

## THE QUAKERS OF IOWA IN 1850

[The following *Journal of Robert Lindsey* should be read in connection with Dr. Louis T. Jones's volume on *The Quakers of Iowa*, which has recently been published by The State Historical Society of Iowa. This journal not only furnishes a view of Iowa Quakerism in 1850, but it illustrates the peculiar phraseology and methods employed by the Friends in their religious services.—EDITOR]

### INTRODUCTION

Typical of the wanderings of the early itinerant Quaker ministry were the religious travels of the two English Quakers, Benjamin Seebohm<sup>1</sup> and Robert Lindsey.<sup>2</sup> There was a time when the Quaker preacher, armed with a "minute for religious service" from his Monthly, Quarterly, or even Yearly Meeting,<sup>3</sup> free from the modern embarrassments of fixed salary or pastoral charge, and in

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Seebohm was born at Friedensthal, Germany, on February 20, 1798. Of Quaker parentage and well educated, while still a youth he traveled through many parts of Germany as interpreter for various Quaker ministers from abroad. In 1814 he went to England, where he was recorded as a minister by Brighthouse Monthly Meeting. Ten years later he began his religious travels in the ministry which in time took him to all parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland, and finally to America. At the age of seventy-three years he died in England, on June 2, 1871. See *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, pp. 1-108.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Lindsey was born at Gildersome in Yorkshire, England, in 1801. Educated for the medical profession, he turned from that calling and at the age of twenty-four entered business for himself at Brighthouse, Yorkshire, as a draper. In business, however, he did not prove successful; but from estates inherited by his wife, Sarah Crosland, he was enabled to take up the, to him, more agreeable work of traveling in the ministry. Before his death in 1863 he, accompanied part of the time by his wife Sarah, journeyed to all parts of Great Britain, twice to America, and to Australia and New Zealand. See *Travels of Robert and Sarah Lindsey*, by their daughter, pp. 1-10, 186-189.

<sup>3</sup> Among the Friends, ministers traveling beyond the limits of their own Quarterly Meetings were required to have written statements or "minutes" from their own Monthly Meeting signifying the fact of their recognized position in the Society and that they were properly liberated for religious service.

“frank disregard of [all] outward and visible signs”,<sup>4</sup> traveled far and wide, obedient only to what he believed to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But with the gradual disappearance of the old-time Quaker in America and especially in the West this ministerial characteristic has likewise all but disappeared.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore interesting to examine the private journals of two such men and to see Iowa as they saw it in 1850.

Benjamin Seebohm and Robert Lindsey bade farewell to relatives and friends in England on the 19th day of October, 1846, and turned their faces toward America, little knowing when they might return. After a voyage of almost three weeks, on the 7th of November<sup>6</sup> their vessel, the “*Britannia*”, bore Seebohm and Lindsey into the port of Boston, where in 1656 the first Quakers had landed on American shores.<sup>7</sup> From Boston they continued their journey to New York City, and thence to Philadelphia, where at once they came into contact with the Wilburite schism then destroying the unity of the Society of Friends in America.<sup>8</sup> With Philadelphia as a central point these two visiting ministers now traveled far and wide throughout the entire field of American Quakerism. During the first three years of their stay they journeyed to and fro in the Yearly Meetings of

To go beyond the Yearly Meeting such a certificate was required from the Quarterly Meeting concerned; and to go beyond seas, the consent of the Yearly Meeting to which the party belonged must have first been obtained. This practice is still generally in vogue.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen's *Quaker Strongholds*, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> John Y. Hoover's *Life Sketches or Jesus Only*, an account of his own religious labors, is an excellent portrayal of the life of a traveling Quaker minister in the western country.

<sup>6</sup> *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, pp. 174, 175.

<sup>7</sup> The first Quakers known to have landed in America were Ann Austin and Mary Fisher, who entered Boston harbor on July 11, 1656. See Jones's *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hodgson's *The Society of Friends in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II, pp. 113-117.

Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, New England, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina, as well as to the scattered Quaker settlements in Kentucky and Tennessee and to East and West Canada, covering in all no less than eighteen thousand miles.<sup>9</sup>

On the 11th day of December, 1849, Seebohm and Lindsey were in attendance upon the "select meeting"<sup>10</sup> at Raisin Valley, near Adrian, Michigan, and by the first of January they were on their way to visit their brethren in the faith beyond the Mississippi in Iowa.<sup>11</sup> Their course now lay over the frozen plains of southern Michigan and northern Indiana and Illinois to Chicago. Along the way for the first time they saw the American Indians; and far out over the open prairie they watched a prairie fire, one of the most awe-inspiring scenes of the far western wilds.<sup>12</sup> From Chicago their way led them some two hundred and sixty miles to the southward where they planned on entering Iowa. The story of their travels within this State may best be gained from the portion of the journal of Robert Lindsey which follows.

LOUIS T. JONES

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA  
IOWA CITY IOWA

JOURNAL OF ROBERT LINDSEY

*Seventh day, 19th.*— We reached the Mississippi River this morning about 11 o'clock, and on enquiry it appeared as if it might be safe to cross over the ice. Tho' there had been some accidents very recently from parties attempting it: one of a very serious character 40 miles down the river,

<sup>9</sup> *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, pp. 180-298.

<sup>10</sup> Meetings for church business among the Friends were kept "select", only members of the Society being allowed to attend.

<sup>11</sup> *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, pp. 299, 301.

<sup>12</sup> *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, p. 305.

when a carriage containing 6 individuals broke through, instantly disappeared under the ice, and 4 of them perished. In order to lighten our carriage we got out & walked over, whilst the ferryman drove our horses across on the ice, and I am thankful to say we all reached the other side in safety. The river here is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile wide, and on its western bank is situated the town of Burlington, a busy and thriving place, where we stopped to dine at one of the best hotels we have seen in the Western States, and afterwards went on towards Salem, and about 7 in the evening reached the house of our friend Joseph D. Hoag<sup>13</sup> of East Grove, 5 miles from Salem. Thus after a journey of 13 days, and travelling nearly 400 miles in which distance we had not fallen in with a single member of our Society, or any in profession with us, we were favoured once more to get amongst Friends, & to reach the distant State of Iowa, which I think may be very properly called "the far West", being, I suppose, not much short of 1400 miles from the seaboard. We understand it is only about 12 years since the first members of our Society came into this State,<sup>14</sup> and now there are 12 settled meetings for worship, 3 Monthly, & 1 Quarterly Meeting, containing upwards of 2000 individuals, and these numbers rapidly increasing by emigration from the other States.

*1st day. 1st mo. 20th 1850.*— This morning accompanied by our friend Joseph D. Hoag attended meeting at Salem. A considerable number of Friends belong to this meeting,

<sup>13</sup> Joseph D. Hoag came to Lee County from New Hampshire in the early forties. Like his father, Joseph Hoag, he was a Quaker preacher of great power. He had much to do with early Quakerism in this State. See the index to the writer's volume on *The Quakers of Iowa*, published by The State Historical Society of Iowa.

<sup>14</sup> The first Quaker known to have entered Iowa came in the fall of 1835. The first Monthly Meeting of Friends established west of the Mississippi was set up at Salem, Iowa, on October 8, 1838. See the writer's volume on *The Quakers of Iowa*, pp. 44, 45.

but owing to the weather, many were prevented getting out; yet it was a large meeting, and heavenly goodness was not wanting in fulfilling, in the experience of some of us who were made deeply to feel that of ourselves we "could do nothing", that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, & not be weary: they shall walk & not faint". After meeting we dined at Peter Collin's, not far from the meeting house, and a number of friends calling in to see us after dinner, a very precious religious opportunity occurred, in which dear Benjn was enabled to hand forth the word of encouragement to the Lord's visited children to be faithful in following on to know the Lord in all the ways of his requirings. In the evening we returned home with our friend Josh. D. Hoag to his house at East Grove. We hoped to have found letters here waiting for us, but have been disappointed, none having yet reached here. Tho' it is likely they have been 3 weeks on their way from New York; but the mails in this Western country are very uncertain, so that we must endeavour to exercise patience, a needful virtue, but one of which I sometimes think I have a very small share.

*Second day 21st.*— In looking towards visiting the meetings of Friends in this State, it seems as if it would be needful to have some one with us who is acquainted with the roads, and the situation of the Meetings.<sup>15</sup> The roads in many places being difficult, and several rivers and streams to cross which are sometimes dangerous, and our friend Joseph D. Hoag having kindly consented to accompany us as soon as he can make arrangements for leaving home,

<sup>15</sup> In June, 1850, after Benjamin Seebohm and Robert Lindsey had journeyed in Iowa, the "Meeting for Sufferings" of Indiana Yearly Meeting published a little book entitled *Statement of Indiana Yearly Meeting and all the Meetings Thereunto Belonging*, which gave the location and the days of holding of all the Friends' meetings in Iowa.

which may probably be on 4th day morning, we are taking a day of rest at his house, which is very acceptable after our late long & wearisome journey from Michigan to this State. The weather today is very cold, with a high wind from the south west, and a sharp frost, so that it seems no easy matter to keep comfortably warm.

*Third day 22nd.*— This morning the thermometer was at 12 above zero, with a clear pleasant sky. A second day of rest at our friend Joseph D. Hoag's, which was spent in writing, reading, walking out for exercise, and in social conversation with our dear friends: and not altogether unprofitably I hope, a comfortable quiet feeling being mercifully vouchsafed, that we were here at this time, not in our own wills, but in the counsel of Him who doeth all things well and wisely: and when this evidence is felt, how are hard things made easy, and bitter things sweet, and renewed capacity is witnessed in all things to give God thanks. This evening I had the comfort of receiving a letter from my dear Wife up to the date of 13th of last mo. giving satisfactory accounts of the welfare of my dear family: fresh cause for thankfulness to our Father in Heaven.

*Fourth day. 1st mo. 23rd 1850.*— This morning we left East Grove accompanied by our friend Joseph D. Hoag as our guide, and our friend Amos Hoag for driver, intending to visit a settlement of Friends 60 or 80 miles north of Salem, where a meeting has very recently been established by the name of Oakley meeting,<sup>16</sup> a branch of Salem Monthly Meeting. The weather was very pleasant, and a few miles on our way we crossed the Skunk River on the ice, and forded a branch of it where the ice was broken up, reaching

<sup>16</sup> This meeting in Cedar County, later known as Red Cedar and now called Springdale, was in 1850 an "indulged meeting" going under the name of Oakley. See *Statement of Indiana Yearly Meeting and all the Meetings Thereunto Belonging*, 1858, p. 59.

the village of Mount Pleasant in good dinner time. After leaving here we pretty soon entered upon a prairie, nearly 20 miles over without a single house or inhabitant upon it. About sunset we had got more than half way across when we came to a creek 3 or 4 ft. deep & probably 20 yds. wide. The ice on which was partly thawed so as not to bear the weight of our horses, & yet so strong that we could not break our way through it, so that we were under the necessity of going back to the last house we had passed, which was at least 10 miles distant, & ask for a night's lodging. We reached it about 8 o'clock, but the owner of it said he could not accommodate us; but directed us to another house 2 or 3 miles further: A second time we were dis-appointed; but on our third application we succeeded in getting a shelter for ourselves & our horses. Benjn. & myself were privileged with a bed; but our friends who were with us had to lie on the floor covered with their buffalo robes. Although it was but a mean place, & the man charged us a dollar & a half for our accommodation, without furnishing us with anything more than some food for our horses, we had cause to be thankful for it, as the night proved very stormy & wet.

*5th day 24th.*—This morning we were stirring pretty early, having 9 miles to go before we should meet with a place to get breakfast. The roads were muddy, & the waters in the small streams considerably risen. Soon after 10 o'clock we reached a house where we got a comfortable breakfast, which we much enjoyed, having had little since yesterday noon, except some biscuit which we had with us. Soon after dusk we reached a house 19 miles further on our way where we expected to lodge; but were obliged to go on 5 miles beyond to a small tavern where we got entertainment; but of a very ordinary kind.

*Sixth day 25th.*—Left our lodging place early, & had a pleasant morning's ride of 13 miles to Iowa City, having

to cross the Iowa River on the ice just before reaching the City. There had been a sharp frost through the preceding night, & the roads were pretty good. The ice on the streams was not so much broken up, as it had been further south. In the afternoon we came towards the settlement of Friends at Oakley in Cedar County; but had the misfortune, when within 5 miles of the end of our journey, to break one of the axletrees of our carriage, & had to leave it in the midst of the prairie, & come on in our friend Joseph D. Hoag's 1 horse buggy, whilst he & our friend Amos Hoag, each of them rode one of our horses to the nearest Friend's house where we could lodge, which proved to be Lawrie Tatum's,<sup>17</sup> where we were cordially received & kindly welcomed into their humble dwelling by him & his wife, an agreeable & interesting young woman, who has recently ventured out into this new country to share in the toils of her husband in providing a home on these western prairies. There are several other young couples settled around them, similarly circumstanced, having come out here within the last 4 years, & who have displayed a commendable concern in having a meeting established among them, which has been accomplished within the last few months, & is for the present held in one of their houses, until they are able to build a meeting house for the purpose.

*Seventh day 26th.*—Some of the Friends of the settlement went out this morning to bring in our carriage, & hope to be able to fix it up for us to proceed on our journey after being with them over tomorrow. Their usual first day morning meeting, & having a public meeting in the evening in a schoolhouse in the settlement, arrangements for which have been made, & notice given in the neighbourhood.

<sup>17</sup> Laurie Tatum was the pioneer Quaker of Cedar County, Iowa, settling near the present site of Springdale in 1844. See the writer's volume on *The Quakers of Iowa*, p. 68.



The weather cold, & a pretty sharp frost. Went to dine at Greenbury Wood's, a short distance from our quarters, where we also spent the afternoon & evening, & before we left them were favoured with a precious religious opportunity, after which we returned to our friend Lawrie Tatum's to lodge with the grateful feeling resting upon our spirits that the Lord had not yet forgotten us in our wanderings in this western land; but was still pleased at times to arise for our comfort & encouragement, & prove Himself to be a very present Helper in every time of need.

*First day, 1st mo. 27th.*— A fine bright winter's morning. The thermometer at  $10^{\circ}$  above zero. At 10 o'clock attended the usual first day morning meeting at Oakley held at the house of Lawrie Tatum. Nearly all their members, & some of their neighbours were present, & it was a satisfactory meeting. At 6 in the evening we had an appointed meeting in a schoolhouse 3 miles from here, which was very crowded, & the forepart of it in consequence thereof a good deal unsettled; but thro' patient waiting a precious calm was mercifully vouchsafed, & dear Benjamin was strengthened to labour among them in right authority, & the meeting concluded to good satisfaction.

*Second day 28th.*— This morning the thermometer was only  $4^{\circ}$  above zero, with a strong north west wind, so that it was matter of serious thought whether it would be prudent for us to endeavour to cross the prairie whilst this wind was blowing; & the cold so piercing; but about an hour after sunrise the wind somewhat abated, & we ventured to proceed, after having wrapped ourselves up as well as we could, & covered our ears to prevent their being frost-bitten, & were favoured to get on pretty comfortably to Iowa City where we stopped for dinner. Here we finished our letters to go by the steamer of the 20th of next month, & posted

them, hoping they may get on in time, as we find the mails in these parts are very uncertain. Having some repairs to get done to our carriage we could not start from here till near sunset; but the evening being fine & moonlight, we made about 10 miles, & then stopped for the night at Dennis's Tavern, where we met with pretty comfortable accommodation. Iowa City is the capital of the State, & the seat of the Legislature. It has a handsome State House, several places of worship, some good stores, & probably about 1000 inhabitants. Owing to the river Iowa upon which the town is located not being navigable, it has not improved so rapidly as some other places.

*Third day 29th.*—The thermometer this morning was 2° below zero, but owing to the air being very still, we did not feel the cold nearly so much as yesterday morning when the thermometer was several degrees higher. We got an early start, & had a pleasant drive of upwards of 20 miles to Marengo, the county town of Iowa county, & seat of justice, containing 8 houses & a log Court House. A poor place where we could not get even a feed of corn for our horses; but were obliged to go on to the next farmhouse, where we stopped for dinner. In travelling along this morning I was made thankful in feeling something of the comforting presence of Him whose tender compassion is over all his works, & humbly to rejoice in the belief that He was not unmindful of us, unworthy as we are: and oh! saith my soul, that He may continue to watch over us, & to preserve us from evil for His mercy's sake. In the afternoon we came on, & about 7 in the evening reached Talbots Tavern, where we took up our quarters for the night, having made 44 miles in the course of the day. The country we have passed over for the last 2 days is mostly rolling prairie, with scattered timber of a small growth, tho' there are also some groves of small extent, & trees of a good size. This is a very newly

settled part of the State, & the houses of the settlers, or cabins, as they may more properly be called, are few & far between.

*Fourth day 1st mo. 30th 1850.*— This morning we passed over a prairie 18 miles across. No house in the whole distance: neither tree nor shrub to be seen as far as the eye could reach. At noon we stopped at a log cabin to get something for dinner, & a little food for our horses, & before sunset reached the Hammer's Settlement, where 5 or 6 families of Friends are located, who removed up here from East Tennessee 2 or 3 yrs. ago. We took up our quarters at the widow Hammer's, whose husband was a minister in our Society, and deceased since they came out here.

*Fifth day 31st.*— Today the weather was very cold, the thermometer at noon being only 4° above zero, with a strong wind from the north west, so that we found it difficult to keep warm even within doors. The house of our friend with whom we lodged being far from tight, the wind had free access through many openings, both in the walls & roof. At 2 in the afternoon we had a meeting with the few friends who reside in this neighbourhood at the house of the widow Hammer, where they are in the practice of assembling together for the purpose of Divine worship every first day morning, though they have not yet any regularly established meeting. The opportunity was satisfactory & relieving, best help being mercifully near in the needful time to strengthen to discharge apprehended duty, & the feeling of peace was the unmerited reward of constrained obedience to the Lord's requiring.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Of this meeting at Rachel Hammer's home Benjamin Seeborn wrote in his Journal:

“It was nearly two o'clock before Friends could be all got together, some living seven miles off. The morning was windy and very cold — the thermometer kept falling, and by noon it was about 4 deg. above zero. Eighteen up-grown persons, and about a dozen children assembled at the widow Hammer's, and we

*Sixth day 2nd mo. 1st 1850.*— This morning the thermometer was  $10^{\circ}$  below zero, the greatest extreme of cold that we have yet experienced, but there being very little wind, we did not feel it so sensibly as at other times. We left "Hammers Settlement" about 8 o'clock, & had a pleasant drive of 12 miles to Parkers' Mill, where we stopped for dinner, & in the afternoon came on towards the settlement of Friends on the Three Rivers, but owing to night coming on we were not able to reach it this evening; but after crossing the Des Moines River, concluded to stay at a small village called Dudley, 5 miles from the Three Rivers. In travelling along this morning, we, for the first time, got sight of 2 or 3 prairie wolves, an animal somewhat smaller than the common wolf; but yet very destructive to the lambs & sheep of the settlers. This part of the State of Iowa is just beginning to settle. For the last 3 days, we have only seen 3 small villages, none of which contained more than 8 or 10 dwellings, & we have several times travelled 8 or 10 miles without seeing a house.

*Seventh day 2nd.*— Soon after breakfast came on from Dudley to Middle River. The most distant & most westerly meeting of Friends on this Continent, being more than 1500 miles west from New York. We understand it is not more than 4 years since this part of the country was occupied by tribes of Indians who sold out their rights to "The United States", & have now been located beyond the Missouri River.<sup>19</sup> We may indeed be said to be almost arrived at the

sat round a large fire; but in a house that let in the external air, both through the roof and the sides, it was not easy to keep warm. I trust we had a pretty good meeting, and the feeling of quiet solemnity at the conclusion comforted me a little."— *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, p. 314.

<sup>19</sup> On October 11, 1842, the Sac and Fox Indians ceded to the United States the last of their lands in Iowa, reserving the right to occupy the same "for the term of three years from the time of signing the treaty". A few straggling bands of the above tribes remained in Iowa after the allotted time and were removed beyond the Missouri in 1846. See Kappler's *Indian Affairs*, Vol. II, p. 546; also, Parish's *John Chambers*, pp. 184-186, and note 365.

bound of civilized life, about a dozen miles beyond this being the furthest village of any size settled by the whites. This afternoon at 2 o'clock had an appointed meeting with the Friends of Middle River, which was held to good satisfaction, after which we returned to our friend John Pearsons to lodge. Today the weather was very cold with a sharp piercing wind which was very trying in passing to & from meeting over the open prairie.

*First day, 2nd mo. 3rd 1850.*— Last night the weather was very cold, & our lodging room being somewhat open it was not easy to keep warm, although we had the fire kept up all night. This morning the thermometer was 20° below zero, so that whilst putting on my clothes, although within a few feet of a large wood fire, my fingers were so benumbed with the cold that I could not finish dressing without having frequent recourse to the fire to restore feeling. After breakfast we left our friend John Pearsons, & came on 8 miles to the Lower River, where a considerable number of Friends are recently located, & had a meeting with them in a school house. The opportunity was a favoured one, & renewed ability was mercifully afforded to be found faithful in the little, & peace of mind was vouchsafed as the unmerited reward in the retrospect. Benjn had good service amongst them, but the weather was so excessively cold, & the house so open that it was trying to us to sit the meeting. We went to dine & lodge at Joseph Carey's, & were hospitably entertained in his cabin, which he had only put up a few weeks ago, having very recently removed here from Indiana.

*Second day 4th.*— At the house where we lodged last night, & which was only a single room about 18 ft. by 16 ft. 12 individuals were accommodated; our company, consisting of 4 men, were privileged to occupy the 2 beds: & the family consisting of the friend, his wife & 5 children, & a young man who was also there, were arranged on the floor,

& on a trundle bedstead which was drawn out from beneath one of the other beds. There was a good fire most of the night, & the openings between the logs of which the building was composed, being well plastered up with mud, we were more warm and comfortable than we had been for several nights past: & I may say that under this humble roof we were treated with genuine hospitality & I do not remember to have felt myself more at home for a long time. We left Lower River this morning on our way towards Pleasant Plains in company with a number of Friends from that neighbourhood who had been up here as a committee to visit Friends here on their application to have a Preparative Meeting established amongst them. Soon after we started we came to the Lower River, which we had to cross on the ice, but the banks being steep & slippery, we were obliged to loose the horses from the carriages, & let them down by ropes, whilst the horses had to be led across. It was a novel scene to see a number of men engaged in this way in the midst of a western forest, but it was safely & quickly done, & we were soon on our way again, & had a pleasant drive of 5 hours, which brought us to the banks of the Desmoines, a large navigable river, emptying into the Mississippi, which we passed on the ice, & I stopped at a village called Red Rock for the night soon after crossing the river. The thermometer at sunrise this morning was  $10^{\circ}$  below zero, but as there has been very little wind thro' the day, we have not felt this degree of cold to be very unpleasant.

*Third day 5th.*—Twelve miles on our way after leaving Red Rock, we came to Pella, a pretty considerable village situated in the midst of a fine rolling prairie, where we stopped to dine. This place was settled by a body of Dutch who removed to this country 2 years ago, on account of some restrictions they were under in regard to their religion. They have purchased a large tract of land, & are

rapidly progressing in improvements. Their houses & out-buildings are much superior to those of the other settlers, & give evidence that they have brought with them the industry & management of their mother country. Their numbers, we understand, are increasing every year by fresh immigrations from Holland. At present there may probably be about 1500 in the settlement, which includes a district of several square miles.<sup>20</sup> In the afternoon we came on to Spring Creek where a meeting of Friends is settled, which we expect to be at tomorrow. Took up our quarters at Thomas Staffords', where we met with more comfortable accommodation than we have fallen in with since coming among the Friends in this State. About 3 miles before we reached here we passed thro' the thriving village of Oskaloosa, the largest place we have seen for 10 days past. It may probably contain 500 inhabitants.

*Fourth day 2nd mo 6th 1850.*—Attended the usual week day meeting at Spring Creek, at the close of which was held

<sup>20</sup> Of this visit at Pella, Seebohm wrote thus:

"Opposite the tavern at which we stopped was a 'store,' kept by a German, from Osabruck. I soon made his acquaintance [Seebohm spoke German fluently], and found him an interesting and intelligent young man. Wishing to obtain a little information respecting this interesting settlement, he readily accompanied me to H. P. Scholte, the minister and chief agent in its formation. We found him in his study, and met with a cordial reception. He is a man of learning and property, living in a large good house. It appears that he and a number of others separated from the National Church, as protestants against rationalism, neology, and the prevailing infidelity, and being persecuted—Scholte himself was imprisoned—they finally concluded to leave the country. They bought a large tract of land on the ridge between the Des Moines and Skunk Rivers,—two townships, or seventy-two square miles,—and founded the little town of Pella, adopting that name on account of its historical interest, and are now fast improving the country all round. Their congregation consists of about one thousand two hundred individuals, and more are coming. Though they united to make the first purchase out of a common fund, it does not appear that they have any community of goods established among them, but the respective families are independent freeholders after they have fixed upon a particular location. The site of the town and the whole settlement is well chosen."—*Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, p. 318. See also Van der Zee's *The Hollanders of Iowa*, Chs. VIII–XI.

their Preparative Meeting, when men & women Friends transacted their business at the same time, & in the same apartment, having no division in the house. But as Friends here are increasing it is to be hoped they will be able to obviate this inconvenience by an addition to their present meeting house, or by building a larger one. There is quite an interesting & hopeful body of Friends belonging to this meeting, & we were favoured with an open & satisfactory time amongst them. The weather today was warm & spring like: a great change within the last 48 hours. After meeting we returned to our quarters to dine & lodge.

*Fifth day. 7th.*—Left Spring Creek early this morning, & reached Waugh's Tavern before noon where we stopped for dinner. In the afternoon went forward to Richland 20 miles, where we arrived about dusk, & found a hospitable welcome under the humble roof of our worthy friend Daniel Wilson, a valuable elder in our Society. The district of country thro' which we passed today was more settled than the western & northern parts where we have travelled within the last fortnight, & according to present appearances will, before long, be pretty thickly populated. We understand that no less than 50,000 emigrants crossed the Mississippi into this State in the past year.<sup>21</sup> This morning we have frost with a slight sprinkling of snow, but very moderate compared with the weather we had a few days ago.

*Sixth day 8th.*—Came on from Richland to Pleasant Plains, 9 miles, & at 2 o'clock in the afternoon attended the Select Preparative Meeting there. It was small, being composed of but 5 individuals besides ourselves; but to my weak faith & patience it was a season of close trial, believing it to be required to hand forth a word of encouragement to this little flock, whilst my own soul was almost ready to faint for

<sup>21</sup> The population of Iowa in 1849 was 154,573; in 1850 it had risen to 192,214, an increase of 37,641. See Hull's *Census of Iowa for 1850*, p. 198.



a morsel of bread, & my mind was afterwards brought into sore conflict fearing lest I had given that unto others which was designed for my own strength; but in the evening a very precious sense of my Heavenly Father's love was mercifully vouchsafed, & my tossed soul was comforted, & enabled once more to cast my burden upon the Lord & still to trust in Him, the rock of my strength. After meeting, went to Addison Johnson's to lodge, a short distance from the meeting house, where we found comfortable quarters for ourselves & our horses. The day was fine, & the weather moderate for the season.

*Seventh day, 2nd mo. 9th 1850.*— Attended Monthly Meeting at Pleasant Plains. A large & interesting meeting, many more Friends being present than could find seats. But it was satisfactory to learn that they are intending to build a larger house to accommodate their increasing numbers. The business was conducted in a solid & weighty manner, there appearing to be amongst them a number of well concerned Friends who are endeavouring in faithfulness & in simplicity to uphold our religious testimonies in this far western land. May their hands be strengthened by the arms of the mighty God of Jacob. The meeting did not conclude until 4 o'clock, when we returned to our friend Addison Johnson's to dine & to lodge.

*First day 10th.*— This morning we have a slight covering of snow on the ground with the thermometer only 2° above zero. Left Pleasant Plains for Richland about 9 o'clock, & had a cold drive there. Benjn. who had been complaining for some days was quite sick on the road, so as to render the prospect of attending the meeting at Richland discouraging. But feeling rather better before meeting time, he ventured to go, & was, thro' best Help strengthened to labour in the Gospel, to the comfort & edification I trust of many who

were there assembled. The meeting was large, the house being filled to overflowing. We dined at Samuel Woodward's not far from the meeting house, & in the evening had an appointed meeting at Rocky Run, 4 miles from Richland, in a neat log meeting house, which has been recently put up by a few Friends who reside in that neighbourhood, & where a meeting was established about a year ago. Dear Benjn. altho' still far from well, was again enabled to stand forth largely in the exercise of his gift so as to raise in some of our hearts the acknowledgment that it was the Lord's doing, & marvellous in our eyes. Peaceful feelings were also mercifully vouchsafed as my portion in the retrospect of the share I had been enabled to take in the labours of the day, altho' it had been nothing more than comparable to the widow's mite, which she out of her penury, was made willing to cast into the treasury of the Lord in ancient days. After meeting we went to lodge at our friend John Howard's.

*Second day 11th.*—Left Rocky Run pretty early this morning, & reached the village of Fairfield to dinner, where I finished & posted a letter to my dear Wife to go by the steamer of the 6th of next month from Boston. In the afternoon we came on towards Salem where we arrived about 7 in the evening, & found a cordial reception & comfortable quarters at our friend Peter Collins, & had the pleasure of finding letters waiting for us from our dear connections in England.<sup>22</sup> Mine was from my dear Wife up to the date of 12th mo. 27th giving satisfactory accounts of

<sup>22</sup> Among the letters received by Benjamin Seeborn at this time was one bringing the news of the compulsory sale of his home, "Horton Grange", due to the financial depression in England following the French Revolution of 1848. Writing from Salem on February 12, 1850, to his courageous wife on the subject he said:

"I have been reading over and over again my letters, and very tender feelings are excited by their various contents. That which perhaps is the most important, though not the least trying to notice, is the allusion to Horton

the welfare of my dear family: a renewed cause of thankfulness to our Father who is in Heaven, who has indeed proved himself to be a Husband to the widow & a Father to the fatherless to those near & dear to me in a far distant land, from whom, in his ordering, I trust, I have now been so long separated.

*Third day 12th.*— At 11 o'clock this morning attended the Select Preparative Meeting at Salem: small, yet a season of encouragement to the rightly exercised, & to those whose hands are often ready to hang down. I trust the faith of these was a little strengthened still to trust in the Lord, & to stay themselves upon their God. After meeting returned to our comfortable quarters at Peter Collins, & much enjoyed the quiet & convenience of a small bedroom with a fire in it which we were privileged to occupy to ourselves: which we felt to be quite a treat after the rough fare & scanty accommodations we have had for the last 3 weeks. The weather today is quite fine, altho' sharp and cold.

*Fourth day, 2nd mo. 13th 1850.*— Attended Salem Monthly Mtg. A large gathering of Friends. It was long & interesting, not concluding until  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 4 o'clock. There was a great variety of business before the meeting, & it was entered upon, & disposed of in a weighty manner. Certificates of removal were read & accepted from 4 individuals amongst which was one for Walter Crew & his wife & 14 children from Cedar Creek in Virginia, whence they removed a few months ago, having travelled the whole distance of 1500 miles in 2 waggons, & been upwards of 2

Grange. . . . Situated as we are, I have no right to consult my inclinations, and do not wish to do so; and ignorant as I am of many particulars . . . . I am unable to form a satisfactory judgment. . . . Under my present circumstances, precluded as I am from acting myself to any good purpose, I feel that it is my duty . . . . to give my dear friends . . . . full power to act as their judgment on the spot dictates".— *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, pp. 48, 321, 322.

months on the road; but were all favoured to reach their destination in safety & in tolerable health. Benj. had good service in both meetings, & I was favoured with peace in the feeble endeavour to be found faithful in the little.

*Fifth day. 14th.*— Were at East Grove Monthly Meeting, one that has recently set off from Salem, this being but the third time of its being held. They are not yet provided with a suitable meeting place, & men & women Friends had to transact their business in the same room, with only a waggon cover hung up between them, which was very inconvenient:<sup>23</sup> neverth[e]less it was an interesting and satisfactory time, & the belief was raised in our hearts that if they keep their right places, there are those amongst them who will be prepared rightly to uphold the standard of truth in this part of the Lord's heritage. After meeting we dined at Josiah Tatum's, a son of our worthy friend Josiah Tatum of Philadelphia, & whose wife is the daughter of the late Thomas Albright formerly of Lancaster in England, who removed to this country a few years ago, & is since deceased. In the evening we returned to Salem, & were permitted to close the day under the solemn feeling of peaceful quiet which as a canopy was permitted to cover some of our minds during a precious opportunity with which we were favoured at our quarters before retiring to rest.

*Sixth day 15th.*— At 11 o'clock this morning attended Salem Select Quarterly Meeting, which I thought was a solid, favoured season, tho' we had very little vocal ministry. Silent exercise before the Lord was my lot; but I was made reverently thankful in feeling access granted in

<sup>23</sup> Almost from the founding of the Society, it had been the custom among the Friends for the men and women members to transact the business of the church separately, the meeting houses being provided with a sliding partition in the middle of the building called the "shutters" which served to segregate the two sexes when the time for the transaction of business arrived. See the writer's volume on *The Quakers of Iowa*, pp. 258, 259.

spirit to the footstool of the Holy Throne, where I was permitted to pour out my petitions in the name of Jesus for that mercy which I feel I greatly need, being made deeply sensible that I have nothing else to trust to but the free & unmerited mercy of God in Christ Jesus, my Saviour & Advocate with the Father. And very earnest also were my cries to the Lord that he would be pleased to grant the blessing of preservation from the many snares of an unwearied adversary, & that the thread of my natural life might sooner be cut than that I should live to bring any reproach upon His precious cause of Truth & righteousness for the professed purpose of promoting which I have been induced to leave all that is nearest & dearest to me upon earth, to take as it were my life in my hand, to cross the mighty deep, & be as a stranger & a pilgrim in this far western land. And oh that He would be pleased to keep me in the littleness & simplicity of a child, that I may never lose the freshness & dew of my youth, when the bud on my branches was tender, & the first fruits of all my increase was holiness to the Lord. For Jesus Christ's sake, my Lord & Saviour, grant this, I beseech thee, Almighty Father, for unless thou help me, vain is the help of man. Amen. In the afternoon attended the funeral of a woman Friend who only died the same morning. So speedily do they inter after death in this country. A meeting was held in the meeting house on the occasion which was largely attended, & proved a solemn opportunity. In the evening was present at the Quarterly Meetings Committee on Education, & found satisfaction in throwing in my mite to encourage my dear Friends in these parts in doing their best in promoting so good a work as the guarded & religious education of their offspring. The day was fine & moderate.

*Seventh day, 2nd mo. 16th 1850.*— At the Quarterly Meeting at Salem, a large, crowded, & deeply exercising meet-

ing; yet thro' Best Help it was got thro', so as to leave a peaceful quiet for which favour I desire to be thankful, feeling that I am indeed a poor weak creature, trembling & tottering at every step, that it is Almighty Grace alone that can keep me from falling. Benjn. had large & good service in both meetings. In the evening we were present at a meeting of Friends "Auxiliary Bible Society", which they have had in operation amongst them for 3 or 4 years. Also an "Association" for supplying themselves with Friends books, both which appear to have been very useful in supplying their wants in these respects, & it was truly gratifying to find the concern had taken such hold on the minds of Friends here as it appears to have done. My mind this evening has felt in a tried state from causes only fully known to the Great Searcher of hearts, & my own soul: & oh! the need I have to ask of my Heavenly Father that he would be pleased for His mercy's sake, to grant an increase of faith & patience that I may be strengthened rightly to bear all those things which He shall see meet, either to permit or to appoint as that food which is most convenient for me. Oh, that I may be enabled thro' all to adopt the language "Not my will, Oh, Father, but thine be done." There have been seasons of late when I have been almost ready to throw away my shield, as tho' it had never been anointed with oil; but a secret hope has sustained underneath that the Lord had not brought me out, as it were, to die in the wilderness; but would yet give me again to see my native land, & restore me to my family & friends in peace. So be it, saith my soul.

*First day 17th.*—The public meeting for worship at Salem this morning was very large, the house being filled to overflowing: yet were we mercifully favoured with something of the calming & solemnizing influence of His Divine Presence, who hath promised to be with his followers even

to the end of the world, & strength was graciously afforded to endeavour to be found faithful to His requirings, so that the grateful acknowledgment was again raised in my heart "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

*Second day 18th.*—Had an appointed meeting at 11 o'clock at Cedar Creek, 4 miles from Salem, which was well attended, & proved a relieving opportunity. A large body of Friends belong to this meeting, & they have lately built themselves a good frame meeting house; but have not yet got it finished. Most of the seats are nothing more than rough boards supported at each end by blocks of wood. Indeed this is the way in which all the meeting houses in this State that we have yet seen are fitted up; tho' it is the expectation of the Friends belonging to the several meetings to substitute forms for them when they are able to do it. But considering that nearly all who come out here were in limited circumstances, having probably only just sufficient to purchase their quarter section of land, it is wonderful how they have contrived to do as much as they have in the short time they have been here. After meeting we dined at Stephen Hackett's, a valuable elder, & in the evening returned to Salem to lodge.

*Third day 19th.*—This morning were at an appointed meeting at Chestnut Hill, 4 miles south of Salem. A meeting has been established here about a year, & they have erected a meeting house, but not furnished it yet so as they can sit in it pretty comfortably. They appear to be an interesting company of Friends, most of them young & middle aged, & we were favoured with a satisfactory opportunity amongst them. We dined at Joel W. Hiatt's near the meeting house in company with a number of other Friends, & in the afternoon returned to Salem with our kind host, Peter Collins who had accompanied us.

*4th day 2nd mo. 20th 1850.*— After breakfast & a solid parting opportunity we took leave of our kind host & his family, with whom we had found a comfortable home for upwards of a week past, & left Salem which has been the scene of our labours for the last 6 or 8 days & went on to New Garden, where we had an appointed meeting at 11 o'clock. The house, which was small, was very much crowded, some being unable to get in at all; but we were mercifully favoured with a sense of the overshadowing Wing of Ancient Goodness to the comforting of the sincere hearted, & I trust also to the stirring up of the lukewarm & indifferent to greater diligence in the pursuit of those things which belong to their present & everlasting peace. After meeting we dined at Francis Sheldon's, & then went home with our friend Joseph D. Hoag of East Grove, where we lodged.

*Fifth day 21st.*— This morning pretty early we left our friend Joseph D. Hoag's & came on to Burlington 25 miles, where we stopped for dinner, & in the afternoon got across the Mississippi on a horse ferry boat. The ice having broken up the previous day, considerable quantities were still floating down the River; but after some little delay we were favoured to land safely on the other side. Before sunset we stopped for the night at a decent tavern 5 miles from the river where we met with comfortable accommodation for ourselves & our horses. Having completed our visit to Friends in Iowa we are now set out towards a settlement of Friends on the east side of the State of Illinois, belonging to the Western Quarterly Meeting of Indiana.<sup>24</sup> The distance, I suppose, is something about 300 miles, which

<sup>24</sup> From Iowa, Seebom and Lindsey again returned to the east and continued their religious labors for over a year among the many Friends' meetings in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and New England. Before they embarked for England from Boston on July 9, 1851, they had totaled in the American journeyings during these four and a half years about 32,400 miles. See *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebom*, pp. 332, 341.



will probably occupy us 9 or 10 days. Thus are we truly like strangers & pilgrims on the earth, having no certain dwelling place. But I humbly trust the evidence is not wanting, that, unworthy as we are, we are not moving about in this way in our own wills; but in the counsel of Him who alone can direct our feet in that path which is well pleasing in His holy sight. The comforting presence of our blessed Lord & Master has been mercifully vouchsafed at seasons to the strengthening of our faith in His precious promises which we have been permitted to know are not yea & nay, but yea & amen for ever in Christ Jesus to them that fear Him, & endeavour faithfully to follow Him, tho' it may be with trembling & faltering steps. Now that we have left Iowa, I may say that we have felt much & deeply interested about the dear Friends who are settled there, to many of whom we have felt nearly united in the bonds of Christian fellowship. There are many precious visited minds amongst them in the younger & middle stages of life, & but few fathers & mothers in the church. Yet, I believe the Divine Hand has been laid upon not a few within their borders in order to prepare them for conspicuous stations in His church. Oh! saith my soul that they may be enabled rightly to submit thereto, so that all the Lord's gracious purposes may be fulfilled respecting His heritage in these remote parts of His earth.