

Missouri Flood of 1952 • Muster Rolls • Why Iowans Fought in the Civil War • Making Sorghum

WINTER 2010 • \$7

Iowa Heritage

ILLUSTRATED



Front Porch

Steadfast Readers—

Who would have guessed that there's a song out there called the "Sorghum Molasses Rag"? You'll find it in our sheet music collection. Charles Boxx composed and published the song in 1913 in Eldon, Iowa, for his friend E. Guss Yoder.

My colleague Marv Bergman looked it over with a musician's eye and described the tune as a typical rag, "quick, sprightly, and fun." Boiling down sorghum may be fun (check out the article in this issue) but it's not quick.

Growing sorghum cane and turning it into syrup is a midwestern farming tradition that dates back to the Civil War, which is the focus of other articles, as part of our series "Iowa and the Civil War."

And while we're thinking about traditions and the Civil War, let's set the record straight on what has been a traditional belief in Iowa for decades and decades. We have all read over and over that Iowa sent more men per capita to the Civil War than any other loyal state.

Not so.

Tim Walch addresses the cherished myth in his article "We Are Coming, Father Abraham," in which he quotes historian Robert R. Dykstra's important book *Bright Radical Star*.

Another historian, Jim Jacobsen, has also confronted the myth after churning through numbers in the National Archives. Jacobsen writes, "The claim was engineered from the start as state officials struggled mightily to avoid military conscription, a fate that became a reality in the latter part of 1864. A total of 76,242 full-term enlistment equivalents was finally credited to the state. This by no means translated into anywhere near that actual number of individuals. The state received partial credits for reenlistments, for its short-term enlistments (one regiment for two months, four and a half regiments for 100 days), for its men serving in the units of other states, for its veteran reserve corps and gunboat enlistments, and even for its galvanized confederates [captured soldiers who voluntarily served in the Union army], formed from prisoners at Rock Island Military Prison."

So . . . our long-held belief is wrong.

Does that tarnish Iowa's pride in fighting for the Union? Does it diminish the sacrifice made by Iowa men and their families?

Not in the least.

Whatever the exact number and however Iowa stacks up with other states, the point is

that the Civil War unalterably changed the lives of individuals across this nation.

We received several comments on last issue's look at prohibition. One reader reminds us of the frequent tragedies when alcohol gets behind the wheel.

Another reader, Patricia S. Smith of Brooklyn, New York, points out that "Iowa didn't legalize liquor by the drink until July 1963." She recalled that she was in Iowa about that time planning her wedding and "had to explain to a bartender how to mix a serious martini."

Here's more from our readers.

"You are correct about German Americans and their beer drinking. I write local history for publications in Louisa and Cedar counties and so I do lots of reading. In one case I read of a boy who went off to the service and when he came home his German American mother's greatest concern was whether they were giving the son enough beer in the service. She equated good beer with health, beer being liquid bread. When I was in the army, we should have had lots of healthy guys because there was a lot of beer drunk."

Verl Lekwa

Columbus Junction, Iowa

"I was a young boy from Calumet, Iowa, and watched with interest the building of the wooden roller coaster featured in the last issue. My parents went to Arnolds Park every weekend. It was one of those early afternoons when my friend Donald Mehrens and I heard the clatter of coaster cars. We hurried to see it and found they were testing it with bags filled with sand in the cars. The operator stopped the coaster, removed the bags, and asked us if we would like a free ride. We were thrilled to be the first to ride this marvelous new roller coaster. The excitement of the first ride was duplicated many times through the passing years. The long, slow ride up and the fast plunge down with a twist in the track. Again up, down and around with great speed. This has remained in my memories of great fun. I am now 92."

Lester Menke

Des Moines, Iowa

As always, thanks for writing in. We love hearing from you. —Ginalie Swaim, editor

Iowa Heritage Illustrated

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Letters to the Editor

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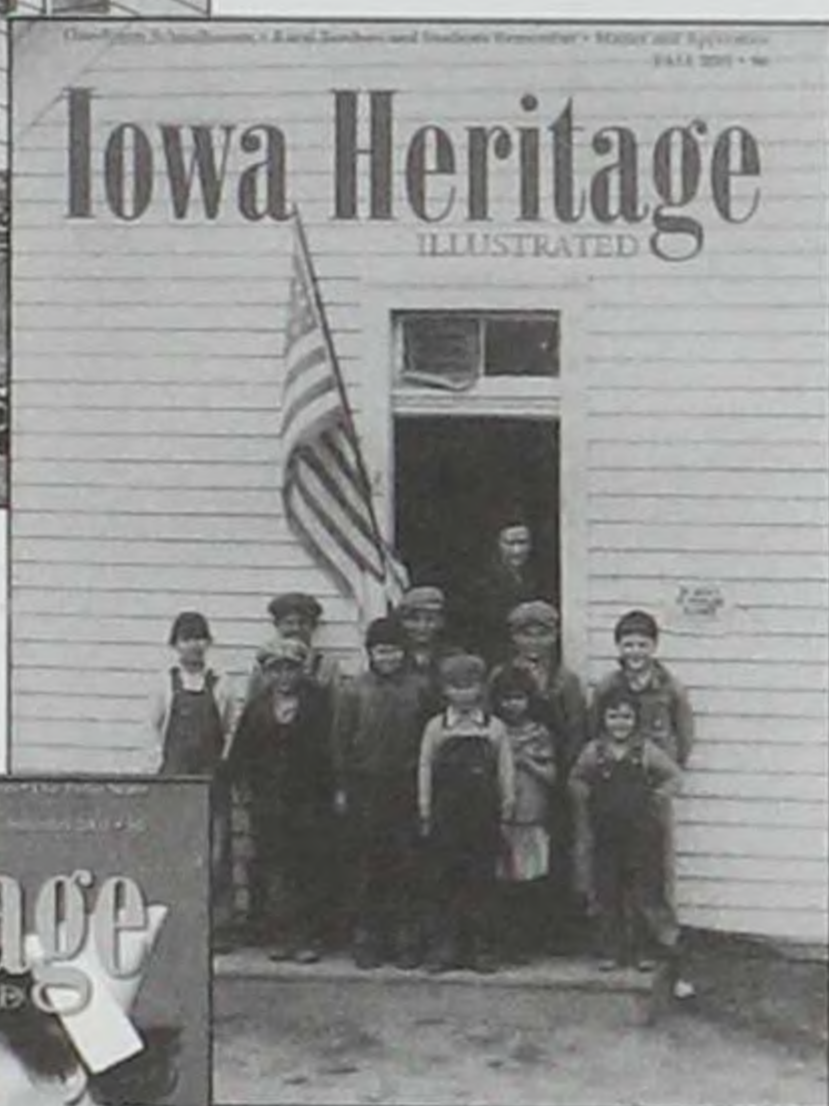
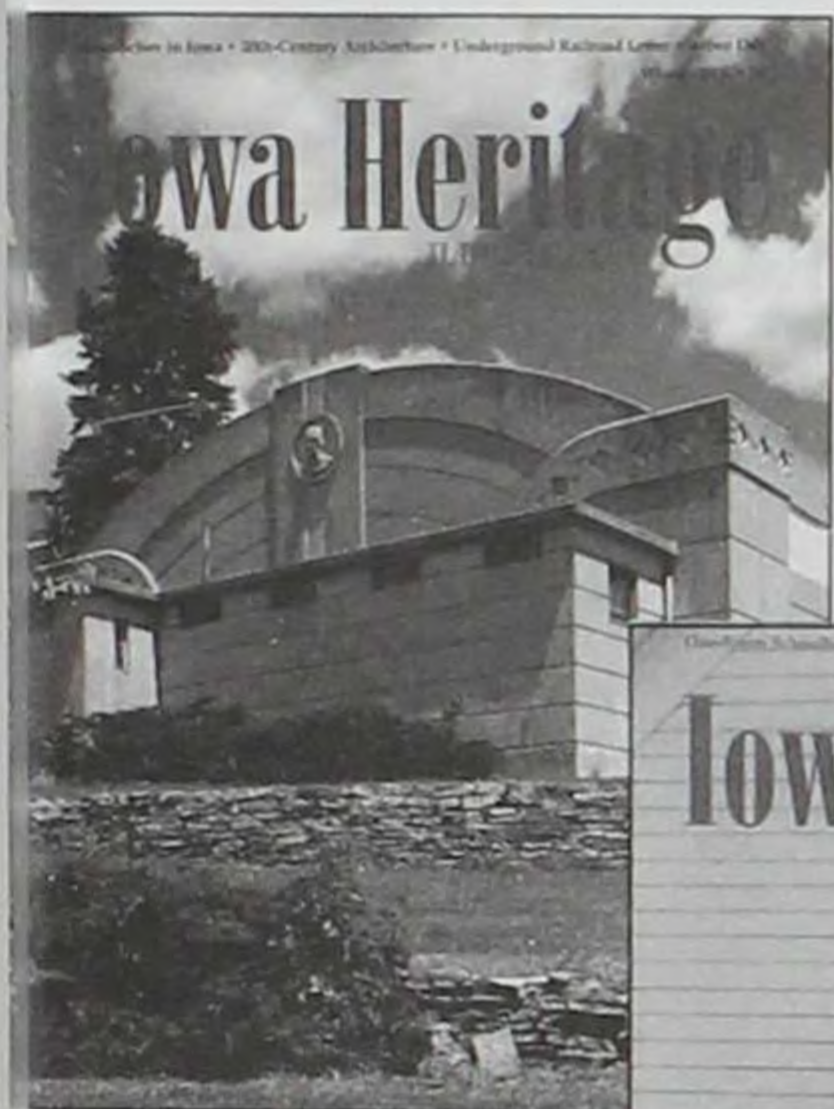
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The Value in Caring for the Real Thing

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You're holding
the best tour guide
you can find
for traveling into
Iowa's past.

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Rare photos
and rich history
in every issue.

*"this photograph by Don
moment in Iowans' fight
a man clears mud from his
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SHSI (IOWA CITY) DON ULTANG COLLECTION

On the Cover

Titled "Man and Mud," this photograph by Don Ultang caught a single moment in Iowans' fight against flooding. Here, a man clears mud from his house after the Floyd River flooded in the early 1950s. This issue traces the 1952 fight against the rampaging Missouri River, as well as Iowa's entry into the Civil War.

A Ferocious, Horrible Thing

Mary E. Kirkendall knew well the fury of the Missouri River. Her great-grandparents Annie and George Hunter had farmed near Sloan, south of Sioux City and not far from the river. Eventually the couple moved a few miles away because the Missouri was slowly taking their 80 acres. "The river cut it away," according to Kirkendall. "It was cutting it back and it would only be a few years before [the farm] would all be in the river."

In 1978, Kirkendall related her own memories of the Missouri, when she and her husband, Jim, farmed near Sloan. "As late as 1952... the whole town moved out because there was danger of flood. There was a possibility that the whole town would be eight feet under water. At that time we had 50 head of feeder cattle and 50 head of sheep which we had to truck up to the hills and get that out. Then the town put up a dike around the farm to try and save the town.

"My father, hard headed as he was, said, 'Never, never—I'll drink all the water that runs down Main Street.' And he wouldn't move out. As it happened, the river flooded over the other side. . . .

"I have a deathly fear of that river. I remember as a child going out there for what we called the June Rage. That river was a vicious, mean—you'd see it and it would have big eddies and whirlpools and big chunks as big as this house in it. When it was running high it would cut under the banks and big, huge trees would go in.

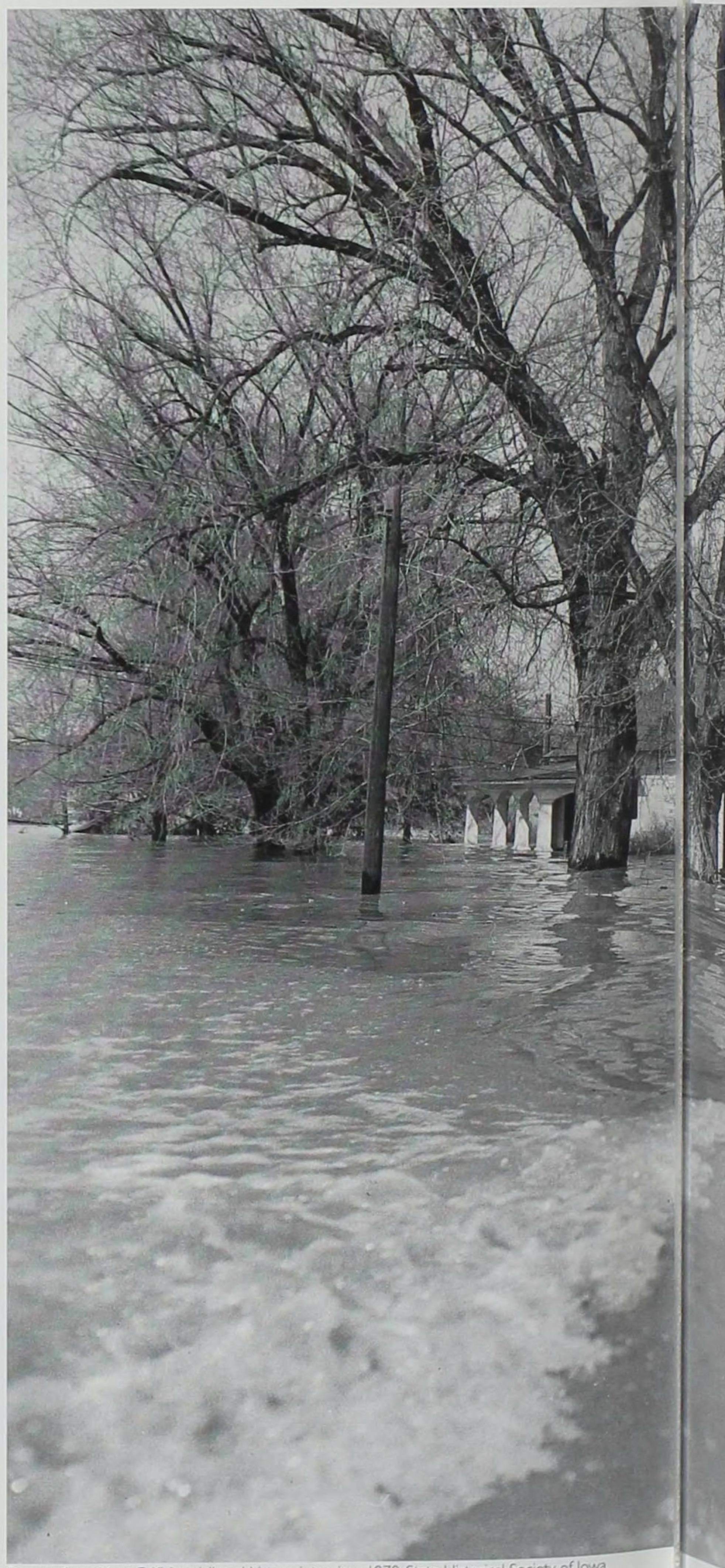
"It still is a river that demands a lot of respect but it's so much tamer now since they dammed up above and controlled the water flow. But in the spring, when all the [snow] melted, all the water that they hold up in the reservoirs now, would come down with a gush—it cut land terrifically. . . .

"The Missouri would always freeze, and in the spring we had huge ice floes that would pile way high. Then we'd have floods 'cause the water couldn't run through.

"You'd never recognize this river from what it used to be. It could be a ferocious, horrible thing."

In 1952, Missouri floodwaters bore down on farms like the Kirkendalls', towns like Sloan, and cities like Council Bluffs. The story of how Council Bluffs fought the river starts on the next page.

—The Editor



Excerpt from Mary E. Kirkendall oral history interview, 1978, State Historical Society of Iowa



Flood waters surge through Hamburg,
Iowa, April 1952.

COUNCIL BLUFFS NON-PAREIL

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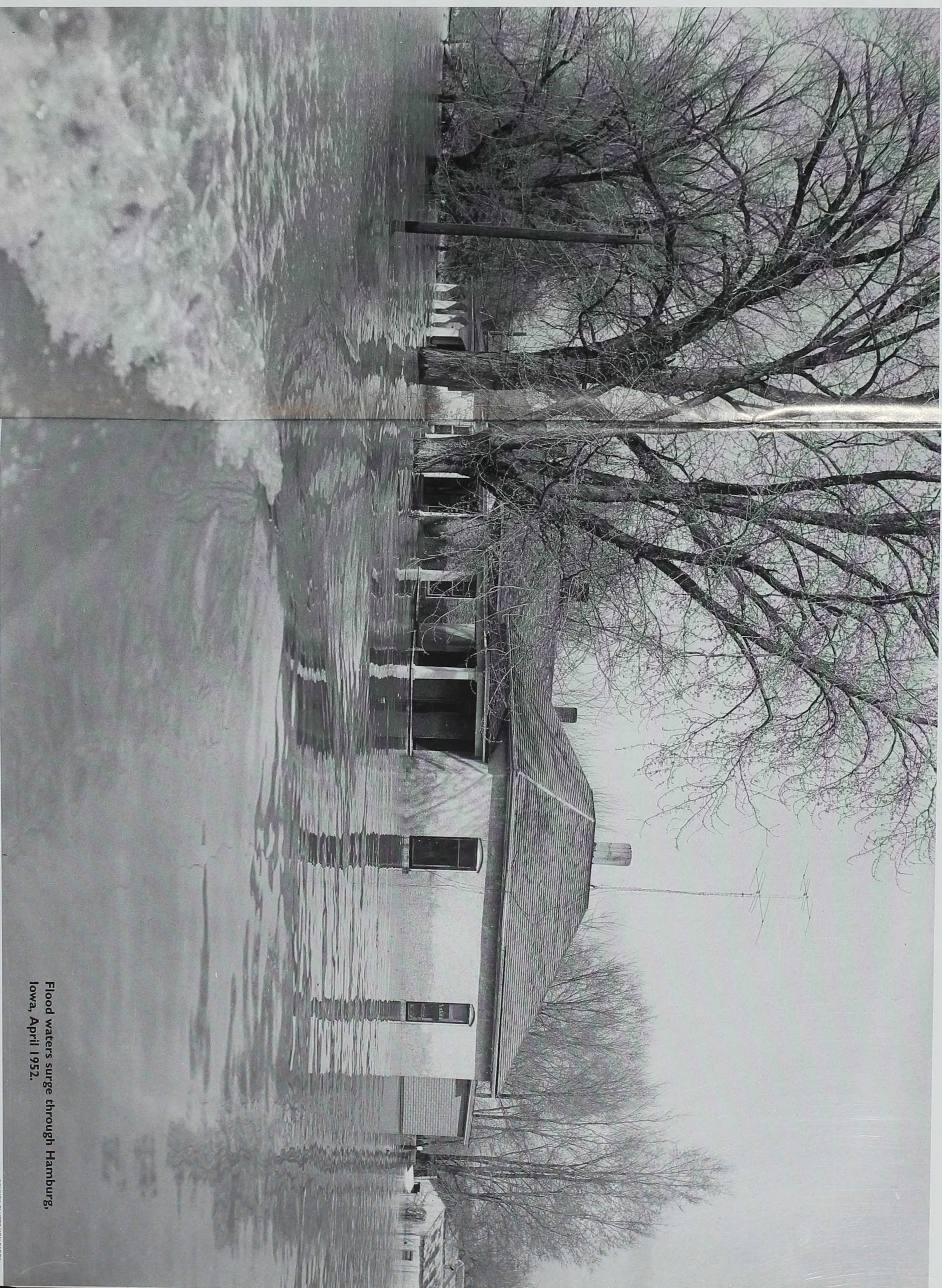
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COUNCIL BLUFFS NOWPANEL



Against All Odds

The 1952 Missouri River Flood
at Council Bluffs and Omaha

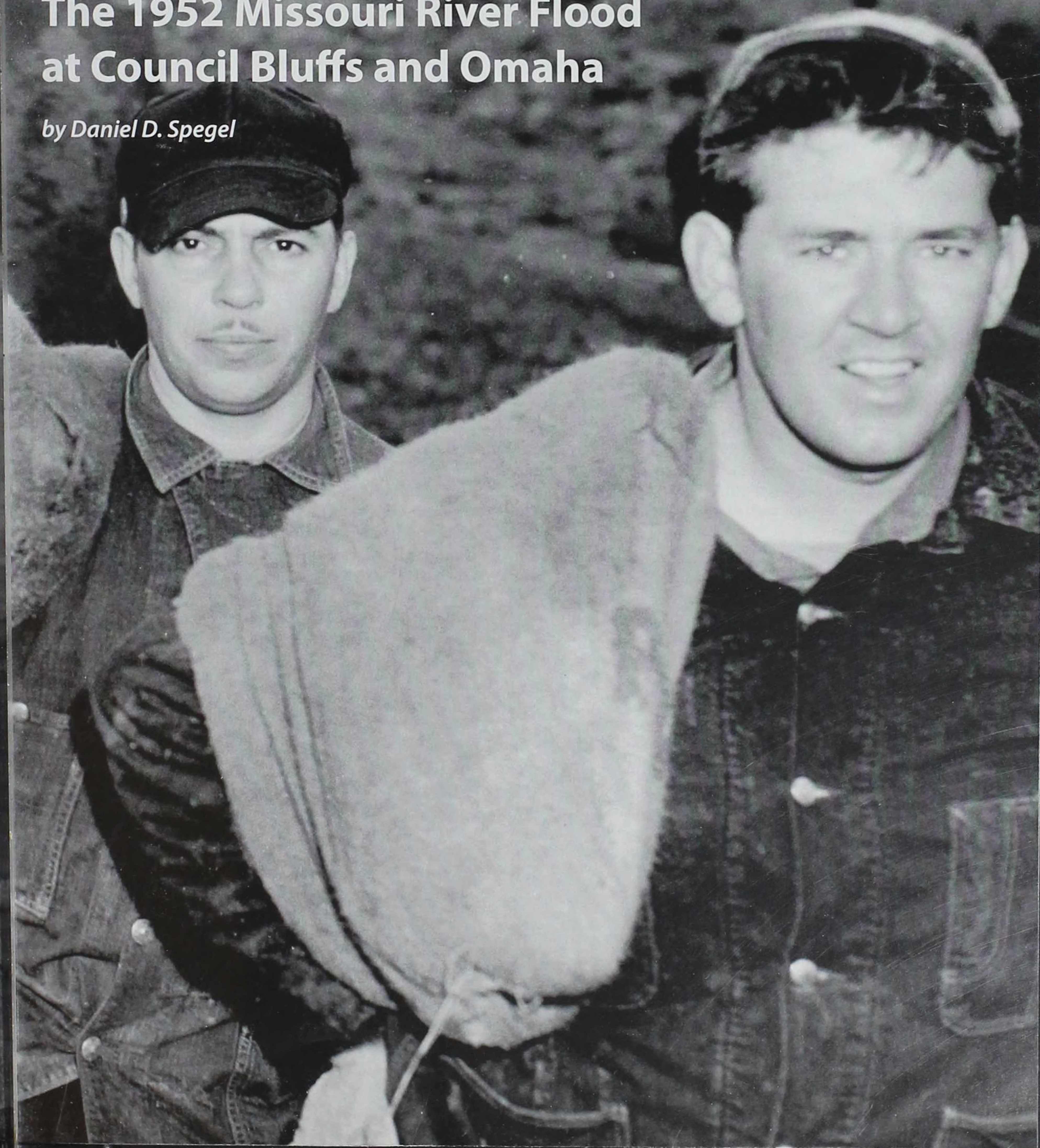
by Daniel D. Spegel



Against All Odds

**The 1952 Missouri River Flood
at Council Bluffs and Omaha**

by Daniel D. Spegel



For centuries, the Missouri River has lured people seeking beauty, transportation, and prosperity. These riches, however, have come at a cost, because the river's generous disposition sometimes turned on them in a radical way. John Neihardt, renowned essayist and intimate observer of the Missouri long before massive engineering projects transformed it, wrote, "The Missouri is unique among rivers. I think God wished to teach the beauty of a virile soul fighting its way toward peace—and His precept was the Missouri."

The river's complex nature burst forth in 1952 when it released a flood of immense proportions. By all rights large sections of the cities of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and, directly across the river, Omaha, Nebraska, should have been devastated. The winter months upstream had produced the perfect weather conditions for disaster, and river-engineering efforts designed to prevent floods were incomplete. Even so, the citizens of this large metropolitan area held back one of the greatest floods ever observed on the Missouri River.

The Missouri River is formed by the junction of the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin rivers at Three Forks, Montana, and flows for 2,460 miles, making it the longest river in the nation. With its tributaries and source streams, it drains an immense area of 529,000 square miles, one-sixth of the United States. Starting at an elevation of 4,032 feet

above sea level, the river leaves its mountainous origins and descends more than 400 feet over a 12-mile series of cataracts to the Great Plains. It later widens at the large reservoir above Fort Peck Dam in northeastern Montana. The remainder of its journey is through mostly flat grasslands, with bluffs often flanking its valley.

Despite this otherwise long and tranquil journey, the Missouri has had an

unruly reputation. Lewis Pick, Chief of Engineers in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1950s, described it as one of the wildest rivers on earth.

Flooding has historically been a common event on the Missouri River. Two predictable rises occurred each spring—one in March, due to snowmelt on the plains and the break-up of ice in the main channel, and the other in June, caused by melting snow in the Rockies and spring rains on the plains. These recurrent floods replace land lost to erosion with nutrient-rich silt. While seasonal flooding promotes the exchange of nutrients and organic materials, it is also threatens farms, small towns, and urban centers.

Efforts to control the Missouri River were somewhat sporadic until Congress authorized the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Plan in 1944, the largest and most durable alteration of the river and its flood plain. As a part of the Flood Control Act of 1944, the plan was named for William Glenn Sloan (of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation) and Lewis Pick (Corps of Engineers). The plan called for the construction of five additional main-stem reservoirs in North and South Dakota, which would supplement the massive Fort Peck Dam in Montana. Reinforcing banks and dredging a navigation channel had also helped tame the lower reaches.

Between 1946 and 1950, the Army Corps of Engineers built levees and a floodwall in Omaha and Council Bluffs. The earthen levees stretched for 36 miles along both sides of the river. An additional mile-long concrete floodwall protected an industrial area in east Omaha.

Construction of the upstream dams, however, experienced delays due to flooding in the late 1940s and budget cutbacks in the early 1950s. The delays would prove to be costly for those who lived near the Missouri River, because in the winter months of 1951–1952, all the right ingredients for a massive spring flood were coming together in the upper basin.

That winter was extraordinarily severe in Montana and the Dakotas, with one of the heaviest snow covers in the recorded history of the Great Plains. Accumulation in South Dakota started with a severe snow and ice storm on December 6. The January snowfall was abnormally heavy in Montana and twice the average depth in North Dakota. Brutal storms continued through Feb-

SHSI (IOWA CITY): DON ULTANG COLLECTION



Previous page: Council Bluffs, April 1952—determined sandbaggers carry a few of the six million sandbags used that week.
SHSI (DES MOINES) DES MOINES REGISTER AND TRIBUNE, APRIL 20, 1952

Above: The Fort Randall Dam in South Dakota was nearly complete when the 1952 flood struck. The dam was one of several federal projects completed between the late 1940s and early 1960s to control the river. (Aerial photo by Don Ultang)



As the flood began to threaten Council Bluffs and Omaha, extensive planning and coordination to fight it relied on the skills of private citizens, military troops, and local, state, and national officials.

THREE PHOTOS: COUNCIL BLUFFS NONPAREIL



ruary and March. The ground was still frozen from an unseasonably wet and frigid autumn, so the normal freeze/thaw cycle never took place. River ice measured two feet in the Dakotas, and remained hard on tributary streams.

The snow pack possessed a powerful flood potential due to its high water content, especially in an area centered around Pierre, South Dakota, where 21 inches of snow equaled over seven inches of water. The Army Corps of Engineers reported that the amount of snow across the mountains and northern Great Plains exceeded that preceding the disastrous flood of 1943.

Incoming data on moisture content in the upper Missouri basin had agencies worrying about what the spring might bring. Ivory P. Rennels, meteorologist for the U.S. Geological Survey Office in Sioux City, Iowa, confirmed in March that the northern plains had received 155 percent of the average precipitation since December 1, with Pierre totaling a whopping 460 percent. "The presence of this ice in the river channels," the Geological Survey reported, "together with a very heavy snow cover over most of the eastern two thirds of the state, presents a major flood threat for the break-up period in South Dakota." All this, of course, would affect farms and cities downstream

Wild and variable weather continued. On March 18, a powerful blizzard inundated North Dakota, stranding 1,200 farm families. Heavy rains fell the following day over Nebraska and Iowa, and the North Fork River, a Missouri tributary, overflowed its banks. Bitter cold air flowed in behind.

Then, as unseasonable temperatures climbed, meltwater rushed into the streams and rivers that fed the Missouri. On March 29, the mercury reached 75 degrees in Council Bluffs and nearly as warm upstream. Roads once impassible from deep snow were now quagmires; airplanes were used to deliver livestock feed to ranchers. The Omaha District of the Army Corps of Engineers suggested that local municipalities along the river review flood-fighting policies, stockpile sandbags and other supplies, and take precautions to



Flood fighters in Council Bluffs and Omaha take much-needed breaks. Above: Some of the 58 volunteers from the Winnebago and Omaha tribes relax after a 12-hour shift filling sandbags.

Below: Resting after six days of moving families, collecting clothes, and piling sandbags, 71-year-old Elizabeth McCammon checks news of the flood. "This is just pulling me apart," she said. "Sandbags at the back doors of these [west side] houses kept falling down. Somebody had to do it."



BOTH PHOTOS: COUNCIL BLUFFS NONPAREIL

protect the levees. At Akron, Iowa, the Big Sioux rose ten feet in only three days.

In the next several days, Omaha and Council Bluffs residents read the headlines of devastation as the flood made its way downstream. Flooding on a Montana tributary forced 1,500 people to flee Havre, Montana,

which now rested beneath ten feet of water. In the countryside, ranchers shot suffering cattle that were stranded. Flood relief operations soon were in place in 27 counties in North and South Dakota, and Red Cross chapters in 12 Nebraska and Iowa counties were on alert. In Sioux City, the stockyards were flooded. A state of emergency was declared, three National Guard units were mobilized, and evacuations began. Some evacuees tried to keep a healthy perspective. Harold Moes commented, "Sure we're going to lose our home, but why get excited? If it's gone, it's gone. We can be thankful we're all here. We can replace our stuff, but not ourselves." Meanwhile, downstream from Sioux City, levees collapsed under the immense pressure, flooding thousands of acres.

Forecasters were now predicting flood stages in Council Bluffs and Omaha that would exceed those of 1943, when waters rose to above 24 feet. Estimates of the flood's magnitude evolved daily as conditions changed and new data arrived. On Monday, April 7, fears of a major catastrophe rapidly escalated when local meteorologist E. F. Stapowich predicted that the river would beat the 1881 all-time record of 24.6 feet. Still, the Corps of Engineers reassured residents that the levees were designed to carry a crest of 26.5 feet of water—though at 31.5 feet, the levees would fail. Authorities warned curious onlookers to stay away from the river for their own safety. Omaha's civil defense director called up the auxiliary police force to secure the levees.

The flood stage rose another 18 inches on Wednesday, and Omaha mobilized, compiling lists of nurses and identifying extra men to help at sewage pumping stations. Experts predicted an 8-foot



BOTH PHOTOS: COUNCIL BLUFFS NONPAREIL

Coffee and quick naps fueled sandbaggers and other volunteers as they took on the rampaging Missouri.





John Vinson Jr. raids his evacuated home for dog food after talking Council Bluffs police into a neighborhood pass. "Ragsey's smart enough to climb up on the shed and float away—or even swim. I'm only afraid he'll starve to death," John said. "I know he'll be waiting for me when the flood is over."



Wanda Delores Edie weds James Croghan Jr. on April 18; Judge Andy Nielsen officiates. The bride couldn't retrieve her wedding dress from her evacuated home, but the county clerk stopped sandbagging to open the district court office in Council Bluffs and issue the marriage license.



Mary Lou Allred tries to comfort a distraught Janice Collier in an emergency shelter set up in Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs.



Gary Lee Meek helps evacuate the grocery store of his grandfather R. V. Thomas in Hamburg, south of Council Bluffs. Emergency vehicles share the street with the Meeks' trailer.

FOUR PHOTOS: COUNCIL BLUFFS NOWPAREIL

rise in the flood stage within the week. Coordinator E. I. Meyers asked citizens not to panic, to ignore rumors but heed official news releases. To keep sightseers from crowding the levees, only flood workers were given emergency passes. All unnecessary railroad cars holding oil or gas were removed, and owners of storage tanks were urged to fill them so they wouldn't float away. Council Bluffs Mayor James Mulqueen briefed residents about a possible evacuation, and warned that any people caught returning to their homes would be treated as looters.

As the river reached 22.4 feet on Friday, Council Bluffs and Omaha went into high gear. Two National Guard companies were called up to maintain law and order, and volunteers rushed to raise levees by two feet under the direction of Corps engineers. The Nebraska State Employment Service organized a reserve labor pool to provide a steady supply of volunteers. The U.S. military flew in 73,500 pounds of supplies for distribution from nearby Offutt Air Force Base.

While businesses boarded up windows and laid sandbags around buildings, residents of east Omaha began to evacuate. Engineers advised evacuees to fill basements with clean water to equalize pressure on the foundation. Checker, Yellow, and Safeway cab companies put 200 vehicles into service, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars pledged its help. At the Omaha Municipal Airport, United and Mid-Continent airlines prepared to move operations to Lincoln. The Red Cross readied more facilities for evacuees and brought in a mobile canteen from St. Louis. The South Omaha Bridge was closed to all non-essential vehicles. In a radio address, the Council Bluffs mayor encouraged citizens to remain stoic. "We do not want to alarm you," he said, but added, "we proclaim an emergency exists."

On Saturday, the river crept up another two feet. Residents in the lowlands of East Omaha and Carter Lake were ordered to evacuate by 6 p.m. the next day. To avoid an electrical brownout, workers sandbagged entrances and windows of Omaha's main power plant, built an east-west dike, and sealed off an older section of the plant thought to be expendable.

In Council Bluffs, many businesses were ordered to close, freeing up employees to fight the flood, and residents west of 30th Street were told to evacuate. People clogged major city streets during the exodus. Hundreds of evacuees swamped local moving and storage services; Walt's Van and Storage Company reported 100 calls the day before. Grocery stores gave

out boxes and cartons for packing. Auxiliary police and the National Guard patrolled city streets, and all highways leading into the city were closed except for flood workers and equipment. Hospitals stocked up on extra water and standby lighting. American Red Cross president E. Roland Harriman placed the entire organization in emergency status to aid flood victims. The Council Bluffs Red Cross opened shelters at Recreation Hall on Broadway for older girls and women, the Skylark Club on West Broadway for women and small children, and the Moose Hall for men and boys. As the local paper reported, "The city swung into a furious race against time Saturday to withstand the 30-foot wallop the Missouri river is expected to deliver here next Thursday."

Council Bluffs added two secondary dikes; one ran down Twenty-ninth Avenue from the river levee to the bluffs, and the other stretched from the Illinois Central Railroad bridge to the hills. Rain on Saturday made the work miserable. "The trouble is, is that you get cold and wet," one worker complained. "And when you get cold and wet, you can't dry out." Adding to workers' grief were sandboils, which could undermine dikes and levees as the water pressure forced flood waters to seep through the saturated ground. One crew labored for several hours near the Ak-Sar-Ben Bridge to contain a single sandboil.

On April 13, Easter Sunday, the Missouri reached 25.5 feet, with 250,000 cubic feet per second of water rushing past the banks. Workers heightened Omaha's concrete floodwall with wooden panels called flashboard.

Council Bluffs residents received warning that electricity would be shut off at 1:00 p.m. the next day. To ensure a source of clean water, Omaha's Metropolitan Utilities District ran a 12-inch pipe across the Ak-Sar-Ben Bridge. The air force ferried a quarter-million pounds of supplies from Ohio. The Coast Guard brought in a helicopter and planned on two more. The generous outpouring of community support continued as volunteers worked 15- to 20-hour shifts, and trucking facilities helped around the clock to evacuate people and their belongings.

A full-blown evacuation was now under way as 5,000 people fled the east Omaha/Carter Lake area, and 30,000 left western and southern Council Bluffs. Some remained skeptical; one man called the evacuation "probably mass hysteria," but he still moved out of his month-old home. More shelters were established—a blessing and a challenge. "The worst part about living in a shelter [is] the noise," one person commented. Church Lyons said, "I was so nervous I forgot

to bring my clothes. When they said get out, I got. I'm so raggedy I'm ashamed. I want to go back and get my good pants." The 73-year-old passed the time recounting stories about the 1943 flood to children at the shelter. In one shelter, a reporter described a "middle-aged woman sitting staring off into space—thinking how she 'complained about ironing last Tuesday.' . . . She would give anything to be back at the ironing board."

On Monday, the river rose more than a foot. Contractors attempted to raise levees with wood cribbing filled with dirt. A confident Otto Sokol, field man in charge of levee work in Council Bluffs, said, "I'm sure we'll hold 31.5 feet, how long, I don't know." The mayor expanded the evacuation area in Council Bluffs. Trucks with loudspeakers drove through the area, which now covered three-quarters of the city, advising people to leave by dawn of the next day. "The Missouri is coming with a rip and a roar," Corp engineer Don Shingler declared. "We're in a hell of a lot of trouble."

Omaha and Council Bluffs were not alone in this battle with nature. On Tuesday, 87 towns in the upper basin were flooded or threatened, and the head of the Corps of Engineers ordered all federal levees to be raised wherever possible. Some 50 miles north of Council Bluffs, a reporter toured the area around Onawa, Iowa, in a powerboat. "We were seven miles inland from the Missouri River channel, but there was water as far as you could see." In Council Bluffs and Omaha, this vast body of water 12 miles wide would crash into a bottleneck only 12,000 feet wide. Experts predicted only a 50 percent chance that flood defenses would hold. Every second, 322,000 cubic feet of water pounded past levees originally designed for only 250,000.

On Wednesday President Truman flew to Offutt Air Force base in Omaha for a conference with federal, state, and local officials. He later flew over the devastated area and officially declared Council Bluffs and Omaha a disaster area. The weather bureau abandoned its pinpoint prediction of a crest at 9 p.m. the next night; the enormous amount of water made accurate predictions impossible for Omaha and Council Bluffs. In evacuated areas, streets were empty and quiet except for truck convoys carrying workers and materials to the levees. One Council Bluffs resident, Lyman Giles, had refused to evacuate his home near the river and would wait out the flood with his dog. "I'm just bullheaded, I guess. That's the only reason."

The day wore on, and the Missouri continued its

assault. Water oozed through the saturated earthen levees, and the concrete portion of Omaha's floodwall was now covered. Bulldozers and giant earth-rollers compacted more dirt onto the original dike. Floodlights lit up the dikes on both sides of the river as workers sandbagged through the night. "I hate to leave it," a Creighton University student volunteer remarked. "It would be good to stand here behind all this work and watch the river take a beating." The *New York Times* called the effort "the battle of the inch."

On Thursday, the river gauge read 30 feet, just inches from the predicted crest. Water surged at 395,000 cubic feet per second, exerting extreme pressure on the levees. The bridges were essentially closed. Thousands of workers kept constant watch for weak areas on the dike, and the civil air patrol flew all day along over the river. If a levee failed, residents in Omaha would be alerted by a siren during the day or flares in the night; in Council Bluffs, by bullhorns from circling planes, by civil defense air-raid sirens, more sirens at the railroad roundhouses and on fire trucks, and even by church bells.

Sandboils continued to frustrate workers. "We threw a dozen bags of sand in there," said a worker at one spot, "and the river threw them right back at us. Finally we made some of them stick and then we dumped two loads of dirt in to squelch the threat." The director of the labor pool pleaded for more volunteers. "We particularly need new blood," he said. "A lot of the volunteers are white-collar people who aren't used to this work, and they are pretty near exhaustion."

The crest arrived on Friday, April 18, at the then record height of 30.24 feet. Nearly 400,000 cubic feet per second—a record that stands to this day by a substantial margin—surged along for hours as the crest passed.

At Omaha's Municipal Airport, 500 volunteers passed sandbags down a human chain a hundred yards long to reinforce a levee holding back 15 feet of water from the runways. That evening a sewer line broke at Grace and Thirteenth streets in Omaha. As water shot several feet into the air, 120 feet of pavement blew apart. Hundreds of men dumped rocks and sandbags into the opening, but without success. Barges delivered steel beams to the sewer's outlet in the river, where engineers used them to seal the opening. The sewer break flooded two square miles of east Omaha and took eight hours to contain.

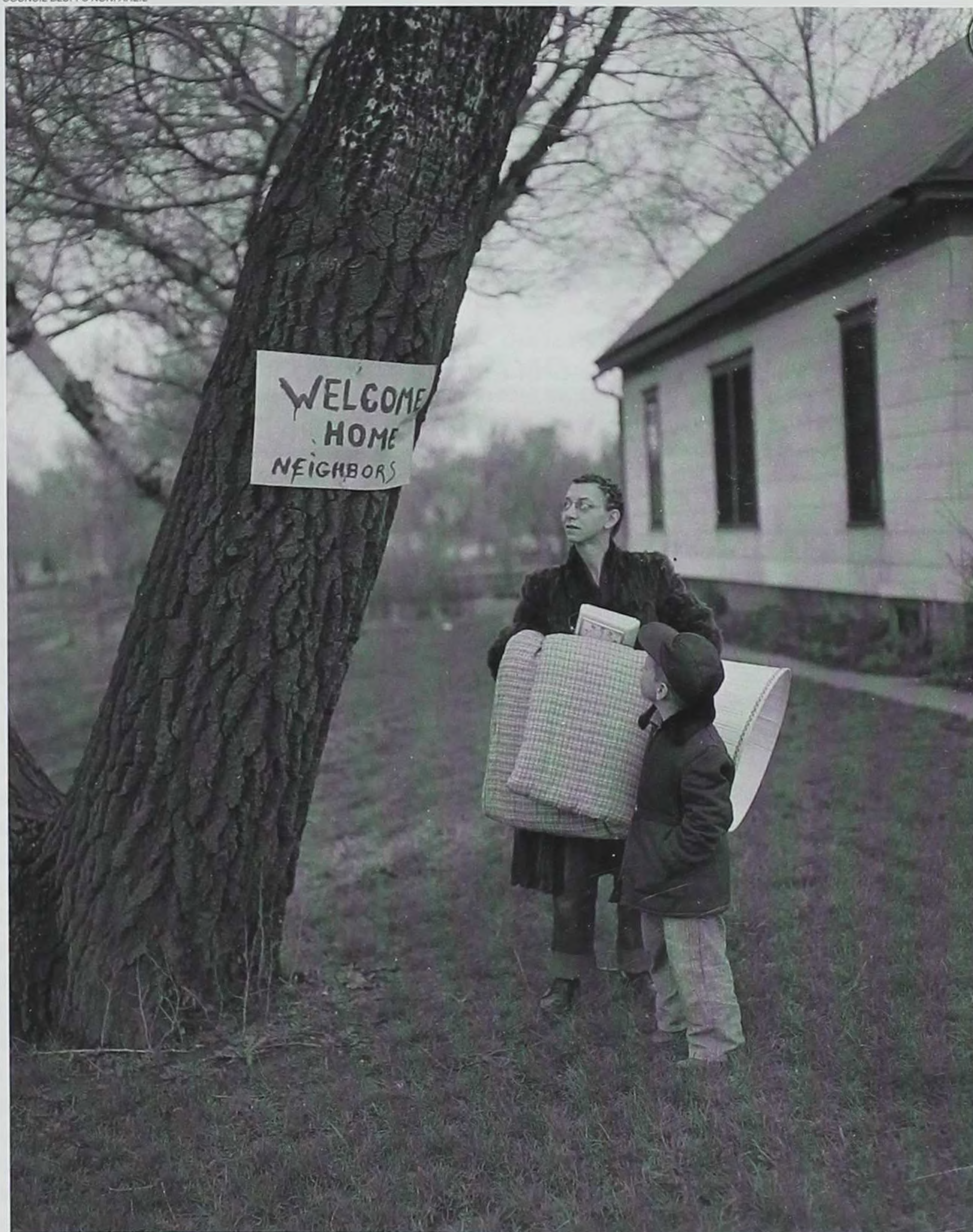
By the next day, the river had dropped more than two feet. Three days later evacuees received the green light to return to their homes. Lewis Pick headed back to his Corps of Engineers office in Washington,

D.C., confident that the cities were now safe. The citizens had shown great spirit and teamwork, he said, "without parallel in my experience." Fifty thousand people had come together and successfully fought back the water. According to historian Robert Kelley Schneiders, "The Corps estimated that the Omaha and Council Bluffs levee system prevented approximately \$62.5 million in damages"—\$507 million in today's dollars.

This triumph should not be viewed lightly. Western Iowa suffered \$43 million in damages, Schneider writes. The agricultural sector lost more than a third of that, through damages to farms and machinery and reduction in potential earnings. Thanks to advanced warning and monumental work, the cities of Council Bluffs and Omaha withstood the last great natural Missouri River flood. The upstream system of reservoirs and levees has since controlled seasonal flooding, but it isn't perfect, as evidenced by the Great Flood of 2011. During springs of exceptionally high runoff, there must be adequate storage space in the reservoirs to hold back the water from large-scale flooding downstream. But as long as the reservoirs exist, it is unlikely that a flood with such great volume as the one that occurred in 1952 will find its way through Council Bluffs and Omaha in the near future. ❖

A resident of Omaha, Nebraska, Daniel Spegel is a history instructor at Metropolitan Community College. He has written a number of works relating to Missouri River history, with a particular focus on river engineering and the Missouri National Recreational River.

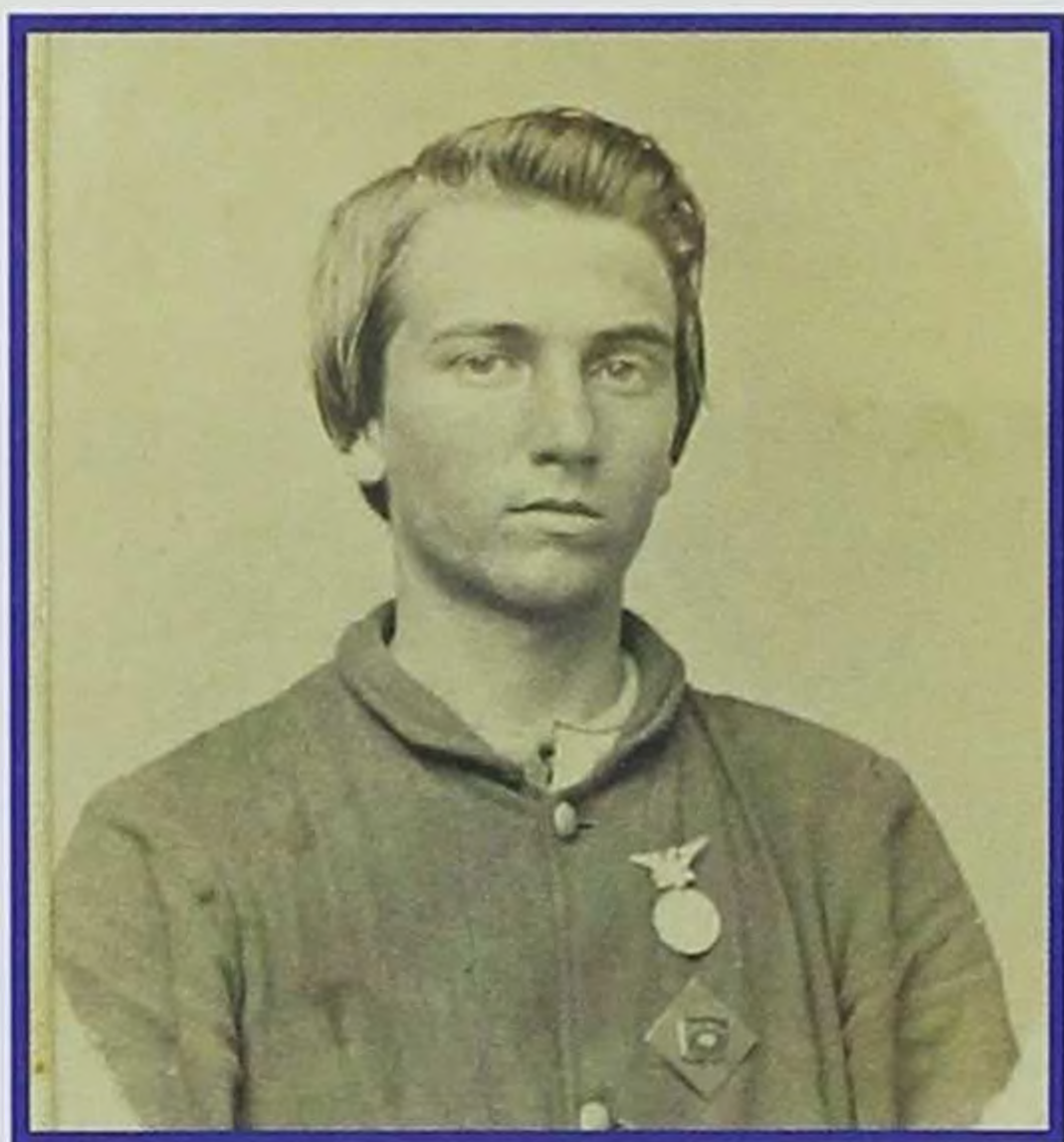
COUNCIL BLUFFS NONPAREIL



Margaret Pearsall and her son, Bryce, read a welcome-home sign posted by neighbor Henry Vanderziel. The Pearsalls returned home five days after the crest hit Council Bluffs.

NOTE ON SOURCES

The *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* and *Omaha World-Herald* in April 1952 were essential sources. Articles also appeared in the *New York Times*, April 12–19, 1952. Secondary sources include John Neihardt, *The River and I* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968); Robert Kelley Schneiders, *Unruly River: Two Centuries of Change Along the Missouri River* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); B. F. Sylvester, "Omaha's Flood, 1952," *Nebraska History* 35:1 (1954); U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, Office of the District Engineer, Omaha District, *Preliminary Report on the Flood of April 1952 in the Missouri River Basin* (Omaha: Corps of Engineers District Office, 1952); and U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, *Floods of April 1952 in the Missouri River Basin* (U.S.G.S. Water-Supply Paper, 1260-B) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975). Annotations are housed in the Iowa Heritage Illustrated production files (SHSI-Iowa City).



For Country, Community, and Comrades Why Iowans Went to War

by Timothy Walch

Why would Iowans serve voluntarily in a violent conflict that pitted them against their own countrymen? That was the question that many young men from this state must have asked themselves when they were called to join the Union army in 1861. In fact, it is a question that historians continue to ponder as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War over the next several years.

There were many reasons to join the war effort, of course, and Iowans were not unique in their responses. Certainly, some young men were attracted to the idea of adventure. After all, daily life in Iowa and many other states was filled with hard work, boredom, and drudgery. The idea of fighting "Johnny Reb" must have seemed exciting and romantic. Few Northerners believed that the Confederates could withstand the might of the Union army; many believed that the war would last only a few months. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first calls for Iowa regiments were answered by young men seeking adventure.

Some enlisted for humanitarian reasons. As a 36-year-old doctor with a thriving practice in Ottumwa, Seneca Brown Thrall had every reason to remain at home, but he joined up with the 13th Iowa because he considered it his duty to care for the wounded.

Some Iowans were fighting for emancipation—either to end slavery or to end the war. Like many Unionists, most Iowans did not consider the slaves as their equals, but slaves were a tremendous asset to the Confederate forces. "The [Union] army is in favor of the emancipation message and views," Thrall wrote in November 1862, "not because they favor abolition of slavery, or the freedom of the negro, but because the Rebels use them as essential aids to their cause."

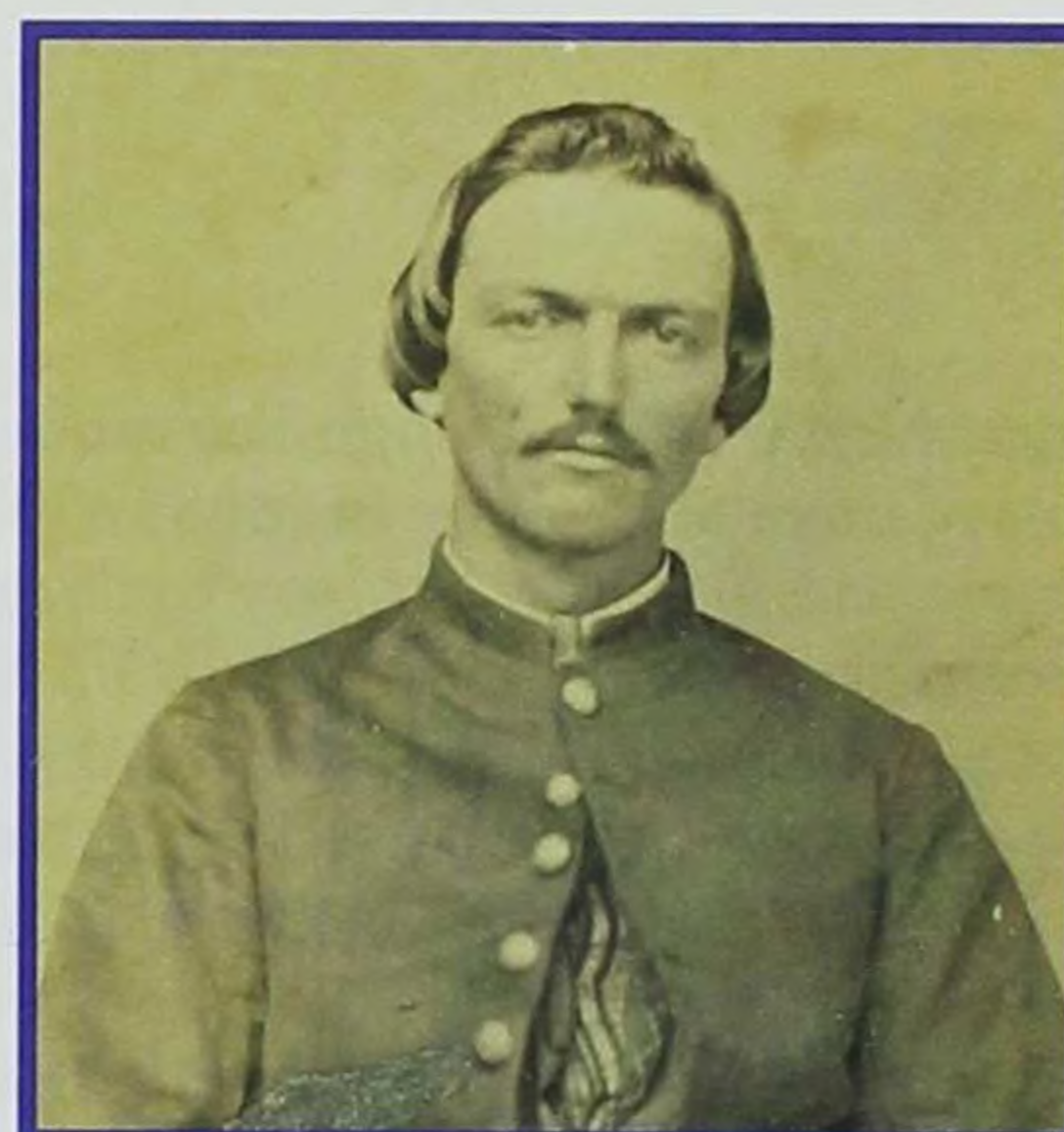
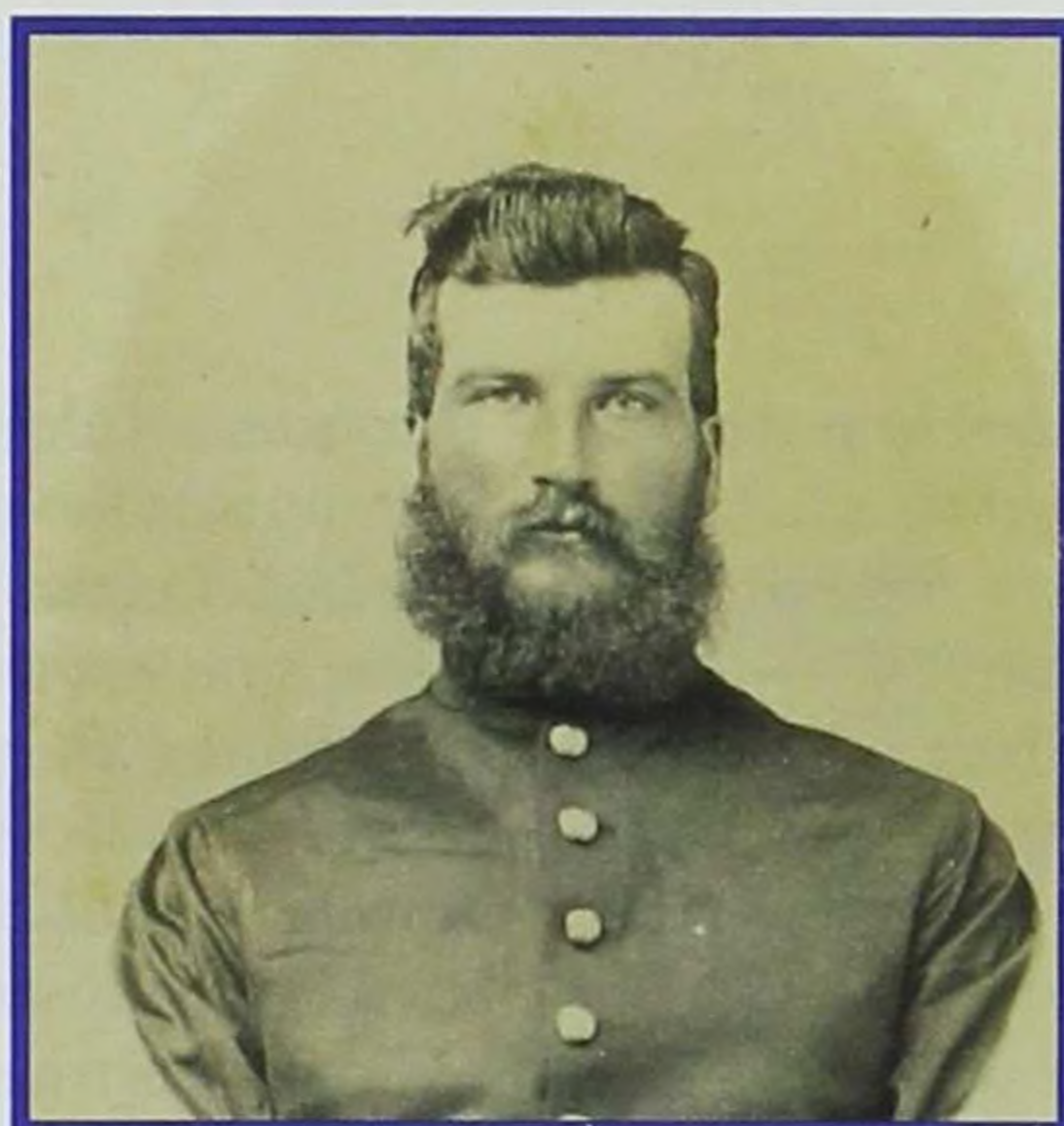
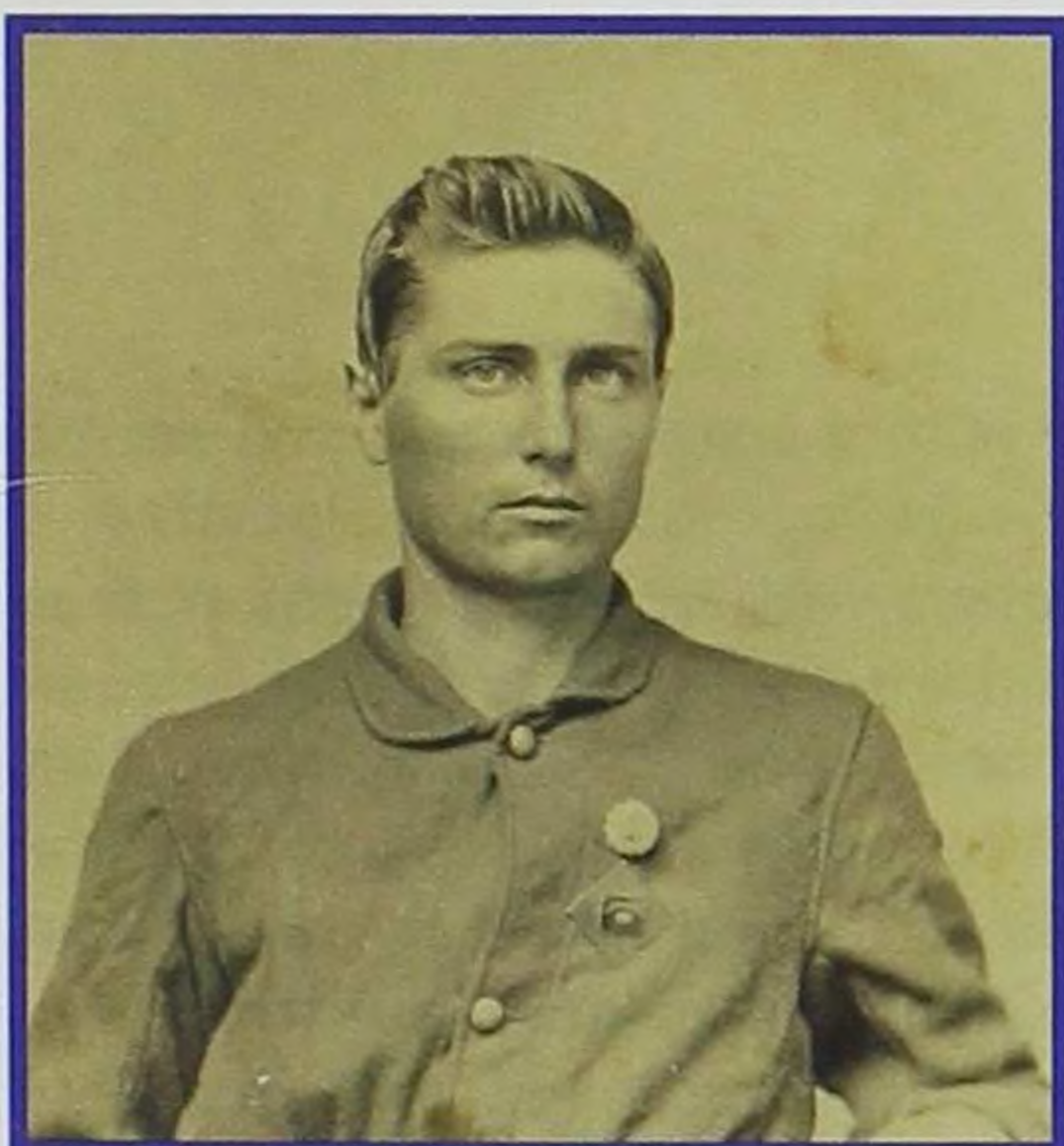
Of all the motivations to join the war, none was nobler than the belief that service to one's nation and state was a fundamental responsibility of citizenship. There would be no inner peace for any man who would shirk from this responsibility.

This sense of a noble purpose is substantiated by Civil War historian James M. McPherson, who has read the letters and diaries of close to 1,100 soldiers. These men "were not long-term professional soldiers," he points out, but rather "citizen volunteers." About two-thirds of the letters from both Northern and Southern soldiers reflect patriotic convictions. Confederate soldiers saw secession as a sacred right; Union soldiers saw it as a challenge to the very foundation of the republic and the constitutional irrevocability of the Union.

Iowa's soldiers were no different. In dozens of letters home, they described this sense of a higher calling and their willingness to share in the sacrifice. The letters and diaries that are most articulate are those written by more literate and educated men, but farm boys and shopkeepers also expressed these motivations.

Of course, some soldiers' motivations were mixed. Cyrus Boyd, age 24, enlisted in Company G of the 15th Iowa Infantry in October 1861. He mustered into service in his hometown of Ottumwa with his best friend, Dan Embree, at his side. "Times are dull at home," Boyd wrote in his diary. "The War may be over by spring and we should feel as if we had lost a great deal by not going." He added, "Every one seems to be actuated by the purest and most patriotic motives and those who are going seem to be moved by a sense of duty."

Philip H. Goode of Glenwood joined the same month as Boyd. Married and the father of two children, Goode helped to organize Company F of the



SIX PHOTOS: SHSI (IOWA CITY)

15th Iowa Infantry and for his initiative was appointed second lieutenant. The regiment remained in Keokuk for five months, waiting for the ice to clear. In March, Goode started a diary: "We are going to the scene of conflict, there to face the enemy." Then he asked himself a question that surely crossed the minds of many soldiers. "How will we conduct ourselves? . . . I believe that it is the firm determination of all of us to act like men and like patriots and all of us feel a strong desire to prove our claim to merit on the field of battle."

Goode was no young man full of bravado and bluster; he was a 27-year-old who realized that he might not return to his family. "It is a serious thing to face death in any form," he confided to his diary. "When I think of my own home, the dear wife and helpless little ones that I have left behind, life is indeed sweet and I almost shrink from the uncertainty of a soldier's fate." Goode further debated with himself over his mutual desire to be with his family but also to do his duty as "a citizen and a soldier."

A week later: "I feel a strong inclination to give up military life and go home to the loved ones that miss me there. But I believe duty calls me the other way." Although resignation was an option, he resisted and used his diary as a means to express his anguish. "Good night dear wife, good night dear children," he wrote in the diary on March 28. "Should anything serious befall you it would break my heart."

Goode returned to the burden of sacrifice repeatedly in his diary. On April 2, as the 15th Iowa moved south to meet the enemy, he asked more searing questions: "How many of the boys will return, certainly not all. Then who will be the missing ones? Perhaps some of my best friends, perhaps myself. I feel sad when I think of the strong probability that ere a month many of us will sleep the sleep that knows no waking but so we will die gloriously and fill a soldier's grave."

Family responsibility eventually outweighed civic duty, and a week after fighting at Shiloh in April 1862, Goode gave in to his wife Maggie's repeated efforts to get him to resign his commission. "The reasons she gives for

Six men from Company A, 31st Iowa Infantry: From left, Ralph E. Tripp, Robert G. Thurston, Samuel Moore, Newell J. White, Solomon S. Sager, and Michael W. Coleman. Some Civil War soldiers recorded in letters or diaries why they were fighting. Others may never have articulated it on paper—or to others.

coming home are good ones," he wrote. "I have promised her that as soon as the active duties of the campaign are over I will resign, go home and leave family no more."

Goode's military career did not end in mid-May 1862, however. For reasons unrecorded, he felt compelled to reenlist as a captain in the 4th Iowa Battery in November 1863 and served until the end of the war. It was as if he had returned to fulfill a promise that he had made in April 1862: "Let us cheerfully go forward," he wrote, "perform our whole duty and time will bring our reward, if indeed we are not already rewarded by the proud consciousness of being defenders of our Country."

Twenty-year-old Abner Dunham was also moved by patriotic sentiments. A farmer near Manchester, Dunham first expressed this in a letter to his parents less than a month after his enlistment in November 1861. "I often think of home," he wrote, "and if god sees fit hope to return to it, but I do not for once regret enlisting in the noble cause in which I am now engaged. I would not miss sharing the glory of victory which we are sure to gain, for hardly any thing. Money could not hire me to miss it. There is not a man in our camp but would be on the [alert] at the prospect of having a battle." This impulse to seek grand adventure in a noble cause was common early in the war.

Two years later, Dunham wrote to his family of "excitement" among the 12th Iowa to reenlist. This was no small decision for Dunham because his family was opposed. "I have weighed the matter well," he wrote. "I have studied on your advice." But he was intensely committed to his comrades. "Do you have the [e]last idea," he asked, "that I could remain [quietly] at home and see those boys who have been with me constantly for over two years, who have endured the same hard-

ships have been through the same dangers, and now leave them to bear my burden? *Not much.*"

A poignant expression of this high-minded attitude appears in letters exchanged by William F. Vermilion and his wife, Mary. A captain in the 36th Iowa Infantry, William mustered into service in August 1862 and less than a month later wrote to Mary that "my love for you all has increased since I left you, but I know that it is my duty to stay here and try to be one of the many that God has raised to put down this rebellion and blot out the institution of slavery."

In another letter William wrote about his sense of pride in place: "We live in Iowa, thank God. A state that has more than its quota of men in the field, and not [a] one, 3, or 9 month [enlistment] or drafted man among them. No traitor in Congress to disgrace our fair fame, by voting to cut off supplies. Whether the Government stands or falls, we will love Iowa."

In a letter just before Christmas, Mary echoed his pride—but also reflected her frustration with the inconsistent response of Northern states that she considered less patriotic. "I am proud of Iowa," she wrote William during a visit to relatives in Indiana. "I am glad that

our home is there. No other state has acquitted herself so nobly as Iowa."

But was the sacrifice worth it? No doubt more than a few soldiers received letters from their families questioning the purpose and value of the war. Mary Vermilion was in such a mood in a letter to her husband in March 1863. "I want to know whether our government is really worth dying for or not," she wrote rhetorically. "Sometimes, my good love, I feel like I am willing to have the war end any way so that you can get home once more. If I lose you, my beloved, what will the country be to me? What will I care whether it is free and happy or not? Oh darling, I can hardly bear to think of it. You are worth more to me than 10,000 republics!" Mary Vermilion was no traitor but she was frustrated with the course of the war and the heartache of missing her husband.

Soldiers often faced competing claims on their sense of duty. In the fall of 1864, as the war bogged down into stalemate, Benjamin Stevens wrote to his mother, Elizabeth Stevens. A citizen of Oskaloosa, Benjamin had joined the 15th Iowa Infantry in 1861. In the years that followed, he saw action at Shiloh and Vicksburg, among other campaigns. After Vicksburg, he left the 15th Iowa to become an officer in the 48th U.S. Colored Infantry.

Joining up for the bounties

PENSION BOUNTY & PATENT AGENCY
The Undersigned is duly
Licensed as
PENSION & BOUNTY AGENT
AND COMMERCIAL BROKER.
FOR TAMA COUNTY
All business entrusted to him will receive prompt attention.
Toledo July 2d 1863. T. A. GRAHAM.
v5n3ly.

Attorneys and agents advertised their skills in winning claims for what soldiers and their families were owed, including bounties. These two advertisements appeared in 1864 in the *Iowa Transcript*, a newspaper in Tama County.

"The new ones cannot endure marches," Iowan Seneca Thrall wrote in November 1862, describing unseasoned soldiers. "The old ones called them 'Bountyites,' and we would see many of them lying by the road side, shoes and stockings off, footsore and completely exhausted.... Then the old soldier would call out derisively: 'Halloa, Bounty, hard work to earn that \$100, aint it? Aint you glad you jined the army? I say old boy, I will tell you how to keep your feet from getting sore.' The new one looks up, eye brightens, he thinks he is about to receive the benefit of the old one's experience, and asks how. [The old soldier replies,] 'Wrap that \$100 around your feet.'"

Generally, however, soldiers' bounties were no laughing matter. Receiving military bounties (sometimes in land, sometimes in money) was a strong American tradition dating back to the Revolutionary War. Throughout the Civil War, Congress frequently adjusted the amount of federal monetary bounties, as well as when they would be paid to the soldier, and to whom they would be paid if the soldier died in battle. Localities and states paid additional bounties.

Iowa newspapers, letters, and diaries hint at the impor-

He was a seasoned veteran by the time he sat down to write his mother. She had asked him to return home to help her with the family farm. Her husband, Simeon, also a soldier, had died, and her second son was a prisoner of war. She needed Ben and wrote as much in a letter on August 24. In his response, he wrote that he had applied for a 20-day leave of absence.

That would be the extent of the time he could give to his mother. He would not, or could not, turn his back on his country. "Well, Mother," he wrote, "as far as resigning is concerned—I will tell you—I feel that my country needs my services for at least six [more] months. She will then be out of danger." It is not known how his mother reacted to her son's rejection of her plea; no response has survived.

As far as Benjamin Stevens was concerned, his god and his country needed him more than his mother: "*Every man that feels that he is accountable to a just God for the deeds done in the body should give himself as a willing sacrifice to his country in this, her hour of need. I would never live in America if our cause is not successful.*" It was a clear and forthright statement of personal patriotism.

Iowans were fighting for union and, to a degree, emancipation—as noble as these causes were to the nation—but also for their very sense of self-worth. The

diaries and letters of Cyrus Boyd, Philip Goode, Abner Dunham, Mary and William Vermilion, Seneca Thrall, and the Stevens family reveal the multiple meanings of Iowa's contribution to this national civic sacrifice. These Iowans speak to us with frank honesty about why Iowans entered the Civil War. Simply put, they fought for country, community, and comrades. ♦

Timothy Walch serves on the Iowa Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission and is a former member of the State Historical Society of Iowa Board of Trustees.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Sources used for this article include [Philip H. Goode], "'A Pretty Hard Business': The Civil War Diary of Philip H. Goode," transcribed by Edward W. Vollertsen, *Palimpsest* (Summer 1991); Russell L. Johnson, *Warriors into Workers: The Civil War and the Formation of Urban-Industrial Society in a Northern City* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003); Russell L. Johnson, "'Volunteer While You May': Manpower Mobilization in Dubuque, Iowa," in *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments*, ed. Paul A. Cimballa and Randall M. Miller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002); James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Edward Vermilion, *Love Amid the Turmoil: The Civil War Letters of William and Mary Vermilion*, ed. Donald Elder (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003). See also letters and a diary edited by Mildred Throne and published in the following issues of the *Iowa Journal of History*: "An Iowa Doctor in Blue: Letters of Seneca B. Thrall, 1862–1864" (1960); "Civil War Diary of C. F. Boyd" (1952); and "Civil War Letters of Abner Dunham" (1955).

tance and appeal of bounties, especially in 1864 as three-year enlistments ended and Lincoln continued to threaten a draft if local quotas weren't met. In August, Nathaniel Baker, Iowa's adjutant general, reported, "The men who might otherwise enlist are awaiting the high bounties sure to be offered by cities, counties and individuals."

"We have served three years without bounty & now want all there is going," D. S. Sigler, from Osceola, Iowa, wrote to the district provost marshal in December 1864. A few weeks later he added that a \$700 bounty would be about right. In any case he and his friend would "go to the [quota] credit of the place from which we get the most Bounty—if we go at all."

According to historian Russell Johnson, "Willing volunteers migrated from rural to urban areas seeking larger bounties."

At first glance, to enlist for money rather than to serve the cause might seem callous. But consider the wage-earning man who was joining the army and leaving behind a family with little means of support. Federal, state, and local bounties helped alleviate the hard times they would face.

—Ginalie Swaim, editor

WAR CLAIM OFFICE of

G. R. STRUBLE

ATTORNEY & COUNSELOR AT LAW,

TOLEDO, - - - TAMA Co., - - - IOWA.

All kinds of Law and collecting business promptly attended to.

Having procured all the laws, of the United States, on Bounties, Pensions and Soldiers' Pay, I am prepared and will give special attention to obtaining and collecting,

Pensions due Invalid Soldiers, the widow and minor heirs of deceased soldiers.

Bounty money and pay due the heirs of deceased officers and soldiers.

Back pay due resigned officers and deceased soldiers.

Discharged soldiers sending their discharge papers, will receive their pay by return of mail from the Department at Washington.

No fees charged on soldiers' claims unless the claim is collected.

G. R. STRUBLE.

v4-n33-ly.

500 Thous'd Men WANTED!

THE LAST CALL.

Jasper county is required to furnish about 100 men within 20 days or a Draft will inevitably be made. Drafting List is already prepared \$402 to veterans and \$302 to new recruits is yet offered as a

BOU TY

The undersigned, Recruiting Agent
ships to get Volunteers: Let all

, will visit the town-
of this matter in earnest.

Evening Meetings will be held as follows:

Thursday, 18th, at Slagle school house.
Friday 19th at Rich Gr. school house.
Saturday 20th in Newton
Monday 22d in Lynnville
Tuesday 23d, in Galesburg
Wednesday 24th, Wild Cat sch. house.
Thursday 25th, in Monroe
Friday 26th, in Vandalia
Saturday 27, in Greencastle
Monday 28; Clyde

On Tuesday 29, a Grand Rally in Newton, for the whole county.

Feb. 10 1864.

J. M. IRWIN

We Are Coming, Father Abraham

Iowa Responds to the Call to Arms

by Timothy Walch

Iowa was weary of war by the winter of 1864. The Union had won great victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg the previous summer, but still the rebellion dragged on. It seemed to many—particularly women who faced another planting season without their husbands and sons—that the conflict would never end. Adding to the stress, more troops were needed. President Lincoln issued an urgent call to the states on February 1: meet your quota of soldiers by March or be subject to another draft.

How would Iowa respond? As it had done in the previous three years, Iowa rose to the occasion. "You shall have our quota without [a draft]," wrote Iowa Adjutant General Nathaniel Baker to the president. Quoting an 1862 recruiting song, he wrote: "We are coming, Father Abraham, with 500,000 more."

Baker's bombast aside, Iowa was exceptionally patriotic in responding to the cause of the Union over the entire course of the conflict. Year in and year out, Iowa met all but one of the quotas set by the War Department.

When war was first declared in April 1861, most states, including Iowa, quickly met their quotas for 90-day enlistments. Many of the first recruits expected the war to be a short-lived adventure.

Except for Iowans' willingness to serve, the state was hardly prepared to do its part when war was declared. There was no organized state militia in April 1861 and no formal means to organize volunteers. To be sure, there were a number of local militias in various cities and communities across the state, but these were little more than social clubs that practiced military drilling.

Iowa had plenty of plowshares, but hardly a sword had been forged.

And yet there was no denying the war fever that gripped the state even before the attack on Fort Sumter on April 14. In fact, there had been growing pressure on Governor Samuel Kirkwood and the General Assembly to organize a state militia in anticipation of conflict. As early as January, Kirkwood had received numerous letters from standing local militias such as the Dubuque City Guards and the Iowa City Dragoons offering to serve when the first Iowa regiment was organized. The volume of mail, the press, and popular opinion convinced Kirkwood to take action. So it was no problem for the governor when only two days after Fort Sumter he received a telegram from Secretary of War Simon Cameron calling on Iowa to organize a single regiment for "immediate service." Kirkwood responded with enthusiasm; records show that the 1st Iowa Infantry totaled nearly a thousand men.

By the end of April, the governor was organizing two more regiments. He boasted that "I can raise 10,000 [recruits] in this State in twenty days." A week later, he asked Cameron, "How many more regiments will be required from Iowa and for how long? I am overwhelmed with applications."

That creation of the first Iowa regiment was symbolic, but the regiment saw only modest action. Although the 1st Iowa mustered into federal service on May 14, the regiment stayed in Keokuk doing little more than cooking and drilling for almost a month. Finally, on June 13, the regiment joined other regiments in Missouri, where it fought in the battle at Wilson's Creek on August 10, comporting itself with remarkable bravery. The regiment returned to Iowa after Wilson's Creek, having more than completed its 90 days of service.

Patriotic feelings remained high in Iowa throughout

most of 1861, and Kirkwood had no problem finding men who were willing to serve. In several additional calls for volunteers that year, Kirkwood was asked to send some 19,000 troops; in response, he would send more than 22,000. "Our people are loyal, patriotic, and devoted," he wrote to the War Department. "Their hearts are with you in the national struggle."

The governor stoked the patriotism of Iowa's citizenry. On September 10, after overseeing the organization of the 2nd through the 10th Iowa infantry regiments and the first three Iowa cavalry regiments, he again called for more recruits by invoking Iowans' loyalty to friends and relatives already in service. "It is your cause, as well as theirs, in which they are engaged," Kirkwood intoned. "It is the cause of government, of home, of country, of freedom, of humanity, of God himself." Within a month he was organizing the 11th and 12th Iowa infantry regiments and the 4th Iowa Cavalry.

But the number of potential Iowa recruits was quickly diminishing. The next three infantry regiments were made up of older men who had families and were ambivalent about leaving their homes and farms to defend the Union.

It seemed that the patriotism of Iowans was wearing thin by the end of 1861. It would not be as easy to fill future calls for more Iowa troops.

The burden of the war—not only in Iowa, but across the North—was evident in that the next year the War Department took over the responsibility for organizing new regiments. This orderly, structured approach eventually led to the establishment of three more Iowa infantry regiments during 1862.

Kirkwood met the challenge with aplomb. "I now assure you," he wrote Lincoln, "that the State of Iowa will be found in the future as in the past prompt and ready to do her duty to the country in this time of sore trial. Our harvest is just upon us and we have scarcely men enough to save our crops, but if need be, our women can help." And later he wrote Secretary of War Edwin Stanton that

"our whole State appears to be volunteering. . . . The companies are now coming into rendezvous as rapidly as I can furnish blankets for them."

By August, Iowa had organized no fewer than 18 infantry regiments, nearly five cavalry regiments, and three artillery batteries since hostilities began. And it was not long before the state sent an additional 22 regiments. "Recruiting is going on in this State magnificently," Adjutant General Baker had remarked. "I like a draft." What Baker meant is that he liked the *threat* of a draft.

Although used as a threat throughout the war, drafts were "not intended to be much more than a pressure to encourage volunteering," according to historian Leland Sage and many others. Because being drafted was often seen as a disgrace, and because draftees received no bounties, the likelihood of a draft spurred enlistments.

The draft law applied to all men between the ages of 20 and 45, including aliens planning to become citizens. Exemptions included the physically or mentally impaired, the only son of a widow or infirm parents, and

a widower with dependent children. "The law gave a draftee two options: commutation by the payment of \$300, or furnishing a substitute [often for \$300]," Sage writes. "Many men used a simpler plan of evasion: on the day of enrollment they simply went visiting in distant parts."

Kirkwood was particularly stymied and frustrated by the difficulty of filling vacancies in standing regiments, which had been depleted largely by disease. As in other states, however, men in

Iowa preferred to enlist together with their friends and relatives in newly organized regiments rather than fill individual vacancies in existing units. But as historian James Jacobsen points out, filling vacancies was "a strategic necessity, given that veteran regiments were far more efficient in integrating and training recruits than were green units."

The challenge to fill depleted standing regiments would resurface the next year. Kirkwood argued that new recruits would serve in regiments that had earned

SHSI (IOWA CITY)

WASHINGTON, D. C., WAR DEPARTMENT, }
August 14, 10 A. M. 1862. }
To Gov. KIRKWOOD :
Your regiments will be accepted if filled up this week as volunteers, but the proceedings for draft should be vigorously pushed forward to fill up the old regiments even if not otherwise required.
EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

Under the repeated threat of a draft, Northern communities pushed to fill their quotas. According to historian Russell Johnson, "Fewer than 10 percent of Union soldiers were conscripts; adding draft substitutes, the number rises to just 10.2 percent."

a reputation and under seasoned officers who knew how to take care of their men. As officers departed, opportunities for promotion would open up. But the problem continued throughout the war.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1863, six new Iowa units were authorized and organized. Among these units was the 1st Iowa African Infantry, which comprised approximately 800 Iowans of color; the officers were white. (A black soldier received no bounty until after 1863, when it was set at \$10.)

Kirkwood and Baker worked diligently to convince the War Department that the state had done more than its share. Except for the 1st Iowa, all Iowa recruits were enlisted for terms of three years or until dismissed. Many other states enlisted their recruits for terms as short as 90 days. Kirkwood and Baker argued that length of service, as well as the number of recruits, should be used to determine Iowa's quota.

The War Department agreed and calculated that Iowa had exceeded its quotas by nearly 14,000 men for all calls up to June. The number of additional men required from Iowa that year was expected to be about 12,600, leaving a credit of 1,281.

Then in October, Lincoln called for 300,000 more troops—well over 7,000 of these from Iowa. Iowa's credit would not begin to cover the quota. Baker argued that Iowans in other states' regiments should be credited to Iowa, and reenlisted veterans should be counted. Once again, a draft in Iowa was averted.

William Stone, Iowa's new governor in 1864, was a decorated veteran of the Battle of Shiloh and former prisoner of war. He proclaimed that "the honored name [that] our brave boys, through years of toil and danger have won for our State must not be tarnished by us in the closing scenes of the war."

Service was a matter of personal honor for Stone, but was it for all Iowans? Concerned that some men in the state were shirking their duty, and with a new quota set to go into effect on March 1, 1864, Stone issued an order prohibiting any state resident from leaving Iowa before March 10. He wanted to make sure that all eligible men were available for duty—under pain of executive order.

Iowa did meet its adjusted quotas for March and May without any difficulty, but not in September. Baker, who had been excellent at forming new units, was overwhelmed by this call to arms in September. The credit surplus evaporated. Iowa answered the call

State of Iowa.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
Clinton, August 19, 1862. }

GENERAL ORDERS, NUMBER 81.

The clerks of the District Courts, under the law of 1861 entitled "an act to amend the militia law of the State of Iowa," in the following named counties, have made returns of the *number* of persons liable to do military duty in their respective counties:

Adams,.....	270
Allamakee,.....	1,895
Benton,.....	1,439
Buchanan,.....	1,302
Boone,.....	702
Calhoun, 1 township,.....	34
Cedar,.....	2,099
Chickasaw,.....	701
Clayton,.....	3,306
Clark,.....	888
Clinton,.....	3,280
Crawford, 3 townships,.....	80
Delaware,.....	1,770
Des Moines,.....	3,131
Decatur,.....	1,343
Dubuque,.....	4,421
Fayette,.....	1,971
Fremont,.....	881
Greene,.....	238
Grundy,.....	173
Guthrie,.....	517
Hardin,.....	711
Howard,.....	500
Humboldt,.....	64
Jefferson,.....	2,056
Jones,.....	2,072
Lee,.....	4,455
Linn,.....	2,828
Lucas,.....	948
Louisa,.....	1,599
Mahaska,.....	2,779
Marion,.....	2,627
Mitchell,.....	594
Mills,.....	518
Monroe,.....	1,420
Montgomery,.....	233
Muscatine,.....	2,248
Polk,.....	2,027
Poweshiek,.....	1,058
Pottawattomie,.....	852
Scott,.....	4,117
Story,.....	656
Shelby,.....	96
Tama,.....	1,083
Taylor,.....	581
Union,.....	431
Van Buren,.....	2,261
Warren,.....	1,679
Wright,.....	115

The Clerks of the District Courts in the following counties have made a return of the *names* of persons liable to do military duty in the townships in their respective counties:

Blackhawk,.....	1,443
Benton,.....	1,439
Bremer,.....	824
Cass,.....	282
Calhoun, 1 township,.....	34
Cedar,.....	2,099
Dallas,.....	829
Davis,.....	2,105
Floyd,.....	669
Franklin,.....	212
Grundy,.....	173
Henry,.....	2,725
Hamilton,.....	246
Iowa,.....	1,393
Johnson,.....	2,691
Jones,.....	2,072
Linn,.....	2,828
Marshall,.....	1,015
Mitchell,.....	594
Monroe,.....	1,420
Muscatine,.....	2,280
Poweshiek,.....	1,058
Wright,.....	115
Washington,.....	2,224

I direct that the Clerks of the District Courts of Counties not in last list send me list of *names* returned to them by townships, as liable to do military duty, and

I direct that the Clerks of Counties who have made no return whatever, make immediate returns to me by townships, of the *names* of men liable to do military duty under laws of this State.

By order of the Commander-in-chief,
N. B. BAKER,
Adjutant Gen. of Iowa.

List

We the Undersigned of
 Sums Set opposite our names
 to S.W. Young for the
 of procuring volunteers to fill the Quota
 of Center Township, Cedar County,
 ordered to take place during the month
 of February A.D. 1865. Payment to be
 made when the sum of \$1200
 shall in the aggregate shall be subscribed.

Names	Names
Henry Thelander \$50.00	Wells Sprad 50.00
James M. McElroy 50.00	W. A. Griswell 50.00
David Kelly 50.00	W. Flowers 25.00
Marion Thelander 50.00	Joseph Walters 50.00
Peter Gay 50.00	Wm. Long 15.00
George McElroy 50.00	Emanuel Wears 50.00
Washington Harris 50.00	W. Schmitt 50.00
R. Swartzlander 50.00	Wm. Dean 50.00
S. M. Jones 50.00	J. Sherr 50.00
A. J. Kellogg 50.00	Mr. Stewart 50.00
Wm. Humphrey 50.00	J. P. Ouelletson 50.00
R. Hill 50.00	N. N. Exline 50.00
J. Waters 50.00	P. W. Thompson 50.00
O. P. Reeves 50.00	Wm. Gilmore 50.00
David W. McGosh 100.00	R. C. Smith 50.00
Wm. Cook 50.00	John L. Howell 50.00
Christian Phelps 100.00	
C. Hammond 50.00	
S. M. Thelander 50.00	

In anticipation of a possible draft in February 1865, over 60 citizens of Center Township in Cedar County pledged money to fund bounties. Out of this pool of money, bounties would be paid to men who enlisted, thus helping fill the township's quota without a draft. The average pledge was about \$40 (several hundred dollars in today's dollars).

SHSI (IOWA CITY)

with about 4,000 soldiers; the majority of them were drafted.

Iowa's sense of service was not limitless.

This was also evident when Stone and other mid-western governors offered to recruit additional regiments to serve as something of a home guard. These soldiers were to be enlisted for 100 days to guard borders, fortifications, and military installations. In Iowa, this duty would include patrols along the Missouri border and guard duty at the Rock Island Arsenal, among other assignments. Once the president gave his approval, Stone agreed to raise 10,000 men for this service by the end of April. "Iowa is all right," he assured the War Department. "The 10,000 are com-

ing rapidly. We intend to beat Illinois and Indiana." Stone was wrong. Even though the obligation was brief and the duty light, fewer than 5,000 Iowans volunteered for this supplementary home guard.

In December 1864 Lincoln issued what turned out to be a final call for men. Again Baker made a strong case that Iowa had more than fulfilled all of its obligations and should be excused from raising additional troops. After "considerable correspondence, and nearly a quarrel," the War Department accepted Baker's argument. Enlistments did continue, however, and Iowa sent an additional 854 men in early 1865.

On April 29, 1865, the War Department ended its recruitment. The war was over. The nation had been preserved and slavery abolished.

As a state of not quite two decades, Iowa was proud of its contribution to the war. "Indeed, Iowans came to believe that they had sent more men per capita to the Union army than had the citizens of any other loyal state," writes historian Robert R. Dykstra, who adds, "This happens to be wrong." Dykstra does note that "49 percent of Iowa's prewar white military-age population did take up arms, a record outclassed by only four other northern states."

There is no disputing that Iowans paid a terrible price. Dykstra records that "thirteen thousand Iowans—

19 percent of those who went off to war—never came home or returned only to die."

On January 23, 1865, Governor Stone had assessed Iowa's service in an address to the state. "Among the first to rally in vindication of our insulted flag," he said, "your soldiers have been constantly in the front, performing the longest marches, participating in the severest battles, and bearing themselves on all occasions with the most

conspicuous gallantry. Secure in the admiration of a grateful country, our state has won a high place in the pages of history."

Setting aside the florid language, Stone made an important point: national service required substantial sacrifice. Iowans could hold their heads high.

Iowa had beaten its plowshares into swords for Father Abraham. Now, in the aftermath of war, Iowa could reforge those swords back into plowshares to feed a growing nation. ❖

SHSI (IOWA CITY)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30, 1864.

To Major Thomas Duncan:

Keep volunteering up as much as possible after the 5th of September, and let it be known that volunteers will be counted on the quota of the present call up to the last practicable moment before the drafted are accepted and sent to rendezvous.

JAMES B. FRY.

Director of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library for 18 years, Timothy Walch now volunteers at the State Historical Society of Iowa.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Sources used for this article included H. E. Brainerd, "Iowa and the Draft," *Iowa Historical Record* 4 (1888); J. E. Briggs, "The Enlistment of Iowa Troops During the Civil War," *Iowa Journal of History* (1917); Robert R. Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993); James E. Jacobsen, "Iowa's Civil War Rendezvous Camps, 1861-1866: A Study" (which will be posted on www.iowaNationalGuard.com), funded by the Iowa Army National Guard, State of Iowa, and National Guard Bureau, Dept. of Defense; Russell L. Johnson, *Warriors into Workers: The Civil War and the Formation of Urban-Industrial Society in a Northern City* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003) pp. 58-100, 316-24; Russell L. Johnson, "Volunteer While You May: Manpower Mobilization in Dubuque, Iowa," in *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments*, ed. Paul A. Cimballa and Randall M. Miller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002); Susan Kuecker, "Reverberations of War: Cedar Rapids in 1865," *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* (Fall 1999). Also useful were three books by James M. McPherson: *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1994).

How Companies & Regiments Were Organized

by James E. Jacobsen

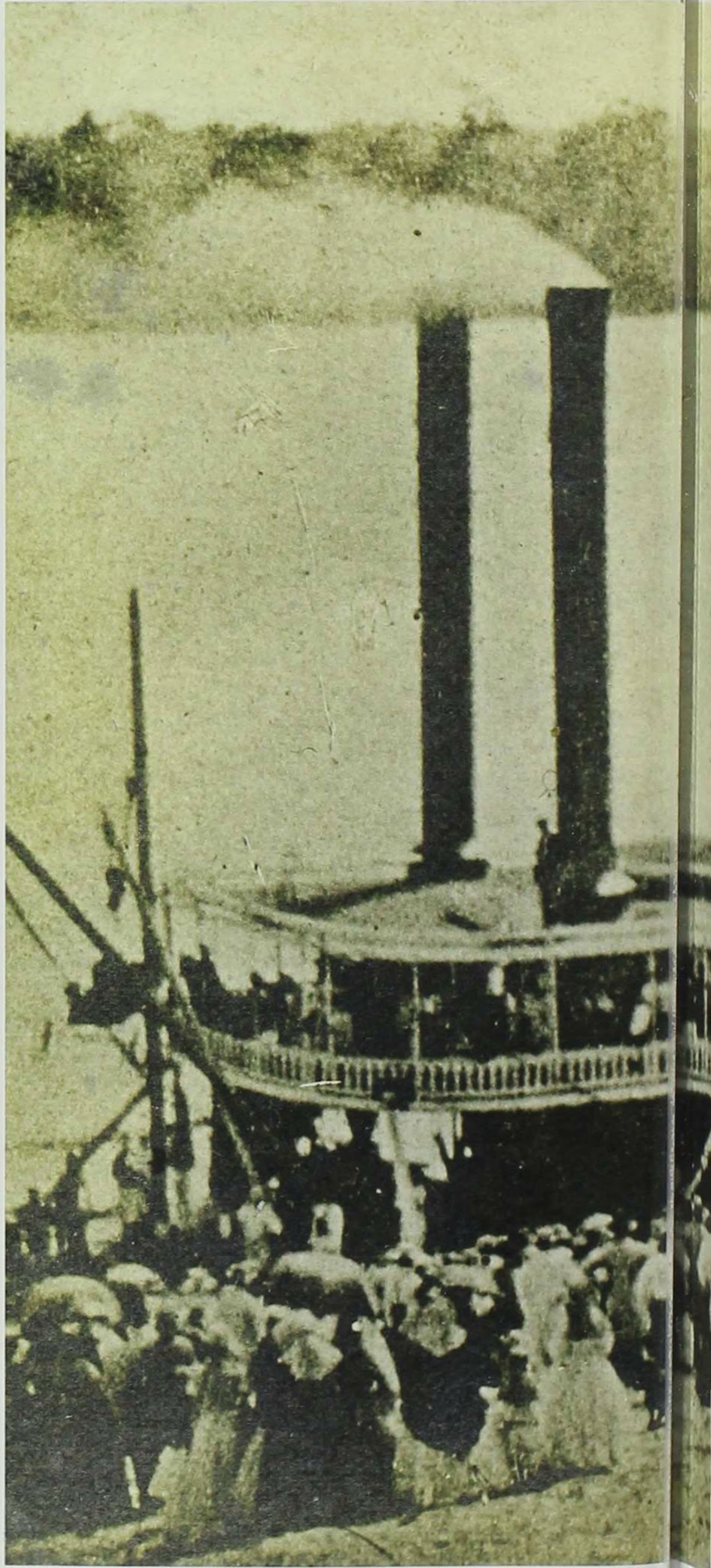
The organization of military companies began with individuals of local prominence, either in a town or county. Those who deemed themselves to be leaders in some capacity had the draw to assemble a company in whole or in part. Previous military experience could be useful, but many a former militia officer with a reputation for being too strict would likely be shunned.

During the first months of the war—say, from May to July of 1861—forming a company was very much a locally controlled process. Companies would spring into existence overnight and would clamor for a regimental assignment from the governor. Since there were still but a handful of regiments and no shortage of new companies, those companies that failed to win a berth right away risked withering away. Which companies won out in the battle for a regimental berth depended on higher level politics, with urban companies having the advantage.

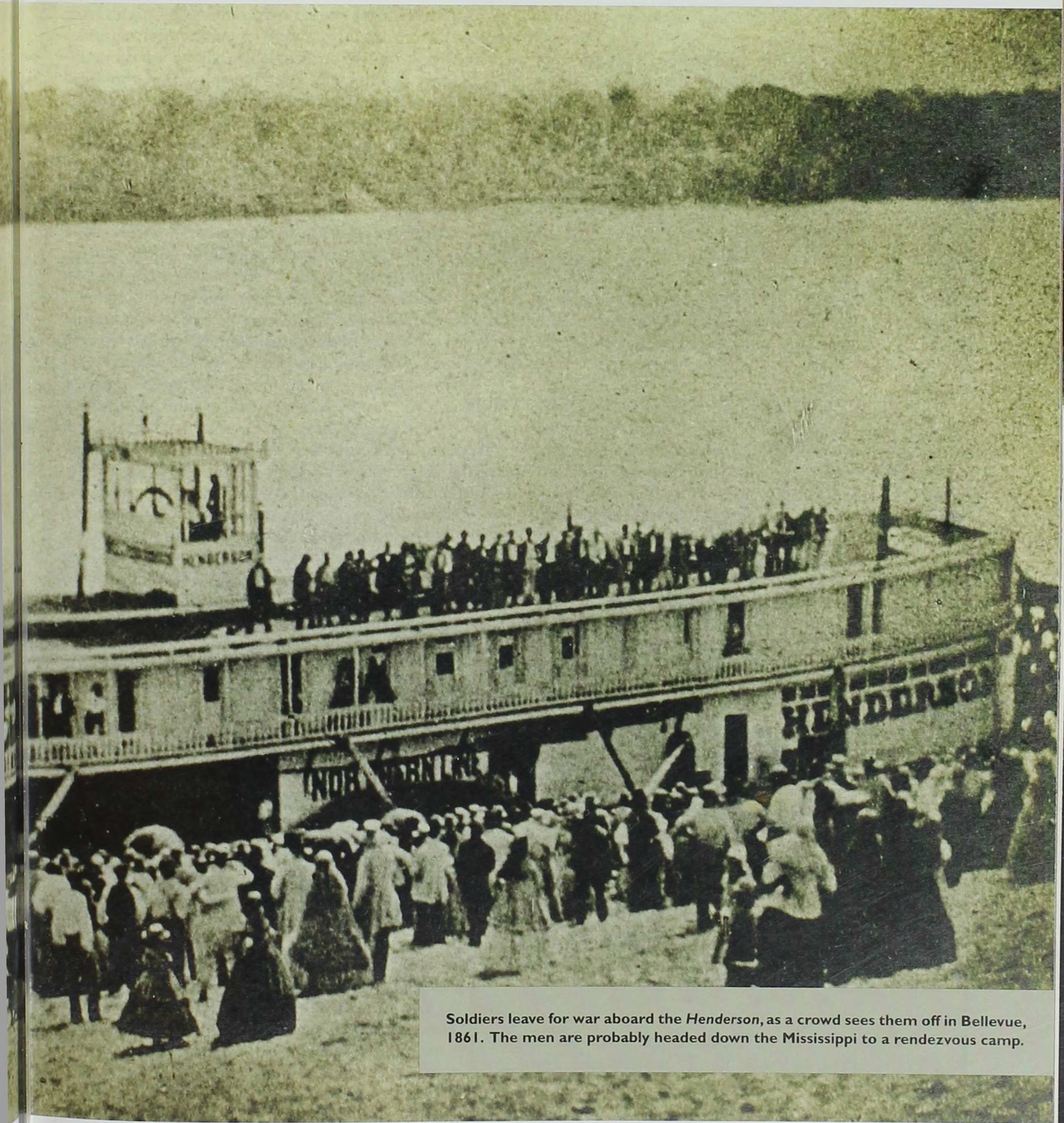
The aspiring company recruiter had to have authorization from the state adjutant general in the form of a recruiting commission. Armed with the proper paperwork, the company recruiter would publish notices in the local newspapers; perhaps establish an office in a larger town or city; hire the requisite wagons, flag, drummer, and bugler; gain the support of high-ranking community leaders to serve as speakers; and otherwise set out to fill up a company. The magic number was 83 men, the minimum needed for an infantry company.

As the roster approached that number, the captain could be authorized to place his men "in quarters." This meant that they could be locally boarded and housed. This was done for several reasons. The recruits had to be assured that there was indeed a bona fide company, as did the state. Company spirit could then develop

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Iowa and the Civil War



Soldiers leave for war aboard the *Henderson*, as a crowd sees them off in Bellevue, 1861. The men are probably headed down the Mississippi to a rendezvous camp.

SHS (IOWA CITY)

How Companies & Regiments Were Organized

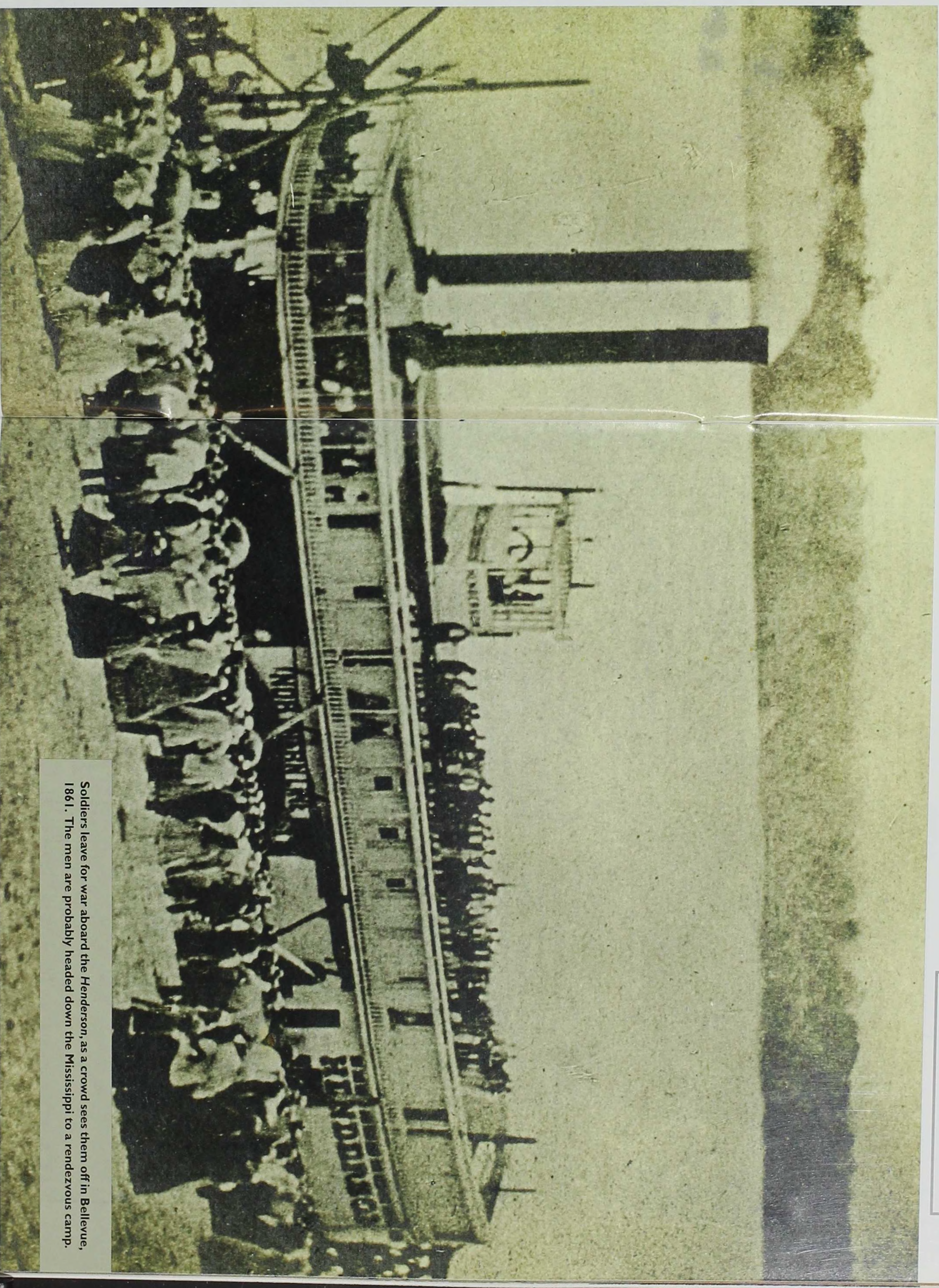
by James E. Jacobsen

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Soldiers leave for war aboard the *Henderson*, as a crowd sees them off in Bellevue, 1861. The men are probably headed down the Mississippi to a rendezvous camp.

and the company could become a cohesive group. The recruits, likely single young men, had to receive tangible results for their commitment, in the form of room and board, or their interest could wane. Most important, the recruiter had to hold the roster together. The recruits were sworn in to the equivalent of state service by local justices, but this doesn't seem to have been very binding.

There were problems with this system. Recruits had a multitude of needs, including medical and travel expenses, blankets, clothing, and shoes. But the recruiter had no monetary advance from the state, and anybody that he contracted with had to be content with holding the bill, sometimes for a very long time.

The major challenges were competing recruiters and, over time, a dearth of recruits. Partial companies either consolidated or they vaporized. This problem was most acute when a company was being raised across an entire county. Each town or farm neighborhood would provide a contingent, and depending on how the men identified themselves—by ethnicity, politics, religion, or even occupation—these contingents would have more or less in common.

These different loyalties played out when the men in the company voted for officers. Usually an initial election was held locally, and officers generally were elected to ranks proportionate to their contributions in forming the unit. But that was not always the case.

An aspiring officer could be astounded to find himself voted out or farther down in rank. For example, candidates who lost out for the captaincy would make a go for a lieutenancy. Most cruel, when the final election was held at the rendezvous camp, the company at full strength could contain a different demographic, and many a man who marched to camp as an officer left without that title.

Then it was time for community farewells. After the company banner (usually designed and sewn by local women) was presented with the requisite speeches and dinners, the new company would ride off by wagon or stagecoach to the nearest railhead, and then speed off to the rendezvous camp (many soldiers taking their first train ride). Iowa rendezvous camps were in larger towns with river or rail transportation, like Davenport, Keokuk, and Des Moines.

The challenge was to hold the ranks together numerically until official mustering in. Speed was always of the essence as recruiters struggled desperately to complete their companies and join a regiment. Partial companies accumulated in camp, and they either coalesced or withered away.

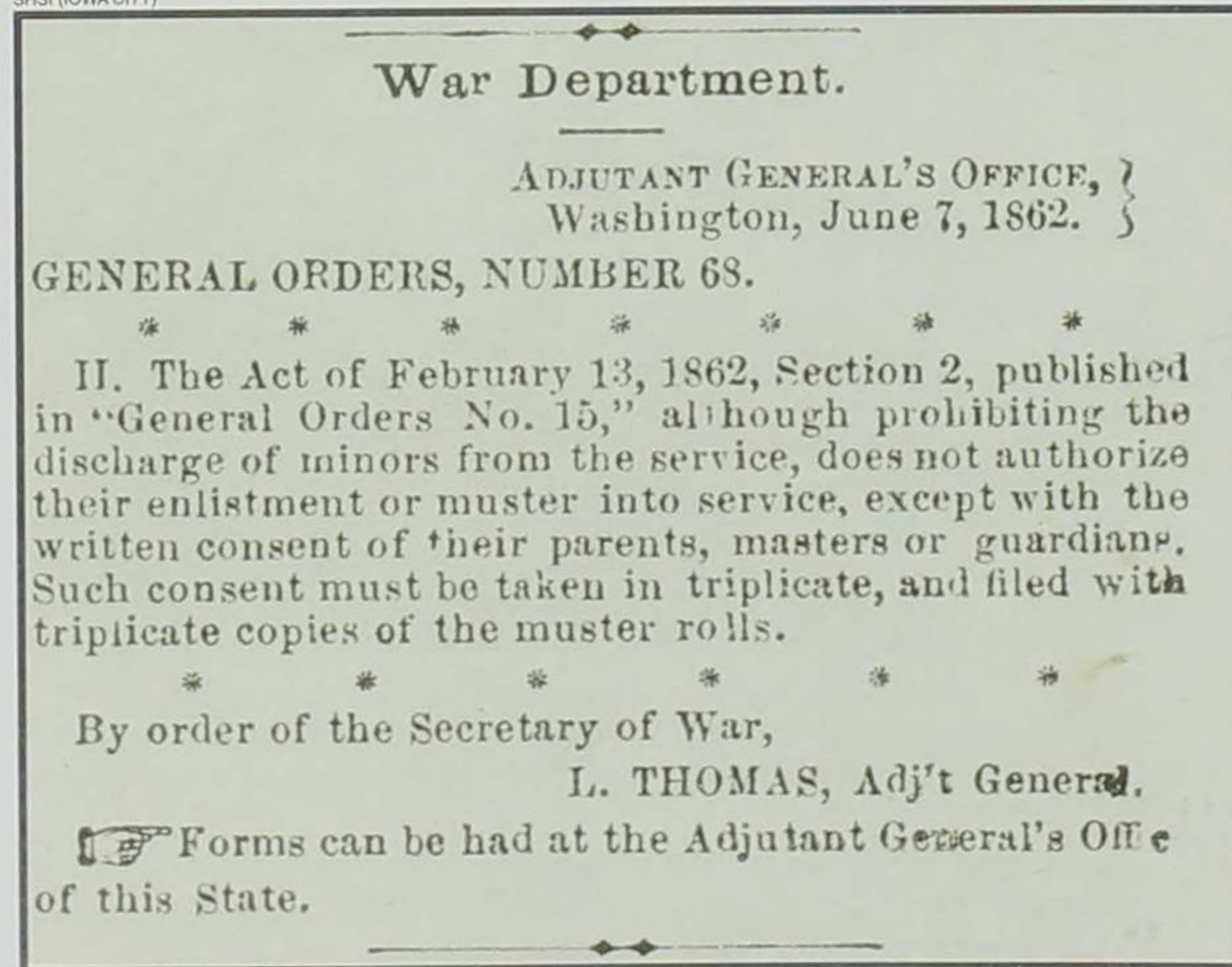
The final test was the medical review; companies could be rendered nonviable when as many as a dozen eager recruits were sent home. Another cause for loss of men was the refusal of a few to take the federal oath (even though they had already taken the state oath). These men were publicly humiliated and drummed out of camp, but their departure also threatened the minimal strength of the promising company.

Once these adjustments were made, a recruiting feeding frenzy ensued, targeting the fragmentary squads in camp to finalize both the companies and their regiment.

The first company to muster in at the rendezvous camp—which meant that it had reached mustering strength and its men had passed their physical examinations—would get the coveted “Company A” designation in a new regiment.

A regiment (which comprised 10 infantry companies or 12 cavalry companies) could be formed in at least three ways. First, influential individuals could apply to the governor for authorization to raise an entire regiment. Second, the state could form a regiment in the rendezvous camp by assigning companies to it.

SHSI (IOWA CITY)



The third way to form a regiment was for quite prominent individuals to bypass the state and receive direct authorization from the U.S. War Department. These individuals often assumed incorrectly that such authorization would bring immediate support in the form of equipage, commissions, and funds, and that the regiment would be more quickly organized and sent into active service. The reality was that these new regiments "fell through the administrative crack" and found themselves orphan organizations and sometimes faded away. The War Department lacked the wherewithal to directly support the units it authorized, and the state was more than pleased to be relieved from assuming any responsibility for yet another new regiment.

SHSI (IOWA CITY)

State of Iowa.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
Clinton, Aug. 11, 1862. }

GENERAL ORDERS, NUMBER 84.

I. The Camps at different places in this State for the new Regiments, will be known and designated as follows:

- At Keokuk, Camp Lincoln.
- At Clinton, Camp Kirkwood.
- At Dubuque, Camp Franklin.
- At Iowa City, Camp Pope.
- At Des Moines, Camp Burnside.
- At Muscatine, Camp Strong.

II. Passes from this Department will hereafter be either signed by me, or by M. H. Tyrrell, for me. If signed "N. B. Baker, Adj't Gen'l of Iowa, by Tyrrell," they are to be respected the same as those signed by me.

N. B. BAKER,
Adj't General of Iowa.

Raising an entire regiment brought rich rewards. The principals would receive field officer commissions (colonel, lieutenant colonel, or major). In turn, they could reward others by influencing the awarding of staff officer berths (adjutant, quartermaster, commissary, or surgeon). But the real plum resided in the social status that came with these positions, not to mention the opportunities for meteoric advancement, either during the war or later in politics.

The real work in organizing a regiment lay in completing the requisite number of companies. The aspiring colonel, in the early war years, was often given complete control (particularly for cavalry regiments). Again, the state was more than pleased to have one fewer new regiment to deal with, and these delegated units were usually placed in one of the isolated and less important rendezvous camps. It was the colonel-to-be who was now deluged with requests for recruiting commissions from aspiring captains-to-be.

The same dynamic exhibited in company organizations now played out times ten or more. Invariably the regiment ended up in camp short at least a few companies. As promised units collapsed, entirely new ones had to be started. The regiment couldn't organize until it had all of its companies in camp at minimum strength. Aspiring field officers accumulated personal expenses as they awaited their commissions and authority to spend funds.

This situation was worst in the camps at Council Bluffs, where the 29th Infantry was sorely delayed in finalizing its company rosters. The recruits lacked

clothing, the officers had exhausted their own funds, and nobody was getting paid until they were mustered in. The state had no authority or obligation over recruits until the mustering in took place, so it was powerless to help.

Like the company, the regimental community elected its initial roster of field officers. Many difficulties resulted as candidates were denied their "promised" rank or the state intervened with its own chosen colonel. A number of regimental colonels were washed out at the rendezvous camp; commanding a regiment required a somewhat different skill set than did raising one. Once in active service, the real winnowing out began as the regimental officer corps reshuffled their rosters. ♦

James E. Jacobsen is a historic preservation consultant in Des Moines. This article is an excerpt from Jacobsen's "Iowa's Civil War Rendezvous Camps, 1861-1866: A Study." Funded by the Iowa Army National Guard, State of Iowa, and National Guard Bureau, Department of Defense, the study will be posted on www.IowaNationalGuard.com.

CIVIL WAR MUSTER

Certainly there are other ways of discovering the service record of a Civil War soldier than by examining muster rolls. Multi-volume sets of official records were published around the turn of the 20th century. Web pages on the Internet are searchable and printable.

But neither of these sources evokes a sense of time like the actual handwritten muster rolls created 150 years ago.

When a company was formally established, the captain

A portion of a muster roll for the 21st Iowa Infantry, which mustered out in August 1865.

21st Infantry
Field and Staff
MUSTER-OUT ROLL, of Captain
 by *The President*
 unless sooner discharged; from the
 at
Recorded

NUMBER OF EACH GRADE.	NAMES.		RANK.	AG.
	PRESENT	AND ABSENT.		
	(Privates in alphabetical order—the first christian name to be written in full length.)			
1	<i>Salus G. Row</i>	<i>And a</i>	<i>Sent. Col.</i>	<i>2</i>
1	<i>Hiram A. Hunt</i>		<i>Adj. Gen.</i>	<i>2</i>
1	<i>James Hill</i>		<i>Chaplain</i>	

Iowa and the Civil War

ROLLS

... The Value in Caring for the Real Thing

21st Infantry.

MUSTER-OUT ROLL, of Captain *David Greaves*
by *the President* at *Dubuque*
unless sooner discharged; from the *28th* day of
at *Dubuque Iowa*, in the month of *August*

NUMBER OF EACH GRADE.	NAMES. PRESENT AND ABSENT. (Privates in alphabetical order—the first christian name to be written in full length.)	RANK.	AGE.	JOINED FOR SERVICE AND ENROLLED COMMENCEMENT OF FIRST	
				WHEN.	WHERE.
1	<i>David Greaves</i>	<i>Capt</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>July 29th 1862</i>	<i>Dubuque Iowa</i>
1	<i>William W Lorimer</i>	<i>1st Lt</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Aug 21st 1862</i>	<i>Dubuque Iowa</i>
1	<i>George G Moser</i>	<i>2^d Lt</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>Aug 22nd 1862</i>	<i>Dubuque Iowa</i>
✓ 2	<i>James Hill</i>	<i>1st Lt</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>Aug 9th 1862</i>	<i>Cascade Iowa</i>
✓ 2	<i>Hiram Buel</i>	<i>2^d Lt</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>March 7th 1864</i>	<i>Savannah Iowa</i>
✓ 3	<i>Samuel Bates</i>	<i>2^d Lt</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Aug 9th 1862</i>	<i>Cascade Iowa</i>
				<i>Aug 21st 1862</i>	<i>Cascade Iowa</i>

CIVIL WAR MUSTER ROLLS

Certainly there are other ways of discovering the service record of a Civil War soldier than by examining muster rolls. Multi-volume sets of official records were published around the turn of the 20th century. Web pages on the Internet are searchable and printable.

But neither of these sources evokes a sense of time like the actual handwritten muster rolls created 150 years ago. When a company was formally established, the captain

A portion of a muster roll for the 21st Iowa Infantry, which mustered out in August 1865.

21st Infantry
Child and Staff
MUSTER-OUT ROLL, of Captain
Recorded at _____ by _____
unless sooner discharged; from the _____, in the m
at _____
Recorded at _____ by _____
unless sooner discharged; from the _____, in the month of _____
at _____

NUMBER OF EACH GRADE.	NAMES. PRESENT AND ABSENT. (Privates in alphabetical order—the first christian name to be written in full length.)	RANK.	AGE.	JOINED FOR SERVICE AND ENROLLED COMENCEMENT OF FIRST	WHERE.
1	Charles C. Lane	Private	28	July 29 th	Quincy Iowa
1	William H. Dennis	Private	20	Aug 21 st	Quincy Iowa
1	George J. Dwyer	Private	25	Aug 22 nd	Quincy Iowa
1	James H. Hill	Private	39	Aug 9 th	Quincy Iowa
1	James H. Hill	Private	29	Aug 9 th	Quincy Iowa
1	James H. Hill	Private	24	Aug 9 th	Quincy Iowa
1	James H. Hill	Private	24	Aug 9 th	Quincy Iowa

Died									
1	Anderson George H.	May 21	Aug 1782	Quincy	James Hill	3 years	Aug 23		
2	Deane Luke D.	May 24	" 9	"	"	"	" 23		
3	McClellan George W.	Sept 39	" 21	"	"	3	" 23		
4	Adams William B.	" 26	" 16	Quincy	"	3	" 23		
5	Carroll Peter D.	Nov 31	" 22	"	"	3	" 23		
6	Phillips Henry W.	" 21	" 22	"	"	3	" 23		
7	Butter Edmund W.	" 26	" 22	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
8	Boydine Frederick	" 26	" 22	Quincy	"	3	" 23		
9	Boydine Edward	" 34	Oct 24 1862	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
10	Castle Charles	" 18	Aug 15 1862	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
11	Driver Henry L.	" 18	Oct 18 1862	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
12	Driver Henry L.	" 24	" 21	Quincy	"	3	" 23		
13	Dave Moore	" 22	Aug 15 1862	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
14	Dyer James	" 23	" 22	"	"	3	" 23		
15	Emale John	" 28	" 14	Quincy	"	3	" 23		
16	Ellert Charles	" 23	" 21	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
17	Foranick William B.	" 26	" 10	"	"	3	" 23		
18	Foranick John B.	" 36	" 10	"	"	3	" 23		
19	Walker Joseph	" 39	" 18	Quincy	"	3	" 23		
20	Heintzen William B.	" 18	" 13	Quincy	James Hill	3	" 23		
21	Wells Henry	" 29	" 22	"	"	3	" 23		

1	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
2	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
3	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
4	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
5	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
6	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
7	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
8	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
9	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
10	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
11	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
12	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
13	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
14	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
15	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
16	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
17	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
18	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
19	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
20	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863
21	General Service at General Organization at 14 regt. Was killed during Battle of Gettysburg Aug 23 1863

Soldiers and officers who died were listed at the end of muster-out rolls, with location, cause, and date of death given.

recorded basic information on his enlistees. This muster roll traveled with the company and was updated as the company changed in composition.

When a company disbanded and its soldiers were discharged, the company captain prepared a muster-out roll, with additional information on promotions and reenlistments; military engagements and duties; imprisonment and release; injuries, illnesses, deaths, and sometimes place of burial. The creation and maintenance of the Union army's muster rolls were outlined in a manual of military regulations, and each muster-out roll emphasized that "every man whose name is on previous rolls, must be accounted for."

The importance of the muster-out rolls was not lost on state and federal officials. At the time the rolls were completed, multiple sets were created for each company. For the most part, the origi-

nal records stayed with company commanders and were often found among their personal effects after they had died. Other sets were sent to the War Department in Washington; one was eventually used to create the Compiled Military Service Records for validating applications for pensions and other veterans' benefits. Additional sets were sent to the capitals of the states where the companies had been formed and eventually transferred to state archives and historical societies. Here at the State Historical Society of Iowa, the muster rolls are part of the Iowa Adjutant General Records in the State Archives in our Des Moines center.

Muster-out rolls are actually large ledger sheets, many of them nearly a square yard in dimension; others are about 11"x17". Over the decades, due to heavy use by researchers and the acidity of the paper, the muster rolls have become extremely brittle and fragile. To slow the process of aging and deterioration—and

Died

1	Anderson George W	✓	1 st Sergt 21	Aug 21 1862	Cascade Iowa	James Hill	3 Years	Aug 23 1862
2	Dean Curtis G	✓	Sergt 24	" 9 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
3	McCadden George W	✓	Capt 39	" 21 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
4	Habins William B	✓	" 26	" 16 "	Dubuque "	D Greaves	3 "	" 23
5	Angel John W	✓	Private 31	" 22 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
6	Britton Henry W	✓	" 21	" 22 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
7	Boston Edwin W	✓	" 26	" 22 "	Cascade "	James Hill	3 "	" 23
8	Boydlin Martin	✓	" 26	" 29 "	Dubuque "	D Greaves	3 "	" 23
9	Bowditch Eliza	✓	" 37	Feb 24 1864	Saxton "	Capt Adams	3 "	Feb 25 1864
10	Bottle Charles	✓	" 18	Aug 15 1862	Cascade "	James Hill	3 "	Aug 23 1862
11	Bruwer Henry J	✓	" 18	Feb 18 1864	Washington "	Capt Adams	3 "	Feb 18 1864
12	Bruwer Weston W	✓	" 20	" 27 "	Delhi "	" "	3 "	" 27
13	Dare Theodore	✓	" 22	Aug 15 1862	Cascade "	James Hill	3 "	Aug 23 1862
14	Dick James	✓	" 23	" 22 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
15	Engall John	✓	" 28	" 14 "	Dubuque "	D Greaves	3 "	" 23
16	Elliott Charles	✓	" 23	" 21 "	Cascade "	James Hill	3 "	" 23
17	Goodrich William A	✓	" 26	" 10 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
18	Goodrich John H	✓	" 36	" 10 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
19	Gilbert Joseph	✓	" 39	" 18 "	Dubuque "	D Greaves	3 "	" 23
20	Heitcher Martin L	✓	" 18	" 13 "	Cascade "	James Hill	3 "	" 23
21	Holpfill Greenberry	✓	" 29	" 22 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23
22	Holpfill Robert	✓	" 18	" 13 "	" "	" "	3 "	" 23

Soldiers and officers who died were listed at the end of muster-out rolls, with location, cause, and date of death given.

recorded basic information on his enlistees. This muster roll traveled with the company and was updated as the company changed in composition.

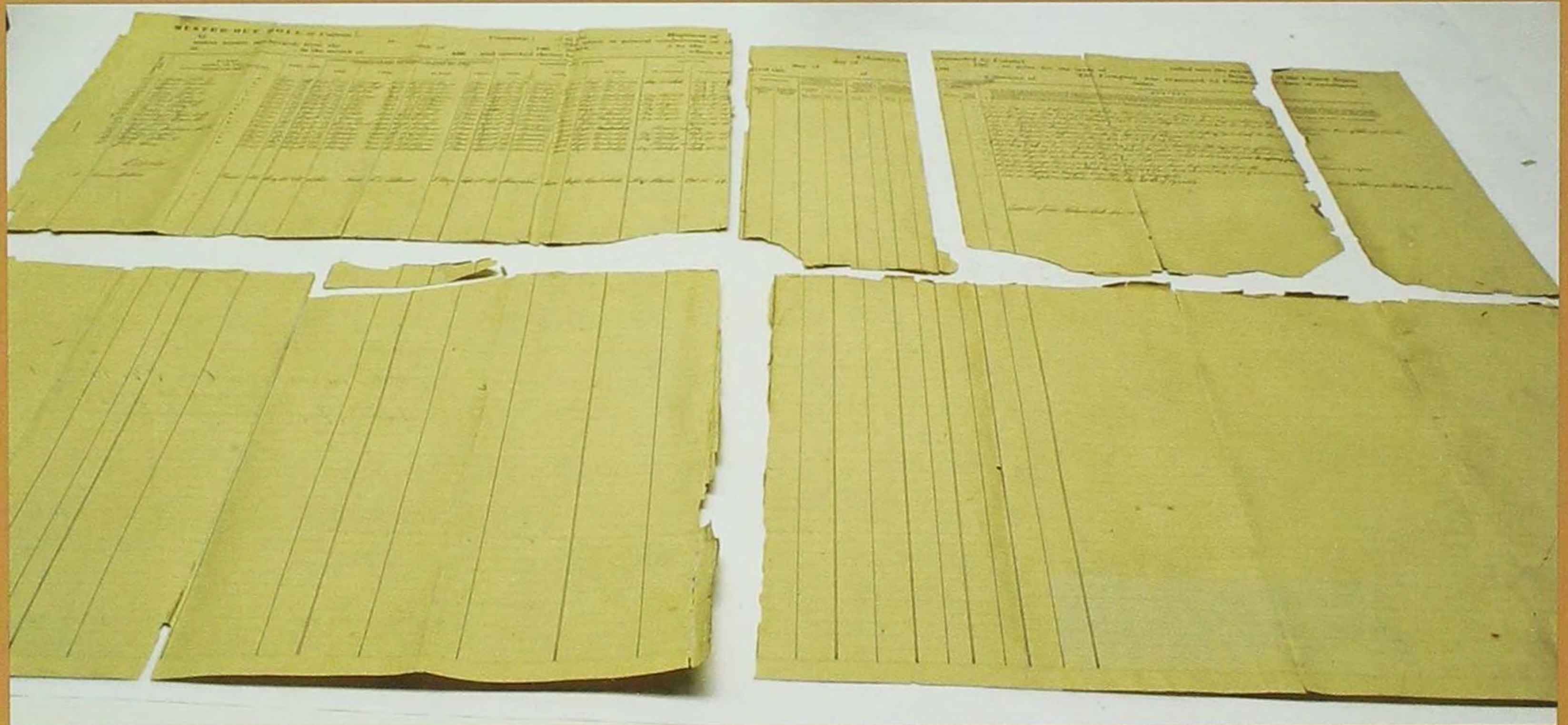
When a company disbanded and its soldiers were discharged, the company captain prepared a muster-out roll, with additional information on promotions and reenlistments; military engagements and duties; imprisonment and release; injuries, illnesses, deaths, and sometimes place of burial. The creation and maintenance of the Union army's muster rolls were outlined in a manual of military regulations, and each muster-out roll emphasized that "every man whose name is on previous rolls, must be accounted for."

The importance of the muster-out rolls was not lost on state and federal officials. At the time the rolls were completed, multiple sets were created for each company. For the most part, the origi-

- ✓ Entered service at original organization as 1st sergt. Was killed during assault on Vicksburg Miss. May 22nd 1863
- ✓ Entered service at original organization as sergt. Died from wounds June 3rd 1863 in Enemy Hosp. Vicksburg Miss.
- ✓ Entered service at original organization as Corp. Was killed during assault on Vicksburg Miss. May 22nd 1863
- ✓ Entered service at original organization as private Promoted to Corp. Sept. 17th 1863 Died in Hosp. New Orleans La. May 25th 1865
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died at Meraphis Penn. July 1st 1863 from Wounds Rec. at Black River Miss. May 17th 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment was killed in action at Black River Bridge Miss. May 17th 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Regt. Hosp. of Lung fever at St. Genevieve Mo. March 22nd 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Hosp. of Typhoid fever at Houston Mo. Feb. 19th 1863
- ✓ Joined a Recruit April 11th 1864 Died in Hosp. of Int. fever New Orleans La. Sept. 30th 1864
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Hosp. of Illness at Salem Mo. Jan. 15th 1862
- ✓ Assigned a Recruit Died while on way to Co. in Hosp. at La. May 14th 1864
- ✓ Joined a Recruit April 11th 1864 Died in Hosp. of Typhoid fever at New Orleans La. June 22nd 1864
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died of Chronic Diarrhoea at Pella Mo. Jan. 11th 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Hosp. Bear of Vicksburg Miss. May 29th 1863 of Wounds Rec. May 22nd 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment killed during assault on Vicksburg Miss. May 22nd 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Hosp. of Illness at Vicksburg Miss. Aug. 9th 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Regt. Hosp. of Lung fever at Iron Mountain Mo. March 2nd 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Hosp. of San Stroke at Bear of Vicksburg Miss. June 4th 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died Dubuque Iowa of Chronic Diarrhoea Sept. 1st 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment was killed during assault on Vicksburg Miss. May 22nd 1863
- ✓ Private from Enrollment Died in Hosp. at Bear of Vicksburg Miss. June 9th 1863 from Wounds Rec. May 22nd 1863.

nal records stayed with company commanders and were often found among their personal effects after they had died. Other sets were sent to the War Department in Washington; one was eventually used to create the Compiled Military Service Records for validating applications for pensions and other veterans' benefits. Additional sets were sent to the capitals of the states where the companies had been formed and eventually transferred to state archives and historical societies. Here at the State Historical Society of Iowa, the muster rolls are part of the Iowa Adjutant General Records in the State Archives in our Des Moines center.

Muster-out rolls are actually large ledger sheets, many of them nearly a square yard in dimension; others are about 11"x17". Over the decades, due to heavy use by researchers and the acidity of the paper, the muster rolls have become extremely brittle and fragile. To slow the process of aging and deterioration—and



Above: Fortunately, not all of the muster rolls are this damaged. Most paper after 1850, including muster rolls, was made of highly acidic wood pulp rather than rags. Over time, the muster rolls have turned brittle and deteriorated along the folds. These pieces will be reconnected and additional conservation measures taken.



To remove creases, the conservator dampens them with cotton swaps and then weights them down.



Thin but strong Japanese paper and wheat paste are used for repairing tears and reattaching fragments.



Surface dirt is removed with a dry, non-abrasive sponge made of natural rubber.



An alkaline solution is applied by brush or spray to neutralize destructive acids and extend the life of the document.

to preserve them as the authentic documents that they are—work has begun on conserving some 500 muster-out rolls, only a portion of the entire collection. This work is possible thanks to an appropriation from the Iowa General Assembly, proceeds from the sale of *Profiles of Valor* by Dennis Black and published by the State Historical Society of Iowa—and because of the technical skills, materials, and equipment in SHSI's paper conservation lab in the Iowa City center.

Conserving the muster rolls takes time, skill, and a steady hand. (The steps are described on the left.) When the work is completed on a muster roll, it is encapsulated in Mylar, a clear polyester film that protects the document and allows handling.

Once safeguarded for generations to come, the muster rolls will continue to bear witness to the men in a company and their commitment to the nation and to each other. For every individual listed, the roll reveals the contours of his years in service. Although the information is brief and basic, the handwritten words hint at the courage, stamina, suffering, and life-changing experiences of a Civil War soldier.

—by Timothy Walch,
Iowa Heritage Illustrated volunteer

Where to begin researching Iowa Civil War service records

- An excellent place to start is the six-volume *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion: Together with Historical Sketches of Volunteer Organizations, 1861–1866*. This source includes information from official records, including muster-out rolls, and is available in the Des Moines and Iowa City libraries of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

- To see what kinds of Civil War resources are available at the State Historical Society, visit www.iowaHistory.org and scroll down under "Collections." The Adjutant General Records and Grand Army of the Republic Collection are particularly rich in Civil War resources. (While on the home page, be sure to check

out SHSI's museum collections online and the Iowa Battle Flags Project.) SHSI librarians and archivists are eager to help.

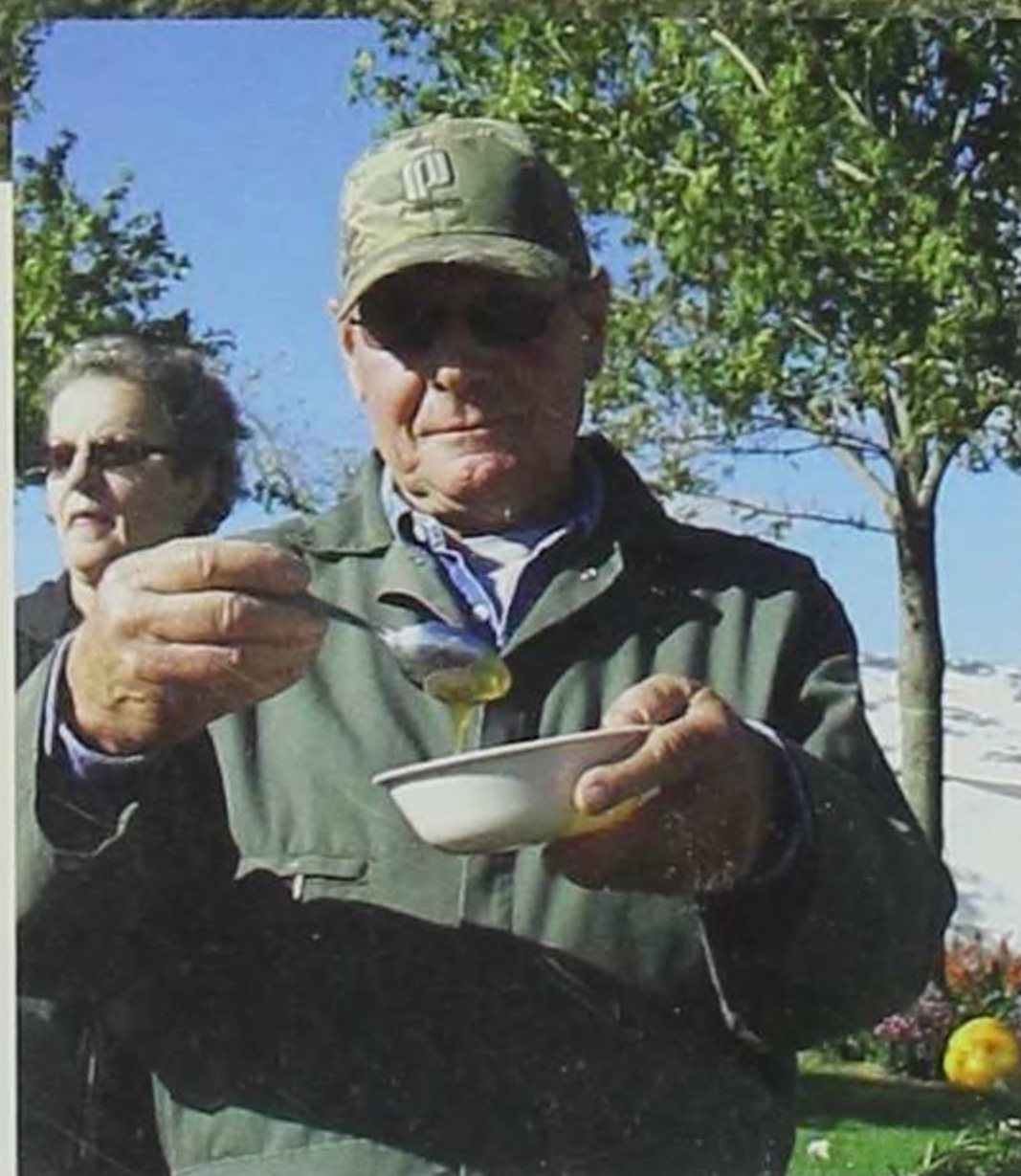
- For an online version of *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers*, visit: www.iagenweb.org/civilwar/books/logan.htm. Click on "Rosters."

- For information on 6.3 million Union and Confederate soldiers, visit www.itd.nps.gov/cwss.

- For veterans records at the National Archives, visit www.nara.gov/veterans.



SHSI (IOWA CITY)



Ralph Manternach of Cascade, Iowa, checks the syrup. Top: Farmers in Johnson County decades ago prepare to press sorghum.

PHOTO BY PAM OCKENFELS

A Sweet Tradition Endures on Iowa Farms

by Amy Karon

Ralph Manternach knelt by a 6-foot-long, 75-gallon boiler pan set over an open fire pit. He had stirred the pan for hours as its swirling green contents slowly thickened and turned brown. Spooning up the steaming liquid to check its consistency, Manternach grinned. "Nearly ready," he told his relatives, who crowded around to watch and snap photos.

On a damp, chilly Saturday last September on the Manternach farm near Cascade, Iowa, more than a hundred family members gathered—some from as far as Texas, California and Alaska—to take part in a generations-old practice of making syrup from a species of sweet grass called sorghum.

Americans consumed millions of gallons of sorghum syrup during the Civil War, and Iowa made more of the molasses-like product than any other state. Corn and sugar cane sweeteners eventually replaced sorghum syrup on most tables, but each fall in Iowa, hundreds of people still attend sorghum festivals where farmers like the Manternachs keep the old ways alive by sharing this part of their state's heritage.

Until the 1850s, Iowans had two choices for sweeteners—honey and cane sugar, said Joe Anderson, assistant history professor at Mount Royal University in Canada and an expert on Iowa's agricultural history. But bee trees were scarce, and cane sugar was expensive. So when an agent from the U.S. Patent Office visited France

and saw sweet sorghum growing at Verrieres, he took note. The plants' tall, sturdy stalks and attractive brown seed heads reminded him of corn, and he thought sweet sorghum could grow as well as corn did back home.

The agent sent a small amount of seed to the U.S. Patent Office, which grew an experimental crop in 1855. The result was promising enough for congressmen and *American Agriculturist* magazine to mail farmers thousands of packets of sorghum seed in the next several years. In 1858, the Iowa State Agricultural Society also created a prize for local sugar and syrup production.

Farmers embraced the new crop. "I consider it one of the greatest things ever brought into this country," Iowa farmer Reuben



PHOTO BY PAM OCKENFELS

Ellmaker wrote in a letter to his brother Enos in December 1857. "I planted four ounce of seed last spring and we made about 30 gallons of good molasses. . . . I put me up a temporary mill that can run out one hundred gallons of juice per day. . . . You can make molasses enough on one quarter of an acre for your family for one year and use it every day of the year."

By 1860, farmers grew sorghum in many parts of the Midwest, and that year's agricultural census showed Iowa produced 1.2 million gallons, the most of any

Sorghum Culture and Profit.—Many reports come to us of success with this important crop. S. P. Jones, of Hamilton Co., Ohio, cultivating like corn and using a good dressing of stable manure, obtained of good thick molasses at the rate of 225 gallons to the acre, which at the retail price there (1.50 per gallon), would be worth \$337 50. . . . Another subscriber has made 5,000 or 6,000 gallons, much of it from cane of excellent quality, but some from green, frosted and mouldy lots, and all purified without the addition of "chemicals." . . . Another reports 14,000 gallons made in the town of N. Haven, Ct. . . . 5000 gallons were made in Meriden, Conn., 3000 in Berlin, 1000 in Southington, and large quantities in New Britain, and in other towns in the same State.

SHS (IOWA CITY), AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST, FEBRUARY 1865, PAGE 37

The *American Agriculturist* in 1865 urged farmers to grow sorghum for syrup.

ALL PHOTOS BY PAM OCKENFELS



state. Yet farmers consumed nearly all the syrup at home or sold it locally. "Storekeepers would take it as payment, as they did with eggs and pork," Anderson said.

Then the Civil War broke out. Union blockades of cane sugar shipments from Louisiana created a sugar shortage in the North and a powerful impetus for growing more sorghum. Midwestern states produced twice as much syrup in 1862 as they had two years before, and by 1863, Iowa's contribution surged to three million gallons.

The sorghum boom began to stabilize when cane sugar prices dropped after the war. Syrup production continued to rise in the United States until 1880, however, when it peaked at more than 28 million gallons—enough to fill 42 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Iowa alone contributed more than 2 million gallons. At the time, hundreds of Iowa farmers were still growing and processing sorghum. Most,

like Ellmaker, made syrup with their own or a neighbor's small, horse-turned press, but a few used steam-operated mills that produced thousands of gallons a year.

Meanwhile, the federal government was searching for cost-effective ways to make sugar from crops besides sugar cane, which didn't grow well in northern and western states. But after years of experiments, scientists concluded that making sugar from sorghum syrup proved too difficult to be economical. They succeeded with sugar beets, however, and also developed cheap glucose syrup from corn. By the 1890s, sorghum syrup's popularity in Iowa began to fade. "It is doubtful if sorghum ever dominated the enterprises of many prairie farmers," writes agricultural historian Allan Bogue. "A patch of an acre or less satisfied the sweet tooth of most families."

Several factors prevented the development of a major commercial market for sorghum syrup. The plants didn't grow as reliably as expected in the North, and except during times of war or

economic hardship, cane sugar's price never climbed enough to offset the amount of time and labor needed to make quality sorghum syrup. Later generations of Iowa farmers also sometimes spurned old-fashioned foods, Anderson said: "There was a bit of a stigma to that for some people—it was something your parents or your grandparents did, or that you had done when you were poor."

And not only was family size shrinking by the early 1900s, but more people were moving to town, leaving fewer behind to help on the farm. "If you're going to process sorghum, you need to have a big family or you need to have cousins or others to help you," Anderson noted. "And if people are primarily leaving the farm, or if Uncle Dave who used to help now lives in Cedar Rapids or Milwaukee, it becomes a lot harder."

Some farmers did keep growing sweet sorghum through the turn of the century. Katherine Buxbaum, who grew up in Washington County, Iowa, during the 1890s, reminisced about watching



her neighbors make syrup as a child: "Some magic drew us to the open door of the kiln shed, where huge iron pans . . . set over the fire of the brick stoves. Stationed by the pans were [the farmer's] sons, armed with long wooden paddles, stirring the thickening syrup. . . . We stepped across the threshold from the slight chill of a September night into warmth, fragrance and Rembrandt tones of color. . . . The rhythm of the paddles as they moved to and fro through the rich brown syrup made a kind of wordless music."

Although the Manternachs don't recall what year they started growing sorghum, Ralph Manternach's oldest sibling, Florence Schockemoehl, who is in her late 80s, remembers her grandfather using a roller press to extract juice from his crop. Later during the Great Depression, Florence and Ralph's father used the press. "The syrup kept 10 years in a cool

place. When we were running low, we'd plant more sorghum," Schockemoehl recalled of her childhood in the 1930s.

Syrup production resurged in Iowa during the Great Depression, said Mike Witmer, agricultural programs and collections manager at Living History Farms in Urbandale, Iowa. "My grandfather really liked the heavy molasses taste," Witmer said. "People who lived through the Depression either like it now for nostalgic reasons or can't stand it because they ate so much; it was all they could afford."

After World War II, a decrease in farm labor caused production to plummet. But the syrup remained a specialty product for Iowa families like the Manternachs. When Ralph Manternach was a boy in the 1940s, his father grew about two acres of sorghum each year to support a growing family. On crisp autumn mornings and again after school, Ralph and his siblings helped harvest and process the crop. "We were still doing all our other chores too. We were milking

cows by hand at the same time," he recalled.

The family made about 250 gallons of syrup in those days, consuming about 25 gallons themselves and selling the rest to relatives and neighbors. "My dad cooked sorghum for most of a week," Manternach said. "My mother had many recipes. We put sorghum in milk and stirred it with a spoon. We put it on pancakes, and my mother made cookies from it. We put it in pork and beans."

But the annual ritual ended when Ralph and Florence's mother became terminally ill in 1956. It wasn't until 1979 that Ralph and his wife, Rita, decided to reunite their now-dispersed family by dusting off the old iron press that had sat unused in their barn for more than two decades. The event was such a success that three more sorghum festivals followed. About every ten years, relatives from all over the United States travel to

PHOTO BY PAM OCKENFELS



The syrup is strained one more time. After cooling down, it's ready to be enjoyed.

Ralph and Rita's farm to see each other and take part in a generations-old tradition.

To prepare for the 2010 festival, Ralph and his brother Larry used a machine planter to sow half an acre of sorghum seeds in May. In late June, local family members cultivated, weeded, and thinned the rows, and in July they weeded again and pulled suckers (offshoots) from the sorghum plants to keep the sugar

concentrated in the main stalk. In early August, ten relatives weeded for the last time.

Processing seven-foot-tall sorghum plants takes skill and hard labor, much of it by hand. On Thursday before the big reunion weekend, dozens of family members arrived to help harvest. Men and women stripped the leaves, sliced off the seed heads, and cut the stalks with corn knives.

They piled the cane in a wagon and hauled it to the sorghum press. Then they dug the fire pit. The work—punctuated by jokes, conversation, and a lunch of grilled hamburgers—lasted all day.

On Friday, the Manternachs began making syrup the way they had for decades. One man hooked a John Deere tractor to the press's wooden sweep (or lever) and drove in circles around the press while Ralph's identical twin, Joe—dressed in a striped railroad cap and overalls that matched his brother's—fed a few stalks of cane at a time between the press's two iron rollers. As the tractor wheels turned, so did the rollers, squeezing sorghum juice into an old metal bucket. A horse had turned the press in Ralph's father's day, harnessed to the sweep and walking in circles.

The family then strained the juice into the boiler pan and cooked it down over the fire. Cooking sorghum juice takes particular care. If removed from the fire too early, the syrup will be thin and susceptible to mold. Stirred too little, it will stick and burn. And if impurities aren't removed it's inedible.

Six hours passed as Ralph, Joe, and other family members skimmed the pan, fed the fire, and traded stories. Again and again Ralph checked the syrup's temperature and consistency. When it had reached 224 degrees he deemed it ready, and four men lifted the pan off the fire pit. At the house they strained the syrup into a whiskey barrel to cool before draining it into glass jars. One batch of syrup—about 18 gallons—was finished.

The Manternachs made a second batch on Saturday, when a

buffet of chili and chicken noodle and kielbasa soups provided respite from the afternoon's chill drizzle. And Sunday dawned clear and warm. Ralph and Rita rose at 4:30 a.m., for this was the day they'd invited the community to come watch them make syrup—and sample the results.

The day's first batch of sorghum juice was on the fire by six o'clock. At noon, the Manternachs served four hundred people a lunch of sausage, pancakes, and sorghum syrup. The second batch came off the fire at 8:30 that night, and family members bade good-bye bearing bottles of sweet amber syrup.

"Just being with everybody

else, that's my favorite thing. Just having all of us together," said Ralph's sister Florence Schockemoehl of her fourth sorghum festival. "The children have gone so far away."

It's no small feat to organize an event for hundreds of people, said Rita Manternach, 72. But she and Ralph enjoyed the work and felt satisfied to have shared a practice that was part of their lives for so long.

"I like doing that for people," she said. "That's part of me."

Like other sorghum farmers his age, Ralph knows he won't be able to play a central role in making syrup a decade from now. Whether the tradition continues

depends on the next generation—in Ralph's case, his sons, who farm nearby.

"I tell them it's up to them if they want to do it," Ralph said. "They have ten years to think about it." ♦

Amy Karon is a freelance writer living in Madison, Wisconsin. Her mother's family is from northwestern Iowa, and she fondly recalls childhood visits to the churches and cornfields of Newell, population 838.



PHOTO BY PAM OCKENFELS

NOTE ON SOURCES

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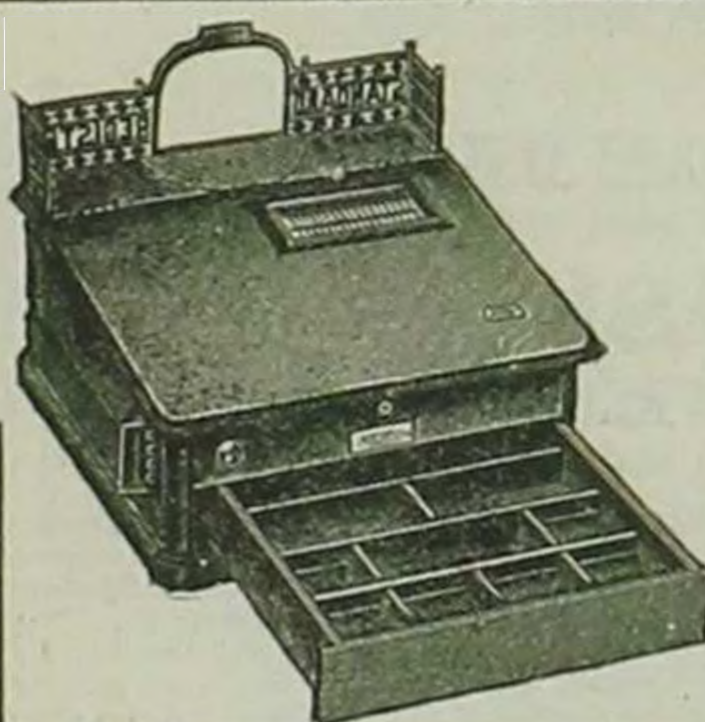
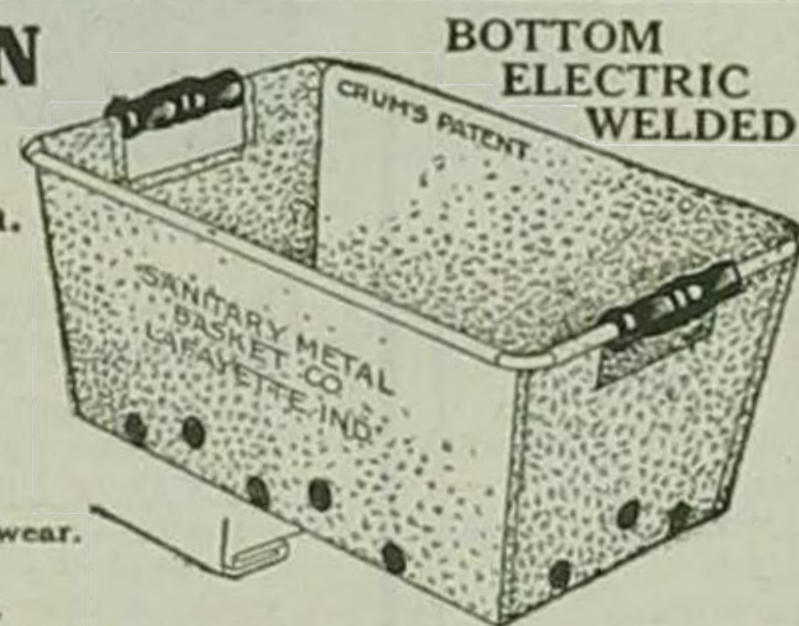
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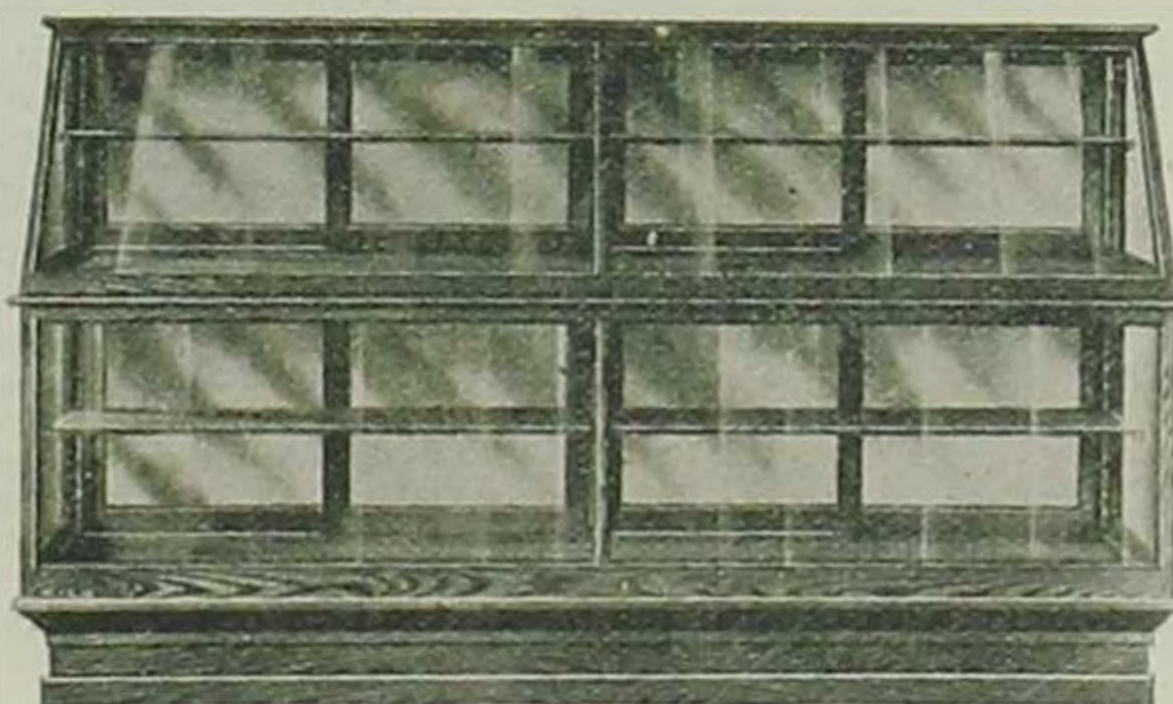
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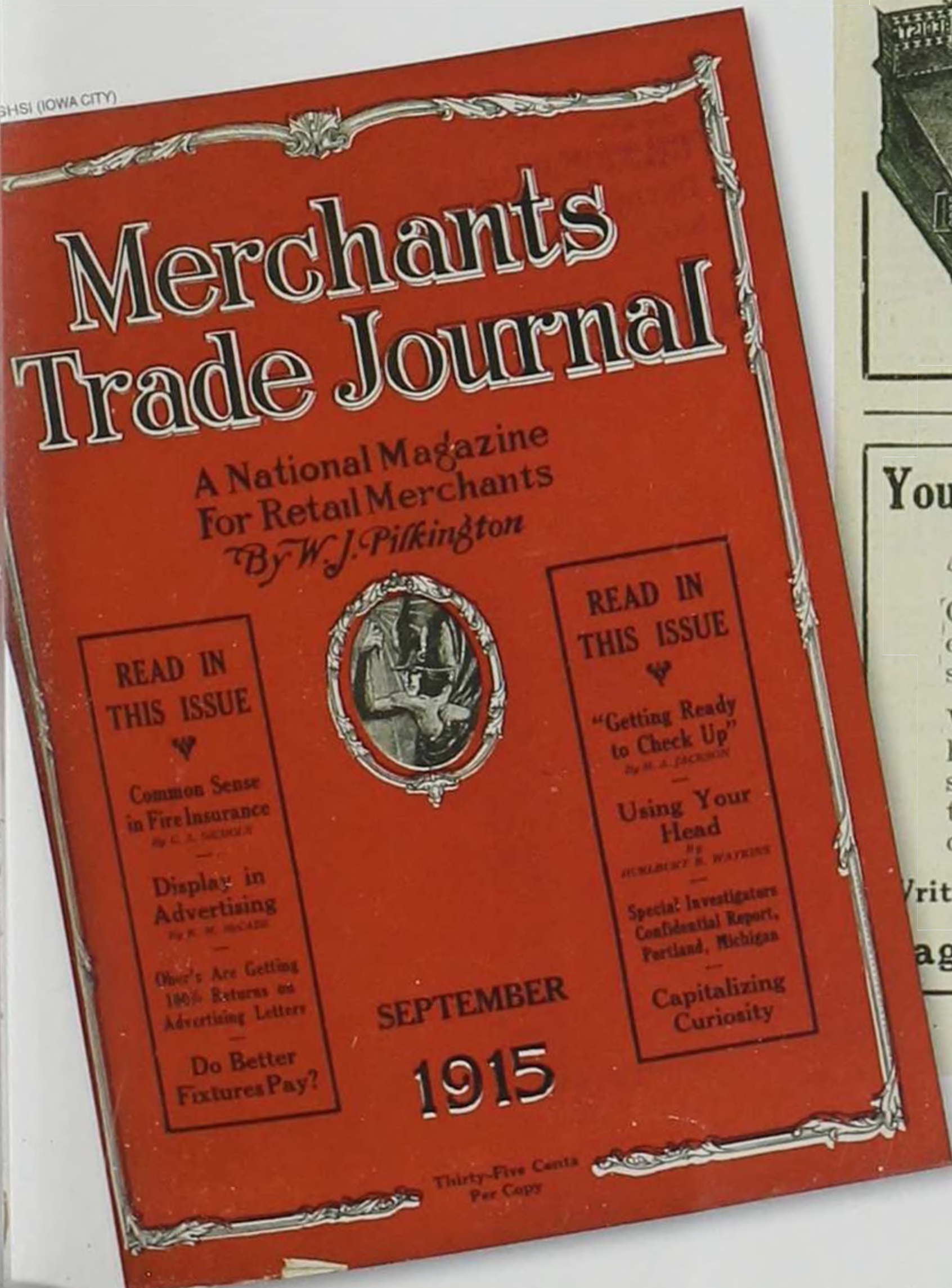
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