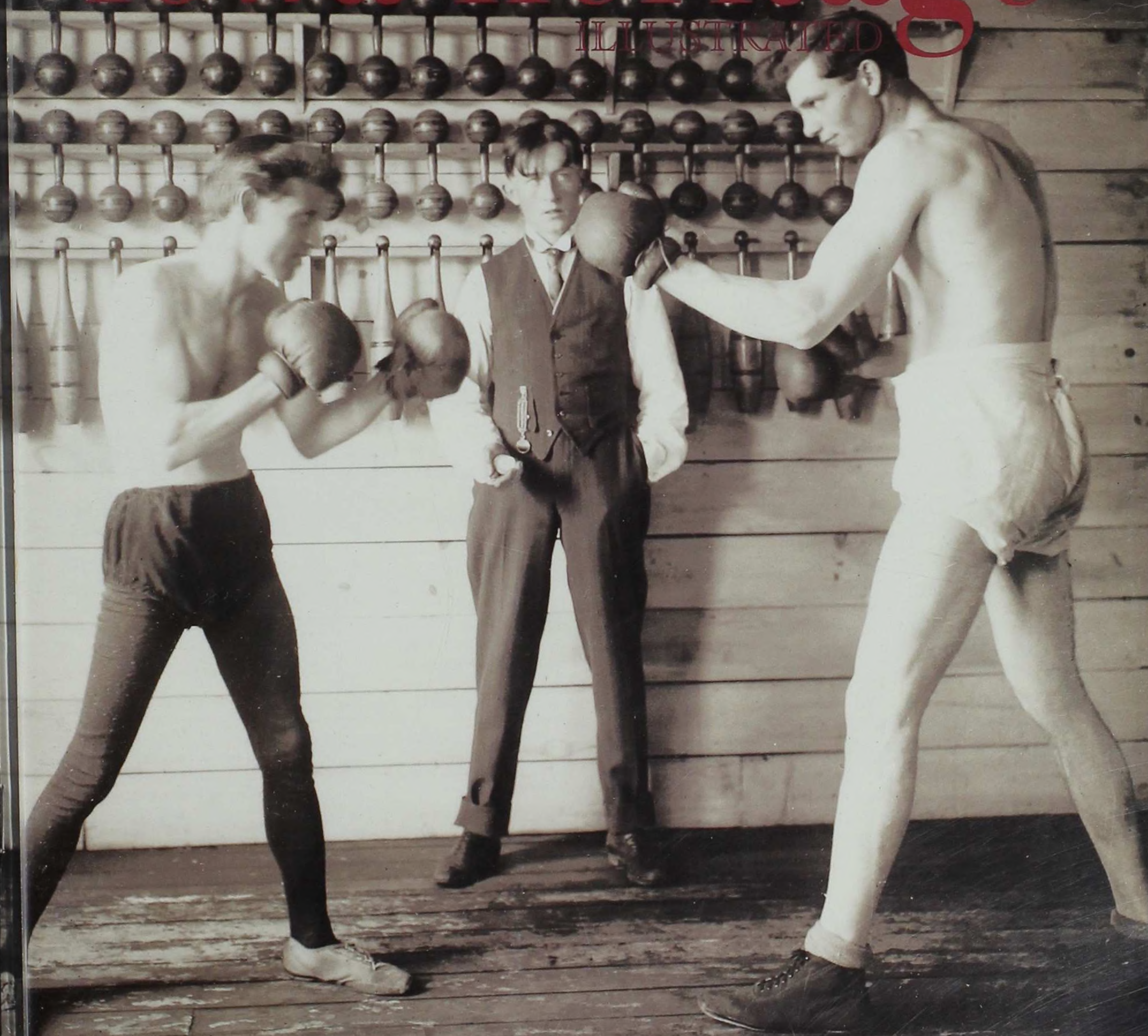


Boxing • Mitchellville Girls School Riot • Family Claims • Cedar Rapids and the Civil War
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Iowa Heritage

ILLUSTRATED



Front Porch

Dear Readers:

What one event would you like to have witnessed in the 20th century? That's the question that Roger Munns, the State Historical Society's public relations director, asked Iowans at this summer's State Fair in an informal survey. Most of the 177 responses were anonymous. We've included a large sampling of them here for you.

Munns reports that 24 named putting a man on the moon as "the event of the century." Judy Morrison, of Traer, was a high school junior touring Europe when the landing was announced in Munich. At that moment, a German band started playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." "The Europeans joined with the Americans singing our national anthem in English," she recalled. "It was a tremendously moving and patriotic moment."

There were also multiple votes for the following events:

- Sinking of the *Titanic* or the rescue of its passengers (9 votes)
- Assassination of President Kennedy (6)
- Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (5)
- Woodstock rock festival of 1969 (5)
- Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk (3)
- Dropping the atomic bomb on Japan (3)
- Explosion of the airship *Hindenburg* (2)
- Death of Hitler (2)
- "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr. (2)
- Selma, Alabama, civil rights march (2)
- The great Alaska earthquake (2)
- Signing of the constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote (2)

Other responses included these:

- San Francisco earthquake
- Lindbergh flight and parade in 1927
- Invention of the computer
- Challenger* explosion
- "John Lennon's murder. I would have conked the shooter."

- Turnover of the Panama Canal
- Discovery of King Tut's tomb
- Septuplets' first public appearance
- Times Square New Year celebration of 1900
- Sally Ride lifts off into space
- The horse-to-tractor transition on farms
- The Mars robot
- Russian revolution
- Early construction in downtown Des Moines
- Attend a one-room school house
- Construction of Gustav Stickley's home
- Farm strike of the 1930s
- Attend any state fair of the 1920s
- "Clinton-Lewinsky"
- Bonnie and Clyde's ride through Iowa
- The first Maid-Rite being made
- The elimination of military rule in Brazil
- The Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler's rise
- The Iowa prairie in the summer of 1900
- Khrushchev visit to Iowa in 1959
- The flood of 1993 in Monona County
- Straightening the Skunk River in 1911/12
- Meeting of the committee that planned the Amana Great Change

Some chose entertainment events:

- To hear Bix Beiderbecke play; 25th Glenn Miller celebration; a John Denver concert; a Gene Autry show; the end of disco.

Some chose personal moments:

- "Marriage of my parents"
- "The day my grandparents defected from Lithuania"
- "The time my grandparents immigrated from Sweden"
- "Birth of my adoptive son in Korea"
- "Watching my daughter being born"

Several were war-related:

- World War I; end of Vietnam War; Victory Day parade in New York and other celebrations after World War II; signing of Japanese surrender; release of concentration camps; attack on Pearl Harbor.

Many named political events: The 1900 Republican state convention; inaugurations of President Wilson and President Hoover; 1968 Democratic national convention; election of President Roosevelt

in 1932; to meet Teddy Roosevelt.

Some wrote more detailed responses:

"To have seen the Des Moines coliseum. My mother and father used to roller skate there."—Joan Fating

"To see my Uncle Dale Christensen, who received the Medal of Honor. He was killed at age 24 in New Guinea."—Doris Shreck

"Getting electricity for the first time. First TV."—Raymond Luber

"I was born in 1983!"—Kate Burpee

"The Lewis and Clark five-day celebration and the laying of the cornerstone for the building of the Carnegie free library [in Council Bluffs in 1904]."—Debbie Weilage

The Depression. "We ate a lot of potatoes, corn bread, and ham and beans, and out of the garden."—Marion Nehring

"To have walked into the Murphy Store . . . south of Newton. It was a thriving area in its heyday."—Maryann Ringgenberg

Sunday School picnics in Dubuque County with "the trolley ride out to Union Park with filled picnic hampers and lots of excited kids."—Michelle Wilkerson

And finally, some chose sports events:

Home runs by Babe Ruth or Mickey Mantle; Jackie Robinson breaking baseball's color barrier; Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympics; U.S. Senior Open in Des Moines; U.S. women's softball in the Olympics.

Correction: In the last issue's "A 1905 Auto Trip to Spirit Lake," the name of Herndon Hippee's Minnesota school was misspelled. The correct name is Shattuck School. Thanks to two sharp-eyed readers for catching the error.—The Editor

Come and converse on our front porch!

Share your thoughts with our readers here on the Front Porch page. Send your letters to Ginalie Swaim, editor, *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240-1806. By e-mail at: gswaim@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Editor: Ginalie Swaim
Subscriptions: Carol Carey (319-335-3916)
Memberships: Ruth Messer (515-242-5217)

In 1920, the State Historical Society of Iowa founded one of the nation's first popular history magazines—*The Palimpsest*. The magazine was renamed *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* in 1996, the year of Iowa's 150th anniversary of statehood.

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Let your imagination soar
on a voyage to Iowa's past . . .

Heritage

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fall 1999, Vol. 80, No. 3



Being a Man

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Savage girls



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Neva Stockdale

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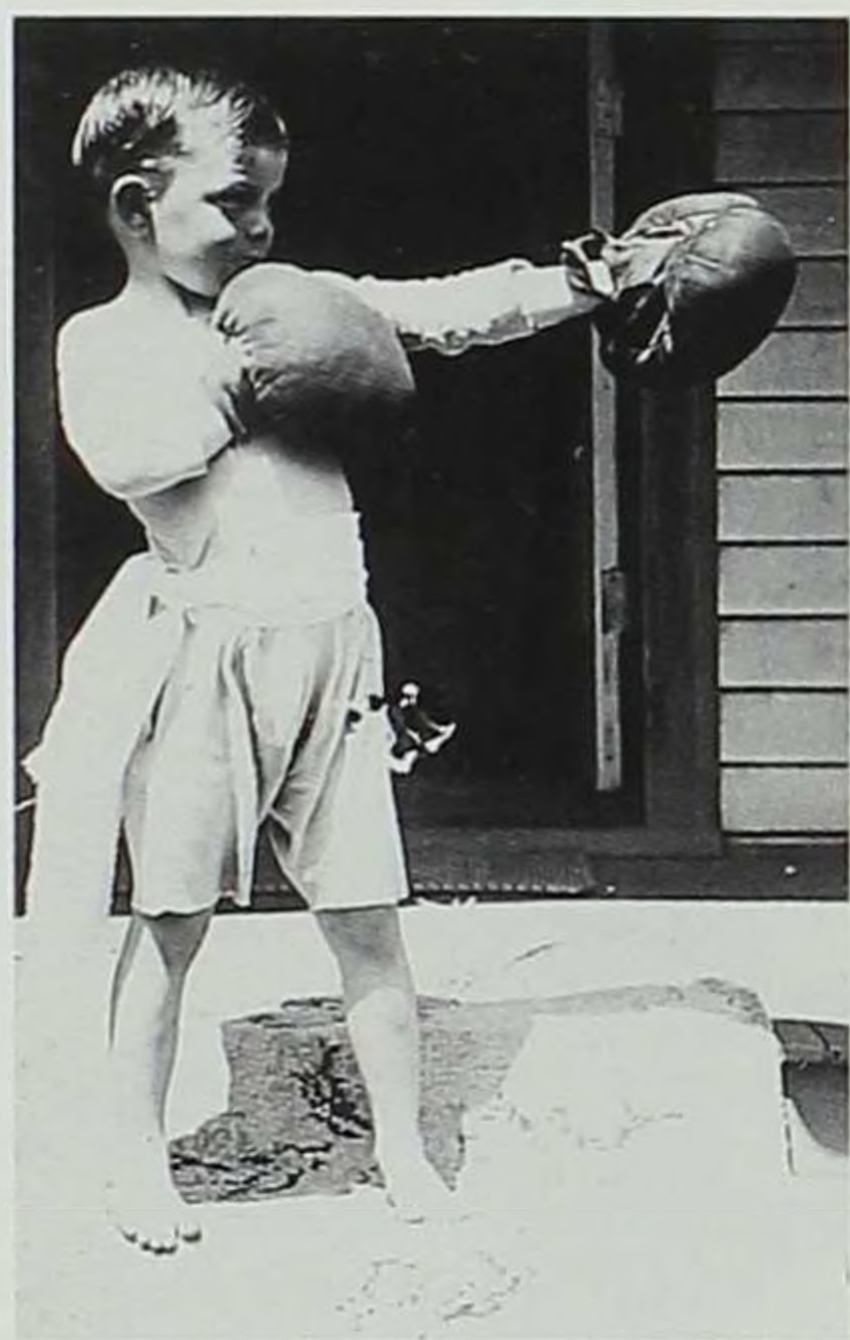
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Iowa Heritage

ILLUSTRATED

Formerly The Palimpsest

Fall 1999, Vol. 80, No. 3



Debating manliness

Boxing and Being a Man

Is it the "sweet science"—or primitive bloodlust?

by Matt Schaefer

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Savage Girls: The 1899 Riot at the Mitchellville Girls School

Neither the public nor the newspapers knew what to make of girls brandishing knives and smashing windows.

by Sharon E. Wood

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Savage girls

"Come Home at Once": The 1917 Letters of Neva Stockdale

"You could help a whole lot right now," Neva wrote to her beau, "for I need to be cheered if anyone ever did." A compelling drama, revealed in a box of old letters.

by Sharlene Voogd Cochrane

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Neva Stockdale

Reverberations of the War: Cedar Rapids in 1865

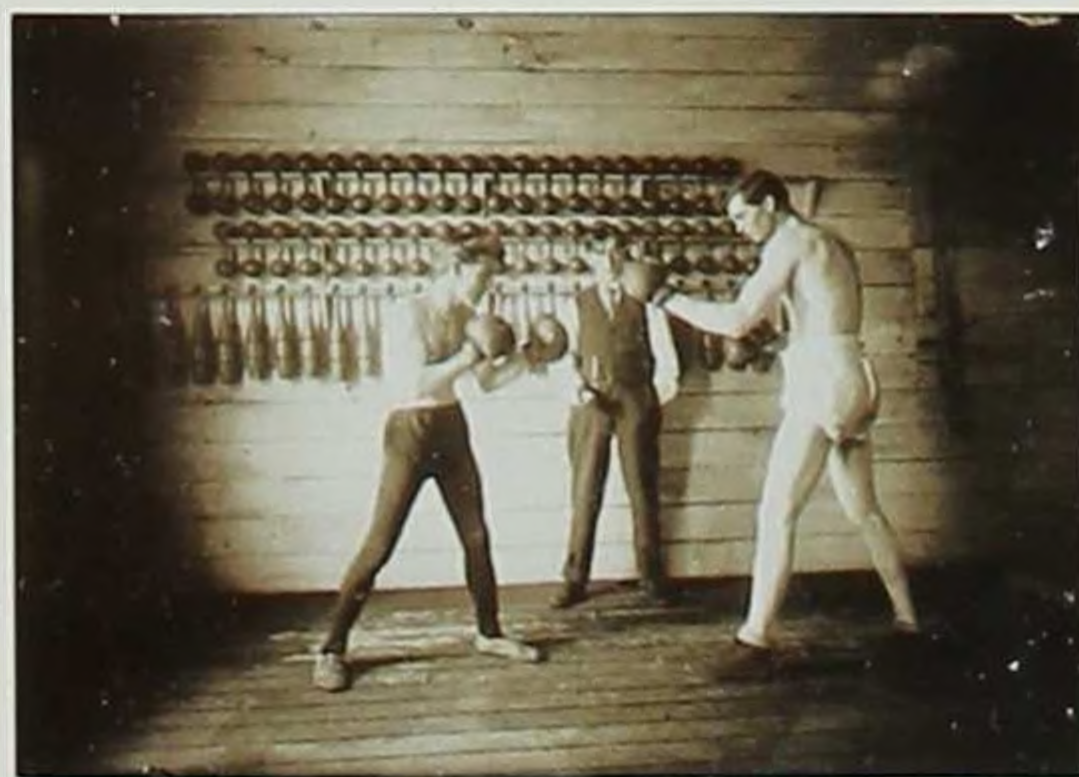
A year in the life of an Iowa community—tempered by a national war and chronicled by a local newspaper.

by Susan Kuecker

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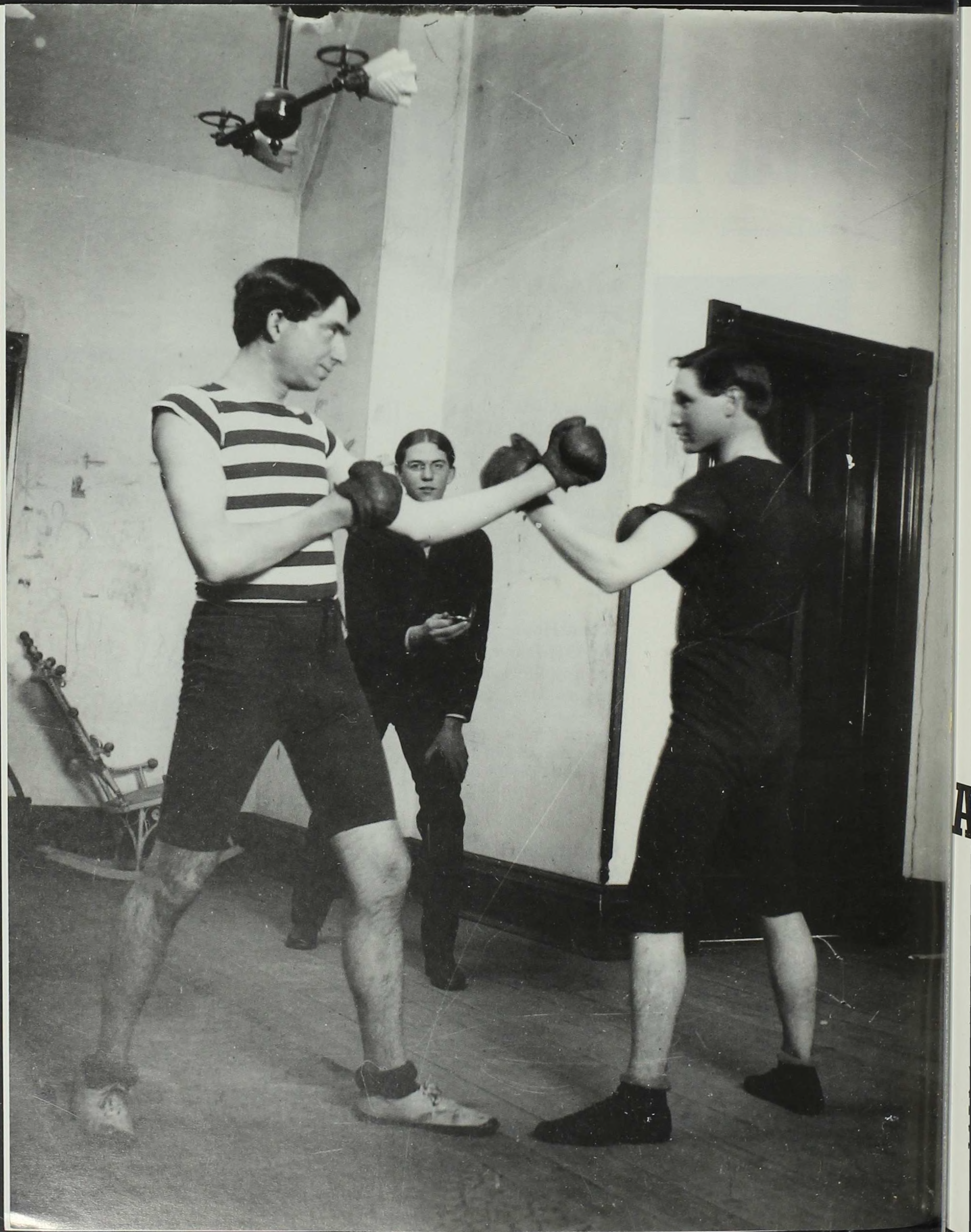


Reverberations of the Civil War



On the Cover

Boxing was particularly popular in the 1920s, when Iowa photographer William E. Felton caught two unidentified boxers and their referee in a dramatic moment. This issue looks at the public's love/hate relationship with boxing over the last century and offers more historic images of Iowans "duking it out." (Photo from the William E. Felton Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City)



Boxing & Being a Man

by Matt Schaefer

AS A LAD

growing up with two brothers, one a year older, the other a year younger, I knew well the meaning of sibling rivalry. We three brothers were by nature a competitive lot; often our games would escalate into violence. Being boys, we all thought that the shortest distance to settling an argument was a short, sharp punch in the nose (or a kick in the stomach). Our father soon grew tired of officiating these disputes. He bought us a pair of boxing gloves and shoved us out to the garage, telling us: "Settle it like men."

With a Victorian wicker rocking chair pushed back, light fixture globes turned up, and a referee and stopwatch close by, two young boxers eye each other. At the turn of the century, in athletic clubs and YMCAs, men and boys learned the rudiments of boxing.

PHOTO FROM WILLIAM E. FELTON COLLECTION, SHS-IOWA CITY

This simple phrase, pregnant with unvoiced implications, hung over our heads each time we laced up the gloves to resolve our childish disagreements. I remember getting pounded several times by my older brother. This was to be expected, since he was a year farther along toward manhood. It was after being walloped by my younger brother (who by rights should have lagged me in developing manliness) that I stopped relying on boxing to settle disputes.

I began to question the whole premise that boxing was the definitive "manly" fashion to reach agreement. This first question introduced a train of follow-up queries: What was it about cut lips, bloody noses, and eyes watering from a stinging blow that equated to manhood? Was there something ennobling about a black eye? Did enduring a punch to the solar plexus make me more manly? More rational?

By the time this train of thought had run its course, I had decided to lay down my gloves and view boxing from a distance. Even the relative safety afforded by this abstract, intellectual redoubt did not completely dim my fascination with boxing as a sport. I followed the triumphs and foibles of its champions through the sports pages. Later I gained a more sophisticated understanding of boxing's place in our culture via my education in American sporting history.

BOXING

is a sport about which Americans have always been strangely ambivalent. On the one hand, it is esteemed as the manly art of self-defense. Promoters of the sport label it the "sweet science." They emphasize the sportsmanship and fair play of boxing done well. They note that the skills of a boxer closely overlay attributes valued in men: grit, stamina, strength, speed, and the reasoned application of force. The ramifications of these overlapping concepts of manliness and boxing skills explain (in part) why the sport retains its popularity. It explains why many of us look with wonder on the heavyweight champion of the world, hoping to see in his form the paragon of manliness. This school of thought emphasizes boxing prowess as evidence of training of will, mind, and body to razor sharpness, esteeming the ability of the sport to raise a common man to uncommon levels of fitness.

On the other hand, boxing has been described as an atavistic vestige of man's more primitive (and savage) nature. It has been characterized as a throwback to cultures where gladiatorial combat more closely showed the true measure of a man, times when a man's ability to fight determined his worth to society. The bloodlust attendant upon a boxing match is a chilling sight. Discussion of whether boxing bur-nishes masculinity, within its rule-bound violence, its artful bloodletting, or its stylish brutality, becomes moot amid cries of "Kill the son-of-a-bitch!" and "Tear his head off!" Other combat sports (judo, wrestling, and fencing) do not have clobbering the opponent into submission as their object. Opponents of boxing point to the tangible human cost in human life, diminished capacity, and shattered lives of men whose prowess dooms them to be fistic fodder for the more skilled. The annals of prizefighting are replete with stories of men who had hoped to use boxing as an avenue up from poverty or ethnic and racial discrimination, only to find themselves at the dead end

of a fist, dazedly staring up at the lights while the referee counts out their dream.

Americans' attitudes toward boxing have moved between these two poles since the days of John L. Sullivan. During the 1880s, Sullivan, the Boston strong boy and heavyweight champion of the world, elevated boxing from its traditional roots as rustic recreation to a commercial enterprise. Prior to Sullivan, American boxing was a small-scale endeavor, pitting two local toughs in no-holds-barred competitions. These bare-knuckle fights often were brutal affairs with each combatant punching, kicking, and biting to gain an edge. They fought until one man was unable to continue. The winner cared more for the fame of being the roughest man in the county than for the pitifully small purse. In this, boxing recalled Greek cultural sensibilities, where male prowess was proven by violent competition.

SULLIVAN

had his share of bare-knuckle bouts, but he earned his widest acclaim fighting under the Queensberry rules. These rules called for timed rounds, no hitting below the belt, no hitting an opponent while he was down, 12 rounds per bout, and, most importantly, boxing gloves (to reduce the damage done to hands and faces). The rules grew out of the English boxing tradition and attempted to reward skillful fighters over the more brutal.

Sullivan's charisma, indefatigable barnstorming, and his undefeated record against all comers brought boxing to the forefront of the American sporting scene in the 1880s. He was the most prominent sporting hero America had produced, earning (and spending) \$40,000 a year for his efforts. His heavy drinking, womanizing, and hot temper received nearly as much attention as his fistic accomplishments, leaving the American middle class to look askance at boxing.

By the time Jim Corbett defeated Sullivan for the heavyweight title in 1892, America was ready for a new champion. "Gentleman Jim" was able to overcome Sullivan's brawn and sinew by skillfully slipping his punches and countering with jabs and combinations. Corbett epitomized the sweet scientific aspects of boxing as a manly art, aiming to outpoint (rather than bludgeon) his opponent. His style perfectly fit the middle-class expectations of fin-de-siècle middle-class American men. They saw in Corbett what they could hope to be—given enough time and training at their local YMCA or college gymnasium. Boxing afforded them a way to combat encroaching



Bare-knuckle fighting (upper right) enlivened 1870s and '80s Mississippi River "clambakes" held on Offerman's Island (now Credit Island) near Davenport. By the late 19th century, bare knuckles gave way to padded gloves in American boxing. Next page: Soldiers box in a free moment during the Spanish-American War. Two fellow soldiers kneel nearby, ready with towels.





SHSI (IOWA CITY); DAN TURNER COLLECTION



SHS IOWA CITY, DAN TURNER COLLECTION



Though barely visible at the top of the photograph, the words "Training for Jack Johnson The 17th round" were handwritten on the negative of this image of two young men in overalls and boxing gloves. In 1908, African-American boxer Jack Johnson won the heavyweight championship. Four years earlier, boxing had entered the Olympics. The same year, psychologist G. Stanley Hall's groundbreaking book, *Adolescence*, recommended boxing for boys as a way of molding character and working through evolutionary stages of savagery. Meanwhile, President Theodore Roosevelt was donning gloves in the White House.

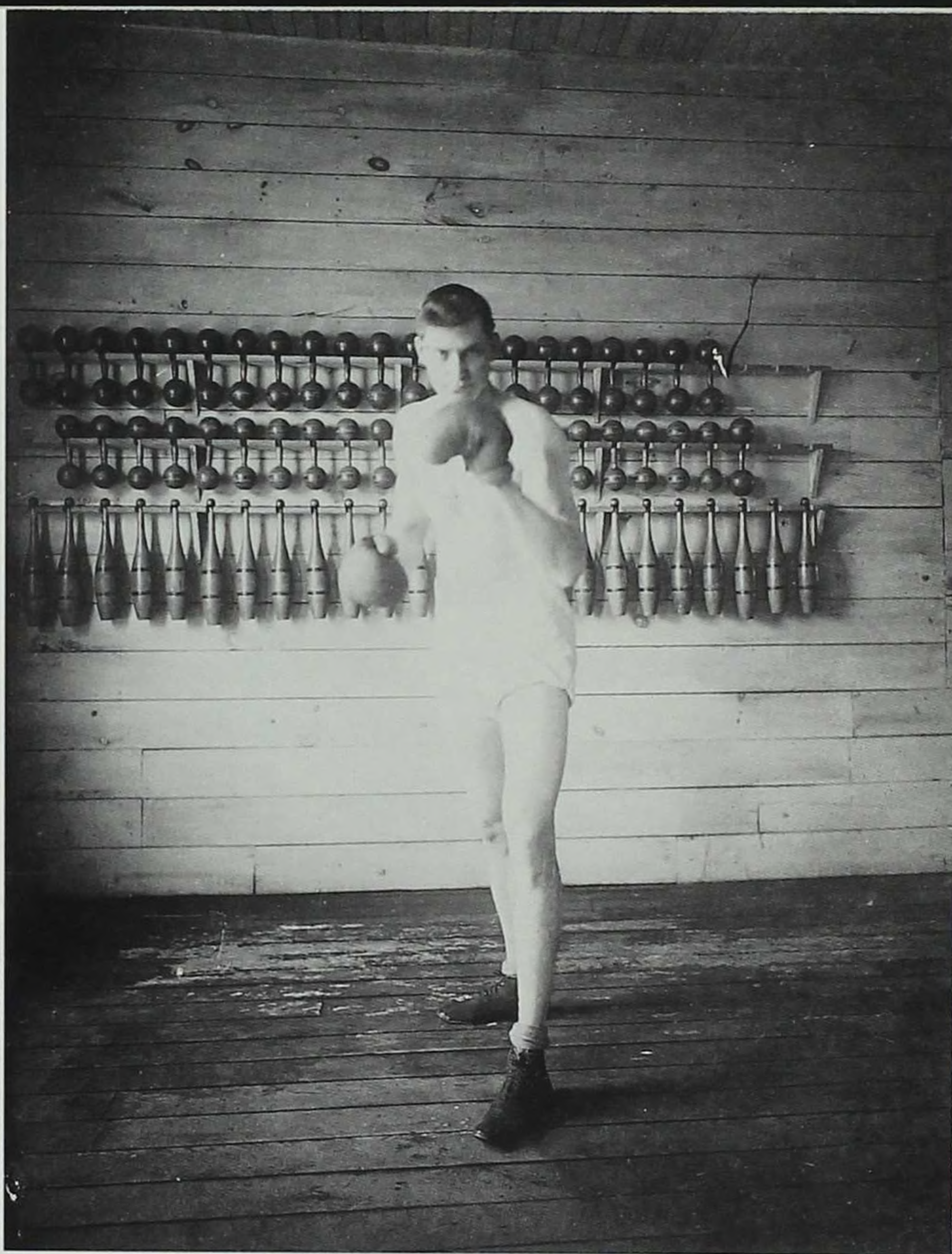
feminization brought about by urban, sedentary life; its training gave them the tools to withstand the strife of life in a competitive market. The new heavyweight champion of boxing was seen to embody the attributes that would conquer both opponents and environments and sustain the race.

With the ascent of Jack Johnson to the heavyweight throne in 1908, Americans now had to confront the issue of race in boxing. The African-American Johnson combined the boxing skills of Corbett with the power of Sullivan. This formidable combination rendered futile the efforts of a series of "great white hopes" to wrest back the title. Johnson's disdain of convention and his refusal to accept societal norms made him enormously popular among blacks, but led to fear and loathing on the part of middle-class white Americans. When Johnson defeated Jim Jeffries in 1910, race riots broke out in Houston, Little Rock, Norfolk, and Wilmington as whites put down blacks celebrating Johnson's victory. Time and enjoying the high life ultimately accomplished what no challenger could: Johnson retired from the ring.

Johnson's retirement cleared the way for the emergence of a new heavyweight champion, Jack Dempsey, who came to prominence just as Americans fully embraced sports as a commercial enterprise. During the 1920s, mass-market magazines, newsreels, and the radio made athletes instantly recognizable. Babe Ruth, Red Grange, Babe Didrikson, and Jack Dempsey were more than just sports figures; they were cultural icons. As an icon, Dempsey earned a fantastic income, boxing in front of tens of thousands in bouts staged in baseball stadiums. Clearly the reservations voiced against the brutality of boxing had receded, swallowed by the full-throated roar of the crowds. Whereas 19th-century opponents of boxing were able to attack the sport from the moral high ground, this ground had eroded by the 1920s. Dempsey lived the large life, adored by press and public.

JOE LOUIS

—the second African-American heavyweight champion—was likewise lionized during his long tenure as titleholder. He won the belt in 1937 and held the title until 1948. Louis was esteemed as champion by nearly all Americans, regardless of race. This reveals less about the evolution of race relations in America (still a segregated society, riven by race) than it does about Joe Louis. He was willing to present himself humbly

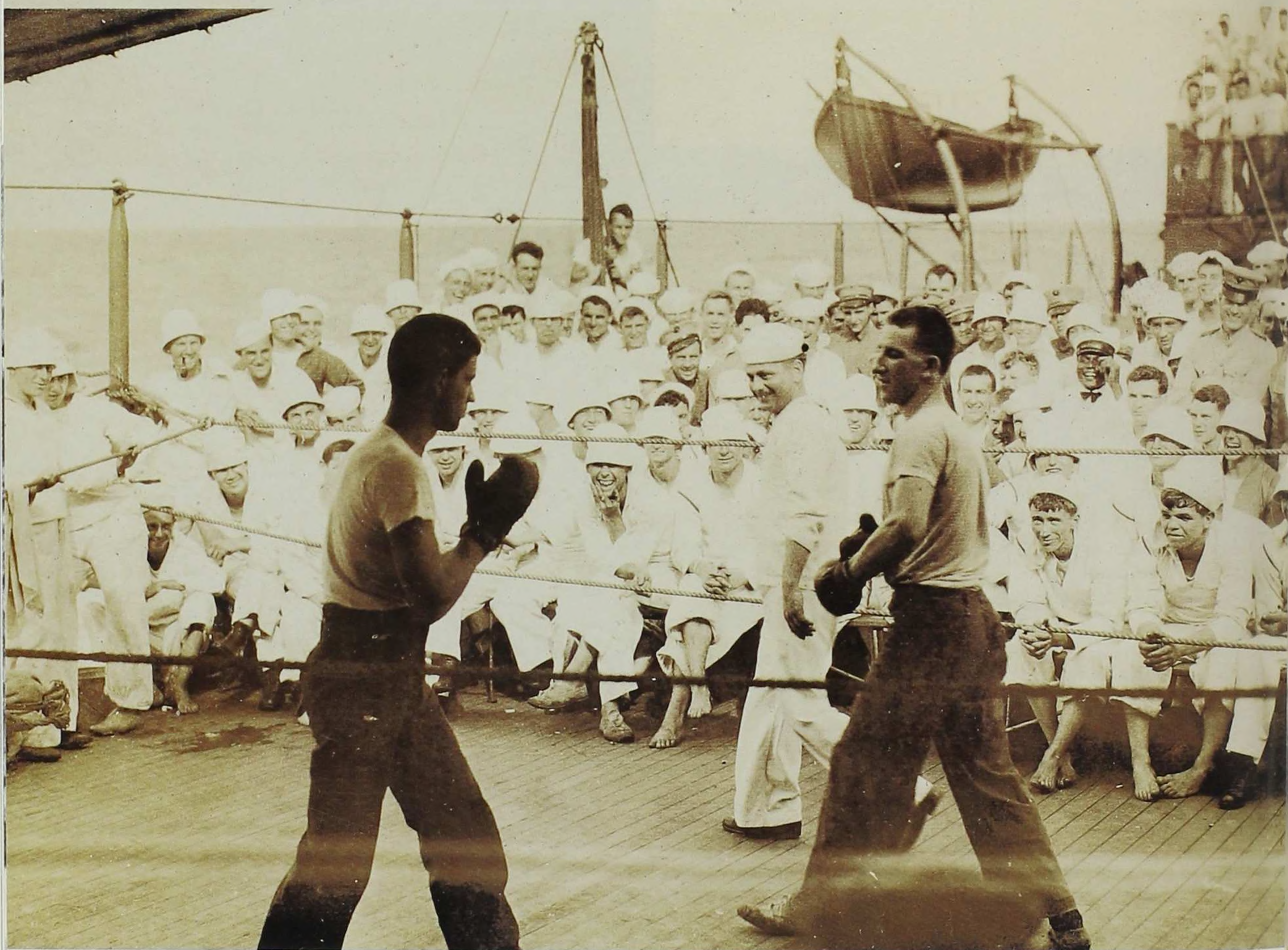


SHS (IOWA CITY); WILLIAM E. FELTON COLLECTION

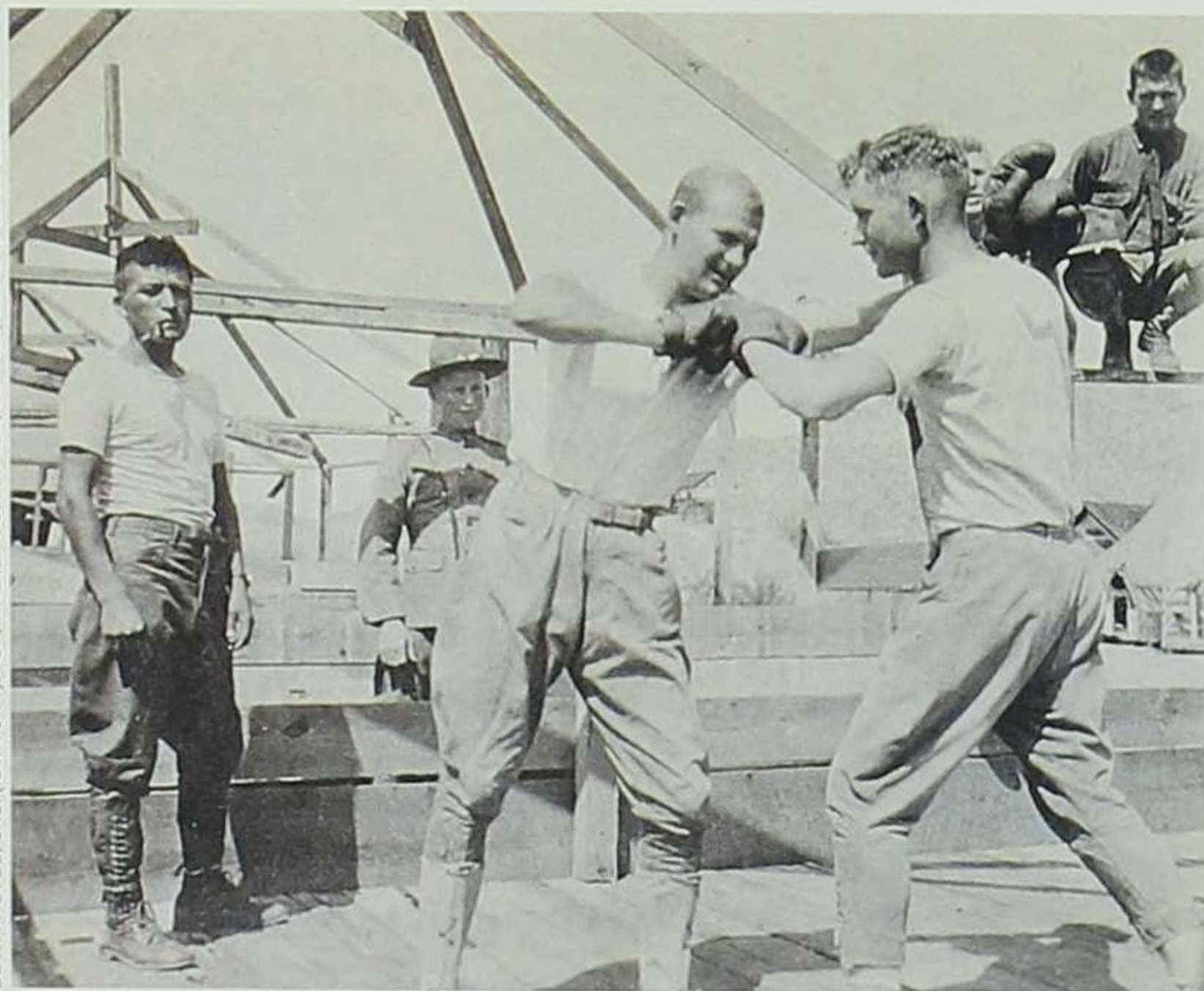
For American males, boxing was part of developing and preserving the "body electric"—a man's vital force. The moral purity of such physical efforts as amateur sparring, gymnastics, and other elements of physical training, however, clashed with the moral dangers of gambling, drinking, and graft, which often accompanied commercialized prizefighting.

within America's racial hierarchy, keeping close counsel over his opinions. When Louis defeated the German champ, Max Schmeling, it was hailed by whites as triumph of the American way of life, and by blacks as a triumph for their race. When America entered World War II, Louis's victory over Schmeling was invoked to hearten the troops during training.

After the war, boxing found another vehicle to transport it into the heart of American culture—television. For most of the 1950s, the televised Friday night fights were a staple. This new medium revealed to many the more barbarous nature of the sport as men pummeled each other into bloody submission. Although the bloodier aspects of boxing could be obscured by the less visceral media of print and radio, live television did not have the luxury of rewrite or verbal gloss. Once again the vocal opponents of boxing were heard. This time their criticisms were lent credibility by medical evidence that repeated blows



World War I exposed American soldiers and sailors to boxing, where they learned it as a recreational outlet and as part of bayonet training. Then, during the Twenties, the growth of leisure time and spectator sports helped usher in boxing's Golden Age. Newspapers, too, did their part: sports coverage grew from a single sports page to entire sections, and in 1923, a Chicago newspaper started the Golden Gloves amateur competition. Nevertheless, social reformers fought prizefighting.



BOTH PHOTOS: SHS (IOWA CITY); TOP, WALKER COLLECTION; BOTTOM, GIFFORD SCRAPBOOK

to the head did long-term damage. As it had in the 19th century, boxing moved to the periphery of America's sporting culture.

Into this arena stepped a brash young challenger from Louisville. Cassius Clay, the winner of the gold medal for boxing at the 1960 Olympics in Rome, emerged as a challenger for the heavyweight title. Clay was bright, bold, and not above gulling a credible press corps. His antic posturing and poetry could not obscure the fact that he was the most skilled, strongest, and smartest heavyweight of his time. He easily won the title in 1964. Clay announced his conversion to Islam and changed his name to Muhammad Ali shortly after winning the title. Ali then shocked the world by announcing that his faith rendered him a conscientious objector to the war in Vietnam. Americans could not accept the notion of a paci-

fist pugilist. Ali was stripped of his title, but ultimately won vindication through the courts. He resumed his career, a little older but still strong, stout-hearted, and sure of his skills. Unfortunately, Ali fought long after his skills had diminished and stands today as testimony to the damage a body can sustain in hand-to-head combat. Parkinson's disease has dulled Ali's rapier wit, tarnished his silver tongue, and slowed his lightning reflexes, offering opponents of boxing a telling case in point.

IOWANS

—like many in America—historically have been of two minds about boxing. It was assumed that young men in Iowa would be able to defend themselves with their fists (and that such feistiness could be used to serve the state). But the 1897 Iowa Code explicitly prohibited prizefighting as an offense against the public peace. This ban was in the same section of the code as injunctions against obscene language, riot, and blasphemy. Those who engaged in a prizefight were subject to fines up to \$1,000 and imprisonment up to one year. Yet prizefights were held in Iowa (if newspaper accounts are to be trusted), and no one was jailed for it. Iowa's opponents of boxing had only the law on their side; without the will to enforce it, it meant little.

During the 1920s, as the popularity of boxing rose across America, the Iowa General Assembly reconsidered its ban on prizefighting. Young men, exposed to boxing as part of their military training during World War I, supported efforts to legalize boxing as a spectator sport. Neighboring states such as Illinois and

Missouri lifted their legislative bans on prizefighting, and bouts were drawing crowds to arenas and armories in Chicago and St. Louis. Each time the issue came to a vote in the Iowa legislature, the representatives from rural districts voted it down. They argued that prizefights brought in

their wake gambling, crass commercialism, and graft. The *Monticello Express* summarized the attitudes of many Iowans in a front-page editorial: "Boxing, when rightly indulged in, is a manly sport, but the staging of such contests as the Dempsey-Carpentier bout puts American sport on a level with the ancient gladiatorial contests and the modern Spanish bullfight. These fights are not promoted through love of clean sport, but as a betting and money-making proposition."

The Iowa Code was revised in 1970 to reflect the reality of scheduled prizefighting in the state. It aimed to control the carnage by establishing licensing boards, review commissions, and mandatory reports. The effect of the measure seems limited, as combatants recently entertained crowds in Davenport with a series of "tough man" matches. These bouts featured "no-holds-barred" action as men punched, kicked, bit, and clawed each other into submission. It was exactly this type of free-for-all that 19th-century boxers sought to replace with the rules-driven matches of gloved men, fighting timed rounds, governed by a referee.

Since the days of John L. Sullivan, champions and opponents of boxing have engaged each other in disputing the relative merits of the sport. This intellectual combat has gone on for well over a century in America. For each individual who rises to defend the character-building aspects of the "sweet science," another counters with evidence of physical damage done to combatants and the societal costs of exploiting young men. American culture is diverse enough, and flexible enough, to allow adherents from each school of thought free rein to voice their opinions. So the abstract battle over boxing continues, with each side landing telling blows, but with neither side able to land the knockout punch. ❖

Matt Schaefer is many years removed from being a skinny little boy boxing in a suburban Cleveland garage. His doctoral research at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor focused on conceptions of physical fitness in America. He currently is Special Collections assistant at the State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City).

Whether protecting one's front porch (left) or one's nation (opposite), many American males gravitated to boxing for decades.



SHSI (IOWA CITY); ALTWOLDT COLLECTION

NOTE ON SOURCES

A useful source on the history of boxing is Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986). For a complete discussion of proposals to legalize prizefighting in the 1920s in Iowa, see Don S. Kirschner, *City and Country: Rural Responses to Urbanization in the 1920s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1970), 98-112.

Savage Girls

The 1899 Riot at the Mitchellville Girls School

by Sharon E. Wood

On a cool October Sunday in 1899, as church bells tolled over the village of Mitchellville and residents strolled to worship, murmurs of discord were already stirring at the State Industrial School for Girls just outside of town. That evening, the inmates rose in open rebellion, and by midnight bells were ringing out over Mitchellville again—this time calling the citizenry to quell a riot so vicious and destructive it defied the most fundamental beliefs of observers: who had imagined that girls could be so savage?

From dusk until nine the following morning, as many as 200 girls and young women reveled in their moment of freedom, dancing, drinking, and destroying nearly everything in sight. When posses of men summoned from Mitchellville attempted to storm the buildings, the inmates fought back, successfully repulsing the attack. Even the Polk County sheriff and his deputies needed several hours to restore order.

In the aftermath of the mayhem, Sheriff Jim Stout marched about 70 “ringleaders” to a special train, which carried them 15 miles to Des Moines and to the cold, cramped quarters of the Polk County jail. There the girls languished for weeks while the authorities puzzled over what to do with them. The debate that followed provoked excuses, explanations, and accusations from all sides: the State Board of Control, which administered the industrial school; a grand jury charged with investigating the riot; newspaper editors and columnists; organizations concerned with child welfare; and the girls’ families. Back at the industrial school, two more short riots in the days following signalled that the trouble in Mitchellville was far from over.

The riot at Mitchellville shocked some, amused others, and perplexed many of the most thoughtful observers. It bewildered because it called into ques-





SHSI (IOWA CITY). ORIGINAL COURTESY OF JAMES BERANEK

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STATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, MITCHELLVILLE, IOWA. COURTESY OF JAMES BERANEK

tion the most basic assumptions about race and gender shared by Americans at the turn of the last century—assumptions that underlay the reform program administered at Mitchellville.

In the 1890s, scientific and popular ideas about boyhood were in the midst of a contentious reorientation. Psychologist G. Stanley Hall was beginning to publicize the ideas he would formally present in the two volumes of his 1904 opus, *Adolescence*. Hall proposed that the races of the world were progressing through different stages of evolution, and that only the white, European race had evolved to the highest stage of civilization. This idea was neither original nor particularly controversial—at least not to most educated whites of the era. Educated non-whites, like Harvard Ph.D. W.E.B. DuBois, vigorously disputed this assumption.

Hall's stroke of originality was to propose that each boy, in his development, recapitulated the entire development of his race, passing through the stage of savagery in childhood, and being flooded with the racial memories of his ancestors—and their sexual energy—at puberty. These experiences called for special tolerance by educators. Young boys' tendency toward "savage" behavior should be permitted so boys could evolve through this stage, deriving physical hardness from it while freeing themselves from any savage taint as adults. The sexual energy of puberty should be channeled safely into sports and schooling so that white boys with the richest stock of ancestral energy could evolve into super-men.

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But where did Hall's work leave adolescent girls? They lingered in an evolutionary backwater. Neither Hall nor most of his contemporaries believed girls could evolve to the highest levels of civilized development. They based their belief on the assumption that females were "generic" while



"GOING TO SCHOOL."
GIRLS INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL — 22—
MITCHELLVILLE, IA.

SPS (OWA CITY) ORIGINAL COURTESY OF JAMES BEHRENS

tion the most basic assumptions about race and gender shared by Americans at the turn of the last century—assumptions that underlay the reform program administered at Mitchellville.

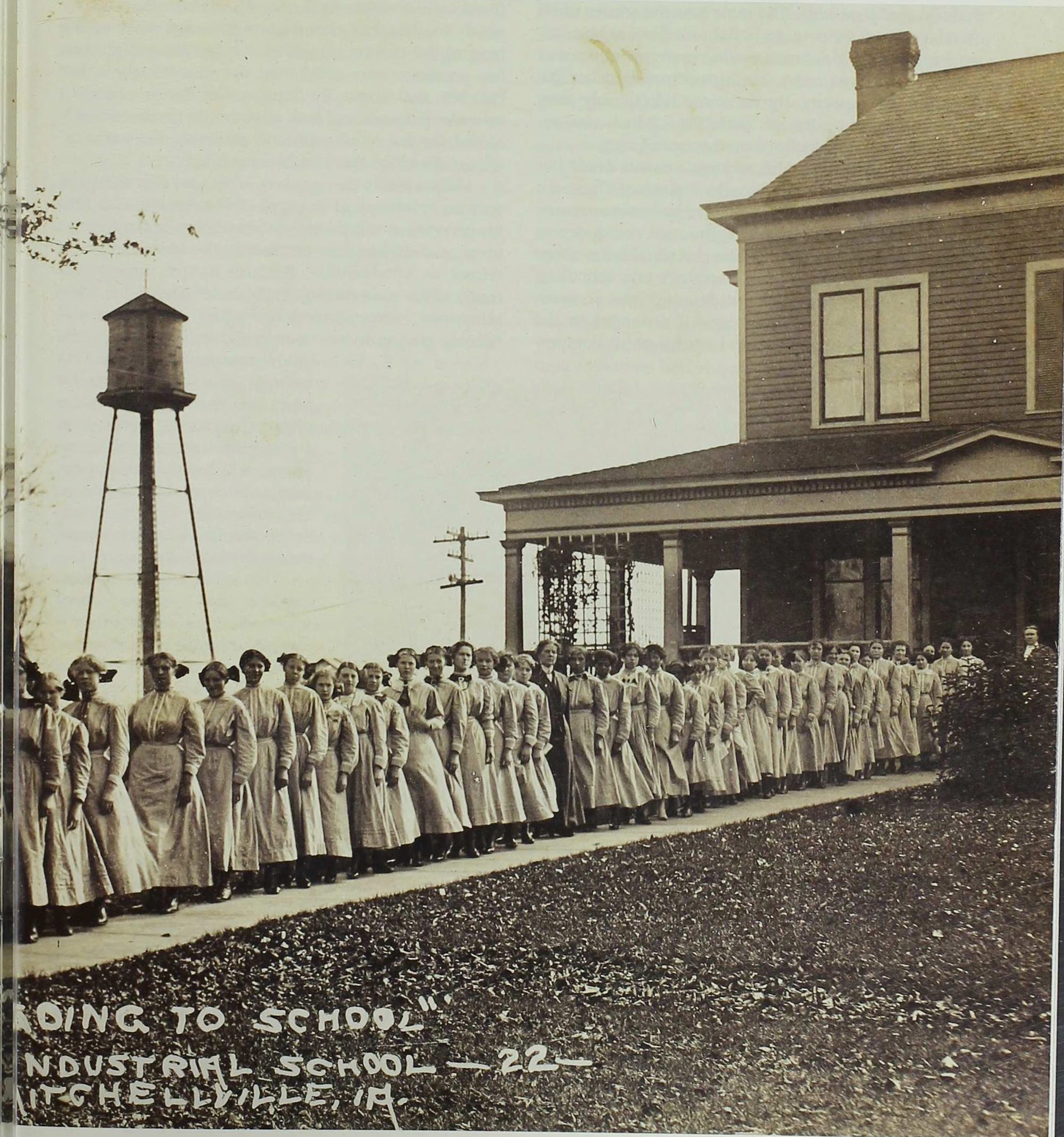
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GOING TO SCHOOL"
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SHSI (IOWA CITY). ORIGINAL COURTESY OF JAMES BERANEK

males were "variable." The male was the source of all developmental innovation in the race, for only he varied from type. No woman could reach the summit of "genius"; she was incapable of transcending her generic mental capacity. By the same token, only men could occupy the rank of "imbecile," which also required dramatic variation from type.

In this scientific model, woman's nature made her steady, conservative, and generic. If she experienced a streak of savagery in childhood, she had no need to indulge it, since neither she nor the race could derive evolutionary benefit from it. Nor did she need to channel the sexual energy of her ancestors into schooling or sports, since she could not develop into a superman. Indeed, such activities posed a danger to the white race. Hall, like all but a handful of his contem-

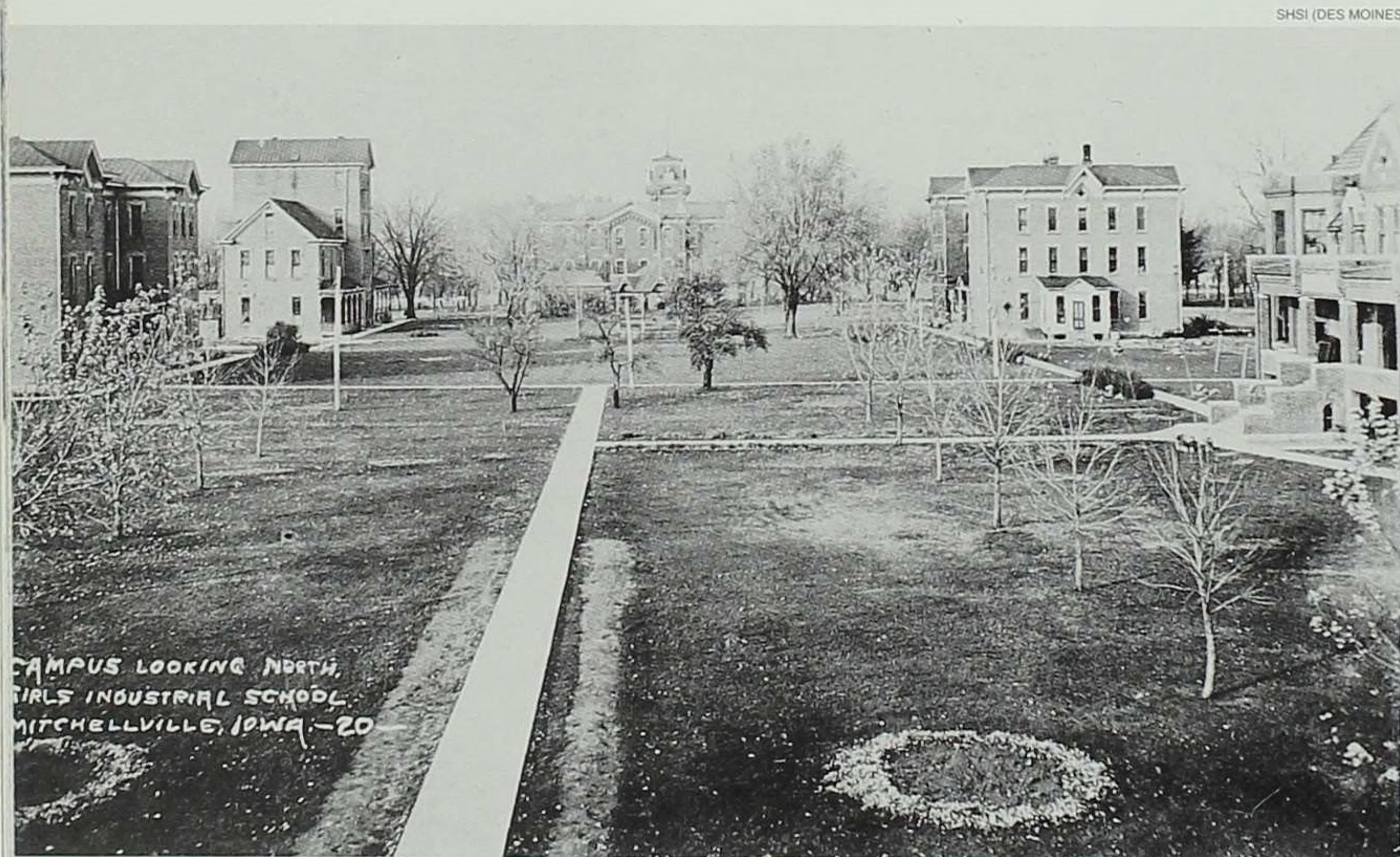
pered by her capacity for motherhood. She was innately modest, her sexual desires aroused only by the longing for children. Instinctively gentle and patient, her passions were awakened only by threats to her children and home. By happy coincidence, woman's inherent patience and lack of ambition made her well-suited for the mind-numbing assembly lines and tedious office jobs she increasingly filled.

Unlike Hall's "savage boy," this scientific model of woman's nature had changed little since the mid-19th century, when it influenced the creation of the first reform schools for girls—including the Iowa industrial school at Mitchellville. Because nature presumably made white girls modest and gentle, when girls were otherwise, then something other than nature—namely, environment—was to blame. Therefore, in the

model reformatory of the 19th century, girls whose home life had led them astray were placed (by parents or court) in a perfected, institutional home. There, wholesome labor, gentle discipline, and good (meaning Protestant Christian) example would allow their innate, womanly natures to emerge.

This was the ideal animating the girls' reform school when the Iowa legislature arranged to create separate institutions for boys and girls in 1873. Over the next quarter-century, girls entering the school followed a routine that divided their time between schoolroom and the various institutional workshops: laundry, kitchen, housekeeping, mending. Their labor subsidized the operation of the school, and in theory prepared

them to be domestic servants after release. For their leisure time, "inmates" (as they were called) were encouraged to pursue such activities as fancy needlework or the study of religious tracts. Twice daily the inmates gathered for Protestant devotions, with Sundays devoted to chapel and Sunday School. They also attended a weekly prayer meeting. Girls who obeyed the rules, labored dutifully, and demonstrated a good Protestant character could accumulate credits that led to their early release. Those whose behavior fell outside the appropriate model remained until age 18.



SHSI (DES MOINES)

Orderly grounds and obedient inmates characterize the following series of six photographs of the Industrial School for Girls early in the 20th century. A far less serene portrait of the school emerged from accounts of the 1899 riot and its aftermath.

poraries, believed that too much mental activity at puberty would sap a girl's limited store of energy, permanently crippling her reproductive organs. They worried that as middle-class girls increasingly attended high school and college, the reproductive strain would dramatically lower birth rates among old-stock white Americans. The result would be "race suicide," or the decline of whites relative to more fertile non-whites.

Civilized woman's nature, as proposed by both science and conservative popular opinion, was de-

By the end of the century, the industrial school had grown from a handful of inmates to about 200. Like most Iowans, nearly all of the girls committed to the home were white, though African-Americans were overrepresented in the school's population. The inmates were grouped into four buildings known as "families," in keeping with the ideal of the reformatory as a perfected home. Each family was under the direction of a woman manager, whose impossible job was to maintain order among as many as 70 inmates, ranging in age from 7 to 18, while offering them motherly attention and a model of appropriate womanly behavior.

While scientific ideas about the nature of womanhood had barely budged since mid-century, standards of institutional administration were changing rapidly. In 1898, the Iowa legislature abolished the school's board of trustees and placed the school under a new central Board of Control, charged with the operation of most state institutions. Centralization was deemed more efficient, and efficiency was increasingly a goal of Progressive Era governments. Given a mandate, the new Board of Control implemented policy changes aimed at modernization and efficiency. It cut the salaries of some employees, and, in a move intended to weed out nepotism but having far-reaching consequences, it prohibited the wives of superintendents from being employed as matrons.

Married superintendent-matron couples were common at public institutions in the 19th century. The practice reflected both the ideal that the institution would be a home, and the assumption that men's and women's roles were natural. If a qualified superintendent was chosen, his wife would naturally be able to fulfill the duties of matron. The duties of the two officers were modeled on those of husband and wife in a conventional middle-class household. The superintendent dealt with representatives of government, supervised male employees, and operated the farm that was often part of such institutions (especially in Iowa). He set overall policy and had final authority in hiring and firing employees. The matron operated the kitchen, laundry, sewing room, and housekeeping functions of the institution and supervised the managers and other female employees. Ideally, she brought a motherly touch to the operation of the institution.

When the Board of Control rejected the superintendent-matron couple, they were at one level embracing professional opportunities for women. No longer would marriage alone qualify a woman as matron; she would need to show training and experience appropriate for the job. Nevertheless, the new policy had the

effect of forcing out at least one effective and well-liked matron, the wife of Supt. A. H. Leonard. Both Leonards resigned, and on October 1, 1899, James N. Miller, a former Des Moines alderman whose only experience in a state institution was performing clerical work at the Marshalltown home for old soldiers, took over as superintendent at Mitchellville.

Miller became the match that touched off a powder keg. Almost immediately after his arrival, inmates began protesting his administration with their feet, running away in record numbers. Miller was not the approachable, fatherly superintendent that A. H. Leonard had been. Where Leonard had encouraged inmates to bring complaints and troubles to him, Miller insisted that the girls speak only to his subordinates. The staff, in turn, was largely inexperienced. Long-time assistants had either resigned over salary cuts or chosen to leave with the Leonards. The former music teacher, Miss Emma Wilson, became the new matron. The distant superintendent and his novice staff proved an explosive combination.

The unrest began early on Sunday, October 22, when several girls escaped from Building No. 2, where the newest inmates were housed. Some were quickly recaptured, but Miss Klinefelter, the supervisor of Building No. 2, decided to punish all 50 residents for the infractions of the few by sending all to bed without supper. The girls rioted briefly when their punishment was announced around 5:30 but soon quieted down. The peace was deceptive. The girls were plotting their real response for after dark.

At 10:30, after they had been sent to bed for the night, several girls who shared a communal sleeping room battered down the locked doors using pieces of furniture. They then fanned across the campus, freeing the others. Together, the inmates vented their fury at the institution. They smashed windows and furniture, arming themselves with clubs made from table legs, knives from the kitchen, and "nice, long, sharp, shiny shears which the Board of Control had recently purchased as an adjunct to teaching the useful art of sewing," as a reporter would note.

An anxious Supt. Miller ordered the bells rung and sent urgent pleas for help to nearby Mitchellville. With a staff of only 13, he could not hope to regain control without assistance. Around 11 p.m., men from the village began arriving on the scene to help restore order. Having been duly deputized, between 20 and 30 men attempted an assault on the largest dormitory building. They were repulsed by "girls armed with

shining scissors, knives and forks, shovels, pokers and other weapons. . . . Wash bowls and pitchers, soap dishes, pieces of lamps and other things were hurled with great force against the citizens," some of whom were badly injured.

By midnight, newspaper reporters from Des Moines had arrived on the scene. Their dispatches depicted the girls as bloodthirsty bacchantes. "At midnight the girls were marching up and down the campus, their hair hanging down their backs, . . . swearing at everyone in sight, brandishing knives and clubs, occasionally picking up brickbats and throwing them through windows which had escaped being broken and terrorizing the community," gasped the *Des Moines Leader*. When several girls cornered the superintendent, "they rushed him and literally chewed him.

more than a touch of irony one reporter observed, "They are entirely without scruples as to whether they ride the diamond [men's] or drop frame [women's] wheel. They ride either with equal grace and satisfaction." Violating the gender conventions of bicycle use was the smallest of their offenses. At every turn the inmates of Mitchellville proved themselves unnatural women: violent, drunk, vulgar, and sexual. Although some of the inmates, perhaps as many as 40, fled the grounds and waited out the violence in the yard of their teacher's home in Mitchellville, these noncombatants went unmentioned in the Des Moines papers.

Within two hours, Sheriff Stout arrived from Des Moines with a detachment of ten deputies. They proceeded to capture and disarm the girls one at a time, handcuffing them and locking them in the basement

of the only secure building left, the school's chapel. According to a reporter on the scene, the girls fought so wildly it took two men about 30 minutes to drag each girl from the dormitory to the chapel, a distance of only 75 yards. On Monday, about 70 girls—considered the ringleaders—were taken by train to the Polk County jail in Des Moines, there to wait weeks in a cold, cramped, dirty cell while authorities squabbled over what to do with them.

The riot had caught people by surprise. The outbreak itself was unexpected, but more important, the behavior of the rioting girls stunned those who witnessed it and those who read of it. According to the *Des Moines Daily News*, word of the riot had initially alarmed a group of visitors in the village of Mitchellville, who feared for

their safety until they learned the institution housed only girls. "But the crowds who went out to the grounds were amazed at the wreck," the report continued. "They could not believe that girls could do so great damage."

The level of violence perpetrated by the female inmates was a source of wonder—and amusement—to reporters. In the hands of these girls, the common articles of women's lives, like sewing shears and crockery, became formidable weapons. The reporters felt



Inmates learned sewing and needlework skills, considered useful for later work as hired domestics or as wives and mothers. In the 1899 riot, frustrated by administrative changes, girls took up "nice, long, sharp, shiny" sewing shears as weapons.

. . . The girls, who had no clubs with which to pound him, vented their enthusiasm by getting him with their teeth." Inside a dormitory, the girls broke out liquor from the laboratory and fermenting fruit juice stored in the cellar, drinking themselves into a state of "hilarity." They "pounded" the pianos, "while can-can and hoochie-coochies were done by a score of girls at a time." Other girls took advantage of the mayhem to escape, many by stealing bicycles ridden out from the village by spectators and deputies. With

called upon to defend the masculinity of those men who had failed to subdue the girls. "The men folks of Mitchellville are fully as muscular and apparently as courageous as the average of mankind," insisted the *Leader*, summarizing the recent service of local men in the U.S. war with Spain and the Philippines, and invoking memories of the Civil War. "While they had not been unwilling to face the leaden hail of an enemy's fire, they were not made of the kind of stuff that feels capable of arresting a mob of 200 women with the most vicious kind of weapons and very evidently willing to use them." Besides, noted the *Daily News*, the Mitchellville girls "created more confusion . . . than would an army of Filipinos."

Other observers, confronting the same evidence, strove to reassure themselves that the rioters really were girls like any others. Following the riot, a reporter who toured the buildings to describe the damage noted, "They proved that despite their viciousness and recklessness they were still women, by sparing every mirror on the grounds." A member of the Board of Control claimed that the girls were so attached to a new piano that they covered it, even wrapping the legs with shawls to protect them from damage.

Singling out evidence that the rioters revealed womanly vanity (by saving mirrors) or domesticity (by protecting pianos), these commentators tried to ease some of the gender anxiety provoked by early scrutiny of the riot. In its first report, one newspaper proclaimed that "the girls in the reform school are the most unmanageable and vicious set of people that any state institution has to control"—a remarkable claim, since the state penitentiary, for example, harbored men convicted of murder, rape, and violent assaults. Only a minority of girls at Mitchellville had even been convicted of a crime. Between two-thirds and three-quarters had been placed by their parents as "incorrigible." But the girls seemed "unmanageable" because they violated gender expectations, leaving people uncertain how to proceed.

One of the innovations pressed by the Board of Control was the abolition of corporal punishment, an innovation opposed by the school's staff, which used whippings, as well as solitary confinement on bread and water, wiring girls to a log chain in a cement basement, and deprivation of food, as punishments. In the aftermath of the riot, the *Daily News* editorialized against corporal punishment: "public sentiment would promptly condemn brutal force applied to women." But would such sentiment

extend to women who had "chewed" their superintendent? When the sheriff had first attempted to use handcuffs to control the girls, the superintendent, horrified, forbade it, but in the end, handcuffs were used. If the deputized men of Mitchellville truly were more willing to face a hail of bullets than of crockery, was it perhaps because in Cuba or the Philippines, they understood the rules of engagement?

The problem of discipline was only one of the troubles exposed by the riot. As the grand jury investigation documented, the institution was severely understaffed, and salary cuts had demoralized some employees and prompted others to resign. Their replacements were inexperienced, and some attempted to control the inmates by terrorizing them. This was especially true in Building No. 2, where the riot began. Easily able to escape supervision, some inmates had been in the habit of meeting local workmen at a barn on the grounds, "for purposes not at all conducive to good morals and good discipline," as the grand jury reported. Indeed, there was evidence that local men had known about the riot ahead of time, arriving to spirit away escaping girls in buggies supplied with liquor and cigarettes. Following the riot, several men, including one police officer, were indicted for lewdness, indecent exposure, or rape. ("Lewdness," in the legal lexicon of the day, could refer to sexual acts other than intercourse, and rape included consensual intercourse with girls under 15.)

The grand jury, the Board of Control, and writers for various newspapers all agreed that the greatest problem at Mitchellville was the impossibility of separating the "more vicious and criminal class" from the "comparatively innocent children," a situation which turned the institution from a reformatory into a school for vice. But the way in which these authorities understood the division between the "vicious" and the "innocent" reveals how assumptions about "natural" female behavior colored their interpretation of events. Although the majority of girls confined in the school had not been convicted of any crime, it was this group, rather than those actually convicted, who were considered the poisonous influence.

The reasons for this were twofold. First, the law provided that if a girl, convicted by a court and placed at Mitchellville, proved thoroughly unmanageable and a detriment to the institution, she could be returned to her home county to serve out her sentence—most likely in the county jail. However, girls convicted of no crime but merely declared "incorrigible" by the court could be placed nowhere *but* the industrial school. This law was interpreted to mean that

"incurrigibles" could not be sent away from the school unless released for good behavior, or when they reached their majority. In 1898, the legislature raised this age from 18 to 21, effectively increasing the sentences of the oldest girls by three years. This created a large population of long-term rebellious girls and young women—some of whom had been anticipating release within months, only to have it postponed by years.

The second reason "incurrigibles" were considered more dangerous than convicts was that "incurrigible" was generally understood to be a euphemism for "sexually experienced." Therefore, living in close quarters with incurrigibles, "[convicted] juvenile offenders, innocent of moral lapses, grow up, in spite of

When incurrigibles were mixed in with "children" convicted of crimes, "vice was disseminated as a disease," and children learned "practices" too dangerous to be mentioned in print. Indeed, in the grand jury report, sexual knowledge and venereal disease were described as "contagions" in strikingly similar language, and both were rife within the confines of Mitchellville. A thief, apparently, might reform, but sexual knowledge was a permanent condition.

In response to these revelations, and in an effort to eliminate sources of sexual knowledge, the next state legislature voted to bar certain categories from commitment to Mitchellville. "Married women, pregnant women, prostitutes, and other vile and depraved characters. . . [whose] contaminating effect is felt through-

out the school," according to the Board of Control, were among those singled out as dangerous. Grouping these categories of women together—and giving the odd impression that marriage makes women "vile and depraved"—reveals clearly that it was sexual experience itself, even sexual experience in marriage, that seemed dangerous.

The response of the Board of Control and the legislators suggests that to these men, girls were endangered by the presence of other, dangerous, girls. But an editorial in Iowa's suffrage paper, *The Woman's Standard*, argued that the riot was the direct result of "Mitchellville Masculine Management." The *Standard* charged that "the most powerful passion on earth lies concealed in the charm or gravitation of sex. If

this shoots over any one's head we would say it again and say it differently. Some men and some women in some circumstances are as helpless in the presence and power of this passion as steel filings under a magnet. . . . The masculine management of a girls' reform school is a mistake. There should not be a man in it, not even to care for the furnaces."

Like so many other observers, the editors of *The Woman's Standard* blamed the unrest at Mitchellville on the sexual corruption of the inmates. But instead of tracing the infection to contacts between "innocent"



"Here they learn to do good, plain, substantial cooking under competent instructors," read a biennial report. On a 1907 school postcard, an employee noted: "I have no bad girls in the kitchen now at least they wont turn on me for they know better."

all that teachers and matrons can do, under influences which are most vicious," the grand jury remarked. While it may seem odd that a pickpocket or shoplifter could be called "innocent of moral lapse," the distinction reflects the way sexual restraint was viewed as a primary, even biological component of white woman's nature. Theft was a superficial misdeed; sexual misconduct, however, violated a girl's essential nature. (In fact, shoplifting was interpreted by some physicians as the particular affliction of women, who could not control the impulse to gratify their innate vanity.)

and "vicious" girls, the *Standard* declared that sexual corruption was the inevitable result of mixing girls with men. Instead, its editors sought to claim the administration of girls' reformatories as a province for professional women.

The *Standard* was not the only paper to blame male administration for endangering the morals of the girls. A month after the riot, the *Des Moines Leader* printed an exposé of conditions at the school. The source was a Miss Magruder, who took a job as an assistant in Building No. 2 in the aftermath of the riot, but stayed barely four days. Her eyewitness account documents a prison on lock-down: girls held in solitary confinement in their cells for several weeks, marched out only at mealtimes and then forbidden to speak, permitted neither reading materials nor sewing to fill the endless hours of isolation.

Even worse, in her eyes, was the punishment for girls who violated the rules or challenged the staff's authority. Several girls accused (falsely, said Magruder) of whispering through their transoms were "marched to a dark room in the basement" and confined on bread and water. When their supervisor demanded still greater punishment, Supt. Miller and two other men brought the girls one at a time from the basement to his office. "The punishment consisted of taking them across the knee and applying lashes with a hard rubber tube as big as my wrist. The punishment was done in such a way as to violate any sense of modesty the girls might have, and it was severe," explained Magruder.

Magruder's language, as reported by the *Leader*, seems calculatedly ambiguous: did Miller himself take the girls—young women probably 15 to 19 years old—across his own knee, raise their skirts, and whip them with a rubber hose? Or did he and the two men simply observe beatings performed by one of the women on the staff? Either way, the report dwells on the sexual impropriety of this episode and of another in which girls were forced to bathe in sight of a male sheriff's deputy. How could a reformatory expect to restore girls to their "natural" state of sexual reserve, when it continually violated that reserve?

As reports on conditions at Mitchellville became increasingly scandalous, another side of the debate broke out over the fate of the 70 or so "ringleaders" taken by special train to Des Moines. Once in the city, the girls had been marched up Fourth Street from the depot to the county jail between columns of police. As hundreds gathered, the girls "jeered at the crowds, boasted of the part they had taken in the riot and begged the bystanders for cigarettes, tobacco, and

even whiskey." The curious thronged the jail for days, and some girls delighted in perching in the windows and shouting to passersby, until the exasperated jailer erected a fence to screen the windows from the street.

Within a day of the rioters' arrival, child welfare advocates had begun to protest their incarceration. The Iowa Humane Society first raised questions about the crowded conditions in the jail, protesting that ventilation was poor and sleeping quarters inadequate. As parents poured into town on every train, hoping to reclaim their daughters, longtime educator and political firebrand Leonard Brown took up the girls' cause, arguing that detaining them in the jail was illegal. "The girls are so crowded that the confinement is injuring their health and they are commencing to get sick," he warned, further informing the newspapers that "they are so situated that male prisoners confined in the jail can converse with them and . . . the conversations are anything but decent." Brown offered a veiled threat that he would seek their release under a writ of habeas corpus. The girls had never been arrested, were not held to appear in court, and most had never been convicted of a crime, he pointed out. Since they had been committed to the industrial school, not the county jail, there was no law to hold them in jail.

Brown enlisted the Des Moines Ministerial Association in his campaign, persuading them to send a delegation of prominent clergymen to ask the Board of Control for immediate action. But former governor William Larrabee, a member of the board, dismissed the ministers' request, asserting that the board had no authority to return the girls to Mitchellville. While the ministers and Larrabee sparred, Brown kept up a steady stream of shocking revelations to the newspapers. A prostitute confined in the jail, he claimed, told one of the girls that "she had an excellent form for a sporting woman and would make a great success in the business." Promising to secure the girl a job in a brothel after her release, the prostitute then "stripped the girl of her clothing and taught her how to dance the couchie-couchie." A reporter for the *Daily News* investigated the story, and was informed by the jail staff that "there was nothing in it" and that "the girls knew the couchie-couchie long before they were inmates of the county jail of Polk."

For their part, the girl inmates of the Polk County jail seemed in no hurry to leave. Unlike their counterparts under lock-down at Mitchellville, they shared a camaraderie and a spirit of conspiracy that made the crowding and the stench

bearable (during a stay of several weeks, the girls were never permitted a bath nor a change of clothes). The girls apparently believed if they could avoid being returned to Mitchellville, they would be sent home, a view that had some basis in law.

Their stay in the county jail quickly became a contest of wills—and the girls seemed to be winning. When Sheriff Stout tried to return several girls to the school the week after the riot, the school staff revolted. Supt. Miller, facing wholesale resignation of his women managers, refused to receive them. The rioters regarded their return to the jail in Des Moines as “a direct victory,” the *Daily News* reported. “The cells fairly rang with shouts of triumph.”

Indeed, if a letter printed by the *Leader* is authentic, the girls saw themselves as revolutionaries, casting

will have if it takes all we are worth,” they concluded, signing themselves, “Members of the government cell.” Patrick Henry may have been more eloquent, but he could hardly have been more sincere.

Over the next few days, however, Sheriff Stout was successful in moving a dozen or more girls back to Mitchellville. Many had become ill in jail, and were either glad to go to the school’s infirmary, with its warm beds and clean sheets, or were too weak to resist transfer. With deputy sheriffs patrolling the halls of the school, the managers apparently withdrew their threats of resignation. In the jail, the remaining girls simply hardened their resistance. They rallied themselves by composing songs “of which Miller is generally the subject and, of course, Miller always gets the worst of it,” the *Leader* reported. Perhaps inspired by

the grand jury before which they were testifying, they held mock courts “in which some one of their number is compelled to take the part of Miller and is invariably convicted of some heinous offense.”

The Des Moines papers repeatedly printed the promising news that all the girls were about to be transferred back to Mitchellville, but as the weeks passed, the jail remained packed with girl rioters—testimony to the success of their resistance, and to continuing antagonisms among the various authorities. Having failed to force the Board of Control into the dispute, firebrand Leonard Brown next sought to organize a petition of demands among the girls—only to find himself barred from the jail by a furious Sheriff Stout. Neverthe-

less, 19 girls presented their own petition bargaining for early release, but were no more successful than Brown.

Gradually, Stout began transferring small groups of girls to Mitchellville every few days. True to their promise, girls from the jail rioted again at Mitchellville, on November 12, “smashing out window glass with chairs, breaking up furniture and battering down . . . doors.” Before they could start a full-scale uprising, the instigators were “hustled off to the basement and locked up in secure quarters” by the special deputies posted at the school.



Four young African-American women and a driver ride in a farm wagon. African Americans made up only a minority of the young women at the industrial school.

their actions in military language. “We will never surrender,” they proclaimed. “We are fighting for freedom.” Insisting that any promises made to them must appear “in black and white in the papers,” the girls sought to make public opinion their ally. Miller, they urged, “is an incompetent man. He will never be able to quell the disturbance that has arisen in the school.” The *Leader* presented the letter as evidence of the “incurable dispositions” of the rioters, but it also reveals their canny ability to marshal familiar language in their own cause. “We want liberty and liberty we

By mid-November, fewer than half the original rioters remained at the jail—though newspaper reports differed as to the actual number. The *Des Moines Leader* reported that 19 remained on November 16, but Susan Glaspell, the “News Girl” columnist at the *Daily News* counted 30 a day later. Glaspell, who grew up in Davenport, had graduated from Drake University only months before and was getting her first experience as a cub reporter at the *News*. At 23, she was not much older than some of the girls herself, and she was struck by a sense of connection with them. “What would I have been like if I had never known a good mother or a good home, if my ancestors had been depraved and my friends had been worse, if I had been turned into the streets when able to walk and had since had the enobling ideal of being as bad as I possibly could be held exclusively before me?” she wondered. Unlike other reporters, who tended to focus on the girls’ rebelliousness and depravity, Glaspell wrestled with the need to see them as ordinary, perhaps even like herself. Visiting them at the jail, Glaspell observed that “they had on blue calico uniforms in which some of them looked pretty and some looked ugly. Their hair was fixed thirty different ways and they had thirty different expressions.” Seated on the cold stone floor, staring at her as she stared at them, they seemed, simply, “like other girls.”

But conversation led her to see other things as well. “They all had an air of bravado. . . . They wanted me to understand they were having the time of their lives and were not soliciting sympathy,” she reported. When they sang for her, it was “in perfect time and tune and with hearty relish”—and apparently with no reference in their lyrics to Supt. Miller. When a woman came through the jail carrying a baby, they “rushed to the door and began clamoring for it excitedly. . . . The hard little faces were softer then and when the lady let them take the baby and pass it around their eyes shown with delight. They handled it carefully and caressingly, petting it just as anyone would.”

Girls who responded to a baby “just as anyone would” were girls whose innate maternal nature remained intact, in spite of all the savagery they might express. But this sentimental moment was not quite the final image of Glaspell’s report. When one girl observed, “It’s too bad to have a poor little baby in the jail,” Glaspell responded, “Well, don’t you think it’s too bad to have you girls in here too?” Another replied, “Oh, we don’t mind,” stamping the scene with bravado by “an airy toss of her head.”



Later an award-winning playwright and novelist, Susan Glaspell was a cub reporter in Des Moines when she befriended the girls held for weeks in the Polk County jail.

Glaspell left the jail still puzzled by the girls. They struck her as “naturally bad,” but she found it a “difficult task to specify the percent of that badness for which they were responsible.” And if the girls were not responsible, did they deserve the harsh treatment some urged? Looking at the debates that positioned Leonard Brown against the sheriff, the ministers against Larrabee, the grand jury against the Board of Control, and the girls against Supt. Miller, Glaspell wondered: “Out of it all will there come something both practical and humanitarian which can shape lives almost predestined to misery?”

In the end, change was more superficial than substantive. The remaining jailed girls were ultimately returned to Mitchellville, and several employees were forced to resign—including Matron Wilson and a family manager especially associated with brutal corporal

punishment. The legislature passed laws trying to restrict the kinds of "dangerous girls" who could be committed to the school, and permitting the transfer of "unruly and incorrigible women and girls over fourteen" from the reform school to the Industrial Reformatory for Females at Anamosa. Supt. James Miller might have remained in his post, but he gained further public enmity for refusing to accept the governor's pardon of one of his inmates, a girl whose family sought to transfer her from Mitchellville to a private reformatory operated by the Catholic Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Omaha. Not only did Miller refuse to release the girl to the custody of the Catholic priest who brought the pardon, but he attempted to have the priest arrested. Miller's anti-Catholic bigotry apparently tipped the balance, and he too resigned his post.

nine years paved the way for another outbreak of violence at Mitchellville. In July 1909, the change favored by *The Woman's Standard* finally came to pass, and Miss Hattie Garrison, a Cedar Rapids schoolteacher and principal, was appointed superintendent. By the following spring, rage at her administration erupted in riot. On the 11th of March, 25 girls broke out of the school and walked all the way to Des Moines to present evidence of brutal treatment to John Cownie, a member of the Board of Control. They were arrested before they reached him, and three days later, the entire population of the industrial school rose in revolt. Along with charges that Garrison had choked one young inmate and punched her in the face were more general complaints. Garrison had abolished dancing and decreed baseball and basketball unladylike, limiting the girls to sports like croquet and lawn tennis. Through the long months of an Iowa winter, she permitted the inmates no outdoor recreation at all. By March, it was hardly surprising that the pressure cooker at Mitchellville was primed for another explosion.

SHS (DES MOINES)



Baseball and basketball at the school were ended in 1909 by the new superintendent Hattie Garrison, who allowed only more "ladylike" sports of croquet and lawn tennis.

In April 1900, with a new superintendent, F. P. Fitzgerald, the school returned to a troubled equilibrium. Fitzgerald, supported by the Board of Control, expanded the teaching staff and the number of families (now called "cottages"), with the goal of giving girls more individual attention. He organized an orchestra at the school, and lively activities like baseball, basketball, dances, and winter snowball fights helped absorb the girls' energy. Fitzgerald's image of appropriate womanly behavior seemed more expansive than that of his predecessors.

In a twist of paradox, Fitzgerald's departure after

girls seemed unclear, and no American reformatory for girls experimented with their application. Meanwhile, standardized intelligence tests introduced in 1908 led some to argue that delinquent girls were "feeble-minded." A classification with no precise parallel in the clinical lexicon of the late 20th century, "feeble-mindedness" implied not only limited cognitive skills, but inability to make moral judgments and propensity to be swayed by the will of others. A feeble-minded girl could not be reformed; no perfected, homelike environment could alter her fate. Even more disturbing, her condition would be passed on

Public responses to the riot of 1899—and its echo a decade later—reflect lingering confusion over the nature of adolescent girlhood. By 1910, psychologist G. Stanley Hall had already begun to explore the new ideas of Sigmund Freud, turning his back on his own theories of the savage stages of boyhood. But in those early years, the significance of Freudian theories for

to her children. Institutions increasingly saw their role as custodial rather than reformatory. Some states—including Iowa—sought to treat “defective and delinquent” citizens by surgical sterilization, seeking to stem the reproduction of congenital criminals. The Iowa legislature passed its first eugenic sterilization law in 1911, though apparently no girls from Mitchellville were considered for treatment.

But in 1899, institutions like Mitchellville operated in a setting of conflicting interpretations of girls’ delinquency. To some, all girls were naturally good and needed only to be protected and reawakened to their innate modesty and maternal gentleness. To others, the fact that some girls—the incorrigible girls of Mitchellville—violated expectations of natural goodness, meant that such girls were too unnatural to be reformed and could only be controlled through rigid discipline enforced with brutal punishment. Far more boys and men found their way into Iowa’s courts, jails, reformatories, and prisons. But the girls and women, though fewer in number, were a more perplexing social problem, as the debate over “savage girls” suggests. ❖

Sharon E. Wood is assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She is currently completing a book on women, sexuality, and public policy in Davenport, Iowa, 1875-1910. Research for this article was supported by a Sesquicentennial Grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa and the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission. A fellowship at the Charles Warren Center at Harvard University provided time for writing.

SHSI (DES MOINES)



Harmony prevailed within the school's orchestra—but far less among the inmates in 1899 and 1910, when they rose up in rebellion. Throughout the decade, music, cooking, and sewing were taught as ways of leading the inmates towards their “innate natures”—maternal gentleness, sexual reserve, and womanly goodness.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Accounts of the riot and its aftermath appeared in the *Des Moines Daily News*; the *Des Moines Leader*; *The Woman's Standard*, 12 (2nd ser.), no. 11 (Jan. 1900): 1; and the *Davenport Democrat and Leader* (March 13, 1910, p. 2; March 15, 1910, p. 1; April 6, 1910, p. 2). My thanks to Lois Craig for calling my attention to a transcript of an article from the *Mitchellville Index*, in the Mitchellville Collection, Box 4, Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa-Des Moines. See also: John E. Briggs, *History of Social Legislation in Iowa* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1915), 384, n. 461; *First Biennial Report of the Board of Control of State Institutions of Iowa* (Des Moines: State Printer, 1900), p. 175; *Seventh Biennial Report of the Board of Control . . .* (1910), pp. 10-11; and F. Andrews, *Pioneers of Polk County, Iowa* (Des Moines: Baker-Trisler Co., 1908), 29-30.

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An annotated copy of this article is held in the *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* production files (SHSI-Iowa City).

"Come home at once"

The 1917 Letters of Neva Stockdale

by Sharlene Voogd Cochrane

Neva Stockdale was 23 years old and a hundred miles from home in the tumultuous spring of 1917. As a first-year student at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, Neva (*right*) was taking classes in German, physical training, harmony, organ, piano, English, and china decoration. She wrote daily, sometimes twice a day, to her beau, Fred Voogd, 21. Fred was attending business school in Cedar Rapids, a dozen miles from Mt. Vernon. Neva also wrote to her family back in Aplington, a small farming community in Butler County. She and Fred had both grown up there, and although they knew each other's family, their romance began after both had graduated from high school.

Neva kept these letters, and years later, after her death in 1984, they were found stored in a large, flat box in her attic. Within the correspondence between her and Fred, and their families and friends, a dramatic, intimate story unfolds in a small, rural community in the early 20th century. The letters present the realities of medical care; the reliance on daily mail rather than telephones for communicating vital family news; the role of faith; and the approach of World War I. Perhaps most important, the letters attest to the various roles and responsibilities of women. As more and more young women left home for college, they found themselves conflicted over their responsibilities to their families, versus their responsibilities to themselves and the larger world.

In Neva and Fred's letters of March 1917, amidst talk of weekend dates, Fred's impending graduation, and their possible marriage were references to events taking place back home in Aplington. Gladys Gerhardt Stockdale, the wife of Neva's older brother Ray,

had given birth on February 16 to their first child, a little boy. But there were complications—childbed fever.

Childbed fever—or puerperal fever—occurs if the uterus becomes infected following childbirth or abortion, or if pathogenic organisms invade the bloodstream, causing blood poisoning, or septicemia. Recognized since the time of Hippocrates, puerperal fever took the lives of appalling numbers of women—perhaps half the cases of maternal mortality.

Yet despite its prevalence, progress in understanding its causes was tragically slow. In the mid-19th century, some physicians began to observe that women came down with puerperal fever after being visited or delivered by a doctor who had treated others with the fever, and that the more invasive the delivery (with hands or instruments), the greater the incidence of the fever. By 1879, Louis Pasteur had linked it to streptococci, its deadliest bacterial cause, but not the only cause. In the 1880s, physicians began to connect the spread of disease with the lack of sterile conditions, and sought to prevent puerperal fever through the use of scrubbed hands, antiseptic instruments, face masks, and clean surroundings. Although these measures reduced the number of cases of puerperal fever, doctors still had no way to treat it until the development of sulfa drugs in the 1930s and then penicillin in the early 1940s.

In 1917, the year Gladys Stockdale fell ill, a doctor might prescribe bed rest, hot or cold applications to the abdomen, and sedatives, and hope that the patient's own resistance would outlast the fever's virulence. The symptoms were dramatic and difficult:



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high fevers, chills, weakness, heavy sweating, dementia. Besides physical suffering, there were emotional swings as one day the patient would be doing well, the next, writhing in pain and mental agony.

The series of letters begins with Neva writing to Fred—her “dearie” and her “dearest”—first with news of the baby boy, and then with concerns for the new mother.

3/1/1917

Dearie —

... I heard from mother today — she says she saw the boy but she didn't say whether it looked like “auntie,” or not — (but I hope not like this auntie, anyway.) ...

Always yours,
Neva

3/8

My Dearest —

... I wish I knew more about Gladys. Glen says she got up last Sat. — and must have taken cold, for she's pretty sick now. Howard's [letter] was written Monday (& Glen's before that) and he said she had a fever. So now that's all I know, just enuf to make me

all worried about her. Wish they'd keep me posted about things or else not tell me at all. ...

Yours,
Neva

3/8

Dear Neva:

... We were down to Gladys' last Sunday and you know she is not getting along so well, she was up and around some but took to bed again on Thursday a wk. ago, took with a chill, had the Dr. several times, also had Dr. Miller down from Ackley Tuesday for consultation, the next day or so was some better, but this is Thursday, Ray was just here, had been to a sale at Harkens.

And just got back, when they phoned for him to get the doctor, she is having another chill. I am frightened about her, have been ever since she took back to bed, I am afraid it is blood poisoning, and if it is that, she can't live. I hope it is not, but I have been so worried about her. She has a dear little boy just as cute as can be. They all think it favors Howard, but I cant tell, he has been real good, sleeps most of the time. They have no name for him yet. ...

Hazel [Neva's sister] stayed with Mildred [Gladys's sister] last Sat night till Mon evening, you

APLINGTON (in Butler County) ●

Neva's parents: C. J. & Louise Keller Stockdale

Siblings: Ray (husband of Gladys Gerhardt Stockdale)

Bob (or Rob)

Hazel

Bill

Glenn

Howard

Fred's parents: Richard A. & Bena Weiss Voogd

Siblings: Beulah

Edward

Gladys Gerhardt Stockdale (wife of Ray Stockdale)

Siblings: Mildred

Bernice

Lucile

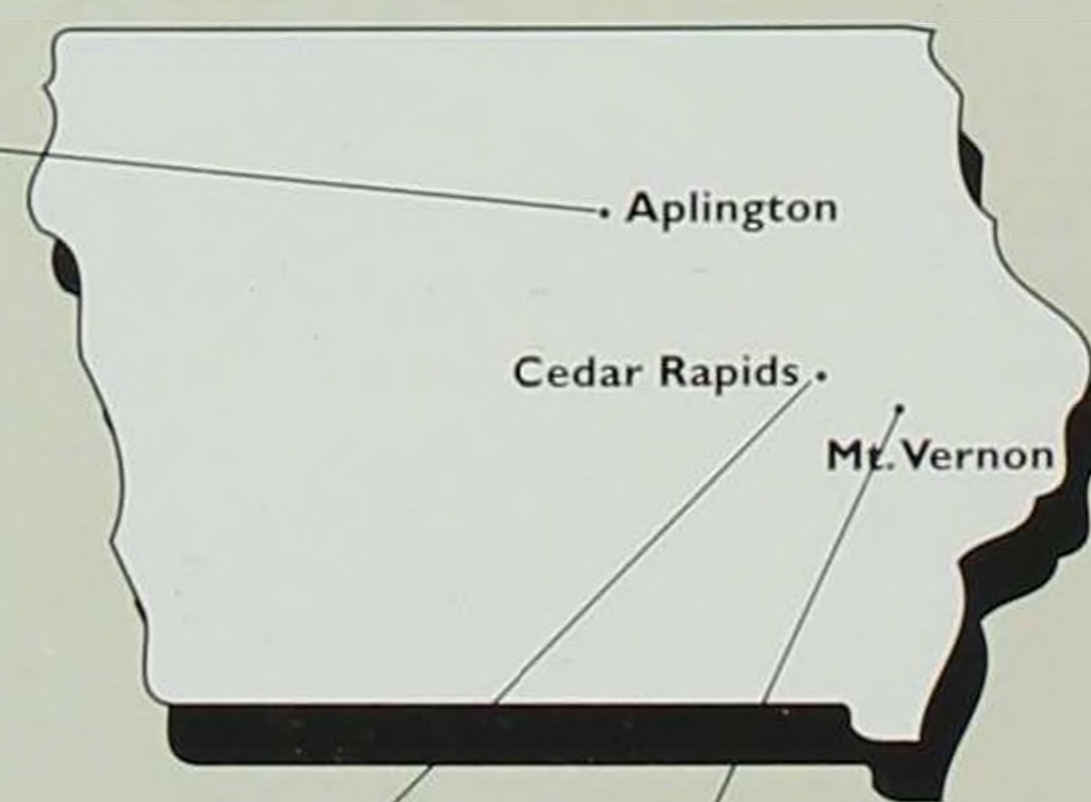
Pauline

Vernon

Marjorie

Friends and neighbors:

Esther DeFriesse, Addie Waudby, Mrs. Paulson, Lizzie, Anna, Nettie Wilson, Ladies of the Christian Endeavor Society



CEDAR RAPIDS ●

Fred Voogd (attending business school)

MT. VERNON ●

Neva Stockdale (attending Cornell College)

Neva's friends: Marge, Besse, Mabel, Margaret, Mildred G., Ruth, Doris, Winnie, Thelma

see Mrs. Gerhart [Gladys's mother] stays with Gladys most of the time and Mildred is afraid to stay home alone at night. . . . Thought I had better let you know about Gladys' condition. Am glad all is well with you, and am hoping it will be so at Ray's house. . . .

I am still your
loving Mother.

3/10

Dear Neva:

I didn't mean to scare you to death, but just told you how things stood, so if anything happened you would be ready for it. She is much better now, and I am sure out of danger, they don't allow anyone in to see her yet, that is a visitor you know, because it disturbs her; but is getting along real well. So do not worry about her, am almost sorry I told you about it. But I was worried about her myself, of course we heard how she was the next day but of course you could not know so quick. . . . But Neva you know we would have let you know if things got worse to have you come home. So please do not worry any more. Hazel was mad cause I let you know anything about it. . . .

Yours Lovingly
Mother.

3/11

Dear Neva:

Well they changed Dr. and Gladys is worse, they haven't very much hope for her Neva. They are going to do all they can for her, but it is very doubtful she pulls through, hope she does. Now if things get still worse will try and let you know every day. I think [Gladys's sister] Lucile will come home Tuesday. Her Mother is pretty near all in. So don't worry too much about it

Yours in haste
Mother.

A flurry of letters, all written on March 12 and 13, spread the alarming news that Gladys's condition was worsening. Neva learned that a network of women in the family and community was helping with all aspects of the crisis. All the care was administered at Ray and Gladys's home, where the dining room became the sickroom. Although there was a nurse at the house almost constantly, the nursing chores were also shared by the women in the family (Neva's mother and only sister Hazel, and Gladys's mother and two sisters) and community.

The situation also required caring for a brand-new child, still without name, who had to be fed, cleaned, rocked, and comforted. Domestic work also continued amidst the sickness. There were meals to prepare, dishes to wash, rooms to clean, laundry to do. The work was strenuous, physically and psychologically, and a variety of women, within and beyond the family, combined forces to keep the household in order and to provide emotional support.

Whereas caregiving was clearly women's work, the role of the men in the family was less direct. Ray, Gladys's husband, continued to maintain their farm, working in the fields, caring for the animals, going to market. Neva's father had a telephone installed at Ray's (most rural households in Iowa had telephones by then, but long-distance calls were prohibitively expensive). Neva's five brothers wrote to her about Gladys's condition but evidently took no direct part in her care.

Meanwhile, a hundred miles away at college, Neva was in constant turmoil about whether to stay at school in Mt. Vernon or go home to help her family.

3/12

Dearest Fred —

I'm just sick, Fred. Got a letter from mother late this P.M. and she says Gladys is worse — there's hardly any hope for her. Oh Fred I just can't stand it — And poor Ray! What will he ever do! Lucile's coming home Tues. Oh I wish I could see Gladys but let's hope — let's hope she pulls thru — but mother says it's doubtful. Wish I knew tonight how she is now. Mother's was written yesterday noon.

Lots of Love
Neva

3/12

Dear Brother [Fred].

Mrs. Ray Stockdale is very sick. They have sent for [her siblings] Vern and Lucile. Ester DeVries [a nurse] is there now. They had Dr. Blackmore but now they have Dr. Hobson. It is doubtful if she will get well again. I feel sorry. Ray feels very badly about it.

From Your
Sister Beulah

3/13

My Own Dearest Neva:

Recd your letter this morning and am sorry to hear that news. I can imagine how you feel and of course it would make it awfully bad if Ray should have to lose her. But dear you can only hope for the

best and here's hoping it turns out alright. I can feel for him cause there is a woman I love and if it was her why I'd go wild. Wish I could see you awhile maybe could cheer you just a trifle for a short time at least. . . . Here's hoping for the best in your moments of feeling blue and if only I could cheer you it would make me real happy. . . .

I am Yours always
Fred

3/13

Dear Fred: —

. . . Mrs. Ray Stockdale is a very sick girl not expected to live, too bad, isn't it. . . .

Your father,
R. A. Voogd

3/13

Dear Neva.

. . . Glads is geting along pretty good. she has the fever and it is lots lower in the morning then it is at night. It gets a little higher in the evening but it does not seem so bad. . . .

Glenn

3/13

Dear Neva:

. . . Well she wasent as good as yesterday, for she had another chill, I think it was last night but this afternoon she seems a little better, she is resting easy. . . .

I was down to Ray's in the afternoon taking care of baby, he is real good they had to give him the bottle. Addie Waudby was there helping that afternoon. They have Ester DeFrieze for there nurse. Mrs. Paulson stayed there two nights and Lucile was there too last night, she came Monday morning, she dont expect to go back anymore now. They didn't know wether Verne is coming or not. Mrs. Gerhart is all done up, it has been almost too much for her, she had sore throat last night. She and the hired girl both gave out being up so much all night, and the worry. I didnt know, but I would go tonight if no one else is there, but Ray wanted to see if the girl is able to come, first.

Pa had a phone put in there this morning, So it will be more handy than it was in the past. They dont let anyone in to see her. I would like to have seen her, but she mustnt be disturbed you know. The Ladies of the society sent her a boquet. She is in a bad condition Neva; if she get well the doctor thinks she will suffer or not be strong like she was. But we will hope "Doctors dont always know it all." She will pull through, Neva.

. . . She has been an awfully sick woman, and isn't out of danger yet but it seems good to have her a little better, we still have hope. We all feel so bad about it, it seems we all love her so much. And if anything happened it would be so hard for Ray. What would the poor boy do. . . .

Your Loving Mother

3/13

My dearest Fred —

I didn't keep my promise to write in the evening; but dear I know you'll overlook it when you know just how awful I felt. For I had gotten that letter before supper. . . . Couldn't go to supper. . . . I didn't feel like doing anything. . . . You could help a whole lot right now for I need to be cheered if anyone ever did. Of course as soon as I awoke this morning — I began wondering how Gladys is. And told the girls when I left just where I'd be in case I got a call. Well, Marge brought my letter to chapel — I met her in the hall, and opened the letter right there — was trembling so I could hardly read — the paper just shook. . . .

The letter was from [my brother] Bob, he wrote yesterday p.m. and says, she seems a little better — temperature has gone down some, it's 102. He says she certainly is a very sick girl — but they're doing all they can for her. And all we can do is wait. Oh I wish he'd told me to come; I've been wanting to go home all p.m. — but now I've got to wait till morning before I'll know anymore about it! He says mother wanted to wait till they knew whether its for better or worse before they sent for me. But I want to go. Seems like I just can't stand it. I couldn't do a thing today — tried to practice etc. but just couldn't.

Your own
Neva

3/14

Dear Neva:

I am down at Ray's now. So can tell you just how Gladys is. She seems to be resting now. I was in to see her and she talked to me. She was so pleased about the pillow you sent her, she wanted to see it at different times. The Christian Endeavor sent her a bouquet of carnations. Say Neva you can get her a boquet, if it isent to much bother for you.

The baby was very sick last night and this morning, but is much better now. I am going to stay tonight. I did not stay the other night. So we hope it will continue, as it is now. So we will let you know from time to time, hope all is well with you. I will

close as Ray is waiting to mail this. But Gladys seems some better.

Your Loving
Mother.

3/14

Fred dear —

... Well, "your" little girl is feeling a little better — it's quite a relief to know Gladys is a little better but still — Mother's letter this morn said she's not quite as good as Mon. she had another chill Mon. eve but was resting well Tues., and is not out of danger but they are still hopeful. Am glad they have a good nurse — Esther DeFriese. They also have a hired girl, but she and Mrs. Gerhardt are both about all in. Mrs. Paulson stayed there a couple nights. Mother said maybe she'd stay there herself last night — but I hope she didn't have to for I'm afraid she would be sick next.

Say dear I'm going to ask the folks tonite if I can't come home Fri nite — I could come back Sun. I probably couldn't see Gladys very much (for mother says they don't let hardly any one in — disturbs her too much — why Mother didn't even see her when she was there Mon. taking care of the little boy) but I'd see her and I'd feel a whole lot better — they don't tell me much about things in their letters — whether she's suffering much or not, etc. Guess they don't stop to think that I'm anxious to know about everything. Doctor's say if she does pull thru "she'll never be near as strong as before." But we hope they're mistaken on that. ...

Always Yours,
Neva

Neva's mother kept her updated through frequent letters filled with detailed descriptions of Gladys's condition, the comings and goings of family and friends, and her own hopes and worries. On the other hand, the infrequent messages from Neva's father, C. J. Stockdale, were direct and to the point.

3/15

[Western Union telegram]

Neva Stockdale

Gladys some better Think best for you to come home

C J Stockdale

3/15

My Little Sweetheart:

Am hoping you are safely home by this time for if everything went well you certainly must be. . . . How are matters? Hope better and improving and that it will continue for better so I can soon have you back. If it should happen that you would have to stay home over two weeks Id be tempted to come home some time to see you cause couldnt stand it without seeing you. . . .

With Love
Your Own Fred.

3/15

My Very Dearest —

Gladys is in very serious condition — they don't think she can live till morning — Mother was here this p.m. and sent Verne to the depot to see if I came. . . . He said I came just in time if I want to see her. I'm at Gerhardt's now for mother had gone home — and Hazel and Bill are coming down in a few minutes and we're going up to Ray's. Oh Fred I don't see why they didn't tell me it was so awfully bad and I'd come before (for it is bloodpoison) she probably won't recognize me tonite, she can't talk anymore. She asked about me yesterday and wanted to know if I was here. She's fallen away so much they think I wouldn't know her. Dear, it's just awful and what will my poor brother do. The baby wasn't expected to live yesterday but is alright today.

Always Your Own
Neva

3/16

My Own Dearest Fred —

... Lucile and I just got in from Rays and all have had supper here so Lucile is getting some for she and I and its ready — so must eat. Oh it's just awful — these hours and minutes I've lived thru since I got home. Gladys is in such an awful condition — and the suffering she's gone thru! but we're glad she's having no pain now towards the last.

When I got there last night found Ray in the kitchen trying to console the crying baby — and two people working over Gladys. She was delirious — wide open eyes and trying to talk and moving her arms all over. She couldn't [talk] very plainly but could make out what she said. She'd recognize diff. ones for a moment but not very long. I sort of hated to go in for Mildred had been in — holding a lamp for them, Gladys is downstairs in dining room — but had to quit and came out in the kitchen fainting. I took the crying baby from Ray — and you should have seen him — he stopped crying instantly — just looked and looked at his "auntie."

Esther wanted to phone Hobson so she says take baby in the parlor. I hardly dared look at Gladys, for I didn't dare faint with that baby. But when I stepped in the room Gladys says "Hello Frieda." I says hello but went on in the parlor. I just couldn't have gone up to her then. But after finally getting him to sleep and got my nerve and when I walked up to the bed as soon as she saw me she raised her head and stretched out her arms and she says (course it was hard to understand but got it all right) "Hello Neva, I'm so glad to see you."

Always Your Own
Little Girl

3/17

My Dearest —

I'm right here at Gladys' bedside, the dear girl is sleeping now — and the nurse, Esther, said I could just sit here quietly so as to be near when she awakens for Esther's gone upstairs to lie down (she's had only about 6 or 8 hrs. and maybe not that much, rest since she's been here — came Sun morning — she certainly is about sick herself) and Mrs. Paulson's resting on the davenport. Nettie Wilson is doing up the kitchen work. Its very quiet around today. Gladys has aroused a little but we got her comfortable and is now sleeping again. But I must quit for a little and dust the room so Esther won't have to when she gets down.

... Couldn't possibly finish this before — had so much to do all PM about 5.30 Lucile came up to Ray's and I came to Gerhardt's to care for the baby — for we brought him here this morn. ... The baby needed me all the time. Gladys pulled thru yesterday altho was so very low, and last night it was terrible — they could hardly hold her in bed. But this morning she seemed to have changed for the better and has rested all day. Doctor says tonite — he has some hope and we're all hoping.

Lots of Love
Your Neva

While Neva was in Aplington with her family, she benefited from her own network of support; her close female friends from Cornell College wrote her letters filled with consoling messages of faith. (Cornell College was founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church and considered itself a nonsectarian "Christian institution." Students were required to attend daily chapel assembly and expected to attend at least one worship service at a church of their choice on Sundays.)



3/18

My dear Neva —

We were so sorry to hear that your sister [-in-law] was so bad when you reached home. We think of you so much and hope for the best. It seems that there is so little one can say but sometimes it is good just to know that one has friends and love and sympathy for after all that is by what and for what we live.

Sometimes it is hard to believe that all is for the best but in the long run we find it true. Even our deepest sorrows have made us able to give more to the people about us. Dr. Koehler preached such a good sermon this morning. He told of Jesus being left alone by his earthly friends in his hours of greatest grief and I thought how wonderfully blessed we are in receiving through him love and sympathy. ... If there is anything I can do for you Neva just let me know.

Lovingly,
Besse

3/18

My dearest Neva,

You can't know how badly we girls felt when we received your letter. We had all so hoped that your sister might be better. Oh Neva, my heart goes out to one in trouble, for I know what it means. It is so hard to always understand God's will, and know everything is for the best. All we can do is simply to trust and believe, knowing all things worketh out for the best to him that puts his unfaltering trust in the Master.

We girls are all thinking of you, Neva, everyday and hoping that you will have strength to bear the



Neva's college friends: "We will be so glad to have you back with us."

unusual burden that is put upon you. If there is anything we can do for you, be sure and let us know. . . . My there is so much suffering everywhere, if we only knew of it. And then to think how discouraged we get sometimes, for absolutely nothing that really matters. If we look far enuf we can always find some one who has more troubles than we do.

Now Neva, we are hoping and trusting everything will be for the best. We will be so glad to have you back with us.

Lovingly,
Mabel

3/18

My dear Neva

I can't tell you how sorry I am for both you and your family. . . . I do hope, Neva, that there is hope for her and that she will get better. We are watching every mail for some more news from you and are hoping and praying that it will be good news. . . . Be sure you let us know, Neva, about your sister because we are all anxious about her. . . .

With all my love
Margaret S.

3/20

Dear brother [Fred].

Mrs. Ray Stockdale was a little better. They have hope for her now again. I have seen the baby. I brought some jello over to Gerhards to bring to them. Then the baby was over to Gerhards. I saw Neva then too.

Your Sister
Beulah Voogd

Neva returned to college after a few days. As she wrote in a letter to Fred, Gladys was improving. Letters from her family resumed, filling Neva in on the day-to-day events.

3/21

My dear Fred —

I hope I hear tomorrow how Gladys is, for haven't since I got here. I went over to see her before I went to the depot, and almost changed my mind (about coming back) after I got there — for she had had another chill that P.M. and fever was up to about 104 or 104 1/2 but of course we couldn't expect her to just pick right up and get better quick and the doctor didn't seem to have any doubt about her. So I just came. She looked so much better that P.M. and talked to me and not a bit delirious just then. She'll probably be in bed a no. of weeks yet — how terrible to suffer like she has.

Always Yours
Neva

3/21

Dear Fredie

I talked to Hazel Sunday night in church Neva was not their Gladys was pretty sick yet But am glad she is getting better right along and the baby to. Nobody thought she would live the Doctors or Nurse. Neva got here just in time; she was so bad it was awful, Nurse is their yet, Verne is here yet.

Your Mama

3/22

Dear Sis Neva

. . . Gladys is getting along pretty good. She is getting some better every day. We are all glad of that and Gerhards are feeling lots better over it. But I hope she don't get worse again. . . . I guess that is all from your brother.

G. S.

3/22

Dear Neva

. . . Gladys is getting along fine a little better every day. . . .

From your brother Howard

3/22

My Dearest —

Fred it seems just ages since I left you that day — why it seems about 6 weeks instead of just one — a week ago tonite, I was writing to you just about this

Esther wanted to phone Hobson so she says take baby in the parlor. I hardly dared look at Gladys, for I didn't dare faint with that baby. But when I stepped in the room Gladys says "Hello Frieda." I says hello but went on in the parlor. I just couldn't have gone up to her then. But after finally getting him to sleep and got my nerve and when I walked up to the bed as soon as she saw me she raised her head and stretched out her arms and she says (course it was hard to understand but got it all right) "Hello Neva, I'm so glad to see you."

Always Your Own
Little Girl

3/17
My Dearest—

I'm right here at Gladys' bedside, the dear girl is sleeping now — and the nurse, Esther, said I could just sit here quietly so as to be near when she awakens for Esther's gone upstairs to lie down (she's had only about 6 or 8 hrs. and maybe not that much, rest since she's been here — came Sun morning — she certainly is about sick herself) and Mrs. Paulson's resting on the davenport. Nettie Wilson is doing up the kitchen work. Its very quiet around today. Gladys has aroused a little but we got her comfortable and is now sleeping again. But I must quit for a little and dust the room so Esther won't have to when she gets down.

... Couldn't possibly finish this before — had so much to do all PM about 5.30 Lucile came up to Ray's and I came to Gerhards to care for the baby — for we brought him here this morn. ... The baby needed me all the time. Gladys pulled thru yesterday altho was so very low, and last night it was terrible — they could hardly hold her in bed. But this morning she seemed to have changed for the better and has rested all day. Doctor says tonite — he has some hope and we're all hoping.

Lots of Love
Your Neva

While Neva was in Aplington with her family, she benefited from her own network of support; her close female friends from Cornell College wrote her letters filled with consoling messages of faith. (Cornell College was founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church and considered itself a nonsectarian "Christian institution." Students were required to attend daily chapel assembly and expected to attend at least one worship service at a church of their choice on Sundays.)



3/18
My dear Neva —

We were so sorry to hear that your sister [in-law] was so bad when you reached home. We think of you so much and hope for the best. It seems that there is so little one can say but sometimes it is good just to know that one has friends and love and sympathy for after all that is by what and for what we live.

Sometimes it is hard to believe that all is for the best but in the long run we find it true. Even our deepest sorrows have made us able to give more to the people about us. Dr. Koehler preached such a good sermon this morning. He told of Jesus being left alone by his earthly friends in his hours of greatest grief and I thought how wonderfully blessed we are in receiving through him love and sympathy. ... If there is anything I can do for you Neva just let me know.

Lovingly,
Besse

3/18
My dearest Neva,

You can't know how badly we girls felt when we received your letter. We had all so hoped that your sister might be better. Oh Neva, my heart goes out to one in trouble, for I know what it means. It is so hard to always understand God's will, and know everything is for the best. All we can do is simply to trust and believe, knowing all things worketh out for the best to him that puts his unfaltering trust in the Master.

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G. S.

3/22

Dear Neva

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From your brother Howard

3/22

My Dearest —

Fred it seems just ages since I left you that day — why it seems about 6 weeks instead of just one — a week ago tonite, I was writing to you just about this

time — only I was feeling just a whole lot different than I am now — and you know why don't you? Why just think of giving a person up and thinking that it must be for the best — and then after all, suddenly realizing that she doesn't have to go and we can have her after all. Why Fred it seems almost too good to be true! and we'd just ought to feel perfectly happy now, hadn't we?

Yours
Neva

3/26

Dear Brother.

Mrs. Ray Stockdale is getting better. Although she is not near well.

From Your
Sister Beulah

3/26

Dear Neva:

This is Monday morning, we were down to see Gladys yesterday, she is improving slowly. The sore limb she had is getting better but the other one is sore now. she had such pain in it, they had to inject medicine to relieve pain. She is a pretty sick woman yet. They do not let strangers in to see her, only relatives, it seems to excite her some. I told her I hope she would get better soon, she said she thought it would be four or five wks. and then she wants to go home to her Mother's and stay. I suppose because the baby is there, she says it is a long time since she was home.

The baby is getting along fine, and the milk seems to agree with him and he sleeps most of the time, stoped in to see him yesterday. Verne is getting to be quite handy around the baby. Verne held him under his arm, for the folks to see him, and he held his head right up and looked at all of them just as though he understood it all. Lucile is still at Rays, she expects to be there this wk. and I think next wk. they are going to have a new girl. Ester is still there and the Doctor is still coming every day. Mr and Mrs Rabe were down to Gerharts yesterday. But they were not going to see Gladys, she did not seem to want them to come. She is hardly able to stand the strain yet.

She wanted to see Rob yesterday, she said she treated him so mean the last time he was there. She wanted to make it right. They think she must have dreamt it. She said there were chairs around her bed, all smeared with eggs, and he couldn't have a chair to sit on. Wasn't that strange. Say Neva, her flowers

were all wilted friday, and Anna and Lizzie sent her a bouquet of red carnations, came on that day. She seemed to be pleased. . . .

With much love,
Your Mother

3/28

Dear Fred:

Mrs Ray Stockdale I understand is improving slowly

Your Father,
R. A. Voogd

3/29

Dear Neva

I thought I had better write and let you know how Gladys is. We were up there this afternoon she is not getting along so well, although they are doing all they can do for her. She cant talk now and has a high fever. The Doc has not very much hope for her, But we are not going to give up, just yet. As long as there is life, there is hope. Do not get scared, But I thought best to let you know just how she is. So you will know what to expect. The baby is real good and growing some,

Yours in haste
Mother

3/30

[Western Union Telegram]

Neva Stockdale

Come home at once
C.J. Stockdale

3/30

My Own Neva:

Suppose you are safely home by this time at any rate here's hoping so and that matters are not as bad as you expected. . . . I had planned a glorious time for Saturday and now all in vain, but then of course your erand is far more important and so guess we can wait can't we dear. . . .

Love, Your Own
Fred

3/30

Dear Fred —

Just arrived and no one is here, am going to phone home. . . . Just heard here that Gladys passed away this morning. Oh, how can I ever stand it?

Yours
Neva

3/30

Dear Fred —

Mrs Ray Stockdale passed away this morning, poor girl, I wrote you the other day that she was improving seems that she had been till that day she commenced to sink

Your Father
Rich Voogd

3/31

My dearest Fred —

Here I am at Ray's — have been here all the time (except I went down town this P.M.) they brought me right here when I came last eve. Lucile and I stayed here all night. Poor Ray — he never slept a wink all night. We're here "all alone" now — he and I (Lucile just went home for a little while) — he's trying to read — oh but its quiet — we're sitting here in the kitchen and the old clock is just ticking away.

Yes we're here alone — the one that has made this a home for him is gone — it hardly seems that it can be true — but it is — she's gone — she's in the parlor in a coffin — all dressed in her wedding clothes — and I combed her hair today — her mother wanted me to, for I combed it the day she was married so they wanted me to fix it as near like that as I could — so I've tried to; Dearest I do wish you could see her — she does look nice — of course she's fallen away, but her face has quite a sweet expression and oh she doesn't show all the suffering she's gone thru, as much as you'd think she would.

Oh its so sad — just think — just 1 yr. 1 mo. and 1 wk. ago today she stood there one of the happiest of brides and who would have ever tho't then, that twould be this way! (It certainly is a blessed thing that one doesn't know what's before them.) It seems hard to think its for the best but we know it must be — and then when we wonder why — why did it have to be — I always think of "Someday We'll Understand." . . .

My dear, on my way downtown I stopped in to see the little boy — the darlingest little fellow — but "motherless" — he'll never know what it is to have a "mother," will he? Dearest, it's all so sad.

Goodnite Sweetheart

4/1

My dear Neva —

. . . Dear we were so shocked and sorrowful to get your card. It is certainly very sad especially for your poor brother. I think it is fine that vacation is so near and that you can stay at home and do get a good rest and dont worry about anything. . . . Please dont take this too hard, it must all be for the best or it could not have happened. . . .

With lots of love,
from Ruth

4/1

Dear Neva: —

I was so sorry to hear that your sister died. Please give my sympathy to your brother. . . .

With love,
Mildred G.

4/1

Dear Neva: —

Your card came and was dreadfully sorry to hear of the dreadful news. . . .

Lovingly
Doris

The crisis past, the letters between Neva and Fred began to mention other matters: their dates, summer plans, and Fred completing school and beginning a job (perhaps in response to his father urg-

Form 1201

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
Day Message	
Day Letter	Blue
Night Message	Nite
Night Letter	N L

If none of these three symbols appears after the check (number of words) this is a day message. Otherwise its character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

WESTERN UNION
TELEGRAM

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, VICE-PRESIDENT
NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT
BELVIDERE BROOKS, VICE-PRESIDENT

RECEIVED AT

Aplington Ia. 30-1917
Neva Stockdale
Come home at once
B. J. Stockdale
How d room mat.
H

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ing him to continue to work hard and to spend less money). The letters also mentioned another crisis—the United States had just declared war on Germany.

4/16

My Dearest —

... I've been feeling quite blue tonite — shed a few tears before supper — but I couldn't help it — got to thinking about Gladys being gone and how lonesome Ray must be out there, especially on a gloomy day like this. And then to think she couldn't even take care of her own baby — and that a — not even a "relative" taking care of it. Not that I'm worried about the care it gets — oh no — for I know Mrs. Lucas is caring as if it was her own. But I'm so glad he's right there and is a whole lot of comfort to Ray I know. ...

With lots of Love
Your Neva

4/18

My Own Neva:

... After 1st of June this boy will settle down to work for he soon wants his little girl to be with him always and if he can afford her why not? Dont you say so? Yes you do. Then too it will make more of a man of me, a desire to get some place. Can't help but tell you how I feel and you always want me to why not. Neva it seems to me that I love you more every-day and each day find I need you more all the time. ...

Lots of Love and Kisses
Yours Always
Fred.

4/19

Dear Friend Neva

As I promised you a word about our little boy will try and keep same to you. He is growing just fine and he now weighs 10 1/2 lbs he is good as can be day and night both; we went up and visited Grandma G. the other pm it was so nice and pleasant. I took him out for the first time he gets more sweet every day wish you could see him I hope you are well and had a nice trip back to school, love to you from Baby and myself, everybody is well

Lovingly,
Mrs. Lucas.

4/20

My Dear Neva: —

I will write you a few lines in a hurry, so the children can take it along. Suppose you think we have for-

gotten you, but we have been so busy all wk and one day I lost being in bed all day with a sick headache, so it is Friday all ready again. ... We were down to Ray night before last. The Baby is getting along fine. ...

from your loving Mother

4/25

My Own Neva:

... Even after you are mine always we will get out on a little trip once in awhile, that has always been my plan and we will enjoy ourselves just as much as before in fact I'll be just a whole lot happier after you are mine for I've tried to be a man in every way and have succeeded in lots of things and so you see I want you sweetheart yes I do. And now that you have promised to be content in a small place awhile I am satisfied that you really want me as much as I do you and you know it wont be long till our wishes and hopes will be relaized. Oh! you happy days. Im as usual thinking of my own girlie and always wishing her happiness and health. I'm a good boy always,

Lots of Love and Kisses
Yours Always
Fred.

4/28

Dear Neva: —

Have been looking for a letter from you all wk. I suppose you think you won't write if we cant. But really Neva we have been so busy all wk., and so tired at night, that we are ready for bed by nine oclock, for we get up at five now. [Your sister] Hazel is practicing now, she expects to go and take her lesson this afternoon. ... We washed yesterday ... and will send your apron soon. We have not been down to Ray's for a wk. He was here the other day, had been hauling hay up here. Ray says baby is gaining right along I think he weighs eleven pounds or better. ... Ray and Mildred were here Sunday, said Baby weighs 14 lbs so you see he is doing better, gained 1 lb in three days. They are thinking of naming him Lewis Ray. ...

Your Loving
Mother

5/1

My Dearest —

... Finally heard from home — a letter from mother this p.m. She says [my brother] Bill's quit school. He had to help at home for a week and then didn't want to go back. But listen to this: Ralph Cunningham has joined the Navy and leaves yesterday or today. Certainly surprised me. Baby weighs

14 lb, gained 1 lb. in 3 days. Isn't that fine. . . .

Lots of Love
Yours Always
Neva

5/1

Sweetheart:

. . . The War problem seems to be a popular subject here for its all we hear since they have passed the drafting law. The young fellows seem to be worried and in fact they have reasons to feel that way for when your name is called you have to go and nothing can prevent it. Now your brothers are safe that is Rob, course Bill is too young for this drafting law it includes the ages of 21 to 24 so that is me. You see Im no farmer and am not married so it just catches me right, course Im ready if need be but dearie how I've longed for you and yes have waited a long time and if such a thing should come to pass it would make it seem awful hard for me, for as you know there wouldn't be much chance of coming back. But lets hope that such things will not happen and that our plans may work out just fine, for if they do you will soon be mine and then I'll quit this worry. . . . Yes Im just longing for you already for I want to hold you close for you are the only one that can make me feel contented and I always want you near. . . .

Goodnight Dear,
Fred.

5/4

Dear Neva,

just a card to say the little darling now weighs a few ozs over 14 lbs he is so cute and sweet notices things and plays with his hands, he coos when I talk to him, Oh he is some boy. All are well, best wishes for you,

I am as ever
Mrs. Lucas, nurse

5/7

My Little sweetheart:

. . . They are talking of closing our school next week for so many of the boys have enlisted that there are only a few left but here's hoping they don't for at least three weeks for I want to be near you dearest and besides you haven't been over here as much as I want you to for we want to see a few things before we go home don't we dear? One of the boys I know real well left this noon, he was around shaking hands with us and he joined the "Aviators Corps." I had quite a talk with him and he told me a number of interesting things. Please sweetheart don't worry about



Neva's beau, Fred Voogd: "I always want you near."

me so much for it hurts me to have you feel that way. I realize that you love me with all your might and would hate to see me go but I may be lucky yet at least we will hope so. I'm so happy for I've a true little girlie and you no doubt noticed that I was very happy yesterday for dearest we did have such a fine time and both enjoyed it so much. . . .

Lots of Love,
Always Your Own
Fred

5/8

My Own Sweetheart:

. . . Three more fellows from Business College enlisted yesterday p.m. You know you met Krueger well he's one of them. . . . Got a letter from Sis today, she says Dad run the Mitchell into the side of the shed and broke it says he's some expert driver but he says it won't happen again. Sure have to laugh how she puts it. Grandma seems to be worrying about me, wishes I were home. . . . Am anxious to get to work for it means having you sooner and that is my main desire always. . . .

With Love and lots of Kisses,
Your Own,
Fred

5/10

My Own Sweetheart:

... My but the bunch at school is awful slim only three or four of my old friends left and in two weeks after this I'll be gone home. Have been dreaming about those old car rides we'll have for even tho the city is nice in ways the small town with its old fashioned ways seems to beat them all for me. The city has many places of amusement but it takes loads of coin and after all the old auto rides and things at home seem to me as being more fun. We can go anyplace we want and believe me we are going to see stuff at Waterloo more than once this summer. We'll have some time this summer and always in fact won't we dear?

lots of Love, Yours,
Fred

Now alone, Ray wrote his sister Neva with news of the baby. The letter hinted at needing her help with the child and with running the house—since Neva's school year was almost over and she would be in Aplington for the summer anyway.

5/10

Dear Neva,

... Louis Ray is getting along fine he weighed 15 lbs. last sunday and has a double chin and his hands look like hands now (not claws). He notices things crows a little etc. but don't cry hardly any and is rather sober but will laugh once in a while sometimes out loud. Hazel and the girls were up sunday and Hazel took two or three pictures of him. I was not here when they were. They say he moved a little on one suppose the others will be alright tho.

... Suppose you got [the housekeeper] Mrs. Lucas's letter. Mrs. Lucas ... told me yesterday that she got a letter from her brother out west and she said she would have to leave a week from next Sunday. ...

Now when is your school going to be out and is it going to be so you can help me some way this summer? I haven't talked with the folks yet but gess I will have to be doing something pretty soon. I suppose Louis will be alright at Mother G. now and I know they would like to have him there. Mrs. Lucas takes awful good care of him and all that but [Gladys's sisters] Mill and Lucile don't like to come up here because she doesn't let them hold him enough, that is she always manages to hold him herself about that time. ... And now Neva write soon to

Your brother
Ray

5/23

Dearest Fred —

... I can't help it — when I think of that brother of mine — cause I know how much I miss her — and how much worse it must be for him. But then we know it must have been for the best. ...

With just lots of Love
Always Your Own
Little Girl,
Neva

Like Neva Stockdale, many young women with college educations experienced a tension between the responsibility they felt to the world at large, and, on the other hand, parents' demands that daughters forgo their ambitions outside the home. This conflict between what social reformer Jane Addams called the "social claim" and the "family claim" could be excruciating.

As Addams explained, daughters had been trained to be "self-forgetting and self-sacrificing, to consider the good of the whole before the good of the ego. ... When the daughter comes back from college and begins to recognize her social claim ... and to evince a disposition to fulfill it, the family claim is strenuously asserted; she is told that she is unjustified, ill-advised." The social claim to the world at large, often "vague and unformulated," would give way to the more clearly expressed family claim, leading the daughter to lose a vital part of her life. Her elders, often unconscious of this situation, could not acknowledge the tension, and, as Addams concluded, "we have all the elements of a tragedy."

Addams herself had experienced it when she graduated from college in 1882, at a time when only one out of every 10,000 American women earned college degrees. By the time Neva was in college, that number had doubled—but the family claim was still alive and well in Iowa.

As spring turned to summer and then fall, this "family claim" echoed throughout the letters Neva received. Meanwhile, Fred had just graduated and was now working at the bank in the nearby village of Austinville. He was not happy about the prospect of Ray's needs interfering with his ideas about the summer. Fred had additional worries of his own—he could be drafted at any time.

5/24

My Own Neva:

... Well dear don't work too hard. ... Don't

worry so much about your exams and I'm sure you will get through everything fine if you only stop worrying see. Yes it must be hard for Ray but your worrying about it all the time won't help it any. . . . Can't blame you in a way for helping Ray but am afraid I won't get to see you very much cause if you handle all his work you'll have plenty to do for 12 to 15 hours a day without seeing me. I'm afraid its going to be too hard on you and then too he won't want to let you go when I want you and well you suit yourself in every respect only I don't want you to work too hard and you know I'm thinking of your best and not interfering only I don't want to miss all my old enjoyments. . . .

Your Own,
Fred

6/1

My Own Neva:

I'm back from my first day's labor. Yes it was very fine and did like it just fine. . . . In a week will be able to handle it just fine. . . . Say I happened to handle a check that was written to you today and the name looked rather familiar, see? (Neva Stockdale) well I know her real well and it seems as tho I have some kind of a claim on her don't you think? . . .

Your Own
Fred

6/4

My Own Neva:

. . . Well, Tuesday is registration day and I'm getting worried for dear they want such men as I am for you see I'm not a farmer and not a married man for you see they are exempt but I'm fit in every way only a trifle light but they don't care on draft for you see I can soon gain 4 lbs. . . . I want to be with you as long as I possibly can but now don't worry about me to much but I must it seems tell you these things. I wish we had been wise and had been secretly married then I would [not] have to go and would have been better for both I'm sure. Am hoping for the best dear and may the Lord help me to be able to have you as my little wife for that seems to be my main wish in life. . . .

Love and Kisses
Yours Always
Fred

Two major events occurred in July: Neva's father died, and Neva and Fred decided to marry. Fred had said all along that once he had finished his education, Neva no longer needed to go to school.

However, the marriage came as a shock to her friends, who wrote to express their congratulations, but also to say they had fully expected her to be with them when the fall term began.

The marriage alone was a "family claim," in the sense that marriage and college were not seen as things one could do together. As summer ended, however, a larger, more immediate family claim was now voiced by Neva's Aunt Lizzie, her mother's sister. Lizzie pressured Neva to remain at her brother Ray's, despite her marriage and intention to set up her own household. Because of her age and availability, Neva appeared to be the most likely family member expected to help.

7/12

My dear Neva

I just heard about your father's death and I can't tell you how sorry I am. . . .

Yours with sympathy,
Margaret

8/1

Dearest Neva,

You can't imagine how surprised I was to get your wedding announcement. I thought you were intending to come back to Cornell but nevertheless I offer my sincere congratulation to you and Fred.

I had been thinking of you, Neva, as taking care of your brother's baby this summer. I have intended to write you every week but something has come up every time. I really am quite mad at you, Neva, because it seems to me that I was to be flower girl or something of the sort at your wedding. You know I am afraid I shall never have one of my own. . . .

I suppose that I had better write you a very dignified letter, because Fred might not like the ones that I usually write you. I suppose he is quite jealous of you now.

We shall miss you at college next year. Especially your footsteps on the stairs as the clock is striking eight. . . . I am having a very good time this summer. I run the car a great deal and then we go to everything that comes along. . . .

Loads of love,
Winnie

[Undated letter]

Dear Neva:

. . . . Why Neva you old sport who would have thot you and Fred would have pulled off that stunt so soon. Now of course I expected it to happen some

time but I nearly fell off the Christmas tree when I opened the announcement this morning. Honestly I had to read it the second time before I was convinced that I wasn't having a pipe dream. I don't blame you tho and Neva dear, I wish you loads of happiness. Please tell Fred I send congratulations to him and hope he realizes what a dandy little wife he has. Of course he does. . . .

Freshie is coming to see me in Aug. I don't know whether he'll have to go to war or not. He won't go in the first draft anyway. . . .

. . . I'd love to hear from you — what you are doing for your country, what Fred is doing, etc. . . .

Sincerely Yours
Thelma

8/28

Dear Neva

Since I was out at your mother's Sunday, I have been very much worried. She told me you were intending to leave Ray's and that you could not accomplish any sewing while there. My dear child, I wish I could talk to you. . . . This thing worries your mother, and my dear, I don't feel that she ought to have any more cares added to the ones she has to bear now.

Couldn't you and Fred help this much by staying there this winter and by next spring the Lord may send us a way out. If mother wasn't so weak, I would do it myself, and I too would sacrifice myself for love of your Mother and Ray. And I would have to leave my home and go among strangers. Don't you think that would mean something to me to give up so much. You won't have to give up so much, and you would be doing such a fine thing for Ray, and would lift this burden off your mother's shoulders.

You surely could stand it for this winter and if you wanted to, I should think Fred could do it for your sake. Remember Dear Neva your mother didn't feel like having you get married so soon after your father died, but she gave in and did something she didn't feel like doing just to please you and Fred. Now don't you think it would look as if you ought to help Ray, and so relieve her from this care.

If you agree to do this thing I will help you with your things. So you can go to housekeeping in the spring hemming table cloths, and napkins, towels, comforts, sheets and cases, anything you would not have time for. My dear I always loved you, for your kindness to your mother. This would make me love you even more, and perhaps some day I may help you out even as you would be helping your brother.

Neva, your mother must not be left alone on the

farm evenings at all. Don't you think you could take turn about in being with her Sat. evenings. One night you, one Rob, one Nell, one Hazel, and so on. Talk it over with Ray. So she won't be left alone as she was last Sat. night. What if something should happen to her, and she alone there. So you older children see to this. But don't tell her I had a hand in it, and I don't want to make her afraid, but it is not safe for a woman to be all alone on a big farm like that. If some tramp came along and knew she was alone, you can't tell what might happen. You could stay all night, if you take turns.

My dear these are only suggestions to you. Do as you think best. Give my love to Ray and let me hear from you soon. . . .

With much love, Neva

I am
Aunt Lizzie

September 1917

Dear Neva

I saw your mother Monday night, and she told me of the surprise you had given on Sunday, and my dear the way she looked when she told me you were going to stay with Ray, should have paid you well for the sacrifice you are making now, for her sake and Ray's. I want to thank both you and Fred. I really feel as if you had done me a kindness. Anything you do for your mother, makes me love you the better. Some day may be I can repay you. She said Ray was so pleased.

Mother and I want to get you a wedding present. . . . You and your mother can get your things and leave some here for us to work on. You can start anytime to bring it, and I can pick it up as I want to. Of course dear if you want them embroidered you will have to do that. . . . Aunt Anna and I will be glad to help you. . . .

Goodbye with much love my dear
Aunt Lizzie

Love to Ray — You and Ray must make Fred feel at home there.

During the tumultuous year of 1917, Neva Stockdale had responded to her father's telegram to "come home at once." She had responded when her brother Ray had asked, "Is it going to be so you can help me some way this summer." She had responded when Fred hinted, "It seems as tho I have some kind of a claim," wanting "to have you as my little wife." And she had responded when Aunt

Lizzie cajoled, "Now don't you think it would look as if you ought to help Ray."

For many women, the expectation that they would help out the overall family, and put aside or sacrifice their own career plans or personal wishes, was often accompanied by promises of love—or threats of the withdrawal of love and approval. As Aunt Lizzie had told Neva, "This would make me love you even more," and "Anything you do for your mother, makes me love you the better."

The reward of training young women to be self-sacrificing was not an unconditional love. Rather, love was the reward if the conditions of proper behavior and family expectations were met. It was an act of "self-sacrifice," just as Jane Addams had described a generation before. In such a scenario, education was secondary to the many specific roles a woman needed to perform. To stop attending college (and whatever the future applications of that education would be) was not seen as a particular loss for Neva. Her wish to set up her own home, with her new husband, was also seen as a small need, given the reality of her brother's situation—raising an infant and running a household while operating a farm. Individual needs and hopes were weighed against overall values and expectations of the family and community. The loss to an individual woman might be "tragic," in Jane Addams's words, but family maintenance and continuity were more valuable.

For Neva (*below*), the choice in 1917 was clear—she

would not continue with college. She spent the first year of her married life caring for her nephew and brother, running their home, as well as making Fred "feel at home there."

Neva and Fred raised two sons, Kenneth (born in 1921) and Richard (1924). Neva became a widow in 1936, when Fred died unexpectedly. She never pursued a calling outside the home. Nevertheless, she mediated the "family claim" later in her life by working within a network of women in her tiny community for larger social issues—forming a women's club, bringing flowers from her garden for Sunday worship services, and taking a leadership role within her church. She helped establish the Aplington library, worked as a volunteer there, and continued her involvement through the 1970s.

Certainly Jane Addams's "social claim" interested and engaged Neva. Nevertheless, at critical moments in her life, when members of her family, including her own husband, needed her attention and care, Neva would always "come home at once." ❖

Sharlene Voogd Cochrane is associate professor in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies Program at Lesley College, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and teaches courses in history and American studies. She is the granddaughter of Neva Stockdale Voogd.



NOTE ON SOURCES

The letters published here are from a longer series spanning 1909 to 1920. The collection is fullest for the period when Neva and Fred are courting and in college, often writing twice a day. There are assorted family letters as early as 1903 and continuing into the 1970s, as well as letters and other items from Neva's younger sister, Hazel, who graduated from Grinnell College in 1923. Special thanks to my sister, Jan Voogd, for helping transcribe and organize the letters into archival folders, and for researching our family's history. In these letters, the original spelling and punctuation have not been altered except in a few places for clarity. Ellipses indicate omissions. For more on Aplington's history, see Jane Abbas, Diletta Buseman, Sylvia Meyer, and Becky Uhlenkopp, *Aplington: 1856-1981, 125 Years* (Aplington, 1981).

Jane Addams wrote about social and family claims in her *Twenty Years at Hull*

House (1910). For a fuller discussion, see: Jean Bethke Elshtain, "A Return to Hull House: Reflections on Jane Addams," *Feminist Issues* 15: 1-2 (Annual 1997), p. 105; and Joyce Antler, "'After College, What?' New Graduates and the Family Claim," *American Quarterly* 32:4 (Fall 1980), 409-34. See also Roberta Frankfort, *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New York: University Press, 1977); Barbara Sicherman, "College and Careers: Historical Perspectives on the Lives and Work Patterns of Women College Graduates," *Women and Higher Education in America*, John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe, eds. (W.W. Norton, 1988); and Sarah L. Wilkerson, "An Oral History Collection: Reflections of Women Who Attended the University of Iowa, 1917-1924" (University of Iowa Archives, University of Iowa Main Library, Iowa City), 1980.

Reverberations of the War



Cedar Rapids in 1865

by Susan Kuecker



As the year 1865 opened, the Civil War occupied the minds of Cedar Rapids citizens and occupied the pages of its newspaper, the *Cedar Valley Times*. Although local issues stirred up editorial ire, and local businesses advertised their wares, long columns of war news dominated much of the four-page weekly. Just as the newspaper kept its readers informed of local and national events in 1865, so too does it reveal to readers today how deeply the war was etched into the local consciousness and how much it impacted local events and concerns.

In early January, details were still appearing in the *Cedar Valley Times* concerning the Union victory at Nashville and Savannah's fall to Sherman in the last half of December. Soldiers from Cedar Rapids and the rest of Linn County served in Iowa regiments involved in both actions. Although the telegraph had brought immediate



Although far from battlegrounds, Cedar Rapids stayed attuned to the Civil War for four long years (above, an 1868 map).

news, citizens still anxiously awaited the published casualty lists and more complete reports that often took longer to reach communities. Just before the New Year, the *Cedar Valley Times* had published the Adjutant General's notice of items "in his possession, for the families of killed and wounded soldiers of the 20th Iowa Regiment." For seven evenings in early January, worshippers met in the town's seven churches and prayed for loved ones serving in the army.

Meanwhile, a fierce local debate raged over President Lincoln's call in December for volunteers. The enthusiasm of the early war years had evaporated and men no longer eagerly sought to enter the army. Once a call for volunteers was issued, quotas were assigned to each state, and the state then assigned quotas to each locality. If volunteer enlistments did not meet the quota, then the draft (established in 1863) was in-

stituted. In Iowa, the only use of the draft had occurred in September of 1864, but not without incident. In Poweshiek County, two United States deputy marshals on their way to arrest draft evaders had been ambushed and murdered. Now state and local officials were determined to avoid a repeat of the September events.

Some eastern Iowa towns reportedly offered bounties as high as \$1,000 to encourage enlistment. In Linn County, the Board of Supervisors considered paying a \$300 bounty to each volunteer, and the *Cedar Valley Times* approved: "We believe that most of the Townships are in favor of giving the bounty. It will certainly be difficult if not impossible to raise all the volunteers required from the county unless an appropriation of this kind is made. . . . The action of the Board will be looked for with anxiety by all." After several lengthy meetings in January, the supervi-

sors decided against a bounty, believing that high bounties were not fair to the soldiers who had volunteered out of patriotism early in the war.

Change, Arms!



The Union Volunteer leaving his "Old Arms" for the "New Minnie."

The war permeated American life. This illustration and those that follow were printed onto envelopes during the war. (From the M.W. Davis Union scrapbook, comprising more than a thousand Civil War envelopes. SHSI-Iowa City)

Nevertheless, the same day that the *Times* reported the supervisors' decision, it also reported apparent draft evasion: "We learn that many persons have suddenly left . . . within the past ten days. . . . The object of their departure is apparent. They were afraid that they should be drafted and thus be compelled to help make up the quota of the County."

Evading the draft by being absent on the anticipated day of enrollment was not uncommon across the North in the second half of the war, but the *Times* had no patience for this. "They have fled like cowards and poltroons, and as such they should be treated," the newspaper scolded. Such a man "should be denied the right of suffrage, and we are not sure but what his wife, if such an apology



My only support—both boys gone to the war. I wonder if they would take me?

for a man has one, would have a substantial claim to a divorce." To officials' relief later that month, local and state quotas were met without drafting any men.

As the 1865 winter dragged on, the plight of soldiers' families also caused great concern. Wartime inflation had almost doubled prices

between 1861 and 1865, wreaking special hardship on soldiers' families, who had lost their wage earners to the war. Iowa counties had been legislatively mandated since 1863 to set up relief boards. In Cedar Rapids, the Relief Committee of the Common Council doled out a few dollars at a time to "the war widows and other needy poor" for necessities.

Noting that "thus far we have had a cold winter," the *Cedar Valley Times* issued a special call for assistance: "We propose that the City Council purchase one or two acres of woodland for the families of soldiers, and that a day be appointed for the cutting and hauling of the wood. . . . The cost of the woodland would not be great, the labor would be cheerfully and gratuitously performed and the good which would be accomplished would be immense. . . . Similar things have been done in many places,—why not in Cedar Rapids?"

Meanwhile, various Iowa regiments pledged several thousand dollars each to aid in the establishment of a home for soldiers' orphans. Estimates that year claimed that there were 10,000 soldiers' orphans in Iowa, and the *Times* reported that "the requests of mothers to have their children taken at the Home are numerous." Although Cedar Rapids promoted itself as an ideal location for such a home, the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' Home was eventually established in Farmington in southeastern Iowa that summer and then was moved to Davenport.

The soldiers themselves were the focus of relief efforts by the Cedar Rapids Ladies Soldiers' Aid Society. Established in the fall of



If I cannot fight, I can feed those who do.

1861, the society had become a chapter of the larger Iowa Sanitary Commission; its cofounder Mary Ely was one of only two Iowa women to serve on the commission's 12-member Board of Control and would receive national recognition for her work. The federal government relied heavily on the thousands of women's organizations like the one in Cedar Rapids to marshal and help distribute food, clothing, and medical supplies to soldiers.

Now, as scurvy threatened the poorly fed Union Army near Nashville (including Linn County companies), the Cedar Rapids Ladies Soldiers' Aid Society asked local farmers to donate vegetables to send to the soldiers. The group was also preparing for the upcoming Chicago Sanitary Fair, scheduled for May. Sanitary fairs, which were essentially enormous bazaars, had proven to be extremely successful fund-raising tools for soldiers' relief efforts in the North. The women were making articles to sell at the Chicago fair and soliciting donations from churches,

lodges, businesses, schools, and individuals. The Cedar Rapids Ladies Soldiers' Aid Society raised more than \$10,000 for soldiers' relief during the war, and the *Times* praised the group as part of the nation's "army of Florence Nightingales" whose victories "will never grow dim."

As winter turned to spring, it appeared that the war was winding down. Some citizens were reluctant to believe this, having been disappointed so many times in the past. And so much speculation had filled the newspapers, including fears that the Confederate Army would shift into a guerrilla war. Thus, when news reached Cedar Rapids of the capture of Richmond on April 3, and of Lee's surrender on April 9, great "jubilations" were held. Shopkeepers closed their doors for the day, and citizens celebrated in the evening with bonfires, fireworks, and political speeches.

Then, at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 15, this mood of celebration changed to one of intense mourning when word reached Cedar



Rapids of President Lincoln's assassination. Stores closed again that Saturday afternoon and the following Monday, but now many were draped in black. Many citizens also donned their mourning clothes to show respect for the dead President.

"People were gathered together in knots on the principal streets," the *Cedar Valley Times* reported, "thinking and talking of nothing but the sad and terrible news." Iowa Governor William M. Stone asked Iowans to "assemble in their respective places of worship" on April 27th for "humiliation and prayer," and requested that "travel within the State, and all secular employment, be totally suspended on that day and that all public offices be draped in mourning" for 30 days.

An editorial in the *Cedar Valley Times* summed up the emotions of that roller-coaster April: "Joy and mourning has thus been strangely mingled, and while raising shouts of joy for the great victories achieved by our armies we have at the same time been called upon to mourn for the *great man* of the nation, stricken down by the bullet of an assassin, at a time . . . when the President was maturing schemes for the conciliation of the rebels. . . . Surely the past few weeks have been marked with great events and while our hearts are pained . . . yet we may be consoled by the reflection that events have recently transpired, fatal to the foe against whom

we have so long been contending."

Some citizens of Cedar Rapids believed that high Confederate officials, including Confederate President Jefferson Davis, had conspired to kill Lincoln. This belief was widespread in the North because only a few days had separated Lee's surrender and Lincoln's death. Accordingly, many called for harsh treatment of anyone suspected of being a Southern



The Jeff. Davis' "Neck-tie."

sympathizer. In Cedar Rapids, it appears that Masonic lodge members had advocated giving aid to needy Masons in the South, and were now accused by some of sympathizing with the Confederacy.

While the prospects of peace between the North and the South were important to Cedar Rapids



We Mourn a Father Slain.

officials, they were also concerned with keeping the peace on the local level. Throughout the winter and early spring, there had been complaints about a recent increase in crime, and the *Cedar Valley Times*, a Republican paper, had directly linked it to alcohol consumption. "The primary and almost the sole cause of the disgraceful occurrences which have taken place in our city is the drinking of alcoholic beverages," the newspaper charged. "Can we expect peace and good conduct in a place of 3,000 inhabitants which supports not less than 19 liquor establishments and several houses of ill-fame?" Finally in May, the city marshal led a series of raids against liquor establishments, but the growing Czech population protested the raids, believing that they discriminated against them.

The end of the war now allowed several long-delayed projects to proceed. Beginning in June, a series of meetings was held to discuss various railroad proposals. City leaders knew that good railroad connections were essential for transporting goods to market and attracting new industry. Citizens in other parts of Linn County also wanted easy access to railroad connections. Although the railroad had reached Cedar Rapids in 1859, the war had slowed further development.

Other transportation improvements were also needed. In July, for the third time in less than ten years, the main bridge across the Cedar River in Cedar Rapids had collapsed, this time as a herd of 40 cattle crossed it. Many wanted a free bridge, but city officials said the city couldn't afford it. Citizens

used ferries to cross the river while a second toll bridge was built.

That summer, Cedar Rapids graded downtown streets for the first time. Business owners installed awnings on their buildings, repaired or added sidewalks, and planted trees in the downtown. Even though nearby Marion was the county seat, Cedar Rapids was Linn County's center of trade. Most of the outlying towns in the county had only a handful of businesses, whereas Cedar Rapids had dozens (including an ice cream parlor). Perhaps the most unusual enterprise in Cedar Rapids was the Cedar Rapids Oil and Mineral Co., which spent the summer unsuccessfully drilling for oil along the Cedar River.

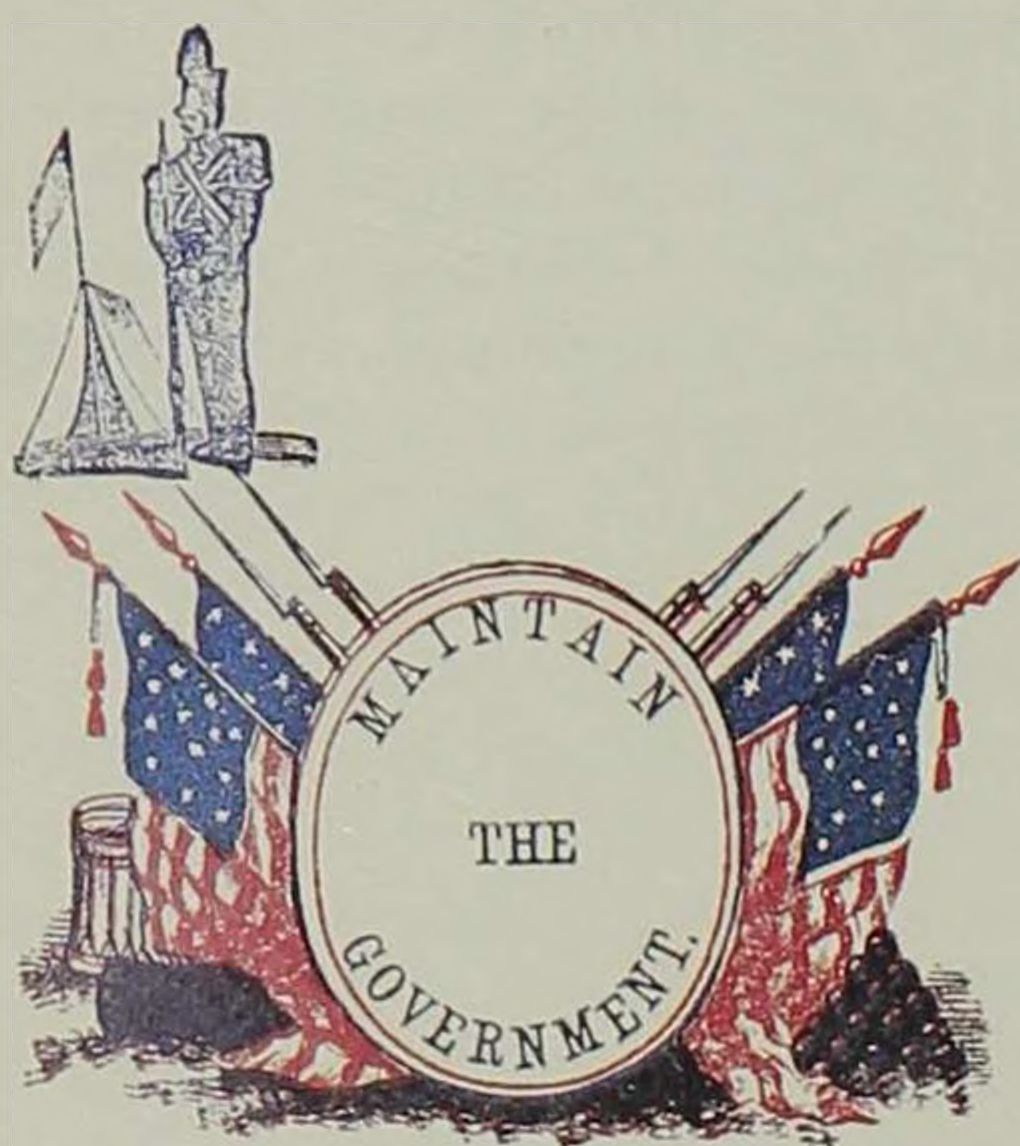
In July, a minor controversy erupted when the *Cedar Valley Times* published a list of citizens who had paid the federal income

the list also made it obvious that some fairly prominent people had not paid much tax.

"We make no comments upon the returns made by different persons," the *Times* remarked. "The list is before our readers and they are at liberty to make such deductions and conclusions as may seem to them warranted by the facts and figures."

Yet a half-year earlier, when the *Times* first publicly contemplated publishing such a list, it had observed that this "would shame some men and cause them to cease defrauding the Government and their fellow-citizens. There are men who are reputed wealthy in Cedar Rapids who pay less income taxes than others who are known to be comparatively poor."

Perhaps the commercial enterprise that changed the most because of the Civil War was banking. As federally chartered banks began to appear in Cedar Rapids, the *Times* had weighed in on the issue in February. While acknowledging that "we have always looked with pride upon the State Bank of Iowa, not simply because it was an Iowa institution, but because it was a sound, reliable institution," the newspaper also reasoned that "we now have a better currency than that of the State Bank, to-wit: that of the National Banks." "The National currency [the greenback] will pay taxes, buy revenue and postage stamps, and is a legal tender for all forms of indebtedness. . . . Give us the money which is current everywhere in preference to that which is at par only in the State in which we happen to reside. . . . Because we have a good banking system is no reason why we should refuse to have a better one. . . . Some of the Branches of the State Bank have been wisely converted into Na-



tax, one of many taxes added in the 1860s to help finance the war. (By 1865, the tax had risen to 5 percent on incomes of \$600-5,000, 7½ percent on \$5,000-10,000, and 10 percent on incomes above \$10,000.) The newspaper justified its action by stating that such lists had been published all over the North. By revealing who had paid the tax,

tional Banks and others are on the eve of doing so. We trust that the wisdom of the change will soon be apparent to all."

The biggest local events of summer 1865 involved the long-awaited return of soldiers. After a Grand Review in late May in Washington, D.C., the Union had begun mustering out its regiments. As each Linn County regiment returned home, the newspaper published a brief history recounting its glorious deeds. Yet an editorial on June 22 reported, "We find that the



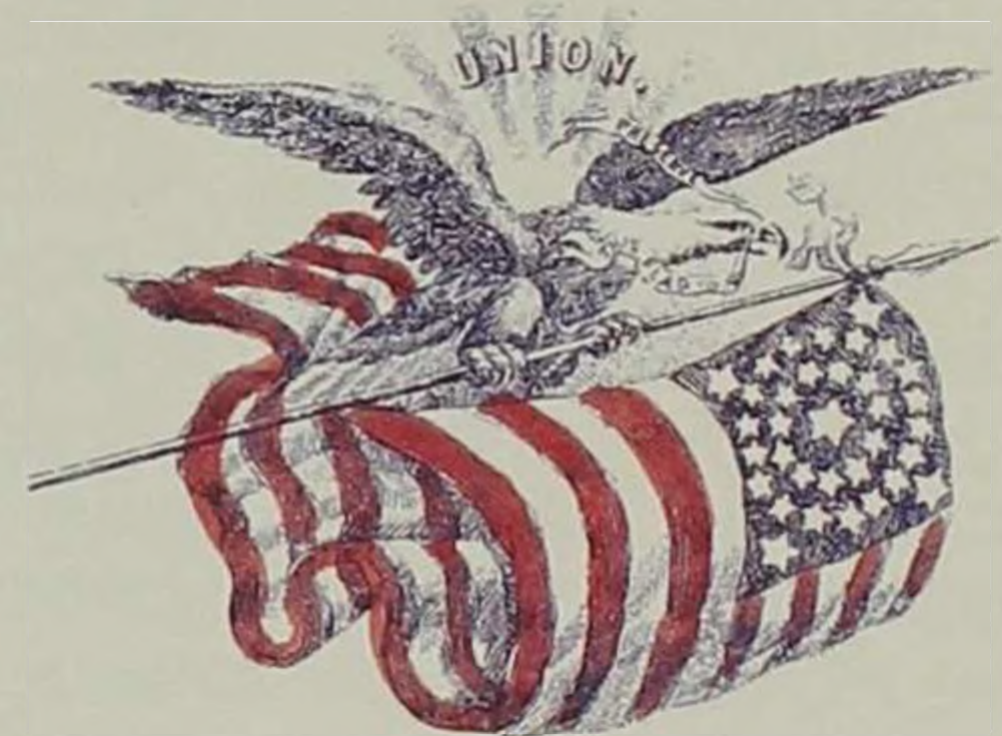
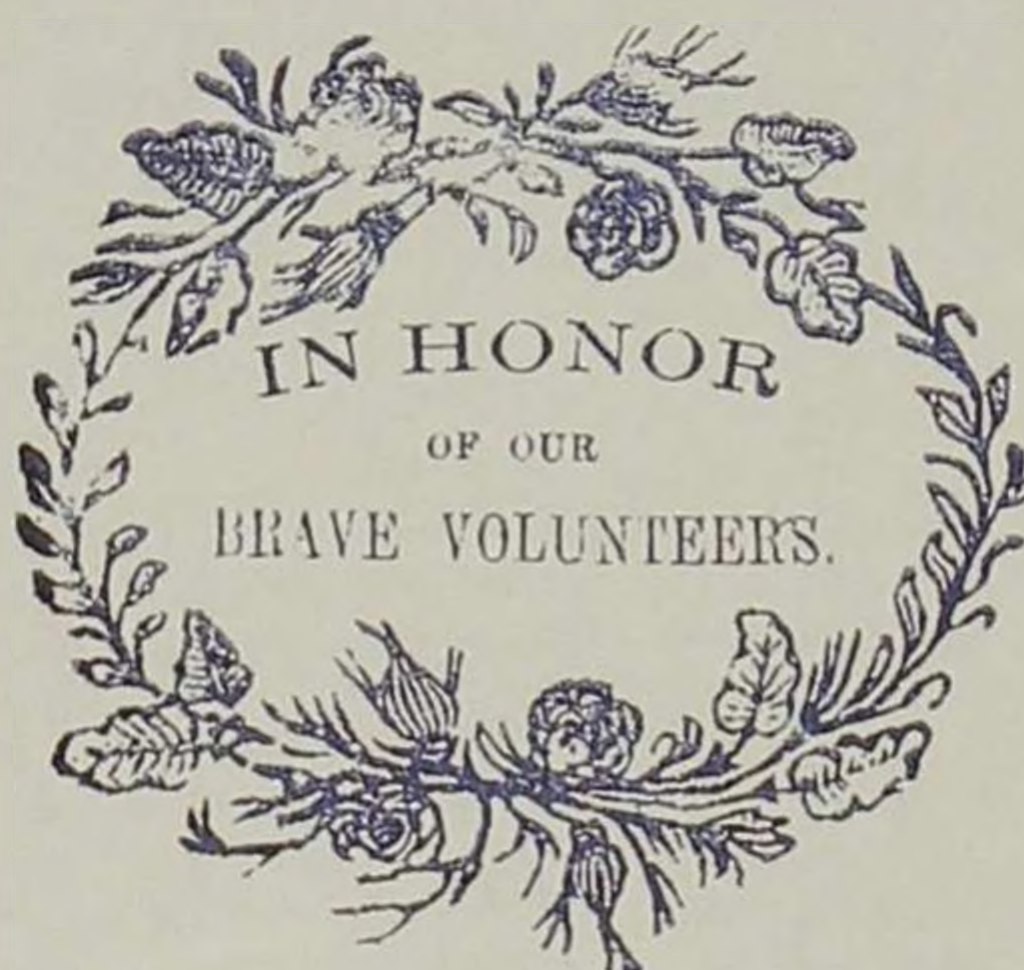
THREE CHEERS FOR
THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE.

soldiers in different parts of the country are complaining in many instances of the cold reception with which they have met when they returned home. We have seen mention of this in Chicago papers, and heard it from soldiers who stopped in Davenport. . . . These men who went out from us have well borne their share of the work which the Union armies had to do. They have endured hardship, privations and sufferings. . . . Now they are coming home . . . the least that we can do, is to give them a warm reception, and demonstrate to them that we appreciate the services which they have rendered us."

As the Fourth of July ap-

proached, the citizens of Cedar Rapids had something special to celebrate for the first time in years, yet city leaders made no special arrangements until they found out that their rival, Marion, had elaborate plans to celebrate the holiday and welcome the soldiers home. Unwilling to be outdone by their rival, Cedar Rapids citizens met in mid-June to form committees and make arrangements. But on the 28th, the committee announced it was too late to arrange a band and fireworks, and that a celebration would have to wait until late summer. The next day, however, yet another meeting was held; a band and fireworks had been obtained after all. In the end, the Cedar Rapids July 4th celebration was complete with a procession, speeches and toasts, a war dance by Pottawattamie Indians camped nearby, and fireworks.

A county-wide celebration was also planned for Thursday, September 7. Committees were organized and extensive arrangements were made for a parade, a 40-foot floral "triumphal arch" over Iowa Avenue (now First Avenue), and other festivities. Officials asked several women from each township to volunteer to help cook and serve a free dinner for the soldiers. And if gossip was true, \$1,000 or more had been spent on fireworks.



Unfortunately on the day of the celebration, a steady down-pour ruined the floral arch and canceled outside activities. Nevertheless, more than 400 soldiers attended the dinner, and the ball was a success, even though it was moved indoors to cramped quarters.

State and local politics were heating up as the October elections approached. Months earlier, at the Republican convention in Des Moines, Davenport editor Edward Russell and Congressman Hiram Price had pushed their fellow delegates into a last-minute addition to a plank for black suffrage. The convention had just passed a less emphatic resolution, but Russell's addition from the floor called for the word "white" to be stricken from the article on suffrage in Iowa's Constitution, thus explicitly extending the right to vote to African-American males. Even among Republicans, the plank was controversial.

Democrats made opposition to this plank their major campaign issue. They pointed to such prominent Republicans as General Jacob Cox of Ohio, who advocated colonizing blacks in the South and withholding the vote until the former slaves were deemed ready. Because of identification of the

Democratic Party with the Confederacy, the party called instead for a "nonpartisan" convention and ran its "Soldiers" ticket, in an attempt to appeal to more voters. For governor, the party nominated Colonel Thomas H. Benton Jr., a former Democrat and state superintendent of public instruction. Benton campaigned in Cedar Rapids but



IOWA

was not warmly received, according to reports in the Republican *Cedar Valley Times*. Meanwhile the paper appealed to veterans to "do what you can to have the word 'white' erased from the Constitution of Iowa; because it is unjust, a slander on the good sense of the people and on the progress of the age."

That October, local voters returned Republican candidates to office by large majorities, and Republicans won easily in the rest of the state as well, as they had since the party's formation in 1856. (Iowa's constitution was amended in 1868 to extend suffrage to black males.)

As fall turned to winter, war-related news continued to appear in the newspaper—reports of pardoned rebels, histories of Iowa regiments, fears that Southern capitalists and freed slaves would progress no farther than a feudal system, details of reconstruction policy, warnings about bounty claim

agents swindling returning soldiers, accounts of a 100-gun salute in Nashville on the one-year anniversary of the battle.

Thanksgiving was celebrated that year on the first Thursday in December. This was only the third year in a row that a national day of Thanksgiving had been declared by the president. Governor Stone called for a day of thanksgiving and prayer, and requested that "secular employment be suspended," and that the "widows and orphans of the patriot dead who gave their lives that liberty and the Union might be inseparable, be remembered."

The year 1865 ended much more quietly than it had begun. Townspeople were relieved that a terrible war that had caused much turmoil and grief was finally over. They hoped that peace would now bring continued growth and prosperity. In an end-of-the-year summary, the *Cedar Valley Times* editorial of December 28 concluded:

THE RESULTS OF UNCLE SAM'S GOVERNMENT.



PEACE, PLENTY AND PROSPERITY.

"The year of 1865 has been marked by two results of momentous interest to the world. . . . First we have the suppression of the Great Slaveholder's Rebellion, and second the legal abolition of slavery itself. Truly the old year which is just expiring has been one of great results to the people of this Continent . . . and those results have been for the best interest of the human race."

Just as it had for four long years, the Civil War still hovered in the hearts and minds of Cedar Rapids citizens. ♦

Susan Kuecker is assistant curator at the African-American Heritage Foundation (Cedar Rapids), children's librarian at the Fairfax Public Library (Fairfax), and a board member of the Linn County Historical Society.

NOTE ON SOURCES

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FOURTH OF JULY!

**ARMY
TABLEAUX,
SCENES & ACTS,**

**IN
DANIELS' HALL,
CEDAR RAPIDS,
Thursday Evening, July 4th, 1867.**

PROGRAMME.

1. *TAKING THE OATH*,..... *Tableau.*
- X 2. *ON THE MARCH*,..... *Act.*
3. *THE PICKET*,..... *Tableau.*
- X 4. *NIGHT ATTACK*,..... *Act.*
5. *THE LAST SHOT*,..... *Tableau.*
6. *DEAD MARCH*,..... *Act.*
7. *READY FOR ACTION*,..... *Tableau.*
8. *IN CAMP*,..... *Act.*
9. *THE VETERAN*,..... *Tableau.*
- X 10. *MANUAL OF ARMS*,..... *Act.*
- X 11. *MILITARY PUNISHMENT*,..... *Tableau.*
- X 12. *RAW RECRUITS*,..... *Act.*
13. *THE GUERRILLA*,..... *Tableau.*
- X 14. *FORAGERS*,..... *Act.*
- X 15. *CAMP DINNER*,..... *Act.*
- X 16. *SICK CALL*,..... *Act.*
- X 17. *THE WOUNDED*,..... *Act.*
18. *CAPTURE OF JEFF. DAVIS*,..... *Tableau.*
19. *AWAITING ORDERS*,..... *Act.*
- X 20. *SHERMAN'S BUMMERS*,..... *Act.*

All the above Programme will be truly represented and faithfully performed by soldiers, whose actual experience and observation have eminently qualified them for representing the scenes and performing the acts true to life.

Doors open at 7 1-2 o'clock, Performance to commence at 8 o'clock precisely.

ADMISSION 50 CENTS.

Tickets for Sale at Derby's and Post Office.

One in a Million

Among the millions of items in the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa is this broadside advertising an evening of "army tableaux, scenes & acts" in Cedar Rapids in 1867.

The broadside announces, "All of the above Programme will be truly represented and faithfully performed by soldiers, whose actual experience and observation have eminently qualified them for representing the scenes and performing the acts true to life."

The next week the *Cedar Valley Times* called the event "a decided success." "The Hall was crowded to its utmost capacity, many being obliged to stand during the entire performance. The 'Boys' acted their part as only old and well trained soldiers could do, and the entire performance was highly interesting to both those who had witnessed the scenes represented in camp and on the field, and those who had not."

Although the Civil War had been over for two years, it would live on for decades in the nation's patriotic celebrations and political campaigns.



In only the first two rounds of a bare-knuckle prizefight, Jefferson Davis cowers and then loses the seat of his pants to Abraham Lincoln. These political cartoons were part of a five-part series printed on the backs of envelopes during the Civil War and intended to rally Northern patriotism. This issue of *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* explores boxing and prizefighting, the effect of the Civil War on an Iowa community, a riot in the state's industrial school for girls, and a family drama kindled by childbed fever.

