

THE GOLDFINCH

Vol. 3, No. 2

Margaret Atherton Bonney, Editor

November 1981

Immigrants

Harper's Weekly, October 25, 1873



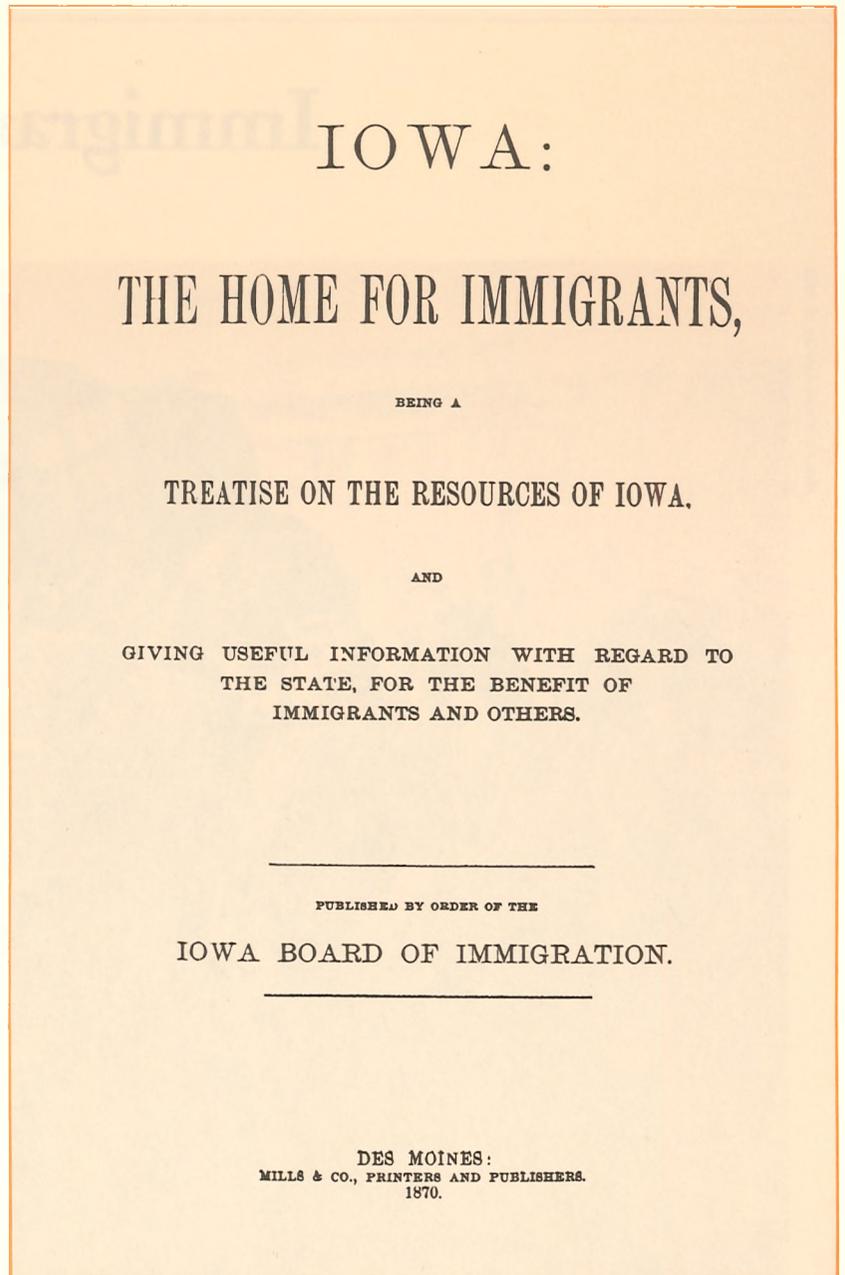
Immigrant n. - person who comes into a country to make it a permanent home.

Who were the first people to live in what is now Iowa? No one knows for sure. We do know that the story of North America, the United States, Iowa, and your community is a story of immigration.

Historians believe the first people who immigrated to the North American continent came from Asia. Their descendants, the many tribes of American Indians, were here when the first European explorers arrived. Europeans began to colonize North America during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Some Indians became Christian converts and worked for the Europeans. Others were forced to move, or were killed in battles over land that the newcomers wanted for settlement. Although France, Spain, and the Netherlands planted colonies in what is now the United States, the English came in the largest numbers. Eventually, Spain, France, and the Netherlands lost control of their lands. English law, customs, and language became the basis for American culture.

In the early eighteenth century, a great migration of non-English people began to arrive upon America's eastern shores. Because most of the eastern seaboard was occupied by the earlier settlers, these newcomers moved inland and down the Appalachian Mountain valleys where unsettled land was still available. This westward migration stopped in the 1750s when war with France over the control of the Ohio River threatened these settlers. Westward migration began again after the American Revolution

Division of the State Historical Society



After the Civil War many Iowans felt that more effort should be made to attract immigrants to the state. Other midwestern states were already advertising the opportunities their states offered. In 1870, Iowa published a guidebook which included

Iowa,

Die Heimath für Einwanderer.

Eine Abhandlung über die

Hilfsquellen Iowa's,

enthaltend

Werthvolle und nützliche Aufklärungen in Betreff des
Staates, für Immigranten und Andere.

Veröffentlicht auf Anordnung der
Immigrations-Board von Iowa.

Des Moines,
Druckerei des „Iowa Staats-Anzeiger.“
1870.

a map of the state. It was printed in English, German, Dutch, Swedish and Danish languages and was sent to eastern cities and to Europe.

ended in 1783.

During the nineteenth century, immigrants arrived at American shores at an increasing rate. The European population had grown rapidly and the countries there were overcrowded. The United States, with what seemed to be an endless supply of land, became a haven of new hope, just as it had been for the first colonists. People from England's crowded industrial cities migrated to escape wretched working conditions. From the many small countries located in what is today Germany, people who would have been jailed because of their religious or political beliefs fled to America. Because the Irish potato crop failed during the 1840s, thousands sailed from Ireland for the United States. Farming people from Scandinavian countries crossed the ocean seeking land of their own to farm — land that was not worn out from hundreds of years of use.

To the Pacific shores came people from China and Japan. From the southwest, Mexican families moved north to escape the poverty caused by long years of revolution.

World War I halted immigration between 1914 and 1918. After the war, many **refugees** sought a new life in America. However, by that time, Americans had developed a strong anti-foreign attitude. As a result, the government created a **quota system** to limit immigration. An immigration law

refugee *n.* — one who flees or is forced to leave one's own country in time of war or because of political or religious persecution.

quota system *n.* — an arrangement that sets up certain numbers of something allowed.

placed a yearly limit on the number of people from each nation allowed into the country. The law controlled immigration from 1921 to 1965.

Iowa was still a young, growing state during the years when millions of foreign-born

immigrants arrived upon America's shores. It was a time when immigrants needed new homes, and Iowa needed to attract new citizens.

To attract immigrants, railroad and land companies advertised in eastern newspapers, describing

the rich, productive farmland and the beauty of the state. After immigrants settled in Iowa, they often wrote glowing letters to relatives and friends in their homelands. These "America Letters" often influenced others to immigrate to this state. By 1870, about 18 percent of the people living in Iowa were foreign-born.

Most of the immigrants did not speak English. Also, they had grown up in countries with customs different from those in the United States. To make the adjustment to living in a new land where language, customs, values, and government were different, newcomers often travelled and settled in groups. This led to large ethnic areas or neighborhoods where the immigrant families often remained through the first and second generation. As children of immigrants attended Iowa schools and learned American customs and language, the most obvious differences between the cultures disappeared.

Iowa descendants of nineteenth century immigrants consider themselves Americans. Some have kept or revived special cultural traditions, while others have forgotten most of their European heritage.

On the following pages you will read about the experiences of foreign-born immigrants to Iowa who joined American-born "immigrants" as residents of the state.

ethnic adj. – having to do with a group of people with similar customs, language, way of life, historical background, etc.

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Be sure and examine the large and very beautiful collection of Specimens of Soil and Agricultural Products from IOWA and NEBRASKA, now on exhibition at this Fair.

Better terms were never offered and probably never will be. We invite comparison and deep competition. Come West and thrive. Friends will follow.

**MILLIONS OF ACRES
IOWA AND NEBRASKA
LANDS.**

FOR SALE ON 10 YEARS' CREDIT.

BY THE

BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RIVER R. R. CO.

AT LOW PRICES.

And only 6 per cent interest required for 4 years, and afterwards only one-seventh of principal annually, till all is paid in 10 years, with more time given if needed by any actual settler.

LIBERAL DEDUCTIONS.

20, 18, 15, and 10 per cent. deductions for full payment down, or in one, two and three years from date of purchase, and a

Premium Credit of 20 per cent.

is given IN NEBRASKA if half of land bought in 1878 is cultivated within 2 years from date of purchase. Improve this best of all chances. NOW IS YOUR TIME.

Half Fare, Half Freight & Free Passes

Half Fare and Half Freight are allowed from Chicago, and Full Fare in Iowa on Iowa Lands,—and Full Fare in Nebraska, on Nebraska Lands, are allowed to our Land Buyers, if they will be careful to buy our Land Explorer's Tickets, at our Chicago Office, 59 Clark Street, or at C., B. & Q. R. R. offices in Mendota, Galesburg, Peoria, Quincy, Burlington, Plattsburgh or Omaha; and if land bought is equal to amount of rebate.

PRODUCTS,

Will more than Pay for Land and Improvements,
within the limits of these generous credits and extra facilities.

SUPERIOR HOMESTEAD AND PRE-EMPTION RIGHTS

Can be secured by soldiers, sailors and others, on U. S. Government Lands joining ours in Nebraska, within easy reach of our Railroad and good markets.

A Large Sectional Map of Iowa Land is sold for 30 cents, and a similar Map of Nebraska Land at same price.

CIRCULARS, giving full particulars are supplied GRATIS. Get and circulate them.

Apply to **GEO. S. HARRIS,**

Land Commissioner, Burlington, Iowa.

CHICAGO AGENCY, 59 Clark Street.
BOSTON AGENCY, 76 Washington Street.
NEW YORK AGENCY, 317 Broadway.

Railroad companies that owned land in Iowa hoped to attract both immigrants and easterners to the state. They offered special travel fares to those who would buy land.

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Why Did People Leave?

"There [in America] I shall certainly meet with the same wickedness which troubles me here; yet I shall find also opportunity to work. There I shall certainly find the same, if not still greater, evidence of unbelief and superstition; but I shall also find a constitutional provision which does not bind my hands in the use of . . . the word of God. There I shall find no Minister of Public Worship, for the separation of Church and State is a fact."

1846

"One sees and hears of such favorable treatment of Hollanders not only at the hands of individual Christians but also at the hands of State officials and State Assemblies. I myself had an experience of this sort at Albany, where the legislature had just convened and I wished to look on for a moment. Recognized by one of the members, I was compelled to take a seat in the midst of them. How different from Holland! In the land of our birth, branded and treated as a despised congregation, misunderstood by everyone, shoved aside, trampled upon and bruised; in the land of strangers and above all in its most respectable place, honored and treated as a costly gift of God to improve their country!"

*Hendrik Peter Scholte, Pella, 1848
a Dutch immigrant*

"Although we were very happy [in Sweden] . . . one is always trying to better one's condition and way of living. My father had friends and relatives in America who kept writing about the wonders of this new land. So, being an adventurous person, for many years he had been wanting to try his fortune in the new land of the free, which seemed to be a chance for prosperity, but mother was not of the same mind. She thought that it would be too much to give up her home and her friends. At last, after much persuasion, she was won over. I know that it must have been hard since she was not of the same nature as he, but she cut herself adrift from all ties, and started to get us ready for the long trip, which was to change our lives so much."

*John M. Stromstern, Corydon
a Swedish immigrant*

"Departing from you, dear father, was very hard on me. . . . But oh, dear father, we did not leave to get away from you, as you know very well. It was for the purpose of going to a country where we, by working hard, could expect a better way of life than in Vriesland [a province in the Netherlands]. And we have not been disappointed . . . for if we remain healthy, within a few years we can start on our own farm, which would never have become a reality in Vriesland. . . . Considering everyone in his own trade, there is not one person who, by moving to America, does not earn more than a common laborer over there. If we had stayed in Vriesland very likely within a few years we would have been reduced to utter poverty."

*Sjoerd Aukes Sipma, Pella, 1848
a Dutch immigrant*

". . . The greater part of the land in England is owned by the high aristocratic families. The population is still increasing while demand for labour is less because of the ever-increasing productions of mechanical power. The desire to emigrate to a place where every man may with little difficulty become an independent landowner, will increase."

an English immigrant, 1850

"Every farm, especially in the southern part of Sweden, had as many tenants as was possible without encroaching too much on the best portion of the estate which was always kept by the owner himself. Each tenant was allowed a patch of ground from half an acre to ten or fifteen acres. The larger tenants paid their rent in money, the smaller in labor to the land owner. In a great many instances he had to labor every day in the year excluding Sundays and holidays, the tenant furnishing his own board. Where one had a large family to support it was slavery in a most aggravated form."

*D. A. Peterson, Casady's Corners, Iowa
a Swedish immigrant*

The voyage to America was not an easy one for most immigrants. One out of three died on the way. Only a few had money to travel first class. Most were lucky if they could save enough to travel in steerage. Sometimes there was only money for one person in the family to come to America. If that immigrant found work, money was sent home to help the rest of the family **emigrate**. After the long sea voyage across the Atlantic, there was another long trip to reach Iowa. The experiences of some immigrants to Iowa tell the story.

"I wish to inform you that I have, successfully and in good health, reached the great city of New York. The journey was very hard: five children died on the crossing and many were sick. . . . We arrived here after a sea journey of seven weeks and two days.

"We were quartered above decks so that it was quite healthy for us, but those who were below decks were full of all sorts of vermin, for people from all kinds of places were mixed together there."

a letter from John Wallengren, who traveled from Sweden to Lyons, Iowa in 1856

". . . the friendless emigrants, stowed away like bales of cotton, and packed like slaves in a slave ship; confined in a place that, during storm time, must be closed up, shutting out both light and air. They can do no cooking, nor warm so such as a cup of water."

a traveler to Iowa, 1849

"Tuesday, May 10th. I would advise anyone wishing to emigrate, if at all possible, to travel first class. I find it is comparatively cheaper that way. Everything is taken care of, unless one wants to take along a little fruit, or fruit juice. Even that can be purchased on board. In second cabin passengers must furnish their own bed clothes, towels and certain dishes, and they get the same food as steerage passengers. One can get along with that, especially the food as served on this ship, but it certainly would not be so tasty, especially when one is seasick. . . . Also regarding privacy it is not so good. I would not want to be there at any price. We have our cabin to which we can retire and do as we please. Our common sitting room (salon) is dry and clean, while in the second cabin water gets in at times."

diary of Charlotte von Hein, who traveled to Iowa from Germany in 1853

emigrate *v.* – to leave one's own country to settle in another.



The Journey

Passengers often suffered from seasickness during the Atlantic crossing. During good weather, they often came up on deck where the fresh air helped them to feel better.

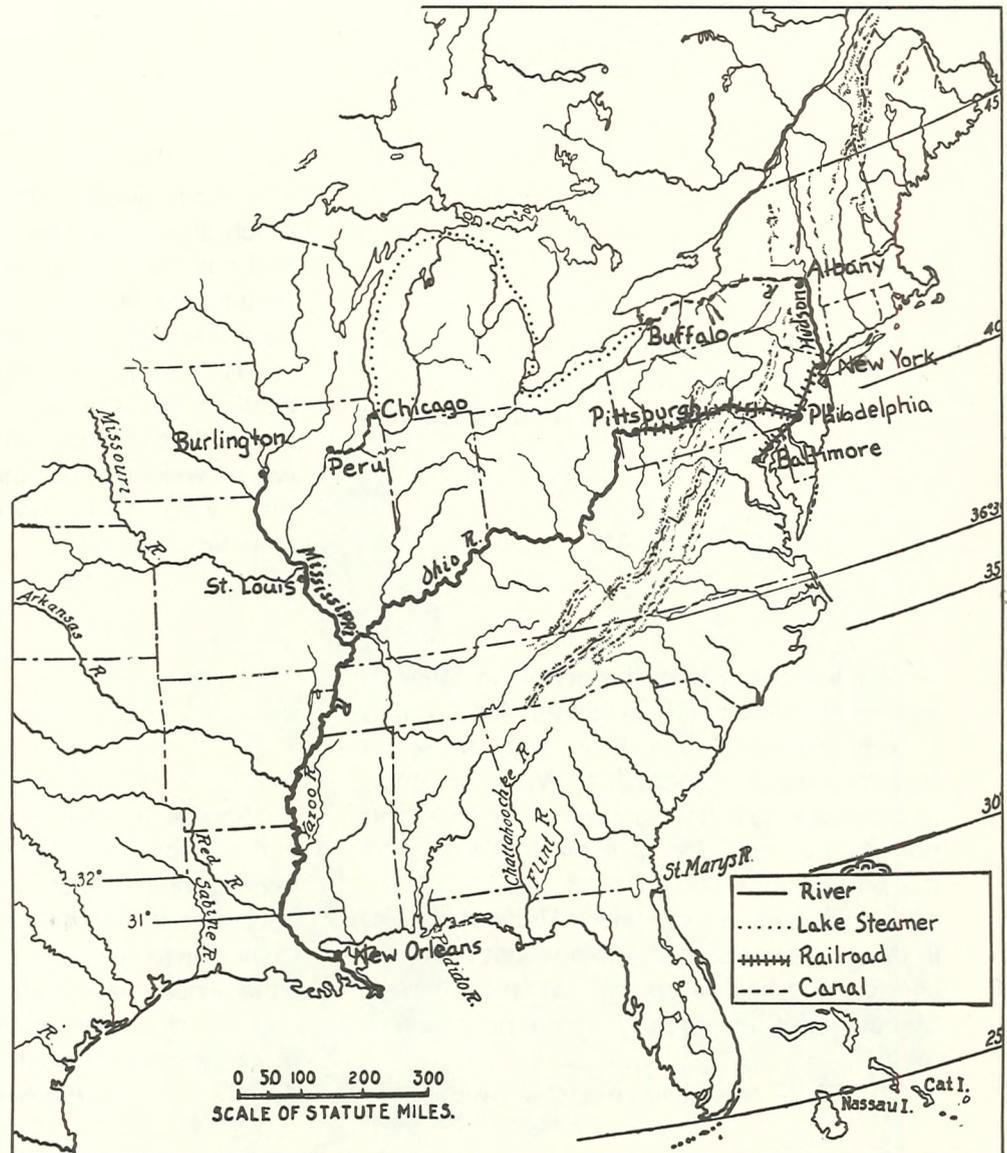
"You wanted to know the best route to take to this country. In the first place, try to get a passage in an American vessel as they are the fastest sailing vessels and the most accommodating seamen. Try to get a passage to Philadelphia, then take the railroads for Pittsburgh. If you cannot go to Philadelphia, either Baltimore or New York will do, then to Philadelphia and then by Pittsburgh. Then over the Ohio River to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Then to St. Louis. Then to Burlington in Iowa. Beware and don't take a passage by New Orleans as many do for it is not the best way and is far from being as healthy and as agreeable."

a letter from an Irish immigrant living in Washington County, Iowa, 1849

"If people feel the desire to emigrate here, the best and the cheapest way is to come from Liverpool to New Orleans and up the Mississippi River to Burlington, Iowa, and eighteen miles to the north is the first Welsh settlement in the state at Flint Creek. Twenty-five miles to the north from there is the second settlement, Long Creek, and thirty miles north again is the third settlement, Old Man's Creek."

a letter from a Welsh immigrant Joshua Jones, Flint Creek, 1852

to Iowa



This map shows several routes that the early immigrants used to reach Iowa.

America Letters

"This is a great country and as you will have seen from the heading of this epistle I am now far beyond what a very few years ago was called the 'Far West.' My home at present is west of the Mississippi 'The father of water.' I came to this state last June with the view of being more useful in the Church of God and obtaining a permanent home for my rapidly increasing family."

*Henry Allen, Iowa City, 1856
an immigrant from Ireland*

"Samuel is not doing very well at farming. He is not more than making a livin."

an English immigrant at Fairfield, 1850

"We live better than the people in Sweden and we are not wanting in spiritual food. When I compare conditions here with those in Sweden, we are fortunate. We have good bread and wheat flour and as much beef and pork as we desire for each meal. We have all the butter, eggs and milk we need. . . . We have an abundance of various kinds of apples. In fact, we have so many things that make for comfort and happiness that, when I compare Sweden with this country, I have no desire to return."

*Mary Stephensen, New Sweden, 1865
a Swedish immigrant*

"Freedom and equality are the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the United States. There is no such thing as class distinction here, no counts, barons, lords, or lordly estates. The one is as good as the other, and everyone lives in the unrestricted enjoyment of personal liberty."

*Peter Kassel, Jefferson County, 1846
a Swedish immigrant*

"I am in good health. . . . Do not worry too much about me. I got along well in Sweden, and this being a better country, I will do even better here. As my plans are now, I have no desire to be in Sweden. I never expect to speak with you again in this life. . . . I am sending you my picture as a remembrance, and with it another picture which I am certain will be welcome, because it is the likeness of a man who is to become your son-in-law sometime this fall."

*Mary Jonson, Mount Pleasant, 1859
a Swedish immigrant*

"Another matter has great influence on the entire social structure. It is not regarded beneath one's dignity to perform manual labor; but rather, it is considered good, even an honor, to be able to help oneself. . . . The richest here is either a dairyman or farmer, and every dairyman and farmer is mister (sir or gentleman), and every woman is madam (lady)."

*Hendrick Peter Scholte, Pella, 1848
a Dutch immigrant*

"To conclude: I do not regret having come here, it is the country for a poor man; if he is able and willing to work he cannot starve. Labour here is no degradation, but on the contrary, the industrious man is respected; worth not riches is the standard of respectability, and magistrates and justices of the peace are only recognized by their superior knowledge and integrity."

*Joseph Buck, 1850
an English immigrant in Maquoketa*

"I am here, feeling fine, and getting along. However, the statement that one often finds in letters from America — that one wouldn't care to be back in Norway for all the world, or words to that effect to assure those at home that they like it here — such a statement I could never make as I should not be telling the truth."

*Gro Svendsen, Estherville, 1863
an immigrant from Norway*

Bezdika Slovenc, 1879



An Iowa City Bohemian-language newspaper drawing illustrates the difference between this family's way of life before and after immigration.

The New Kid in Town

Suppose your family moved to a foreign country and all around you, kids spoke a different language, wore different clothes, ate different food and played different games than you were used to. You would feel pretty weird.

The first thing you would do would be to look for somebody else who spoke English. Then, if that person were American and — even better — from Iowa, it's probably a safe bet that you would quickly become friends.

If your family had emigrated from America to escape a **tyrannical** government or because they were very poor in the United States, you'd feel happy about the move and would want to become part of this new

culture. But at the same time you would keep up your own customs. You'd probably speak English at home, eat hamburgers, drink pop, and maybe try to teach some of your own games to your new friends at school.

Back in the 1800s foreign-born immigrants in Iowa went through a similar experience. They tended to band together with people who spoke the same language and had the same way of life. Even immigrants from English-speaking countries liked to socialize with people from their own country during the first few years after their arrival.

Some immigrants wanted to become "real Americans" as quickly as possible. "Let's leave

European ways in Europe," they thought. But others felt they should contribute some of their own culture to the American character.

Almost every ethnic group that came to Iowa established schools so that they could teach their own religion and language to their children. There were also social halls where immigrants got together for special celebrations or meetings.

It was more difficult for older immigrants to learn a new language and change in their ways of doing things. Young children found it much easier to adjust. Those who went to public school usually adopted American ways quickly. **by Jane Mitchell**
tyrannical adj. — cruel.



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THE TURNER HALL BUILT BY GERMAN IMMIGRANTS AT GUTTENBURG

Immigrants to Iowa seldom were sorry they had made the choice to become Americans. They realized that opportunities for a better life in America were far greater than in their home countries. Yet, they were fond of the old customs they had grown up with — the foods, the entertainment, and the special celebrations that had been a part of their lives for so long. Many foreign-born Iowans found ways to continue and preserve their customs and traditions. When families lived near one another they often built meeting halls where they met to enjoy one another's company and to celebrate special occasions. Most of the immigrants held strong religious beliefs and churches were another place where language and custom were kept alive. By meeting together often, immigrant families could help one another adjust to the new culture in which they had come to live.

Becoming a citizen

Most immigrants came to the United States to stay. But they could not be citizens just by living here. Newcomers needed to go through a process called **naturalization**. For many immigrants, becoming an American citizen was one of the most important events in their lives. It meant they could vote and take part in the government of their new community, state, and country.

For many, the rights of citizenship were something new. In the countries they had come from, they had not been allowed to vote, or even to speak about the way their country was governed.

To become a citizen, an immigrant went to court and applied for citizenship. At least one year's residence in the state or territory and five years' residence in the United States was required.

Ole A. Larson's naturalization paper.

Division of the State Historical Society

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,



THE STATE OF IOWA, *SS:*
STORY COUNTY.

Be it Remembered, That at a term of the District Court, holden in and for said county, in *the Town of* *Keosauqua* therein on the *31st* day of *April* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *sixty eight* was present the honorable *J. D. Chapman* sole presiding Judge *W. H. Murphy* Sheriff of said County, and *J. D. Chapman* Clerk of said Court, when the following among other proceedings were had, to-wit: *Ole A. Larson* a native of *Norway* and at present residing within said State, appeared in open Court and makes application to be admitted to become a **CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES**, and it appearing to the satisfaction of the Court, that he had declared on oath, before *the Clerk of the County Court of Keosauqua County, Iowa*, a Court of Record, having common law jurisdiction and using a seal, two years at least before his admission, that it was bona fide his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and to renounce forever, all allegiance to any foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatsoever and particularly to *King of Sweden in Norway* of whom he was heretofore a *subject* and said applicant having declared on oath, before this Court, that he will support the Constitution of the United States, and that he doth absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatsoever, and Particularly to the Power above named. The Court being satisfied that said applicant has resided within the United States for the term of five years next preceding his admission, without being at any time during the said five years out of the territory of the United States, and within this State one year at least; and it further appearing to the satisfaction of this Court that, during that time, he has behaved as a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same. Thereupon the Court admitted the said applicant to become a citizen of the United States, and ordered all proceedings aforesaid to be entered of record, which was accordingly done by the Clerk of this Court.

In Testimony Whereof, I, *J. D. Chapman* Clerk of the Court aforesaid have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of said Court, at office in *Keosauqua* in said County, this the *31st* day of *April* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *sixty eight*



J. D. Chapman
Clerk of the District Court.

Exam. Entry &c., P. M., Keosauqua

naturalization n. – the process by which a foreigner becomes a citizen.

It's the Law—Speak English Only!

"Dear Sister.

Must tell you now what happened here. . . . Monday we had an awful time. People acted like savages. They came in mobs from towns all around and one mob got Rev. John Reichardt and made him march through town carrying a flag. Then they made him stand on a coffin, which was a rough box and kiss the flag while a band from another town played the Star Spangled Banner. . . . Then he was ordered out of town. . . . The sheriff got Rev. Reichardt to Tipton for protection as the mob could come any time and even kill him. Preacher is packing his goods. Papa and the boys made boxes for him all day yesterday. Mamma was there yesterday afternoon and helped pack. Quite a few people are helping them. Rev. and Mrs. look bad as they are not safe at all. We will not have any church for a long time now. When they were through with the Minister they got ahold of Fritag, kicked him and pushed him into the crowd carrying a flag. I was standing right next to Fritag when they got him. Nearly scared me stiff. Charles, Mamma, and I beat it for home. . . . Then they went after Louis Ripe. He was just in the corn field when the mob came down there. They scared the children and Lena something awful. Lena came over there and cried with all her children. Louie had to march in Main Street and carry the flag. While all these men were marching they would ring the fire bell something awful. . . . Then, each man had to pay \$100 to the Red Cross."

Young Lydia Conrad wrote this letter to her sister describing the celebration at the end of World War I on November 11, 1918 in Lowden, Iowa. Lowden was a town of 650 people in 1918. Over 450 of them were foreign-born or children of foreign-born parents. Most were of German heritage.

The war had begun in 1914, but until 1917 the United States stayed out of the conflict that raged between the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey, and the Allied Powers of France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, and Japan.

Even before the war began, native-born Americans had come to think that it was time to stop allowing so many immigrants into the country. Immigrants were willing to work for lower wages, so some Americans believed that the newcomers might cause native-born citizens to lose their jobs.

Dislike of foreigners grew stronger during the war. It started with a distrust of people of German heritage. Even naturalized German-American citizens did not escape suspicion. Then, distrust grew to include anyone who spoke a foreign language or who continued to practice customs from the old, home country. Almost overnight, people who had been considered fine citizens of the community were suspected of disloyalty.

Because the United States was at war with Germany, those of German heritage were the main target of suspicion.

Soon, German language instruction was banned in public schools. Then, **parochial schools** were forced to use only English in their classrooms. The churches

parochial school *n.* – school run by a religious group.

were next, and eventually Iowa's Governor Harding declared that only English was legal in public and private schools, public places, and over the telephone. This meant that foreign-born Iowa citizens could no longer listen to church sermons in what might be the only language they understood. It meant that these people could not talk to one another over the telephone. Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, and Bohemians could not speak in their languages either. To be "American," a person must speak only English! Although several states passed laws banning the use of the German language, no other state went as far as Iowa. In Le Claire, four women who were overheard speaking German on a party line were arrested and fined.

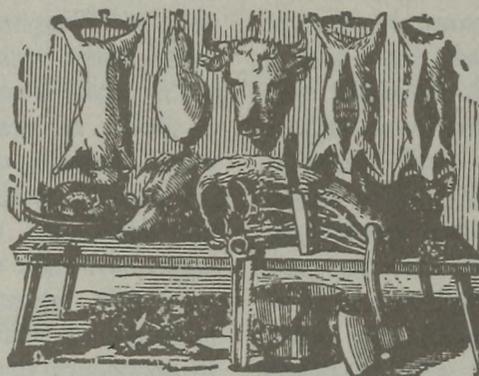
Not all Iowans agreed with the laws against foreign language, and there were protests against the ruling by both foreign-born and native-born citizens. They pointed out that many loyal Americans of German, Swedish, Norwegian, and Bohemian ancestry were in Europe fighting in United States uniforms. But it was no use. There were plenty of Iowans willing to help enforce the ban by reporting the names of people who were heard speaking a foreign language.

The end of the war did not end anti-foreign attitudes. The feelings of distrust continued. Customs and languages were lost, until the revival of pride in heritage, fifty years later.

revival *n.* – to bring back again.

The primary source for this story is "Iowans During World War I: A Study of Change Under Stress," unpublished dissertation by Nancy Ruth Derr, George Washington University, 1979.

Deutsch-Amerikanischer, Germans in Iowa, December 24, 1898



Albert Sickler,

Händler in
frischem, gesalzenem und geräuchertem

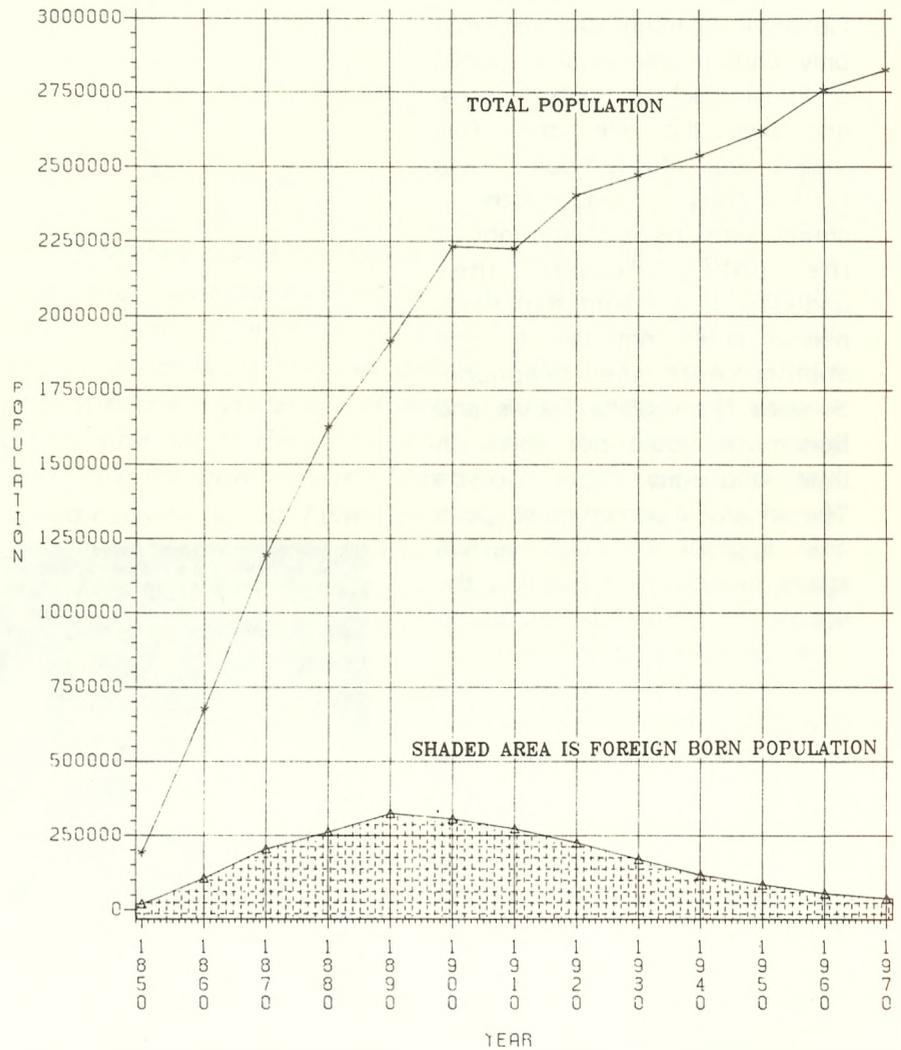
Fleisch.

Extra feine Rauch- und Leberwurst
stets and Hand.

125 nördl. Gilbert Straße.

Before World War I, there were twenty-two German-language papers in Iowa. This ad is from an 1898 Iowa City newspaper. For what sort of business do you think the advertisement is? Try to find someone who reads German to translate the advertisement for you.

Who Came to Iowa?



Country of Birth	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
All Countries	20,969	106,077	204,692	261,650	324,069	305,920	273,484	225,647	168,080	117,245	84,582	56,278	40,217
England	3,785	11,545	18,103	22,610	26,228	21,027	16,784	13,036	9,045	5,961	4,931	3,917	3,191
Scotland	712	2,895	5,248	6,885	7,701	6,425	5,162	3,967	2,871	1,829	1,332		574
Wales	352	913	1,967	3,031	3,601	3,091	2,434	1,753	1,183	674			133
Ireland	4,885	28,072	40,124	44,061	37,353	28,321	17,756	10,685					
N. Ire.									1,778	747	57	395	
Eire									4,179	2,671	2,066	769	534
Canada	1,756	8,313	17,897	21,062	17,465	15,687	11,596	8,929	6,333	4,962	4,122	2,725	2,342
Germany	7,101	35,842	66,162	88,268	127,246	123,162	98,290	70,642	53,901	35,540	22,774	14,368	9,026
Sweden	231	1,465	10,796	17,559	30,276	29,875	26,763	22,493	16,810	11,406	7,080	3,813	1,864
Norway	361	5,688	17,556	21,586	27,078	25,634	21,924	17,344	12,932	8,642	5,531	3,159	1,547
Denmark	19	661	2,827	6,901	15,519	17,102	17,961	18,020	14,707	10,987	7,625	4,864	2,658
Netherlands	1,108	2,615	4,513	4,743	7,941	9,388	11,337	12,471	10,135	7,840	6,078	4,335	3,087
Switzerland	175	2,519	3,937	4,584	4,310	4,342	3,675	2,871	2,096	1,414	838	522	213
France	382	2,421	3,130	2,675	2,327	1,905	1,618	2,125	1,435	892	793	662	467
Austria	13	2,709	9,457	12,027	12,643	13,118	15,136	4,334	1,596	1,558	1,156	845	431
Czechoslovakia (Bohemia)			6,765	10,554	10,928			9,150	8,280	5,552	3,819	2,307	1,198
Poland		100	178	403	453	751	2,115	2,028	1,875	1,284	1,402	1,133	691
Yugoslavia								1,603	1,306	1,086	920	867	491
Russia (USSR)	41	40	96	535	782	1,998	5,494	7,319	4,552	3,671	2,774	1,777	986
Italy	1	30	54	122	399	1,196	5,846	4,956	3,834	3,461	2,908	2,254	1,557
Greece	1	1	1	4	1	18	3,356	2,884	1,910	1,535	1,407	1,145	623
Mexico	16	6	14	18	41	29	509	2,560	2,517	1,335	1,253	1,038	1,224
Asia	2	24	55	92	161	282	64	170	144	120	869	634	2,880

This chart shows the number of foreign-born people from different countries, living in Iowa. The information comes from the United States Census which is taken every ten years. Not all of the countries from which people came are included. Blank places on the chart mean that the number of people from that country was not counted in that census year.

Later Immigrants

Little Maria shivered in the autumn night air. There she was with her mother and father, the only people on the West Liberty depot platform. They had just arrived from Minnesota where her parents had worked picking beets. Magdeleno and Maria Cano had migrated from Mexico to Minnesota in that year of 1927, hoping to find a better way to make a living. Many years of revolution in Mexico had caused thousands of Mexicans to leave their home country. When the beet picking season ended, Maria's father had purchased tickets on a southbound train. The little family had traveled as far as their money would take them. Now, they stood alone, and Mr. Cano raised his eyes upward and said, "Well, God, here you have us. What will you do with us now?"

At that moment the Canos heard the whistling of a familiar tune. It was "La rielera", a Mexican song popular among the railroad workers. The young **Chicano** whistler took the Cano family to his home, where they stayed until Mr. Cano found a job as a section hand with the Rock Island Railroad in Iowa City. The Cano family lived in a boxcar beside the railroad tracks. Water had to be carried from a nearby stream. Later, they moved to a house, where Maria grew up with her seven brothers and sisters. She went to school in Iowa City and became an interpreter at the University of Iowa Hospitals.

Immigrants still come to Iowa every year. Most come as individuals, or as a family, as the Canos did, although the Southeast Asians arrived in large groups as the earlier immigrants did. In recent years, there have

been more immigrants from Mexico and Southeast Asia than from any other country. The number of Mexican immigrants increased steadily between 1910 and 1930. Southeast Asian immigrants began to come to Iowa in 1975 as refugees from the Vietnam War.

The war had caused thousands of Southeast Asians to leave their homes. Among the many groups that left were the Tai Dam. They had fled to North Vietnam from Communist-governed China in 1952, only to leave again two years later when Vietnam was divided into two countries. The Tai Dam then migrated to Laos where, for twenty years, they struggled to make a living. At the end of the war in 1975, a Communist government took power in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The Tai Dam, fearing for their lives under the new government, fled once more. They went to Thailand where they joined thousands of others crowded into a refugee

camp. They were now a people without a home. So, they wrote letters to thirty United States governors asking for help in finding a new place to live. Governor Robert Ray was among the five governors who responded. He said the state would help the refugees find new homes and places to work in Iowa. Along with the Governor, many organizations helped other Southeast Asian immigrants to settle in Iowa, too.

Asian and Mexican immigrants faced the same problems as earlier immigrants. They could not understand the language. Instead of bread and potatoes, Asians were used to eating rice, and Mexicans liked beans and tortillas. Iowa's climate was much different from the year-round warm climate from which the newcomers had come. Everyday manners were different too. Most of all, it was difficult to be parted from old friends and family members who remained in the home country.

Iowa Refugee Service Center



After a long flight from Asia to the United States a Tai Dam family leaves Des Moines with their sponsors. Every family has a sponsor to help them find a home and a job. Sponsors also help the newcomers to enroll the children in school, grocery shop, and learn to speak English.

Chicano *n.* – Americans of Mexican ancestry.

One Step Further...

1. What reasons did people have for leaving their home country? (See pages 3 and 5.)
2. In what ways did Iowa become an attractive place for immigrants? (See what immigrants said in the America Letters.)
3. Are there some foods you like that were brought to this country by people of a certain nationality or ethnic background? (Talk with your teacher or some other adults who can help you.)
4. Do people have different reasons for wanting to immigrate now than they did one hundred years ago? (See pages 5, 8, 9, and 15.)
5. Look for more information on the Turner Society, and other immigrant organizations. (For a start, look in the encyclopedia under Immigration, Germans, and Turner Society.)
6. Study one nationality or ethnic group that came to Iowa. What contributions did the people make to the state? (Think about foods, music, words, clothing and hairstyles, and the way holidays are celebrated.)
7. From what countries have most foreign-born Iowans come? (See the information on page 14.) Use the information on page 14 to make up three questions to ask your classmates. Perhaps your class can divide up into two teams and have a contest.
8. Have a class discussion about the ways to learn how to respect and get along with people from other cultures who come to live in Iowa.
9. **xenophobia** — How many words do you know that begin with "x"? Here is a new one for you! Look it up and then decide which national group of Iowa immigrants to which it might apply.



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