

GLEANINGS FROM THE NOTE BOOK
OF THE ITINERATING EDITOR

[That the pioneers of Iowa were keenly interested in what other communities were doing is evident from the number of travel letters printed in some of the pre-Civil War newspapers. It was to satisfy this curiosity that Jesse Clement made a series of trips west, south, and north of Dubuque in December, 1858, and continuing during the spring and summer of 1859. What he saw and learned on these journeys, he published in the Dubuque *Weekly Times*. Excerpts from these letters are reprinted here in connection with the biographical sketch of Mr. Clement which appears above. The articles were anonymous, but his authorship is well authenticated.—THE EDITOR]

ANAMOSA, (Iowa,) December 10, 1858.¹

Left Dubuque this morning on a trip into the interior of the State. Our course leads through a section untraversed by us before, and we propose to take notes and print them. In other words, we shall keep a sort of 'journal,' which has been defined "a dialogue between the writer and his memory." In our case, however, the dialogue will be mostly with the reader — should we be favored with one.

Passed to-day, for the first time, over the Dubuque Western Railroad, which is now open from Farley Station, on the Dubuque and Pacific road, to Sand Spring,² twenty miles northeast of Anamosa. The road is graded most of the way to this point. Ten thousand dollars more, it is estimated, would finish it ready for the rails. When open to Anamosa, this road will be a great feeder of the Dubuque market. The grain, pork, &c. of Jones county will then seek our city for consumption or trans-shipment. But few, comparatively, of the four thousand swine and three thousand beef cattle now slaughtered in this county, see Dubuque; yet most of them would go there were the iron horse on the Western road daily

¹ This is apparently the first letter published. It appeared in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), December 30, 1858.

² Sand Spring had been established the preceding January by T. H. Bowen and L. H. Langworthy. It was the site of what was called the Exodus Colony in 1858. The town did not thrive, however.—Merry's *History of Delaware County Iowa and Its People*, Vol. I, pp. 264, 265.

prancing into this young city. That road *must* be hurried up, or the trade of Jones county will be lost to Dubuque. To say nothing of the Air Line Railroad,³ which may or may not one day open direct communication between this point and Lyons on the Titan 'father' of ship-canals in the West—the Muscatine and Tipton road already open to Moscow on the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, is working its way northward through Cedar county, which borders Jones on the South. The friends of the Dubuque Western road, then, must bestir themselves or its crowning blessings to the 'Key City,' will vanish in thin air. The citizens of Anamosa showed their sense of the importance of this road and their confidence in its Directors, last September, by voting to tax themselves ten thousand dollars to aid in its construction.

At Sand Spring village and post office, three miles south of the present terminus of the Western Road, a good beginning has been made. The place is but one year old, yet contains a hundred inhabitants or more. A village of goodly size is destined soon to spring up there. It is in Delaware county. The other points on the way to this place are Monticello and Langworthy. The former place reminded us of the *fact* that

"God made the country and Man made the town."

Monticello is charmingly located on the South fork of Maquoketa; and its site and the scenery around it, are delightful. With a little taste on the part of the denizens of the place, and an uncompromising and abiding hatred of whisky, it may become one of the loveliest villages in the interior of the State. It is in Jones county.

Langworthy⁴—an appropriate name for a station on the Dubuque Western road, and destined to perpetuate the name and memory of the noble and enterprising President of that road—has hardly made a beginning toward a village. Its site is on low ground, though not so low, perhaps, as to make the place unhealthy. It has a post office, a small hotel and one or two stores.

The other towns, or incipient indications of villages, in the northern half of Jones county, are Bowen's Prairie, Duane, Grove Creek,

³ This was a popular name for a proposed railroad across Iowa surveyed by Samuel Ryan Curtis. The official name was the Philadelphia, Fort Wayne and Platte Valley Railroad. It was never built.

⁴ Langworthy is still a station on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. It also was laid out in 1858, but did not grow.—*The History of Jones County, Iowa* (Western Historical Company, 1879), p. 545.

and Scotch Grove.⁵ Bowen's Prairie is less than a year old, we believe, yet contains something like two hundred inhabitants. It has grown up like Jonah's gourd. Its inhabitants are New England people, and are as full of energy and all the elements of thrift, as their native hills are full of rocks.

Omitting Anamosa in this enumeration, the other villages and foreshadowings of villages in this county are Johnson, Edinburgh, Isbell [also Isabell], Madison, Highland Grove, Fairview, Rome and Wyoming.⁶ The last mentioned village is in the eastern part of the county, and is next in size to Anamosa. It contains four or five hundred inhabitants, represented to be enterprising and intelligent.

Jones county had 368,640 acres and 362,436 of them are assessed. The assessed value of the county, aside from town lots is upwards of two million dollars! The assessed value per acre is \$5.77. Unimproved lands can be bought from five to eight dollars per acre and farms, excepting in certain favorable localities, from eight to sixteen dollars. The *average* price of land is estimated at \$10 per acre.

Jones county is well timbered and well watered. . . . In the county are five flouring mills and about thirty saw mills, and yet but a small part of its hydraulic privileges are appropriated to the purposes of civilization.

The land in the county is highly fertile, and the few thousand acres of the least promising — the bottom or overflowed lands — have lately been found to be well adapted for the cultivation of the Chinese sugar cane. In some places, the past season, where the seed of this plant lay under water for ten days, it sprang up and did finely. Dr. Dimmitt, the intelligent Secretary of the Jones County Agricultural Society, informs us that sixteen thousand gallons of Sorghum have been produced in the county this year.

⁵ Bowen's Prairie, Duane, and Grove Creek are now abandoned towns.— Mott's *Abandoned Towns of Iowa* in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. XVII, pp. 581, 582. For an account of Scotch Grove see Corbit's *History of Jones County, Iowa*, Vol. I, pp. 523, 533, 595-598.

⁶ Rome was renamed Olin about 1868. The post office was known as Walnut Fork until 1872. Wyoming is still one of the Jones County towns. The others mentioned here are listed as abandoned towns.— Mott's *Abandoned Towns of Iowa* in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. XVII, pp. 581, 582; Corbit's *History of Jones County, Iowa*, Vol. I, pp. 554-580, 598, 599, 623, 624.

Its average price will exceed fifty cents per gallon. On the main traveled roads every third or fourth farmer has a cane mill.

The Jones County Agricultural Society has finally located its show grounds here at the county seat, and they have been gradually improved until they are probably second to none in northern Iowa. . . .

Saturday, December 11.⁷

A day spent in Anamosa has caused us to fall in love with the place, and we have concluded to pass the Sabbath here. . . . Between two and three thousand dollars have been expended the past year, in grading the principal street, building side walks, and other improvements. Fifty buildings have been erected since last spring. Some of them are elegant private residences, built of brick and in the most modern style. The population of the city is upwards of one thousand. The 'Wapsy' runs on its south side, and is spanned by a substantial bridge between two and three hundred feet in length. Near it is a new and excellent flouring mill owned by Metcalf, Graham & Co. It has three run of stones. They are of the 'Burr' order, and one of them burst into a thousand pieces last night, while under full motion, sending the fragments in all directions, some of them passing through the building into the river; others, weighing from fifty to a hundred pounds being thrown across the mill and leaving their mark in the form of a deep indentation. One fragment grazed a miller's limb and came within two or three inches of amputating it in a hurry!

Half a mile north of the city is the stone flouring mill of Fisher & Son, another durable and just now highly industrious establishment. It has also three run of stone. There are three saw mills in the town; twelve or fourteen stores and shops of various kinds; two hotels aside from the Fisher House; three churches; good public schools and a select school for young ladies, recently opened by the Misses Isbell, and highly praised by the first families in the place; and two weekly newspapers, the *Eureka* (Republican) and *Gazette* (Democratic). We have formed the acquaintance of Messrs. Crockwell & Parrott of the former paper, and Messrs. Mann & Sawyer of the latter. These journalists are, happily, parsimonious of personalities; pay proper attention to County matters, and their papers are read at home and abroad.

⁷ Printed in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), December 30, 1858.

The bluffs in the neighborhood of Anamosa furnish excellent lime stone of a light color, and almost as beautiful as marble. Some of it is used here and some abroad. People in adjoining towns and counties send for it to use for window sills, caps, &c. It is susceptible of an exceedingly fine polish.

The County seat was removed hither from Edinburgh two years ago. The Court House is a plain frame building. A jail is in but little demand, and has not been built. Gentlemen who need close quarters are posted to Marion, in Linn county, a distance of only eighteen miles.

The Congregationalists, and United Brethren have church edifices in Anamosa, and the Methodists use the Court House. The Baptists and one or two other denominations, have organizations, but no house of worship. Some of them will probably build next year, as there is much enterprise, in every praiseworthy direction, among the people. . . .

Sunday Evening, December 12.⁸

Have spent our first Sabbath in Jones county. Went to hear Rev. S. A. Benton, of the Congregational Church, the only clergyman whose acquaintance we have made. We like him as a man and a preacher. He is doing much for the mental culture as well as moral instruction of the community. He is one of the leading spirits in the newly formed literary society; is deeply interested in the public schools of the place, and is trying hard to lay the foundation of a literary institution here which shall eventually rise to the dignity of a college. He knows the value of education, and is doing his part in its dissemination.

The preaching of Mr. B. is mostly extemporaneous. With Sydney Smith,⁹ it is evident that he does not believe in "stale indignation and fervor a week old," dished out from the pulpit. He speaks with earnestness, as though he felt what he said. His discourses evince a wide range of reading, as well as taste and discernment. His illustrations are apposite; his imagery is choice; and his periods are well formed. As might be expected, he draws around him many of the most cultivated families of the city. In short, he has an appreciating, an attentive and a large audience. In it is considerable musical talent. The singing was better than one ordinarily hears in the young towns of the West.

⁸ Printed in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), December 30, 1858.

⁹ This is probably the English clergyman and essayist who died in 1845.

En passant, what power there is in music to call buried memories from their grave! — The songs of Zion which we have heard to-day have caused us to live over again *years* of the long-sepulchred Past. Sixteen years ago this 12th of December, we crossed the Merrimac river to seek a home near the source of the Niagara, at the foot of Lake Erie;¹⁰ and few are the days which we have spent bodily in New England since the closing month of the year 1842; but in spirit we have been there on this sacred day, and many a vernal spot in the fields of childhood has loomed up before the mind's eye. . . .

Since the muscular sense of the memory inclines to weakness with age, the utmost care should be taken to cultivate it. This art of cultivation has been condensed by a writer into four rules — “1. The habit of fixing the mind, like the eye, upon one object. 2. The application of the powers of reflection. 3. The watchfulness of understanding which is known, is a good sense as curiosity. 4. Method.”

Some people have no occasion to resort to any of these arts to strengthen their memory. It has instantaneously a most wonderful grasp. Abercrombie¹¹ and other writers on mental philosophy, give remarkable instances of memory. Leibnitz,¹² in very advanced age, could repeat *verbatim* nearly all the poetry of Virgil. . . . We believe it is Walter Scott who states that Dr. Leyden¹³ could repeat an act of Parliament or any dry document, equally as lengthy, after once reading it. Wallis,¹⁴ the mathematician, not only extracted the square root of twenty-seven places of figures in the dark, but kept the unwritten result in his memory for a month! Some of the most marvellous feats of this faculty of which we have read, we cannot recall with sufficient accuracy of detail to repeat them — owing of course to the fallibility of our own memory.

¹⁰ See the account of Jesse Clement's move to Buffalo in the biographical sketch, pages 249–262 above. This is one proof that Jesse Clement was the author of this series of letters.

¹¹ This was probably John Abercrombie, a Scotch physician and philosopher who in 1830 published *Enquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth*. He died in 1844.

¹² Probably Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz (or Leibniz), 1646–1716, a German philosopher and student in many fields.

¹³ Unidentified.

¹⁴ This was probably John Wallis, an English mathematician who died in 1703.

— But we are thankful that this faculty has not wholly forsaken us. It has taken us back to the home of childhood to-day. We have trodden its hallowed ground; have heard the blackbird and bob-o-link carol as they flew over the meadow in which we once hunted for birds' nests; have heard the whip-poor-will in the deepening twilight,¹⁵ have shaken hands, in imagination, with the companions of youth; and have involuntarily looked upward to catch, if possible, some glimpse of the dear ones who have broken from our grasp and ascended to Heaven. . . .

Cedar Rapids, December 15.¹⁶

Cedar Rapids is six miles below Marion, and lies directly on the Cedar River. It has a water power superior to that of Cedar Falls, because the stream here has much greater volume. It can all be appropriated to hydraulic purposes, and *will* be some day. Already there are three flouring mills in operation with an aggregate of nine run of stone, a clothing mill, and several machine shops. The "Cedar Rapids City" flouring mill and the "Farmers," are owned by H. G. Angle & Co., and the "Valley Mills" by J. Black. The clothing mill is owned by N. B. Brown & Co., who weave excellent woolen blankets, satinet and other fabrics. The extensive furniture factory of J. A. Dewey is just above the flouring mills. Farther up the river are the steam Variety Works of Greene & Graves, through which we were conducted by the Superintendent, S. L. Dows. About twenty-five men are employed in manufacturing all kinds of wood and iron machinery, agricultural tools, plows, gearing, castings and all kinds of wrought iron works, together with circular saw mills, threshing machines, &c. A saw mill for the manufacture of all kinds of lumber and lath, is connected with this great establishment — *great* for the interior of Iowa. Another season it will probably give employment to at least fifty men. Most excellent work is done in it. Near it is the door, sash and blind factory of A. Hager, in which we saw some fine work. H. G. Angle & Co. have a stave machine which turns out twelve staves in a minute, taking the material from the log. Three men are employed to tend it. Messrs. Rowley & Berkley are just starting an oil, soap and candle factory.

¹⁵ Compare this with the poem on page 239 above.

¹⁶ This was one of the letters in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque) for January 6, 1859.

One and a half miles from Cedar Rapids are the Glasgow flouring mills, the property of J. P. Glass. Adjoining them are a saw mill and a clothing mill. Still farther out of town are the grist mill and distillery of Brown & Brother. The mill is known by the name of 'Spring,' the water by which it is carried issuing from the ground about a mile from the mill, and directly by the road side, half way between Cedar Rapids and Marion. The water bursts out of the earth in enormous volumes, and sweeter water we never drank. The only fault we find with it is that, in a cold winter day, it is too warm.

There are seven brick kilns in and around Cedar Rapids, and 30,000,000 brick were manufactured in 1857. The finest brick blocks which we have seen in the interior of Iowa are in this city. . . . Nearly one hundred dwelling houses have also been erected since last spring. Three or four of the churches are built of brick and are neat and tasteful edifices. The Episcopal church, which stands on the high grounds in the eastern part of the city, in the suburbs of the grove, is very romantically situated. The grounds in its neighborhood are inviting sites for private residences, and some of the 'merchant princes' are building there. A mile or two further out is the palatial residence of Judge Greene,¹⁷ surrounded with its orchards and its nursery with several thousands of fruit trees. We are glad to see that the people of Linn county are turning their attention to the cultivation of fruit. We met at Marion yesterday, an old acquaintance who is connected with one of the famous Rochester Nurseries, and were pleased to learn that the people of Marion and its vicinity are bound to raise their own apples. This looks commendable. . . .

The streets of Cedar Rapids, like the principal ones in Marion, are very wide and well laid out. There is an abundance of land "out West," and why should not streets be capacious? Iowa Avenue, on which Franklin Block, of which we have spoken, stands, is 120 feet wide. Commercial Street, which is ornamented with the other blocks mentioned, is 100 feet wide. The same is the case with three or four other streets, and none we believe, are less than 80 feet. . . .

¹⁷ George Greene, compiler of the four volumes of Iowa Supreme Court Reports known as the G. Greene Reports. For a sketch of this man's life see the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Linn County, Iowa* (Chapman Brothers, 1887), pp. 895-900.

December 16.¹⁸

Through the politeness of Mr. J. M. Chambers, the Secretary of Linn County Agricultural Society, and from other sources, we have been enabled to collect some facts in regard to this county, not devoid of interest. This is the second county in Northern Iowa in wealth, and the third in population. In 1856 it had 14,700 inhabitants and it must now have upwards of 16,000. It has 720 square miles, and of its 468,800 acres, 438,660 are assessed. The value of the land per acre as assessed, is \$8.22; and the assessed value of the twenty townships, exclusive of towns lots, is \$3,608,026.

The following table will show the number and value of the stock in this county:

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Average Value</i>	<i>Total</i>
Horses, . . .	5,872	\$50,65	\$297,452,27
Cattle, . . .	146,59	\$12,75	\$187,056,92
Mules, . . .	123	\$55,56	\$ 6,835,00
Sheep, . . .	5,853	\$ 1,25	\$ 7,348,34
Hogs, . . .	127,64	\$ 1,92	\$ 24,535,79

It is gratifying to learn that the farmers and mechanics of this county are doing much to create a commendable spirit of emulation. The Agricultural Society has purchased fifteen acres of land between Marion and Cedar Rapids, to use as Fair grounds, for which purpose they have been fitted up. The Society is in a flourishing condition, and numbers more than two hundred members. The receipts at the last Fair were nearly five hundred dollars. Improved stock is much sought after by the farmers. Many thorough bred horses and cattle are already found in the county. We saw some fine horses this morning in the Livery Stable of Mr. Carscarden of Marion. Mr. J. S. Wolf, of Cedar Rapids has a fine Black Hawk Morgan; Henry Pence of Round Grove has a short horn Durham bull and some cows of the same breed; and William Cook of Marion has also a bull of this breed. In a few years Linn county will be pretty thoroughly stocked with the best breeds of horses and cattle. Next to Dubuque county in wealth, in Northern Iowa *now*, we see no reason why Linn county may not *continue* to be so. . . .

In Linn, as in Jones county, much attention is paid to the culti-

¹⁸ Published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), January 6, 1859.

vation of the Chinese Sugar Cane. In Franklin township alone, 3700 gallons of syrup were produced this year, and the aggregate amount in the county must exceed 20,000 gallons! . . .

There are several small villages in Linn county. Of Mount Vernon, in the southeastern part we have already spoken. Near it is Lisbon, which is about half its size. Center Point, in the northwestern part, has 200 inhabitants or more. Palo and Grove are post office places in the western part, and Newark, St. Julien, Hoosier Grove and Ivanhoe in the southern part. Spring Creek and Boulder are small places in the northern part.¹⁹ . . .

Vinton, December 17th.²⁰

Left Cedar Rapids this morning for Vinton, a distance of twenty-five miles. On this route we came once more in the range of the Western Stage Company, whose line we patronize in preference to any other, because, thus far in our experience in Iowa traveling, it is the best. Mr. Joseph Sharpe carries the mail on this route, and takes passengers when he can find them stupid enough to ride on his forbidding sleds and carts. Last week we were obliged to go from Sand Spring to Anamosa on one of his sleds — a Western patriarch of its family of vehicles. We had cold mail bags for a seat; nothing but Ursa Major to lean our back against, and paid our dollar and a half for the twenty miles ride in this covered carriage — covered by the blue concave through which comets have recently, and from time immemorial, been punching holes. When Mr. Sharpe runs coaches or sleds, or even carts, embracing any of the elements of comfort, and charges any price below robbers' rates, we may patronize him — when nothing better can be done.

The Western Stage Company runs well covered hacks, when the sleighing, as, at this time, is poor, between Cedar Rapids and this place; and as they keep none but supple horses, the traveler gets over the ground as rapidly as he could expect with any thing short of steam. Some of the way, to-day, where the roads were prime,

¹⁹ Newark, St. Julien, Hoosier Grove, Ivanhoe, and Boulder are listed as abandoned towns in Mott's *Abandoned Towns in Iowa*. No village by the name of Grove has been located. Oak Grove was a pioneer post office in western Linn County. South of it, in Clinton Township, was Sisley's Grove, a post office from 1857 to 1862. Spring Creek may have been Spring Grove, in the northwestern corner of Spring Grove Township, a post office from 1851 to 1879.— *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. XVII, pp. 588-590.

²⁰ Published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), January 6, 1859.

the steeds seemed to almost fly. As the day was warm and we wished to see the country, we took a seat beside Jehu, and kept it all the way. The country is beautiful, and the ride was exhilarating. In crossing Bear Creek, into which the descent is decidedly declivitous, as there was a foot or more of ice on the shore, over which the wheels drops suddenly down, the feat is dangerous to outsiders. The driver gave us due warning of the perils of the plunge, and we grasped the iron railings at our side with both hands. Suddenly, however, our senter [sic] of gravity advanced a fraction of a degree northward, and we were suspended by the side of the hack, our feet very near the water, and our shawl in it. —No bones were broken, and Bear Creek did not seem greatly disturbed by the adventure, notwithstanding it came very near converting us into a "stiff cold water-man."

We find Vinton,²¹ the shire-town of Benton county, most delightedly located on the south side of the Cedar river. It has broad streets, very wide, running at right angles and some of them as level as a house floor. It was first settled in 1851. Among the pioneers were C. C. Charles, John S. Tilford, and Dr. J. C. Traer. The last two are still living here. Mr. Tilford has a nursery of ten or twenty thousand apple trees, most of which will be ready for transplanting next spring. His, we believe, is the only nursery in the county, and it will do very much toward supplying this section with fruit. In a very few years, we presume, Benton county will produce all the apples needed here.

Mr. Traer is a banker, and the local commissioner of the Blind Asylum, which is located here, and the site of which we have visited. It is half a mile from the village, on high ground, overlooking a wide extent of country. They embrace forty acres generously donated by J. W. O. Webb, and worth forty dollars per acre. The walls of the building, which fronts the east, are already up.—The whole length of the building will be 220 feet; the height from the basement to the top of the dome, 115 feet; its depth 70 feet. The center or main building—the part designed to be completed at first—is 108 feet long, and its height four stories above the basement. The outside walls are to have a front of dressed stone, the work being crandled, with beveled joints, and will have a very neat and rich appearance. The rear wall and ends are to be

²¹ Mr. Clement gave the population of Vinton as eleven or twelve hundred.

hammar [sic] -dressed stone. The building stands on a plat of twelve acres, twenty rods in front. The remainder of the land is reserved for gardens, orchards, &c. The cost of the center building, — now rising, will be about forty thousand dollars. It is to be heated by steam, and lighted with gas.— Everything about it is most commodiously arranged. Dr. Traer visited the asylums of several States in order to get the best plan.— His efforts are untiring, and Iowa will ere long have a model Asylum for the Blind.

The stone used in the building is limestone, and is brought from a quarry three miles above the village, and directly on the south bank of the Cedar. In company with Dr. T. we have visited the spot, and find as good a quarry of the kind as we have seen in these parts. The stone is of a very light gray color, and makes a richer front, in our estimation, than marble. The bank in which the quarry is found, is fifty feet high, and stretches for half a mile along the shore. The stone is very easy of transportation by water, and at this time by land, the sledding from that point to the site of the Asylum being good. There is, doubtless, stone enough in the quarry to build the Pompeii of the West. The nature of the stone may be gathered from the fact that a cute Yankee picked up one of our specimens at the Shields House, and with his jack-knife made a handsome pipe of it in less than one hour. The pipe we have in our possession, and having no other use for such a domestic utensil, we shall, on our return to Dubuque, keep it on exhibition in our editorial sanctum — admittance one cent — children half price. . . .

We dined to-day at the Fremont House, in company with friends, Drummond²² and Traer. Mr. Russell Jones, the proprietor of the house, is full of cheer always, and, after dinner, of something else. He sets a good table, and being an early settler here, is known and popular all over the country. He kept a public house here when the country was so full of people — in the days of briskest speculation, that a man was willing to pay twenty-five cents for the privilege of standing outside of the inn all night, and listen at the key-hole to the snoring within.

Our sumptuous dinner at the Fremont House was slightly marred by the indisposition of Mr. Drummond. Being “under the weather,” he was able to eat nothing excepting two plates full of

²² Thomas Drummond, the young editor of the Anamosa *Eagle*.

"chicken fixins," two slices of roast beef, and pastry to match! He is better this evening.

One of the best bridges in the Cedar Valley crosses the river at Vinton. Who built it we know not, though, to borrow a pun from Theodore Hook, if we should cross it we might be tolled.

There is good water power here. All that is needed is a race two miles long, which can easily be dug — and will be, sometime. Vinton is bound to rise, for the country is rich around it, and the trade and business of the county centers here. Two or three years hence, when the Cedar Valley Railroad spans Benton county, a livery stable for iron horses may be located here. . . .

In this county are four flouring mills, and sixteen saw mills. There are also sixteen post offices. Aside from the county seat, are several little villages. Marysville, the northeastern township, has three hundred inhabitants, and two churches. Benton City, six miles east of Vinton, on the Cedar, has at least two hundred inhabitants, and two steam saw mills, and two steam flouring mills — Shellsburg, in Center township, ten miles southeast of Vinton, has two hundred inhabitants. Geneva, in Big Grove, six miles southwest of the county seat, has about one hundred and fifty. About twice its size is Irving, though a portion of it is in Tama county.²³

Most of these facts in regard to the villages in Benton county, we obtain from Judge Douglas,²⁴ late Democratic candidate for Secretary of State. He is well posted in county matters, and highly communicative. All the county roads run on section lines alone, a plan originated by the Judge — though *this* fact we learn from another source; and the county is well supplied with roads, in building which Judge D. has been one of the prime movers. He has been in this county about four years. Twenty years ago he was the editor of the *Ohio State Journal*, hence he is of Whig antecedents. . . . From the exalted position of a journalist, he has sunken to that of a County Judge! Alas! Alas! . . .

From Mr. Dysart, the popular and efficient Superintendent of the schools of the county, we gather the following facts: There are twenty township school districts, and ninety-one sub-districts, and forty-one schoolhouses. A few are well planned and properly

²³ Marysville, Benton City, Geneva, and Irving were later abandoned.—Mott's *Abandoned Towns of Iowa* in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. XVII, pp. 443-445.

²⁴ Samuel Douglass. In spite of the title, he was not a lawyer.

seated; the majority of them, however, afford but indifferent accommodations to pupils. Forty-one schools were taught last summer four months. Of the teachers, nine were males, employed at an average compensation of twenty-one dollars per month; thirty-two females, whose average pay amounted to thirteen dollars per month. About seventy-five per cent. of the text books used were recommended by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. There are now fifty-five schools in operation. Between five and twenty-one years of age there are 3098 persons — 1662 males, and 1436 females. For the support of schools the County Judge²⁵ levied \$3,794.96 — the townships boards \$5,816.99 — in all \$9,611.95. For the erecting and furnishing of schoolhouses there was levied the sum \$6,518.94; for incidental expenses, \$688.65. Taxes for the support of schools were levied in all but four townships in the county. — Ninety-five teachers' certificates have been granted. The people generally manifest a deep interest in education.

The Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad is projected across this county, with a branch running up the Cedar Valley through Vinton. The Dubuque Western road will doubtless touch the southeastern part of the county.

From five to ten thousand gallons of sorghum have been raised in Benton county this year, and the farmers will go into the business much more extensively next year. We met, as we came up from Cedar Rapids yesterday, two or three droves of fine looking shoats, raised in Benton county. We are told that there are several horses of the Morgan stock in this county. Mr. J. E. Vanmeetre, of Union township, has a large stock of pure short horn and Durham cattle. But few sheep are raised here, and not many mules.— An agricultural society is needed in Benton county, and will probably be organized in a few months. It will do much to excite competition, and thus to improve the stock of the county. We say to the enterprising farmers and mechanics of Benton county, fail not to have a Fair in the autumn of 1859. Among other animals to be exhibited then, will be a calf, the property of "mine host," Mr. Shields. We have seen nothing superior to it in the Cedar Valley, except the calf at Waterloo, of which we spoke last September — owned by Henry Sherman.

²⁵ At this time the chief administrative officer of the county was the county judge, really a county manager.— Pollock's *Historical Background of the County in Iowa* in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. XXIII, pp. 41-47.

About a mile from Vinton, are thirty or forty trappers, camped out, of the Mishquaqua²⁶ tribe. Game of the fur kind is abundant in this county. We have seen to-day more musk-rats' nests, within two miles of Vinton, than we ever saw before. Minks are also plenty, and their pelts are in fair demand. The Indians take no paper money for them, and prefer articles of clothing to silver, their favorite coin. Beaver and otters are caught within one mile of Vinton village. Thus, as we told the members of the Vinton Literary Association last evening,

Beside the stream where beavers build to-day,
And timid musk-rats unmolested play,
To-morrow stands the village, spreading wide,
Henceforth the home where Culture shall abide.

January 7th, 10 P. M.²⁷

Breezes from hyperborean climes are still blowing, and the weather is colder than it was yesterday. Winds that have long been pealing a dirge over the grave of Sir John Franklin are hurrying southward to meet and embrace their warmer confreres that fan the orange groves of the tropics, and in their way they nip a man's ears or nose just to remind him that they are passing. When we reached Pilot Grove, ten miles east of Waterloo, this forenoon, the driver's probocis was white with frost. Before reaching that point, an ex-coachman, who has sat on the box for five years, and who had on an india-rubber overcoat and other suitable garments, begged for admittance within. Even the hog from Blackhawk, still on board, made no unfavorable response to his plea, as there were at least three vacant seats. As he came in and sat down he remarked that it was the first time he had ever ridden inside of a stage! After five years toughening on the box, this day's boreal breezes drove him inside! He pointed out to us the spot where, two years ago, the stage horses which he was driving, became blinded by freezing sleet in a storm, and lost the road. After riding for some time in a circle over the prairies, a house was at length espied, and six passengers and the driver sought shelter within.

²⁶ Apparently the Meskwaki Indians who came back from Kansas just before this. Most of them belonged to the Fox nation.

²⁷ This was written from Cedar Falls and published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), January 20, 1859.

They slept that night, seven in a bed, on the floor! Mr. Kellogg of Dubuque may recollect the night. . . .

In conversation with a friend here in Cedar Falls, this evening, he stated that it was supposed, from careful inquiry, that two hundred people were frozen to death in Iowa during the winter of 1856-7.

Guttenberg, Feb. 14, 1859.²⁸

Left Dubuque this morning on our third Winter trip into the interior of Iowa. We took the Dubuque and Garnavillo mail line of stages, C. Scripture proprietor, and came through a distance of forty miles, in a little more than six hours, stopping six times to change the mail, and three quarters of an hour to dine. The sleighing could not be better; the horses were in fine trim, and Mr. J. T. Upham, the driver the first thirty-two miles, was anxious to get to the end of his day's drive that he might enjoy the luxury of a change of linen. Mr. Scripture was so considerate as to send out three buffalo robes — something of which some mail carriers and stage proprietors who run out of Dubuque do not think.

The route from Dubuque to Guttenberg, leads through a timbered and mineral country most of the way. Some part of it is through deep ravines, with bluffs, composed of solid masses of limestone, towering, here and there, to sublime heights. Between Jefferson and Millville is a strip of country more level; and it is about as beautiful as any we have seen this winter. . . .

The happiest things which we have seen to-day, were a flock of ducks at Durango, taking their morning bath in a little pond long-side a copious spring. The waters gush out of the earth so warm as never to freeze and the ducks seemed perfectly jubilant while bathing in them. We met rational beings to-day, less thoughtful than the plumed aquatics; they had forgotten to wash their faces and hands — *consequently* they were less happy than the ducks. . . .

The descent into Guttenberg from the south, is down a very steep bluff, towering to mountainous proportions, and as one looks upon the young city, squat upon the shore of the "father of waters," it seems to have sprung up by enchantment upon the wild beach. He sees a limestone city standing where the Sac and Fox Indians planted their corn but a few years ago.

²⁸ The letters for February 14, 15, and 16 were published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), February 24, 1859.

February 15th.

Guttenberg is beautifully situated directly on the west bank of the Mississippi, about six miles above the mouth of the Turkey river. Its site is somewhat similar to that of Winona, Minnesota, it being on a beach prairie. It extends from the base of the bluff half or three-fourths of a mile eastward to the river, and three miles up and down its margin. Mr. John McBride informs us that the prairie forming the site of the town received from one of the early French missionaries who were once stationed here, the name of Prairie la Porte, or Door Prairie. With this French name it was laid out about twenty-one years ago, and became the seat of justice of Clayton county — then a part of Wisconsin Territory. We are told that the first term of the District Court was held here in a log house, in May, 1838. The county seat has migrated more than once since then, and has found its way back to Prairie la Porte, alias Guttenberg, while the little one has become a thousand — multiplied by about $2\frac{1}{4}$. In fact, Guttenberg has become a city, with its Mayor and Aldermen, and other dignitaries. His honor, Mayor Wiest, is said to be an excellent man. His [sic] is temporarily absent from town. He is the proprietor of an extensive hardware establishment, and in his absence his wife, who has great business tact, has the supervision of the mercantile house. In fact, we believe she is her husband's partner! G. Falkenhaimer & Brothers have also a large hardware and hollow ware store. . . .

The store of Fleck & Brother is twenty-five feet wide and one hundred deep. They have also an immense stone warehouse on the levee, containing 100 hogsheads of bacon, with 1,000 pounds in each, 25,000 pounds of lard, 3,000 bushels of corn, 1,000 barrels of flour, and 100,000 pounds of mineral. Fleck & Brother have also a steam flouring mill built of stone, which cost \$24,000. It has four run of burrs, and is in all respects a superior mill. . . .

Otto Kramer and Charles Scherling have a couple of large harness shops on the street fronting on the levee; and almost every store and mechanic shop in that street wears the air of thrift and of a commercial town.— About thirty rods of continuous levee have been built in the most substantial manner, aside from one or two other lesser strips, made by private enterprise. Messrs. Fleck & Brother have a fine landing place in front of their mammoth warehouse. . . .

The churches in this city are Catholic and Lutheran. There are

not enough families of any one other denomination to form an organization — an indication of the strength of the foreign population. . . .

Garnavillo, Feb. 16, 1859

Garnavillo is in the second tier of townships from the Mississippi, and on what is called high prairie, the village plat being four hundred and eighty feet above the level of the river. It was neutral ground between the Sacs and Foxes, and Winnebagoes in 1836, when the first settler came here. Dr. F. Andros, the pioneer, noted his advent by marking a tree with black paint, January 6, 1836, and the mark is still visible. The tree is a mile or two from the village. The Doctor built the first log cabin erected here, immediately on his arrival. He was followed by John W. Gillet, who still lives in this neighborhood. In the winter of 1837-38, there was an attack near this place by the Sac and Fox Indians, on the Winnebagoes, and thirty-seven of the latter were killed.²⁹

Game was very plenty here twenty years ago. Dr. Andros thinks he has seen as many as one hundred elk at one time near the site of Garnavillo. Deer and turkeys were also abundant.

High Prairie now has a lovely village of about three hundred inhabitants, and is dotted all over with farm houses, many of which are surrounded by a profusion of shade trees and other indices of enterprise and taste.— Some of the best farms which we have seen in nearly a thousand miles travel this winter in Northern Iowa, are within a mile or two of Garnavillo. . . .

The harness maker is J. W. Drips, who, with half a dozen other citizens of the place, [is] sighing for a view of the new Pisgah of the West — Pike's Peak. Nothing will cure any of them, probably, but a strong dose of Cherry (Creek) bitters.

There are four shoe shops in Garnavillo, and two wagon and two blacksmith shops. We find also a silversmith here, a gun smith, a dentist, a cabinet maker, a tailor, and two milliners.

A magnificent hotel, already enclosed, is to be completed in the spring, and Mr. Crosby and two or three other citizens of the place, are erecting fine brick dwelling houses. There are two good saw mills and a flouring mill on Buck Creek, two miles from Garna-

²⁹ The Winnebago Indians seem to have been killed by sniping Sacs and Foxes over a six-year period ending with the establishment of Fort Atkinson. — Van der Zee's *The Neutral Ground* in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. XIII, pp. 327, 328.

villo. The foundation of a magnificent high school building has been laid in the village. . . .

The schools of the place are, a public (English) school, a private German school, and the Clayton county High School. The last named school is taught by Mr. J. Briggs, formerly of Springville, Erie county, New York. We have known him for fifteen years. It is doubtful if there are better teachers in this county. . . .

Rockford, March 14, 1859 ³⁰

We came hither two days ago with Mr. Horace Green, hotel keeper of Mason City, starting an hour behind the Norwegian mail carrier, and reaching Rockford, fifteen miles south-east, on the Shellrock river, an hour and a half ahead of him. He starts late; drives slowly; goes two miles round to the Owen's Grove Post Office; and when he crosses the river at this point, he leaves the mail-bags in his carriage, while on the ferry boat, so that, when the horses back the carriage off the boat into the water — as they did two days ago, the mail may have a thorough soaking! In that way, the heated expression of passion — love and anger — in the letters, are cooled off before they get to their destination.

About half way between Mason City and this place, in a grove on Lime creek, near the road, we saw a pair of eagles making or rather repairing their nest, which looked, forty rods off, as large as a huge wash tub. While we were passing, one eagle came to the nest with a long stick in its claws, and the mate flew off in pursuit of its next installment. Like some young men recently removed to the valleys of the Shellrock river and Lime creek, those princely birds are making early preparations for the rearing of a family. We are informed that March is the month when the eagle usually prepares for nidification in these parts. In very early seasons, she commences operations the latter part of February. We hear of another pair of eagles which were repairing their nest on the Shellrock, a mile or two northwest of Rockford, three or four days ago.

The present spring is somewhat forward.— Rain has been falling almost daily since the 2d of the month, and all the streams in these parts are free from ice.

As Rockford, Illinois, is the loveliest town in Northern Illinois, so its child is one of the loveliest towns in Northern Iowa. Both are situated on either side of a river; both have an affluence of

³⁰ Published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), March 24, 1859.

natural shade trees and shrubbery; both have a somewhat sandy and dry soil; both are filled with enterprising, intelligent people. Several of the settlers here came from Rockford, Illinois. The town was laid out in June, 1856, by a company residing in that city. The site was selected, we believe, by Mr. George Wyatt, the agent of the company. He has a fine house, out-houses, garden and orchard, on the most beautiful lot in this village.

A log house has never been built in the village. Many of the buildings — the school house and nearly half of the dwellings, are grout. They are cheap and warm. An air of comfort and taste prevades most of the private residences. The stranger enters the town with a consciousness that he is among a refined and moral people.

Rockford is situated at the junction of the Shellrock river and Lime creek, on a tongue of land unsurpassed in beauty, in Floyd county. It has an abundance of lime stone; a superior kind of clay, blue and yellow, for the manufacture of brick, and a large quantity of timber in the neighborhood. On the east side of the Shellrock, in the suburbs of the village, is a small grove; one and a half miles northwest is Brentner's Grove, containing a thousand acres, and four miles north is Rock Grove, five times as large. . . .

Bowen's Prairie, March 30, 1859.³¹

Before leaving Cascade we visited the Academy³² in company with Messrs. Chew, King, and Butler. It is most delightfully located on an eminence on the east side of the river, where one has a commanding view of the surrounding country. About ninety scholars are in attendance, and appearances indicate that they are making good progress in their studies. The Winter term will close this week.

Last Sunday, three lads, living near the village of Cascade, and between the ages of twelve and fourteen years, started on foot for Pike's Peak! They had no money, no change of linen, and but a dozen and a half of eggs for provisions! They went a short dis-

³¹ Published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), April 7, 1859.

³² In his letter from Cascade dated March 28, 1859, and published also in the *Weekly Times* for April 7th, Mr. Clement wrote: "on the east side is an Academy, taught in a substantial stone structure of liberal proportions. It was built by a Joint Stock Company and is complimentary to their enterprise. Prof. Henry D. Wilson is principal of the Institution. He has three assistants."

tance beyond Monticello the first night, or about a dozen miles, and found lodgings in a wagon bound for the new Eldorado, sharing their eggs with the proprietors, and in turn receiving some bread and meat. The next morning they hurried on, full of hopes, eggs, &c., and had got within a mile or two of Anamosa, when they were overtaken by some anxious and older friends from Cascade, and ordered to take a back track. The boys belong to three different families. We have their names but suppress them. The leader is an orphan boy, twelve years old. He may one day be a Representative in Congress from Jefferson, or some other gold-bearing State.

Bowen's Prairie is six miles west of Cascade, in the township of Richland, Jones Co. It lies, like Cascade, directly on the old Military Road from Dubuque to Iowa City. About eight hundred teams passed over this road in 1851-2, on their way to California. Between forty and fifty thousand dollars, we are told, was expended on this road by Government. It is now controlled the same as any other county road, by the counties through which it passes.

Bowen's Prairie derives its name from Hugh Bowen, who came hither from Durango, Dubuque county, and settled, on the 1st day of May, 1836. He has resided here since that date. From a solitary log cabin, he has seen the houses increase until a thousand people have gathered around within the sound of "the church-going bell." The Prairie spreads over about a township and a half of territory. Its soil is a black loam, varying from two to four feet in depth, and is excellent for corn, wheat, and oats. More than fifty springs are found on this prairie. Half the farms or more have at least one spring on them, and on some of them four or five springs are found. The Prairie has also plenty of stone. Most of the wells are from fifteen to twenty-five feet deep. The Prairie is almost completely surrounded by timber. It was not settled by speculators, but by persons whose motto was, "Live and Let Live." The early comers respected each other's claims, and each man tried to help his neighbor as well as himself. They were a hospitable, social, and peaceful people, and *remain* thus. . . .

One mile east of the village of Bowen's Prairie, are the two hotels of Ross and Scott, and a cooper's shop. The village is called Richmond — a name which might have appropriately been given to the entire prairie. It is truly *rich land*.

On this noteworthy prairie, where Charles Johnson, an early settler, killed his hundred wolves before going to California in 1851,

and where his brother chased, run down in the deep snow and killed by hand a wolf, are half a dozen school houses, hundreds of neat, frame farm houses, and a church, erected in 1854, with its bell weighing 712 pounds. One hundred dollars, by-the-way, of the bell fund was raised at a festival given by the ladies. It was emphatically a Bell(e) Festival. . . .

Clayton, April 15th, 1859.³³

A late start from Dubuque this morning, the early breaking of the tiller rope, causing an hour's delay, and a fierce and sleet-laden wind in our teeth, brought us to the little village of Clayton, fifty-five miles, by water, above Dubuque, late this afternoon. With a red hot stove in both ends of the boat and an abiding attachment to overcoats and shawls, a few passengers managed to keep comfortable. The high winds and squally heavens seemed to make the wild ducks crazy. Their gyrations through the air would indicate that they were either frightened or insane. Possible, though, they were merely exercising to keep warm. . . .

Tipton, May 24, 1859.³⁴

Through meadows rank with tall grass and fragrant flowers; through a lovely grove, full robed in its spring attire; between broad wheat fields, luxuriant and highly promising; over a section of country as fertile as any we have recently seen — we have found our way from Mechanicsville to the shire-town of Cedar county. We noticed on the way, two or three miles north of Tipton, a fine strip of Osage fence. With the aid of a few stakes, driven down here and there, it serves as a good protection from cattle. This kind of fence, however, we believe is not much cultivated in Cedar county.

Tipton is a prairie town of 1150 inhabitants, twenty-five miles north of Muscatine, and forty north-west of Davenport. It was laid out in March 1840, immediately after the County seat was located here. It has remained here ever since, and the best Court House in the interior of Northern Iowa is nearly completed. It stands on the Public Square, in the center of the village, directly west of the old frame Court House. It is built of brick, with cut stone corners, and galvanized window embellishments. Its cost will

³³ This is the beginning of a letter published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), for April 28, 1859.

³⁴ Published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), June 2, 1859.

exceed forty thousand dollars. It was contracted for two years ago, in the flush times of the West; hence its costly adornments.

There are a plenty of harness makers, shoe makers and other mechanics common to towns of the size of Tipton. It has four hotels—at least one or two more than seen to be needed. Mr. O. H. Stout has a steam flouring mill. . . .

The Cedar *Democrat*, C. Curtis, Publisher, and the Tipton *Advertiser*, S. S. Daniels, Publisher, are the newspapers of the county—both being published here.

Tipton has a flourishing Union school, and a spacious two story brick school house, highly creditable to the place. The Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians, have societies and church edifices. The Lutherans are building a house, and the Universalists have an organization. Most of these societies are supplied with a pastor. The place has four physicians, and nine lawyers. . . .

Cedar county has sixteen organized and the same number of Congressional townships. It began to be settled in 1836. Of its 360,000 acres of land, only 98,000 are improved.—Yet it is producing, in a poor year for grain, 226,000 bushels of spring wheat, 300 bushels of winter wheat, 34,000 bushels of oats, and 600,000 bushels of corn. It also produces 27,000 bushels of potatoes, 6,000 gallons of sorghum molasses, 11,000 tons of common hay, and 575 tons of Hungarian grass. The total valuation of property is \$3,181,480.—The population is 12,175; the number of voters 2,648.

Mount Vernon, May 26th, 1859.³⁵

Beautiful for situation and delightful to the eye of the tourist, is Mount Vernon. It is "set upon a hill" and hence cannot be hidden—in the day time. It is a *light* set upon a hill, for it is the location of Cornell College, one of the pet institutions of the Methodists of Iowa. A Seminary was started here in 1854 in a brick building, then newly erected, 40 by 72 feet and three stories high. In 1856-7, the College building, 55 by 100 feet and four stories high, including basement, was erected at a cost of \$25,000. We believe it is the largest building of the kind in the State. It is a well built commodious structure an ornament to the place, and highly creditable to the enterprise of the denomination through whose agency it has been created. It overlooks a wide range of

³⁵ Published in the *Weekly Times* (Dubuque), June 9, 1859.

country. From its observatory we have had one of the best views to be enjoyed in this part of the State. The eye sweeps over the country in all directions from fifteen to twenty miles. The prospect is scarcely inferior to that presented from the observatory of the College at Beloit, Wisconsin.

On the north side of the College building, and hugging its back door is a charming grove, from which Pan has been driven to make way for the votaries of true science and the living God. Birds sing there, and poetry loving nymphs warble Shakespeare's "native wood notes wild."

The College grounds embrace twenty-three acres, and with suitable improvement, can be made to rival in attractions, similar grounds almost anywhere — always excepting Burlington, Vermont (the handsomest College site and town in New England), and a few other mountain-guarded, literary spots at the East.

Cornell College has primary and preparatory departments, and is open for male and female pupils. The number in attendance is 190. The first College class — five in all — will graduate next July. Two of them are males and three females. The latter are in what is termed the Scientific course. . . .

This Institution is supplied with apparatus for illustrating principles in natural science, and has a small library of carefully selected books. Sixty or seventy thousand dollars have been secured toward the endowment of this Institution. Evidently its future is to be bright.

Mount Vernon has more than a thousand inhabitants, and is growing rapidly. Three warehouses have just been built at the railroad depot; seven stores are going up, and the Presbyterians are preparing to build. The *Scotch* Presbyterians and Methodists have had houses of worship for some time. No other religious societies than those mentioned, have been organized here. A weekly paper, the *News*, was started a few months ago, by J. S. Jennison, Esq., formerly of the Linn County *Register*.

We find here two tin, two tailors, and two millinery shops; three wagon and four blacksmith shops; one cabinet shop, two livery stables; one brick-yard, and a steam flouring mill, the property of W. & A. Hamilton.

Mount Vernon has four physicians, but no lawyers and no whisky venders. Our legal friends will pardon the juxtaposition of the aforesaid last two professions.