to his position in the foremost rank. As a banker he has a reputation for shrewdness foresight and tact by no means confined to this State, or those of the West. Though sometimes he has been the object of censure on account of his rigid rules of business, no man who entrusted money to his charge ever had the least reason to complain, and surely none others had any right to. Though his investments have been numerous and extensive, ninety-nine out of every hundred were so judiciously made and thoroughly guarded as to be perfectly available. Though handling vast amounts of money for others, scarcely a dollar has ever been lost. Of few, indeed, can as much be said. . . . Close application to business, we are happy to say, has rewarded him handsomely.

The principal competitor of Mr. Corbin in Davenport, Ebenezer Cook, had become a railroad magnate before the debacle in 1859. At the time of the latter's death, which occurred in Davenport, in 1871, he was acting president of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad Company. Cook's partner, George B. Sargent, also recouped his fortunes in the promotion of railroads. He died in Europe where he had gone to dispose of American railroad bonds to European investors.<sup>64a</sup>

#### MANUFACTURING

Several conditions contributed to the growth of manufacturing in Scott County in pioneer times, such as the great distance from the manufacturing centers of the East and South, a rapidly expanding local market for manufactures, the presence in Scott County of several valuable raw products such as wood, clay, grain, and livestock, and finally an increasing number of skilled laborers.

In the thirties and forties manufacturing was still largely in

<sup>64a</sup>Richter, *op. cit.*, Oct. 30, 1921.

the handicraft stage, especially in the western communities. Everywhere there was home manufacturing. Though cloth was not as a rule made in the western homes, clothing was; and if not, often in local shops. Food was prepared for immediate and future use almost entirely in the home, though such standardized goods as salt, sugar, flour, and whiskey were usually purchased. Only a few farm implements were home-made; and, while the pioneers often built log cabins or sod houses, they soon replaced them by frame or brick houses, the construction of which called for manufactured goods produced in large local plants or imported from older manufacturing centers.

The first concern of the pioneer after he had staked out his claim or entered his land or lot would be to build a house. It might be constructed of sod or logs, but some sawed lumber helped to make it more comfortable and more attractive. Though finished lumber could be made by hand there are only occasional instances of this being done, and soon saw mills run by water power arose along the creeks and in places on the Mississippi where canals could be dug conveniently to direct enough water to turn mill wheels.

In 1835 Captain Benjamin W. Clark of Buffalo, Iowa, built the first saw mill in the county near the mouth of Duck Creek in Pleasant Valley Township. Two other saw mills were soon built in this township where there were both water power and logs—one in 1836 by Davis and Haskell, near the mouth of Crow Creek; and another in 1837 by Spencer and Work on Spencer's Creek. In the latter year also a steam saw and flouring mill began to operate in Rockingham.<sup>55</sup>

The native woods of Scott County yielded excellent hardwood logs, which in a few years were supplemented in an ever-increasing number by white pine logs from the pineries of Wisconsin and Minnesota. For general construction white pine in some respects is superior to hardwood because it is light, easily worked, and yet durable. The planing mills, which soon became attached to the larger saw mills, also found it to be superior material to be worked up into doors, sash, blinds, and window frames.

<sup>55</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), pp. 974, 1188, 1230.

Eventually the steam mills superseded the water mills, but both continued to operate throughout the pioneer period. Scott County had twelve saw mills in 1858.<sup>56</sup> Only two of these were water mills. Most of the twelve mills were located in Davenport; the largest plant there, which was operated by Burnett, Gillett and Company, employed about ninety hands.<sup>57</sup> Outside of Davenport there were large saw mills at Buffalo, East Davenport, Le Claire, and Princeton.

Davis and Haskell of Pleasant Valley Township built the first grist mill in the county in 1835. It was a very crude affair, having two common boulders rough hewn for mill stones and housed in a log cabin. Nevertheless it was considered a most valuable improvement in its day and for years farmers from miles around brought their grist to this mill. In 1837 Samuel and Wheeler Hedges built the second grist mill in the county and equipped it with a set of French burr stones, said to have been the first used in this part of the country.

The grist mills soon became flouring mills, which produced bolted meal or flour, and in a few years the Davenport mills were exporting large quantities of high grade flour to the Eastern markets. Scott County had fifteen flouring mills in 1858.<sup>58</sup> One was a windmill, built by the noted Schleswig-Holstein immigrant, N. J. Rusch, who became lieutenant governor of Iowa in 1860. Two were water mills and the rest were run by steam. There was one good-sized mill at Blue Grass and one at Valley City, two at Le Claire and two at Princeton, and five at Davenport. The Davenport mills were operated by David A. Burrows; Jacob Weaver; Gillet, Greene and Company; Graham and Kepner; and Burrows and Prettyman.<sup>59</sup>

The last firm, originally a retail firm, had gone into manufacturing as a better means of disposing of the ever-increasing amount of wheat which they were purchasing from the farmers. In 1845 the partners leased J. H. Sullivan's steam flouring mill at Rockingham and ran it for two years. The first year they lost money because prices fell at the outbreak of hostilities with Mexico, and the losses were so serious that only through the timely intervention of a friend of Burrows was

<sup>56</sup>*Fifth Annual Report of the Iowa State Agricultural Society*, (1859), p. 403.

<sup>57</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), p. 668.

<sup>58</sup>*Fifth Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

<sup>59</sup>*Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline Directory*, (1858), pp. 103-104.



bankruptcy averted. The second year the firm secured several good government contracts to furnish supplies to United States forts and Indian reservations and made some money.

With Rockingham declining in population, Burrows and Prettyman decided to transfer their milling business to Davenport where A. C. Fulton had just completed a three-story mill building. This the firm purchased with the understanding, though without any express agreement, that Fulton would not continue in the milling business. But some of the people did not like the idea of just one big mill, and they easily prevailed upon the mercurial Fulton to undertake the construction of another one, which he dramatically announced would be built and in running order before Burrows and Prettyman could install machinery and start theirs.

When Fulton made this announcement the lumber for the new mill was still growing in the forest, the stone was not yet quarried, nor the brick yet molded. Five months and twenty-two days later it stood completed and ready to grind. Its formal opening occurred on January 15, 1848 when admiring friends served a banquet on the second floor of the building to three hundred Davenport citizens, in honor of Mr. Fulton's spectacular feat. The new mill was called the Aetna Mill.

A few days later Burrows and Prettyman turned on the steam for the first time in their Davenport milling establishment which they named the Albion Mills. Burrows looked upon the Aetna Mill as a challenge which he accepted with the determination that it never should make any money for its operators, and it never did. In a few years the building was sold to Burrows and Prettyman who used it as a warehouse.

Meanwhile the Albion Mills had made a name for their brand of flour. In the East it was known as one of the best grades of flour on the market, and the manufacturers could not half supply the demand.<sup>60</sup> The plant was enlarged several times and made a fortune for its owners, but this was swept away in the financial disaster of Cook and Sargent in 1859, after which the firm was dissolved. Burrows leased his former mill and was again making good when a fire destroyed it

<sup>60</sup>Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

in 1862. It was at that time the largest flouring mill in the state, making from 350 to 500 barrels of flour per day.

Pork packing for export became noticeable in the early forties. By that time the pioneer's "wind splitter" had given way to "more respectable porkers" and with larger corn acreages pork production became profitable, at least in years when prices were good.

As a general industry, pork packing was then in its early stages. Live hogs might be sold to the local butchers, but hogs for packing usually arrived at the rude packing plants dressed and frozen. The packers cut the meat up, salted the sides, smoked the hams, and rendered the lard. During the season—it was always the winter months—cured meats would accumulate, sometimes necessitating pressing into service as warehouses empty cellars and houses. In the spring and summer steamboats carried shipments of produce up and down the Mississippi. A good many shipments went up the river to lead miners and fur traders, and to fill government contracts for garrisons and Indians.

In 1840 John Seaman and Shays and Gano began pork packing in Davenport.<sup>61</sup> Other early packers were Burrows and Prettyman, who became the leading Davenport packers in the forties and fifties. During the season 1853-1854 they packed 19,000 hogs, twice as many as ever before in any one season.<sup>62</sup> In all, the Davenport packers in 1857-1858 packed only 13,000 hogs.<sup>63</sup> The apparent decline in the number marketed at Davenport is explained partly by the fact that many live hogs were now shipped by rail.

Flour milling and pork packing made necessary the cooper shop. Burrows and Prettyman established their own cooper shop which employed a considerable number of men. In the late fifties Davenport had three large and three smaller cooper shops.

At this time woodworking shops and factories had become quite numerous in Scott County. The raw product could be produced locally and the finished product did not usually accumulate in the warehouses of the producers. In 1857 Le

<sup>61</sup>*History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), p. 664. *Weekly Davenport Democrat*, January 11, 1872.

<sup>62</sup>Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>63</sup>*Fifth Annual Report, op. cit.*, p. 394.

Claire had three wagon shops, two cooper shops, two cabinet shops, and one boat yard where steamers were repaired and keel boats built and repaired. Princeton had two wagon shops. In Davenport there were nine wagon shops, eight furniture factories, one employing forty men, a wash tub factory, and twenty-one carpenter shops. At this time too, John Zimmerman had commenced building piano-fortes.

A Scott County manufacturer began to turn local corn into whiskey in 1838. This particular plant was not in operation very long, but other distilleries came to take its place, only to give way in a few years to a number of more permanent breweries. The influx of German immigrants brought the taste and the demand for beer as well as the technology of the brewery. The first brewery in Davenport began to operate in 1851, and Davenport had three breweries in 1857.

Of bakeries there were then five large ones and several small ones in Davenport, the oldest dating from 1842.

Tailor shops, boot and shoe shops were numerous in the county at this time. Le Claire had two tailor shops and two boot and shoe shops; Princeton four boot and shoe shops and two tailor shops; Blue Grass one boot and shoe shop; Davenport nine tailor shops, the largest employing from six to nine men, eleven boot and shoe shops, the largest employing from ten to fourteen men, and many smaller ones. Davenport also had six millinery and dressmaking shops.

Furthermore, before the Civil War, Davenport had a brush factory, a broom factory, several soap and candle factories, a tannery, a buckskin mitten factory, a soda water factory, a vinegar factory, and a number of cigar-making establishments.<sup>64</sup> The latter generally used imported raw products, but in 1864 Nicholas Kuhnen and Company were making Scott County tobacco into Davenport cigars of good quality.<sup>65</sup>

Of heavier industries, Davenport had in 1860 three marble works, seven brick yards and twelve metal and implement works. Harvéy Leonard began to make brick in Davenport in 1837 and made most of the brick produced there for several years. Ezra Carpenter was making brick in Blue Grass

<sup>64</sup>Wilkie, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-270; Downer, *op. cit.*, pp. 260, 267, 280.

<sup>65</sup>*Weekly Davenport Democrat*, December 15, 1864.

in 1845. The implement factories in Davenport turned out plows, threshers, harrows, and horse rakes. John Bechtel started a plow factory there in 1846, which in a decade became the largest of its kind in the state.<sup>66</sup> A plow factory at Le Claire specialized in making breaking plows, and turned out about two hundred of them a year.<sup>67</sup>

According to the census of the United States for 1860, Muscatine County ranked first in manufacturing of the counties of Iowa, with an annual product valued at \$1,538,447. Scott County came next, having a product valued at \$1,145,659. Des Moines County with a product valued at \$1,099,740 was third. The largest item in the value of Scott County manufactures in 1860 was that represented by the milling industry, namely flour and meal. Saw and planing mill products followed as a distant second. But so far as capital investment was concerned, a new industry, the production of illuminating gas, ranked first, and milling second.

#### THE PRESS

Printing and publishing constitute a peculiar branch of manufacturing. The product—whether it be circulars, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals or books—furnishes information and provides for entertainment, through which again it becomes a potent influence in shaping and directing public opinion.

In the later fifties printing and publishing in Scott County were represented by one establishment in Le Claire and five in Davenport. All except one was mainly engaged in the publication of weeklies and dailies in the English and German languages. Only one firm—the Luse, Lone, and Company—made a specialty of publishing books. It employed from twenty to twenty-five hands, and was at the time the only book publishing house in the State of Iowa.<sup>68</sup>

Local historians have been accustomed to indulge in a bit of word play in recounting the beginnings of press history in Davenport whose first newspaper, a Democratic weekly, was *The Iowa Sun and Davenport and Rock Island News*.<sup>69</sup> Of

<sup>66</sup>Wilkie, *op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup>*Fifth Annual Report, op. cit.*, p. 403.

<sup>68</sup>Wilkie, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

<sup>69</sup>Rock Island here refers to the island, not the City of Rock Island. The latter was still known as Stephenson.

course, the beginning of its publication in 1838 was the "rise" of *The Sun*. It "set" in 1842. But before its "setting" the *Davenport Gazette* had "arisen," and under the able management of Alfred Sanders, a Whig of the Henry Clay school, it "rose" to be a tri-weekly in 1853 and a daily in 1854. In 1856 it was published in three editions: a weekly, a tri-weekly, and a daily. Add H. Sanders, a brother of Alfred Sanders, and like the latter a brilliant journalist, joined its editorial staff during the next year. The *Gazette* won the diploma and a \$10 premium at the state fair in 1860 as the "best looking paper" in the state.

There was no Democratic paper in Davenport after 1842 until 1848 when Alexander Montgomery began to publish the weekly, the *Democratic Banner*. After changing owners several times, this "sheet" was finally purchased in 1858 by the firm Richardson and West who merged it with the *Iowa State Democrat*, founded in 1855. In 1859 the latter also absorbed the Democratic *Daily Morning News* which had been issued since 1856. The combination continued under the name of the *Democrat and News* until 1864 when it became the *Davenport Democrat*.

The German press made its debut in 1850 with *Der Demokratischer Herold* (The Democratic Herald), which ceased publication after "a sorry existence" of six or eight weeks. Still there was a real need for a local German newspaper. Though only a few of the German immigrants could read English, they were nevertheless a reading people ready to subscribe for newspapers in their own language. They had come to Iowa to stay and usually became citizens and voters when the residence requirement of five years could be met. This gave the politicians an interest in them and "on an expenditure of about a hundred dollars or so, to which Mr. [Hiram] Price was the largest contributor, some second-hand German type was purchased, and on the 22nd of November, 1851, the first number of *Der Demokrat* was issued." Its motto was "Liberty for All," and its first editor was Theodore Guelich, "a talented young German, fresh from the battle-fields of the Schleswig-Holstein revolution of 1848, in which he had gained many a scar in the name of sweet liberty."

As the name *Der Demokrat* (The Democrat) indicates, this paper was Democratic politically, but Guelich soon espoused the Free Soil creed, and in getting ready for the presidential contest of 1856, he brought out the first issue of the daily edition of *Der Demokrat*. Guelich's political deflection was not acceptable to all the readers of the paper, and these dissatisfied German Democrats then began the publication of the *Beobachter am Mississippi* (Observer on the Mississippi). This paper, however, had too small a following to injure *Der Demokrat*, which continued its forward march as a Republican newspaper, though of an independent hue. In 1858 it was published in three editions: a weekly, a tri-weekly, and a daily.

Theodore Olshausen, another Schleswig-Holsteiner, succeeded Guelich in 1856; and Olshausen again was succeeded in 1860 by still another Schleswig-Holsteiner, Jens Peter Stibolt, a prodigious worker whose "days of recreation for twenty years did not amount to a dozen." Of Theodore Olshausen an admiring friend wrote that "he had an ardent love of liberty, hated slavery intensely, his mind had a great tendency to idealism, he was strongly guided by principles and was much freer from egotism than human frailty generally is. Neither money nor glory could allure him; he was mainly guided by his sense of duty and love of liberty. And yet he was banished from his native country which he loved so well."

It was such men and others like them who guided the destinies of the German press in Davenport for more than half a century.

In the feverish activity and excitement of the mid-fifties when steam presses replaced the old hand presses a number of short-lived newspapers and periodicals were launched. Some like the *Anti-Know-Nothing*; the *Weekly Union*, published for a few weeks in 1856 to boost Millard Fillmore for president; the *Union*, fathered by the Old "Silver Grey" Whigs in the interest of the Bell and Everett ticket in 1860; and the *Davenport Bee*, an independent weekly, all had political axes to grind. Others like the *Iowa Temperance Organ*, published for about a year by Hiram Price and other Iowa prohibitionists, promoted social reform. Others, again, spoke definitely for the business interests such as *Davenport Commercial* soon

changed to *Davenport Courier*, the *Real Estate Register*, and the *Bridge City Record*, both of the latter being devoted especially to real estate affairs. Three new dailies strove for subscribers between 1856 and 1858; *Evening News*, *Davenport Times*, and *Davenport Journal*. Hiram A. Reed's facetious little journal, *The Chip Basket* began its existence in 1856. "It was a small sheet of four columns, which besides making some fun for the public, made some trouble for its owner in the way of buffetings from the aggrieved." Its career was brief. Of other special interests religion and education were represented by the *Christian Evangelist* and the *Iowa Instructor*.

Outside of Davenport only Le Claire had a newspaper before the Civil War. How unstable newspaper work was in the small towns is indicated by the fact that Le Claire had a succession of four newspapers in four years: *Le Claire Weekly Express*, 1856-57; *Le Claire Republic* established in 1858; *Le Claire City Enterprise*, 1858-1859; and *Le Claire Register* established in 1859.<sup>70</sup>

#### PUBLIC UTILITIES

The need for street lighting in Davenport began to be felt in the later forties. In 1849 several public spirited citizens at their own expense put up a dozen oil lamps on Front and Second Street.<sup>71</sup> Five years later local capitalists organized the Davenport Gas Light and Coke Company, which obtained from the city the exclusive right for twenty years of using its streets, alleys, and public grounds for the purpose of furnishing the inhabitants with gas. The franchise fixed the price of gas at \$3.50 per thousand cubic feet for the first two years. Thereafter it was to be the same as that paid in other Iowa cities of equal population and similarly situated as to the cost of manufacturing. The city was lighted with gas for the first time in October, 1855. New additions and improvements were made in 1857. The capital invested increased from \$55,000 in 1854 to \$196,300 in 1860.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup>Data for the section on the press from: *The Twin Cities Directory*, 1856, pp. 132-133; *Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline Directory*, 1858 and 1859, p. 128; Franc B. Wilkie *Davenport Past and Present*, (1858), pp. 267, 311-315; *Twin Cities Directory*, 1859, pp. 19-20; 1860, p. 8; *History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1882), pp. 570-605, 674; *Biographical History of Scott County, Iowa*, (1895), pp. 475-477.

<sup>71</sup>August P. Richter, "A True History of Scott County," in *The Davenport Democrat*, July 4, 1920.

<sup>72</sup>*Directory of the City of Davenport, for 1856 and 1857*, pp. 118-119; *Manufacturers of the United States in 1860*, p. 158.

The price of gas was increased to four dollars per thousand cubic feet before the Civil War and to five dollars during the war. The latter rate remained in force until 1872.<sup>73</sup>

#### BUSINESS MEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The business men of Davenport organized a Board of Trade in 1857. Its elaborate governing board consisted of a president, a vice president, a secretary-treasurer, five directors, a committee of arbitration, and a committee of appeals. The object of the organization was to establish uniformity in local business usages, to promote just and equitable principles in trade, and to collect and publish such information relative to commerce and manufacturing as might promote the prosperity of the manufacturing and commercial classes, and all other classes of the city. There were two classes of members. One consisted of large manufacturers, wholesalers, and capitalists, all of whom paid each a fee of \$10 annually. The other class consisted of professional men and smaller merchants, each of whom paid but half as much as the members of the first class.<sup>74</sup>

The Board of Trade appeared just as the business boom of the mid-fifties was beginning to break. It languished during the following years until the revival of business at the close of the Civil War gave it a new lease on life.

#### LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

In a new community the problem of labor is often the problem of labor shortage, which, as the community grows older, becomes a problem of labor surplus. This sequence was true of Davenport between 1833 and 1858. But after a couple years of turmoil the Civil War came and took up the slack in employment. The United States employed a number of laborers to build an arsenal and to establish a prison camp on Rock Island in the Mississippi. Several military camps were also located on the outskirts of Davenport. The labor surplus was further reduced by enlistments and drafts. Of nearly 4,000 men of military age, Scott County sent more than half to the colors. Of the drafted men, 135 hired substitutes.<sup>75</sup>

The early labor organizations in Davenport grew to some

<sup>73</sup>Richter, *op. cit.*, September 4, 1921.

<sup>74</sup>*Directory of Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline*, 1858 and 1859, p. 127.

<sup>75</sup>Richter, *op. cit.*, February 27, 1921, March 27, 1921.



extent out of the societies organized by the state, sectional, and foreign groups. This is especially noticeable in the case of the German immigrants. In 1861 workmen organized the *Gewerbe Verein* (Mechanic's Society), which had weekly meetings and functioned as a labor union until after the Civil War.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Davenport City Directory for 1863*, p. 170; for 1866, p. 141.

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