

ATTEMPTED LYNCHINGS IN IOWA.¹

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In this paper an attempt has been made to set forth the various attempted lynchings in Iowa in such a way as to be of value to the students of history and sociology. In doing this a brief history of the various cases has been given, followed by a critical analysis and interpretation of them, and closing with a chronological list of the cases with a short history of each.

It is probably true that some of the cases of attempted lynching have not been discovered by the writer, but it is believed that the investigation has resulted in obtaining approximately all of them. It is certainly true that enough of them have been discovered to make the conclusions drawn from the analysis practically the same as if it were known that all of them had been discovered.

The phenomenon of lynching is distinctively American and probably had its origin in the United States in the latter part of the eighteenth century.² Other countries have had mob violence, but the mobs of other countries have not exercised the same correctional power over offenders as the mobs in the United States.

The term Lynch Law has been so broad in its meaning as to include many kinds of punishment administered by a mob. The change in the content of the term has been characteristic of it in Iowa as elsewhere, and in order to get a definition that would include all the social phenomena which were at any time included in it, it was necessary to select a very broad statement of what could be termed a lynching. The best at-

¹A history of the lynchings in Iowa was given in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April, 1912, Vol. X, No. 2.

²Cutler's *Lynch Law* (1905), p. 39; Black's *Lynchings in Iowa* in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April, 1912, Vol. X, No. 2, p. 151.

tempt at defining it was found in the Ohio Laws of 1896.³ Here a lynching is defined as follows:

Any collection of individuals assembled for any unlawful purpose intending to do damage or injury to anyone, or pretending to exercise correctional power over persons by violence, without authority of law, shall for the purpose of this act be regarded as a "mob" and any act of violence exercised by them upon the body of any person, shall constitute a lynching.

This very definitely defines a lynching. An attempted lynching would be any trial at accomplishing such violence as is defined in the above law which results in failure for any reason whatsoever. The cases enumerated in the chronological list have found place there because they were attempted lynchings according to this definition.

For data on the cases here given the writer searched through approximately all of the existing files of newspapers published in the State from 1834 to 1860, after which time the search was continued and confined to the files of the *Iowa State Register*, *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, and the *Iowa City Republican*. These files were found in the collections of the Historical Department of Iowa at Des Moines and The State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa City and in various other libraries and newspaper offices in the central and eastern part of Iowa. Such other sources as the ANNALS OF IOWA, annals of counties, the *Iowa Biographical Series*, *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, county histories, etc., as well as correspondence with about three hundred persons who were acquainted with the facts relative to the various cases, were freely used in order that the cases might be justly presented.

To the persons included in the list of correspondence the writer is deeply indebted for much information that otherwise would have been unobtainable. Especially to Professor F. I. Herriott of Drake University, and Professor J. L. Gilin, previously of the State University of Iowa, now of the University of Wisconsin, is he indebted for encouragement and helpful criticism.

³Cutler's *Lynch Law* (1905), pp. 236, 237, where there is a quotation from 92 *Ohio Laws* 126, and a reference to 93 *Ohio Laws* 161, sections 4426-4 to 4426-14 of the *Revised Statutes*, and 93 *Ohio Laws* 411, sections 5908 of Title I, Part Fourth, *Revised Statutes, Crimes and Offenses*; Black's *Lynchings in Iowa* in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April, 1912, Vol. X, No. 2, pp. 151, 152.

In a number of cases the names of the persons who were objects of attempted lynchings could not be found, and where this occurred blank spaces have been left to indicate the fact in the chronological list of the cases. In other cases the exact place and time of occurrence could not be found, and where this difficulty was encountered the internal evidence was used, where there was any, to define the place and time, and where there was no evidence as to the time and place an arbitrary arrangement in the chronological list was necessary.

With the opening of the Black Hawk Purchase in 1833 a large influx of immigrants began in that part of the present State of Iowa lying north of the Des Moines river and directly west of the Mississippi, a tract of land about fifty miles wide reaching as far north as Clayton county. The majority of the very early immigrants came from the South. After a short time other districts of the United States contributed in larger proportions. It was long after the State was admitted to the Union that the native-born gained the majority. A statistical analysis of the census reports will show a very complex population in the early part of Iowa history and with this fact in mind the student of sociology is not surprised at the large amount of such crime as lynching in the State.

Those who came to Iowa in the early immigration movement were rugged, aggressive people whose home life previous had been in the less favorable districts of the United States for obtaining subsistence, and as a result they were constantly used to doing things for themselves and not waiting for the slow arm of the law to effect them. Coming from the rough and broken districts of the South and the eastern parts of the United States, they naturally settled along the rivers and streams in Iowa where fuel, water, and protection were near at hand. Considering the prairies as unfertile because no trees grew on them, the wooded region was more attractive and became settled first. This fact brought the district in which crime was committed within the rougher districts for the most part. More than that, criminals could

commit crime and escape justice easier in the wooded districts than in any other, and for this reason, together with many other contributory ones, the crime districts of Iowa in the early days were confined largely to these wooded districts. The same environment favorable to crime lent facility to lynchings, and as a result the lynchings were likewise more frequent here than elsewhere.

So far as this investigation has been able to disclose, there have been at least sixty-eight attempted lynchings in Iowa. These have not been evenly distributed over the time space from 1834 to 1912, but if one glances at the chronological description of these cases he will see that they have been becoming increasingly prevalent if an absolute number basis is taken for a comparison. On the other hand if one compares the attempted lynchings of recent times with those of the early period on a per capita basis he will find that they are becoming less frequent.

The causes for the attempted lynchings may be classed as direct and indirect. The direct causes were the occasions for the attempts and the indirect causes were the conditions of the environment that were favorable to lynching. Of the direct causes there were political, economic, and social ones. The largest number of these were social, of which murder was the most frequent. It occurred more than thirty times. Of all the cases that could be definitely located it was found that fifty-three per cent of them occurred in wooded districts. This fact shows that probably the environment added much indirectly to the cases of attempted lynching. This fact when considered along with the fact that the districts were populated with a large Southern element coming from the less favorable districts of the South, adds something towards the explanation of the lynching phenomenon.

It was found that the months of the year when the most of the attempted lynchings occurred were April and July. If the time of occurrence is charted it will be seen that the general tendency is for the attempts to increase with the general rise in temperature, reaching the highest mark in July.

A statistical analysis of the day of the week on which the different attempts occurred, showed a marked tendency to approach a maximum on Wednesday and on Saturday. This varied from the curve representing the lynchings in that they tended to occur most often at the last of the week.⁴ A possible explanation may suggest itself in the economic conditions which make attempted crimes and especially lynchings more easily successful at the close of the week when the work of the week is done and crowds gathered in the towns for trading and social intercourse.

An investigation into the time of day when the attempted lynchings occurred showed that they were most frequent in the night when rapid fulfillment of plans and escape of detection were possible.

The causes of failure to accomplish the purpose of the mob gatherings are varied. Many failed on account of the efficiency of the police force and the strength of the jails, others by the escape of the victim and lack of mob leadership, and still others by the compliance of the intended victim with the demands of the mob.

The mobs that attempted to lynch in Iowa varied in size, but so far as estimates could be obtained they showed an average of more than three hundred per mob.

The mob composition has been varied. Some were composed of liquor men, some of farmers with no organization behind them, some were composed of Vigilantes and Regulators, and still others of various elements.

Other indirect causes might be mentioned, among which are "yellow journalism," inadequacy of the courts, etc. Such causes have added to the mob excitement and the degree of openness with which they acted. The participants have reverted to the primitive instincts and allowed conditions adverse to self-preservation to draw them into actions impossible in calmer moments.

⁴Black's *Lynchings in Iowa* in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April, 1912, Vol. X, No. 2, p. 162.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS ATTEMPTED LYNCHINGS IN IOWA,
CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED.

Patrick Brennan.—“A Mr. John O’Morra was knocked on the head with a club while sky-larking, as they called it, by Patrick Brennan—rather rough playing as the poor man died immediately. The officers of the lynch law turned out to arrest the offender, but he had made his escape.”⁵

G. W. Hayes, Jefferson County.—One of the early claim holders in Jefferson county was G. W. Hayes. He laid claim to a much larger tract of land than was usual for a settler, and when his neighbors remonstrated with him he remained obstinate, refusing to give up any of it and went to Fairfield to enter his claim. While he was away a mob came to his house, thinking he was at home, and attempted to frighten him out by shooting holes in his house. His wife, being the only one at home, was badly frightened and was able with much difficulty to persuade the mob that her husband had gone to Fairfield to enter the claim.⁶

G. W. Hayes, Jefferson County.—At another time the mob came to the home of G. W. Hayes and placed a board over the chimney and attempted to smoke him out but they failed in this also. Hayes persuaded them that he had sufficient evidence to convict them in court and they ceased to molest him.⁷

Patrick O’Connor, Dubuque County, May 19, 1834.—This same Patrick O’Connor who was mentioned in the article on *Lynchings in Iowa*⁸ was the object of an attempted lynching on May 19, 1834. This mob action occurred just after the murder of George O’Keaf when the people were highly excited by the news of the murder. The more conservative members of the mob persuaded them to desist and allow the man a fair trial.⁹

⁵Langworthy’s *Dubuque: Its History, Mines, Indian Legends, etc.*, in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1910, p. 391.

⁶Correspondence of the writer.

⁷Correspondence of the writer.

⁸Mill’s *Story of the Earliest Hanging in Iowa* in *The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), September 25, 1910.

⁹*The History of Polk County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880), p. 518; Porter’s *Annals of Polk County, Iowa, and the City of Des Moines* (1898), pp. 504, 505.

The Reeves family, Polk County.—The Reeves family was suspected of being connected with the gang of horse thieves that were doing so much work in Polk county, and a mob of citizens went to the Reeves home and gave them orders to leave the country under penalty of severe punishment if they refused to go. Then the family moved to Fort Des Moines from their home in Linn Grove on the North River. There were two old men and several grown sons in the Reeves family.¹⁰

The Reeves family, Polk County.—The Reeves family had not lived in Fort Des Moines long when Cameron Reeves killed James Phipps. The citizens of North River heard of it, and fearing that some trouble would arise over it they took upon themselves the trouble of forcing them again to move. Cameron had been placed in jail at Oskaloosa, so he escaped the visit of the mob. The remaining family were visited one day by about sixty men and were again told to leave the country. When the mob was approaching, Presley Reeves saw them and thought that he would make a run for liberty, and started across a corn field. He was captured in a short time and brought back. The mob forced them to load all their possessions on wagons and leave. After their departure they seem to have made a better record, as Cameron became a prominent man in Omaha and served as sheriff for several years.¹¹

Harvey Leonard,¹² ———, Scott County, September 5, 1855.—“We learn from the Davenport *Gazette* that a mob of Germans, armed with pitchforks, and old muskets and revolvers, made a demonstration upon the office of a Justice of the Peace in that city, on Wednesday last, to recover possession of some liquor seized and deposited there under the liquor law. Four of the ringleaders of the crowd were ar-

¹⁰*The History of Polk County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880), pp. 518, 519; Porter's *Annals of Polk County, Iowa and the City of Des Moines* (1898), pp. 505-507.

¹¹*The History of Polk County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880), pp. 518, 519; Porter's *Annals of Polk County, Iowa, and the City of Des Moines* (1898), pp. 505-507.

¹²The account of this case does not give the name of the sheriff or deputy sheriff, and it is assumed that Harvey Leonard was the first man since he was sheriff at that time. The name of the deputy could not be found. See Downer's *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa* (1910), p. 559.

rested, not, however, without stout resistance, in which the sheriff was severely pounded over the head with a club, and his assistant shot in the side.

“The Anti-Temperance ticket was successful in that county at the late election and hence these ‘first fruits’ of the Locofoco Liquor triumph.”¹³

Richard Custer, Washington County, April 15, 1856.—A sturdy blacksmith of Marion township, Washington county, named Richard Custer, was accused of adultery and the spirit ran so high that a lynching party was organized. Probably about fifteen men went to his home on the night of April 15, 1856, at ten o'clock, and attacked the house. Custer defended himself and shot John Dewese and killed him. Dewese was the mob leader, and when he fell, Custer made his escape in the confusion and the mob were unable to find him when they had regained their self-control.¹⁴

Isaac Ridgway, Poweshiek County, 1857.—Isaac Ridgway was the father-in-law of William B. Thomas who was lynched in Poweshiek county in 1857. The Ridgway family had made a bad record in the county and surrounding country and the citizens finally decided to rid the country of them. In the spring of 1857 a mob came to the Ridgway home and gave them orders to leave the country within ten days. In the ten days' time allowed, Isaac went to Des Moines and, before Judge W. H. McHenry, filed information against eight or ten of them. These men were brought up and examined before the Mayor of Des Moines and after a time were discharged. Those who had been thus brought up then charged Ridgway with perjury and had him brought before a justice of the peace. Ridgway was allowed to give bail and it was purposely arranged that as many of his family as possible should have their names attached to the bond, for they knew that this would be the last of Ridgway. As soon as Ridgway was released on this bond, he and his whole family left the country.¹⁵

¹³*The Daily Gate City* (Keokuk), September 11, 1855; *Daily Journal* (Muscatine), September 13, 1855; and the *Des Moines Valley Whig* (Keokuk), September 12, 1855.

¹⁴Correspondence of the writer.

¹⁵*Porter's Annals of Polk County, Iowa, and the City of Des Moines* (1898), pp. 512-515.

Canada McCullough, Cedar County, 1857.—As lynching in Cedar county became more frequent in 1857, some of the best citizens began to denounce it as a means of justice and to censure those who participated therein. Among those who thus denounced lynching was Canada McCullough, a wealthy farmer of Cedar county. The Regulators heard that he had been denouncing them and they gave him orders to leave the country. McCullough decided to remain in the country and defied their power to control his denunciations. He provided himself with three rifles for self-defense and made portholes in his cabin so that he might be ready for an attack. One day in 1857 the Regulators came up on horseback and stopped in front of his home. McCullough stepped to the door with a loaded rifle, ordered the leader to stop and make known his business. He was informed that he must cease denouncing the Regulators or leave the country at once. McCullough replied that he would do as he pleased about that and ordered the mob to withdraw or suffer the consequences. The mob knew that he was a sure shot and that he would defend himself with his life, and after a short parley they withdrew and did not molest him again. The Regulators were from Big Rock and they were well known by McCullough.¹⁸

John Pardee, Nat Pardee, Ben Pardee, Bart Pardee, Boone County, spring of 1857.—In the spring of 1857 the Pardee family, consisting of John, Nat, Ben, and Bart, were suspected of stealing and were ordered out of the country. They did not obey the orders and finally the farmers of Boone county attacked the house, but they found it well fortified. Being unable to get the Pardees out of the house in this manner, they tried burning them out. A wagon loaded with bundles of oats was prepared and rolled toward the house, and as it approached the bundles were lighted with fire. As they were about to cast the burning oats bundles on the house the Pardees opened fire and frustrated the attempt. One of the mob was killed and some others were wounded. After a parley they decided to wait until morning and then attack the house again, but when morning came the mob found that

¹⁸*The History of Cedar County with a History of Iowa* (Historical Publishing Company, Chicago, Cedar Rapids, 1901), Vol. I, pp. 369-371.

the Pardee family had left the country. The house not being watched closely during the night, the Pardees secretly escaped.¹⁷

Henry Garrett,¹⁸ Jackson County, April 17,¹⁹ 1857.—The confession of Gifford to the murder of Ingles implicated David McDonald and Henry Garrett. Gifford said that these two men had hired him to kill Ingles. A mob gathered and after a short search found Henry Garrett. In order to get him to surrender, the mob had to promise him a fair trial in the courts. He had been so well fortified in his home that he could defy the mob, and they had to make this concession to get him without loss of life among themselves. The mob never intended to carry out their promise, but to make it appear that they did they turned him over to the officers, intending to get him later from them. The justice of the peace, Eleazer Mann, learned that the mob intended to lynch him, and he took his prisoner secretly out of the back door of the jail and transferred him to Davenport, going via Fulton and Bellevue. From Davenport he was again taken to Fort Madison for safe keeping. When the mob heard that he was transferred to Fort Madison they gave up hopes of getting him, but it was not until they had followed close upon the heels of the prisoner for some time that they ceased to follow him.²⁰

William B. Thomas, Poweshiek County, April 17, 1857.—William B. Thomas, alias "Comequick", when on trial at Montezuma for the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Casteel, came near being lynched on April 17, 1857, by a mob that collected because of the delay of the case in the court. The lynching was prevented by a strong guard force that had been placed about the court room. Judge Stone and others

¹⁷In *Days when Horse Thieves Had Way Stations Near Boone in The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), August 22, 1909; *The History of Boone County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880), pp. 471, 472; and correspondence of the writer.

¹⁸Ellis says that the man's name was Jarrett.

¹⁹Ellis also says that the date was the day following the Gifford lynching which would be the 12th of April, but *The Washington Press* says it was on the Friday before the 22nd of April, which would be the 17th.

²⁰Ellis's *More About the Thrilling Crimes in Pioneer Days*, in the *Annals of Jackson County, Iowa*, No. 3, July-October, 1906, pp. 68-75; *The Washington Press*, April 22, 1857.

made addresses to the mob and finally succeeded in dispersing it. Thomas was lynched a little later.²¹

— — —, — — —, — — —, Cedar County, June, 1857.—About the 25th of June, 1857, a woman and two men were chased out of Cedar county because they had been suspected of harboring horse thieves. The Committee seems to have followed them as far as Burlington where they found that one of the men had gone through that place only a few hours in advance of the Committee. So far as has been learned, the mob did not catch any of them.²²

— — —, Jackson County, July, 1857.—Because the vigilance committee in Jackson county thought that the taxes were too high in one township, they met in July, 1857, and demanded that the assessor reduce them. The assessor was waited upon by the committee in order to force him to accede to their demands.²³

— — —, Jackson County, July, 1857.—A certain surveyor established a line in Jackson county that was not agreeable to a member of the vigilance committee, and he, too, was the object of the committee's visitation in July, 1857. As a result of this visitation the surveyor packed up his possessions and left the country.²⁴

— — —, — — —, Cedar County, July 31, 1857.—The organization of the "Law and Order" men did good work in Cedar county on July 31, 1857, when they prevented a mob from lynching two men they had taken from Mechanicsville.²⁵

J. W. Brown, Mahaska County, August 3, 1857.—On the night of the election in Oskaloosa, August 3, 1857, J. W. Brown, the editor of the *Herald*, and E. W. Rice sat talking in the office of the former, when about midnight a saloon keeper, Bowen, and his gang, came past. Brown and Bowen had difficulty in getting along peaceably with each other. Stopping under the office window they began to make threats

²¹*Des Moines Valley Whig* (Keokuk), May 20, 1857.

²²*The Daily Hawk-Eye* (Burlington), July 1, 1857.

²³*Muscatine Daily Journal*, July 17, 1857.

²⁴*Muscatine Daily Journal*, July 17, 1857.

²⁵*Quasqueton Guardian*, August 1, 1857.

upon the life of Brown, which were easily overheard within. As the threats became more violent, Brown armed himself and stood ready for defense. A few minutes later Bowen was heard to declare that he would head the gang and they would clear the office. As he started for the door, Brown called out to him to stop or suffer the consequences. Bowen reached the door and started to break it open, but was shot before he succeeded. He fell, mortally wounded, and the mob did not dare go further.²⁶

Leonard Brown, Polk County, 1860.—In 1860 Leonard Brown was prosecuting some saloon keepers in Des Moines and their anger was so aroused against him that they attempted to mob him. Brown escaped, however.²⁷

A. N. Marsh, Polk County, 1862.—The marshal of Des Moines, A. N. Marsh, in 1862, killed a man named King with whom he had had trouble and at the time was attempting to arrest. As soon as Marsh saw that his victim was dying he fled to his home and from thence to parts unknown. A mob pursued him, threatening to use summary vengeance if they were able to catch him.²⁸

— — —, Keokuk County, 1863.—The vigilance committee became aware that a thief was at work in Keokuk county some time in 1863, and they set about to catch and lynch him. The committee gathered at a school house one night and hitched their horses in the woods nearby. It is reported that while they were organizing within, the thief passed by, saw the horses and knowing what it meant, left the country. The mob was estimated at about a hundred men.²⁹

Benjamin McComb, Wapello County, August 31, 1864.—Benjamin McComb was on trial for a double murder in Ottumwa in 1864 and a mob, which grew irritated at the long proceedings in the courts, on August 31st, attempted to lynch

²⁶*The Daily Hawk-Eye* (Burlington), August 6, 1857.

²⁷Correspondence of the writer.

²⁸*Porter's Annals of Polk County, Iowa, and the City of Des Moines* (1898), pp. 521-524.

²⁹*The History of Keokuk County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880), p. 451.

him, but by doubling the guard force the officers were able to prevent it.³⁰

— — —, Poweshiek County, October, 1864.—Some officers were sent to arrest a number of Copperheads about fourteen miles south of Grinnell in October, 1864, and in making the arrest one of the officers was shot and mortally wounded. One of the Copperheads was also wounded and captured. He was taken to Grinnell where he came near being lynched by a mob.³¹

Emerson Reed, — Green, — Shields, Dubuque County, March, 1865.—Emerson Reed, Mr. Green, and Mr. Shields were arrested in Galena, Illinois, and brought to Dubuque for trial. They were met by a mob of about four hundred men crying "Hang them", but the prisoners were finally safely lodged in jail in spite of the mob efforts to lynch them.³²

James Madison Kibben, Henry County, April 16, 1865.—James Madison Kibben "was a Virginian and a Democrat and though at all times loyal to the Union he felt that the Civil War was brought about through the machinations of politicians and could have been avoided. He was kindly disposed toward the Southern people and while for the Union was not entirely friendly toward Lincoln.

"Mt. Pleasant was intensely loyal to both the Union cause and Abraham Lincoln, and Mr. Kibben's ideas were unpopular in the community. There had been murmurings against him and by some he had been stigmatized from time to time as a 'Copperhead'. Throughout the War some evidences of ill will had been shown the family. His daughter, Mary, was a teacher of mathematics in the college at Mount Pleasant. While there was no direct cause for it, the feeling was such that she resigned. The entire family withdrew from membership in the Methodist Episcopal church. Mrs. Kibben and her daughters afterwards returned, but Mr. Kibben did not.

³⁰*Daily Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), February 21, 1865.

³¹*Iowa City Republican* (Weekly), October 5, 1864.

³²*Dubuque Semi-Weekly Times*, March 10, 1865.

“During the War a stranger called at the house and tried to gain the confidence of Mr. Kibben and beguile him into expressions of sympathy with the Southern cause. It was always thought by the family that this man was a spy. Near the end of the War a son, Walter Kibben, resigned his position in Sanders & Kibben’s bank because of the ill will growing out of the discussion of War subjects.

“In these matters the Kibben family were not so ill-used as some others in Mount Pleasant.

“No personal violence was suggested until the day after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Kibben had gone to the bank as usual and was sitting in the bank office when the news of the calamity came. In discussing it he said in the presence of quite a number that were assembled that, ‘the country could not afford the loss at that time as well as it might at an earlier period.’ This was misconstrued and misquoted by some person unknown, until in the words of the mob that assembled it was claimed that he had said that, ‘it was too bad that it had not happened before’. One Wray Beattie, hearing the rumor, went to the bank to demand an explanation but did not find Mr. Kibben, who had started for home. Not gaining any satisfactory information, Beattie gathered from the street corners and from in front of the post office a group of men which soon grew into a mob, and they started after Kibben shouting ‘hang him’, ‘hang him.’ The mob on its way, Beattie dropped out. They overtook Mr. Kibben at his gate and demanded a retraction. Being a man of stern disposition, there was no possibility of any retraction from him. His daughters came out of the house and asked him to say anything that the mob wanted in order that he might come in and be left in peace. He said to them that he was an old man, and infirm, and that he ‘might as well die now as at any time’.

“The disturbance attracted the attention of William Corkhill and Charles Snider, both prominent Republicans, Abolitionists and Lincoln men. They came and appealed to the mob for reason, finally proposing that Kibben return to the Bank, repeat his remark and explain the meaning. This he

consented to do if the mob would precede him to the bank, refusing to go with the mob or in their custody. The mob having left, he proceeded with Messrs. Corkhill and Snider to the bank, where he stated his true meaning and the crowd dispersed. The family cannot recall the names of any of the mob, but are sure that it did not include any persons of standing in the community.

"There was no further trouble, but for a long time there were threats of violence. The family purchased firearms and prepared to defend themselves, but there was never any occasion for their use. After a time a reaction set in and former friends were reconciled."²²

— — —, — — —, — — —, Jackson County, 1867.—Not long after the Conk murder trial in 1867, in Jackson county, three men were taken to the jail at Andrew on charge of murder. The citizens were aroused and a well-laid plot was made to lynch the prisoners. The town was picketed so that the prisoners could not escape. It became known to the officers that a lynching was intended, and in order to save the prisoners it was necessary to run the picket and get aid from Maquoketa. A little boy was selected and sent out as if to get the cows, and by morning a posse came from Maquoketa just in time to save the prisoners. The mob had arrived at 9:00 a. m. but the plans were defeated when the aid came.²⁴

Hiram Wilson, Lucas County, July 6, 1870.—Hiram Wilson was captured in the woods near Chariton by a mob on July 6, 1870, and only by a stout fight by the officers did he escape being lynched. The reason for the attempt at lynching was that he had mortally wounded Sheriff Lyman of that city. He was lynched later on the same day when the news of the death of the sheriff had spread.²⁵

George W. Kirkman,²⁶ Polk County, December, 1874.—George W. Kirkman had the reputation of being a very cruel

²²Correspondence of the writer.

²⁴*The History of Jackson County, Iowa* (Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1879), pp. 356-407.

²⁵*The History of Lucas County, Iowa* (State Historical Company, Des Moines, 1881), p. 565; (See also *Chariton Democrat*, July 12, 1870.)

²⁶*The Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), December 25, 1874, gives the name as George A. Kirkman.

husband. He drove two of his sons from home and his wife also left, refusing to live with him. She fled to the home of William Zinsmaster, her brother-in-law. Kirkman had property in Polk and Story counties and was of considerable wealth, and when Mrs. Kirkman fled from his home, the neighbors, judging from his actions, thought he had gone insane and an attempt was made to divide up the property for the support of the family. Kirkman refused to have this done and attempted to get his wife to return. Zinsmaster had been appointed to make a division of the property and of course some feeling arose on account of it between him and Kirkman. A few nights afterwards Zinsmaster's barn was burned and evidence pointed to Kirkman as the offender. The citizens took the matter up and sent him an invitation to attend an investigation meeting. He declined this invitation. A mob of citizens took him to the woods and threatened to hang him, but after a long parley he was allowed to go. He was lynched a little later.²⁷

Samuel E. Watkins, Monona County, June 27, 1877.—During the night of June 27, 1877, a mob raided the Onawa jail with the intention of lynching Samuel E. Watkins who was confined there on charge of murder. Through the efforts of the sheriff the prisoner was saved.²⁸

Reuben Proctor, Warren County, November 12, 1877.—The lynching of Reuben Proctor was prevented on November 12, 1877, because of the strength of the jail at Indianola. The jail was stormed for several hours and finally the mob gave up and left, thinking they could not break open the door. If they had known it, only a little further effort would have made it successful as the door was almost ready to give way when they ceased. Proctor had been confined for assault. Miss Augusta Cading, the victim, died a little later, and as he was on trial another mob succeeded in lynching him.²⁹

²⁷*The Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), December 25, 1874; *The History of Polk County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880), p. 530; *The Daily Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), December 17, 1874.

²⁸*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), June 27, 1877.

²⁹*The History of Warren County, Iowa* (Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1879), pp. 462, 463.

Henry Weese, Lee County, March, 1878.—On the fifteenth day of March, 1878, occurred the murder of Henry and Margaret Greaser in Jefferson township, Lee county. Evidence led to the arrest of Henry Weese and Fredrick Knoeh as the murderers. Knoeh proved an alibi but Weese was retained in Ft. Madison jail for trial. A search through the clothes of Weese discovered more than \$1,900. He was considered guilty by such a number that finally a mob went to the jail one night and demanded that he be delivered to them. The former mayor, Dr. A. C. Roberts, then editor of the *Democrat* was a popular man, and as he lived near the jail he was secured to address the mob, and after a time he was able to disperse them. Weese was tried later for the double murder, proven guilty, and sentenced to the penitentiary for life.⁴⁰

— Jones, Benton County, June 10, 1878.—After a mob had burned William Hick's barn, wounded him and frightened him out of the country, they immediately went to the house of Jones, June 10, 1878, and attempted to lynch him, but they did not find him. Several volleys were fired into the house in a vain effort to get him out, but no response came and they finally disbanded.⁴¹

— —, Green County, July, 1878.—“At Grand Junction a few days ago a tramp attempted to commit an outrage on two little girls, six and seven years, whom he had enticed off in the weeds, but was frightened off by parties who discovered his designs, arrested and narrowly escaped lynching.” This happened about the middle of July, 1878.⁴²

Henry Abel, Washington County, July 2, 1879.—An convict, Henry Abel, was paying his respects to Miss Haskins of Clay township, Washington county, when an objection made by the parents caused him to murder both of them. Abel was searched for by the mob who intended to lynch him if they caught him, but they were unsuccessful. This was on July 2, 1879.⁴³

⁴⁰*The History of Lee County, Iowa* (Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1879), pp. 462, 463.

⁴¹*The History of Benton County, Iowa* (Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1878), p. 380.

⁴²*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), July 19, 1878.

⁴³*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), July 3, 1879.

William Pickering, Louisa County, July 3, 1879.—The murder in Louisa county, of William Teets by William Pickering on July 3, 1879, called out a large mob which pursued the murderer, intending to lynch him. Pickering evidently had committed the murder because of the marriage of his mother-in-law to the victim, whom he disliked.⁴⁴

Jerome West, Jones County, October 1, 1880.—An convict, Jerome West, was arrested and placed in the penitentiary on charge of murdering George W. Yule of Jackson township, Jones county, and on October 1, 1880, a mob of about four hundred men, thinking he had been placed in the county jail, attacked the jail and were disappointed to find that West was not there.⁴⁵

John Weise, John Gwinn, Charles D. Errickson, Polk County, April 14, 1882.—At the time of the murder of Mayor R. W. Stubbs of Polk City, Polk county, John Weise, John Gwinn, and Charles D. Errickson were arrested on charge of murder. An attempt was made by a mob in Polk City on April 14, 1882, to lynch these men, but the officers succeeded in getting them away to Des Moines for safe-keeping.⁴⁶

Leonard Brown, Polk County, July, 1883.—Leonard Brown was outspoken against mob action at the time of the murder of Mayor R. W. Stubbs of Polk City, and some of his neighbors set upon him one day in July, 1883, in order to force him to keep quiet on the subject.⁴⁷

William Barber, Isaac Barber, Bremer County, June 6, 1883.—William and Isaac Barber, two desperadoes well known in Iowa, were arrested in 1883 on charge of murder and confined in the jail at Waverly. Rumors of a lynching party being formed put the officers on their guard and they took the prisoners to Independence for safe-keeping. In the night, June 6, 1883, the mob came to the jail at Waverly and demanded the Barber brothers, but they were disappointed to find they were not in the jail.⁴⁸

⁴⁴*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), July 10, 1879.

⁴⁵*Iowa State Register*. (Des Moines), October 13, and October 20, 1880.

⁴⁶*Burlington Hawk-Eye*, April 18, 1882.

⁴⁷Correspondence of the writer.

⁴⁸*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, June 8, 1883.

Robert Moore, Cerro Gordo County, September 18, 1884.—During the fair at Mason City in September, 1884, quite a disturbance was created by an insult offered a married woman by Robert Moore of Freeport, Illinois. The husband of the woman knocked the offender down, and in a few minutes a guard of soldiers came and placed him in custody. About midnight, September 18th, a mob came to the guard house and attempted to lynch Moore, but the officers succeeded in defending their prisoner.⁴⁹

James Reynolds, Decatur County, August 2, 1887.—The assault upon Mrs. Lewis Noble of Leon caused the arrest of James Reynolds, the offender, and his confinement in the Leon jail. The officers feared a lynching and removed the prisoner. On August 2, 1887, a mob came to the jail and searched it in vain to find Reynolds. The next morning the sheriff brought him back to Leon and bail was secured for him. This was a bad move, for Reynolds assaulted three other women as soon as he was loosed. He was arrested again and a mob lynched him on the night of the fourteenth.⁵⁰

Frank Pierce, Des Moines County, June 30, 1891.—The graveyard at Burlington was used as a dumping ground for garbage by a few individuals and it became necessary to forbid it. On June 30, 1891, Frank Pierce came to the graveyard with a load of garbage and was informed by E. H. Wishard that he could no longer unload there. Pierce had a reputation for ugly acts, and he drew two revolvers and shot Wishard. Pierce was arrested and brought to jail, and by the time he arrived a mob of about five hundred awaited him. They would have lynched him had not the militia been called out and blank cartridges used. This was the second time that a mob came near lynching him, as he had been sought by one in 1888.⁵¹

Edward Walton, Wapello County, October 16, 1893.—Dr. Edward Walton was arrested for the murder of Melinda Amelia Cook, upon whom he had performed a criminal opera-

⁴⁹*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), September 19, 1884.

⁵⁰*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), August 3, 1887.

⁵¹*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 1, 1891.

tion, and as the officers brought him in a carriage to the jail in Ottumwa, a mob attacked the officers in an attempt to wrest Walton from their hands and lynch him. The officers succeeded in getting him safely lodged in jail, but the talk of lynching was kept up all day and the mob remained about the town until night.⁵²

Leon Lozier, Pottawattamie County, January 17, 1893.—The well-known sprinter of Council Bluffs, Leon Lozier, was arrested for assault on Madaline Anderson, a girl five years old, and as he was being taken to jail a mob followed, threatening to lynch him. The mob was addressed by Sheriff Hazen and the Dodge Life Guards were called out to protect the jail. Several other speeches were made and finally the mob dispersed. The leaders were arrested, but whether they were finally prosecuted has not been learned.⁵³

John Hamil, John Krout, George Weems, Polk County, May, 1894.—A conductor on the Great Western Railroad, Lucias Blake Ridpath, was killed May 19, 1894, by two men while he was on his way to take charge of his train in Des Moines. The next day John Hamil and John Krout were arrested and charged with the crime. On the 21st George Weems was also arrested as one of the perpetrators of the murder. Krout was talkative and told much about the crime. The people became much aroused and threats of lynching were frequently made. A mob gathered at the police station, but because of lack of organization and also because of the efficient police force the mob was not able to get the prisoners. On the way from the police station to the county jail another mob was encountered, and with difficulty the men were lodged in jail. The mob remained about the jail for hours. The prisoners were secretly taken out of the city to prevent their being found if the mob should become unmanageable. Krout was released after a time and Hamil and Weems were convicted and sentenced to be hanged.⁵⁴

⁵²*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), October 17, 1893; *The Ottumwa Weekly Courier*, November 23, 1893.

⁵³*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), January 20, 1894.

⁵⁴Porter's *Annals of Polk County, Iowa, and the City of Des Moines* (1898), pp. 567-569.

—————, Pottawattamie County, May 31, 1894.—A tramp brutally assaulted Mrs. George Smith of Pottawattamie county on May 31, 1894, and a mob collected and pursued the tramp with ropes, intending to lynch him, but he could not be found.⁵⁵

Orlando P. Wilkins, Charles W. Crawford, Madison County, March 6, 1895.—The bank robbers, Orlando P. Wilkins and Charles W. Crawford, were arrested on March 6, 1895, before they had got very far from the robbed bank in Adel. After the capture a mob came and wanted to lynch Crawford who had been placed in jail, but by persuasion they were dispersed. Wilkins was shot to death in the capture.⁵⁶

R. E. Martin, Wapello County, April 4, 1896.—Little Eva Moore, twelve years old, was assaulted on April 13, 1896, at Ottumwa, and the news spread so rapidly that in a very short time many people were on the streets curious to see the results of the search for the offender by the police. As the excitement grew more intense a rope was procured and the mob awaited the time when the little girl should identify the offender among those constantly brought in by the police. The mob thought R. E. Martin would be identified when he was brought in and they intended to lynch him, but the little girl could not recognize him as the man. The craze subsided after a time and the mob dispersed.⁵⁷

Wilbur Smith, Charles Harris, Ralph Duncan, Wapello County, August 28, 1896.—Three men, Wilbur Smith, Charles Harris, and Ralph Duncan were arrested for entering a house in Ottumwa and assaulting Miss Nellie Warner, twenty years of age, and a mob of about three hundred attempted to wrest them from the sheriff but the sheriff was on his guard and prevented it. Harris was from Blakesburg and Duncan was from Illinois.⁵⁸

A. D. Storms, Des Moines County, February 9, 1898.—The dead bodies of Mrs. Fannie Rathbun and her daughter, Mary,

⁵⁵*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), June 1, 1894.

⁵⁶*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), March 7, 1895; *Dallas County Record*, March 8, and March 15, 1895.

⁵⁷*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), April 14, 1896.

⁵⁸*The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), August 29, 1896.

were found by the police at their home, 1616 Dodge St., Burlington, on the 30th of January, 1898. They had evidently been dead for a week. Evidence was discovered that caused the arrest of A. D. Storms as principal and F. Fox, S. Johnson, William Williams, Jones Lannon, and Joseph Burchman as associates. The excitement grew intense over the affair and finally a mob, said to be led by W. A. Pruden and Charles Gallagher, formed at Patterson's barn and went to the jail to lynch Storms. The mob was probably composed of as many as five hundred men. Placards had been posted to arouse the citizens and call them to the mob meeting. The police mixed with the mob, found out their intentions and succeeded in getting Storms out of the back door of the jail just in time to save him. This mob collected on Tuesday evening, February 9, 1898, and after a short time went to the jail. When the officers told the mob that Storms was not there, they refused to believe it until a search had been made of the jail and even through the home of the sheriff, with no success. Even the room of the sheriff's daughter, who lay critically ill, was invaded and the closets broken open in a mad search for the suspected man. Scouting parties were put out to search the city and these did not give up the idea of finding Storms until after midnight. At one time the mob passed within one block of the closed carriage that contained Storms, but they did not know it and Storms was taken to Mediapolis and then to Anamosa for safe-keeping. Storms later confessed to the crime and implicated many others in his confession.⁹⁹

Alva Brooker, Monroe County, November 24, 1900.—The rape of Mrs. Sarah Hovel of Albia caused the arrest of Alva Brooker (colored), charged with the crime. A large mob attempted to lynch him on November 24, 1900, but Company G of the Iowa National Guards prevented it.¹⁰⁰

Charles Arnett, Webster County, December 19, 1900.—A large mob gathered at the jail in Ft. Dodge on December 19, 1900, and made such a noise about the premises that Charles

⁹⁹*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, February 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10, 1898; *The Saturday Evening Post* (Burlington), February 5, and 12, 1898.

¹⁰⁰*Iowa City Weekly Republican*, November 28, 1900.

Arnett was frightened into confession of his guilt by the threats of lynching from the outside. The charge against Arnett was theft.⁶¹

Seymour Washington, Polk County, September 1, 1901.—As Miss Ada Ware was crossing the fields on her way to Valley Junction on September 1, 1901, two negroes assaulted her. She succeeded in getting away and ran home. Her father mounted a swift horse and rode to town as quickly as possible and aroused the police. Search for the offender was begun, and many suspects were brought in for identification by Miss Ware. The news spread and caused a large mob to gather about the jail, and the ones brought in were closely watched. Finally Miss Ware identified one negro, Seymour Washington, and the mob, already very much excited, grew worse and ropes were procured and attempts were made to lynch him. The jail was besieged and was the object of a bombardment of flying missiles for some time. Washington was placed in a car and taken to Des Moines as soon as possible, and the lynching was prevented.⁶²

Edward Davidson, Wapello County, February, 1902.—The twelve year old daughter of William Gallagher, living two miles northeast of Eddyville, was criminally assaulted by Edward Davidson of Pekay, in February, 1902. Davidson was arrested and confined at Eddyville. Plans were laid to lynch him, but the officers heard of them and took him to Ottumwa and thus frustrated the plans of the mob.⁶³

W. L. Horn, Appanoose County, December 21, 1903.—A murder near Salem church, Appanoose county, on December 21, 1903, called forth a mob that searched all night for the offender. He was found dead the next morning, having evidently killed himself rather than allow the mob to lynch him, which they intended to do if they had found him alive.⁶⁴

————— Burk, ————— Zimmerman, Pottawattamie County, December 28, 1903.—Two negroes, Burk and Zim-

⁶¹*Iowa City Weekly Republican*, December 19, 1900.

⁶²*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, September 3, 1901.

⁶³*The Reveille* (Rolfe), February 21, 1902.

⁶⁴*The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), December 22, 1903.

merman, assaulted, robbed, and offended two women in Council Bluffs, December 28, 1903, and when they were arrested and placed in jail a large mob attempted to lynch them, but an extra guard force made the jail secure and prevented the lynching.⁶⁵

Harry Thompson, Woodbury County, April 18, 1904.—Continued disturbances were made in Sioux City by Harry Thompson, and finally Mayor John Bunn caused a warrant to be issued for his arrest. When the warrant was read to Thompson, he resisted, escaped, procured weapons, and shot Bunn. The citizens tried to lynch him, but the sheriff took him in charge and succeeded in getting him aboard a train and out of the city.⁶⁶

James Price, Boone County, November 19, 1904.—A negro, James Price, shot and fatally wounded Thomas Albright and then escaped to the woods in Boone county. On November 19, 1904, a mob searched for him, and judging from their talk they would probably have lynched him if he had been found. Stories spread about that he had been cornered on a sand-bar and lynched, but no evidence can be found to verify this story.⁶⁷

Victor Lee, Henry County, August 2, 1905.—The public sentiment against Victor Lee was shown on August 2, 1905, when he took his wife from New London to the insane asylum at Mt. Pleasant. The citizens sympathized with his wife and felt this was only a means of getting rid of her. They probably would have lynched him as he went away but the sheriff had him too well guarded. When Green Lee returned that night they egged him, and evidently they thought Victor Lee would return also, but he remained at Mt. Pleasant and thus escaped.⁶⁸

Frank Brothers, Polk County, September 27, 1905.—Howard Wittell was arrested and brought to the police station on September 27, 1905, by Detective Frank Brothers. In the

⁶⁵*The Daily Nonpareil* (Council Bluffs), December 30, 1903.

⁶⁶*Dallas County News* (Adel), April, 20, 1904.

⁶⁷*The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), November 20, 1904.

⁶⁸*The Mt. Pleasant Journal*, August 4, 1905.

arrest Brothers had wounded the boy with a shot from his revolver, and this aroused the citizens so that a mob followed him to the station. No man was found among them who would dare lead the mob to lynch him, and finally they dispersed.⁶⁹

Robert Hyde, Charles Martin, Polk County, July 16, 1906.—Two negroes, Robert Hyde and Charles Martin, pushed a white woman off the sidewalk in Des Moines on the night of July 16, 1906, and they came near being lynched for their aggressiveness. A mob took a rope from a street car and would have hanged them if the police had not been re-enforced just at that moment. The mob grew in size and did not disperse for some time.⁷⁰

Thomas Grimes, Henry County, January 22, 1907.—The jail was besieged at New London on January 22, 1907, by a mob who sought Thomas Grimes (colored), supposed to be confined there on charge of the murder of J. W. Govin. The mob was outwitted by the officers who had learned of the danger of a lynching and had removed the prisoner to Mt. Pleasant.⁷¹

Ray Edwards, Wapello County, January 25, 1908.—On the night of January 24, 1908, Mrs. Clara Erwin was assaulted by a negro. Ray Edwards was arrested and charged with the assault. The indignant citizens came to the jail in a mob and demanded Edwards. The officers put out all lights in the jail and sent in a riot call to the police headquarters. When the sheriff came before the mob he told them Edwards was not in the jail, and to make sure, a committee from the mob searched the building but failed to find him. He had been secretly taken to Albia for safe-keeping.⁷²

John Junkin, Wapello County, February 21, 1909.—The murderer of Clara Rosen of Ottumwa created much trouble for the authorities, as several attempts were made to lynch him. The assault on Mrs. C. M. Johnson made the state of

⁶⁹*The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), September 27, and 28, 1905.

⁷⁰*The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), July 17, 1906.

⁷¹*The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), January 25, 1907.

⁷²*The Keosauqua Republican*, January 30, 1908.

feeling worse, and a mob went to the jail, February 21, 1909, to lynch him. Being admitted to the jail by the officers they made search for him but were unable to find him. He had been taken to Albia.⁷³

John Junkin, Des Moines County, February, 1909.—When the officers were taking John Junkin to Ft. Madison in February, 1909, a mob met them at Burlington and showed their attitude by casting missiles at Junkin.⁷⁴

John Junkin, Wapello County, March 12, 1909.—When John Junkin was brought back to Ottumwa on March 12, 1909, he was sought by a mob at the jail, but after staying about the jail for a time, creating much disturbance, the mob dispersed.⁷⁵

John Junkin, Appanoose County, June 1, 1909.—Immediately following the death sentence of John Junkin in Centerville, a mob attempted to lynch the prisoner and the officers had a hard time getting him safely on the car for Ft. Madison. This was June 1, 1909.⁷⁶

J. A. Keefner,⁷⁷ Polk County, August 8, 1910.—Because J. A. Keefner's automobile caused a runaway and the injury of the team by running into a wire fence, a mob of farmers threatened to lynch Mr. Keefner. Word was sent to Des Moines and officers came to his rescue within a very short time.⁷⁸

⁷³*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, February 23, 1909.

⁷⁴*The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), March 12, 1909.

⁷⁵*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, March 12, 1909.

⁷⁶*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, June 2, 1909.

⁷⁷*The Des Moines Capital* gives J. A. Kulfner.

⁷⁸*The Des Moines News*, August 8, 1910; *The Des Moines Capital*, August 8, 1910.

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