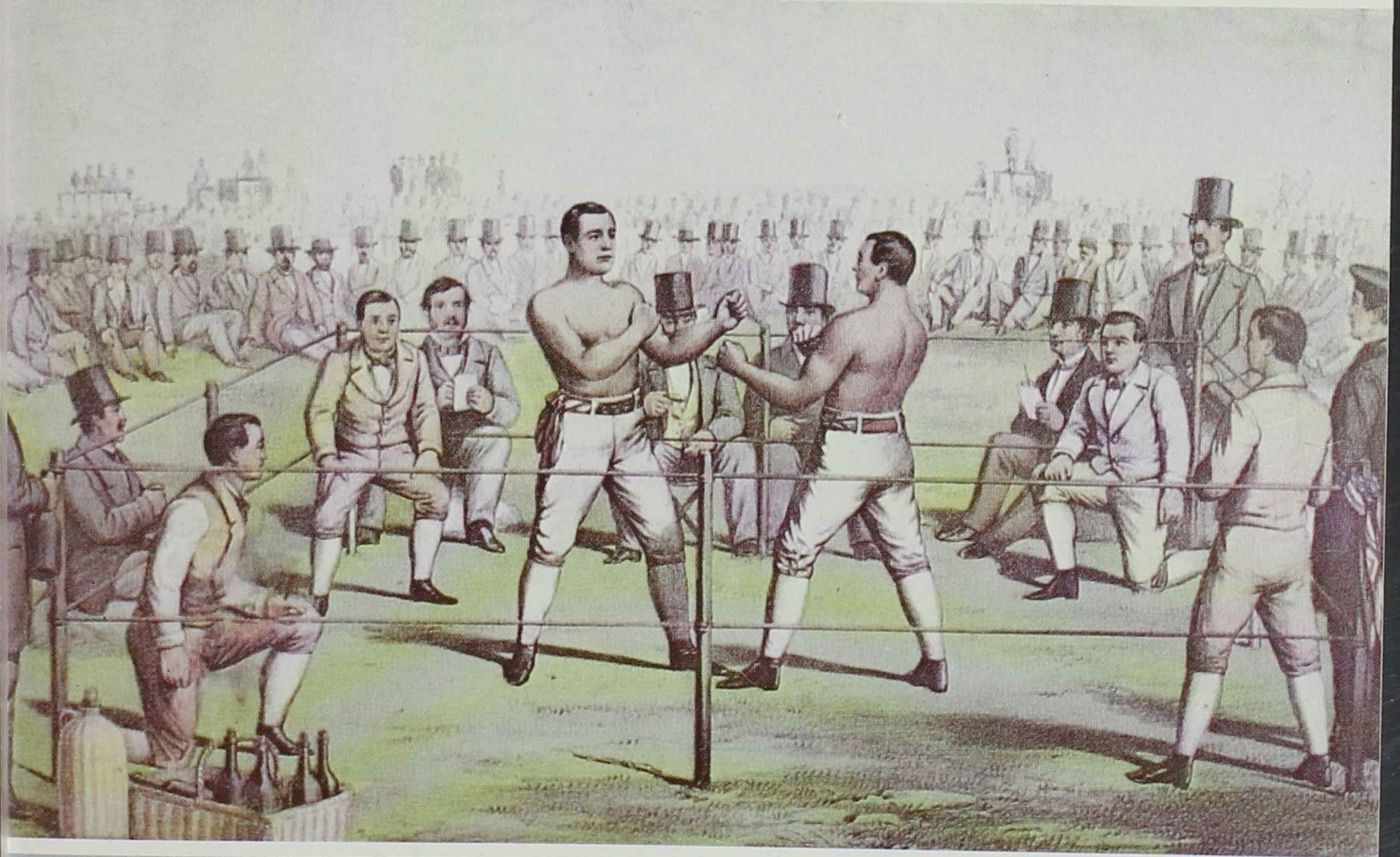
The PALIMPSEST

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 64 NUMBER 1 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1983



Iowa State Historical Department
Office of the State Historical Society
The Palimpsest

MARY K. FREDERICKSEN, *Director of Publications*
STEVEN J. FULLER, *Production Manager*

PRICE — Free to members. Single issue — $1
MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual dues — $5
LIFE MEMBERSHIP — $150. HUSBAND AND WIFE JOINT LIFE MEMBERSHIP — $200
ADDRESS INQUIRIES TO: State Historical Society, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240

USISSN 0031 — 0360

The code at the bottom of the first column of each article in this magazine indicates the copyright owner's consent to reproduction of the article for personal or internal use. The consent is granted, however, on the condition that the copier pay the stated per-copy fee of $1.00 through the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. The consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as copying for general distribution, for advertising or promotional purposes, for creating new collective works, or for resale.

The Office of the State Historical Society and the editor are not responsible for statements of fact or opinion made by contributors.

THE PALIMPSEST is published bimonthly by the Office of the State Historical Society in Iowa City. It is printed in Des Moines and distributed free to Society members and exchanges. This is the January/February 1983 issue and is Number 1 of Volume 64. Second class postage paid at Iowa City, Iowa.

The
PALIMPSEST

© Iowa State Historical Department/Office of the State Historical Society 1983

Adrian D. Anderson, Executive Director

VOLUME 64 NUMBER 1 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1983

Mary K. Fredericksen, Editor

CONTENTS

The Big Mill Near the Big Muddy: The Allen-Hogan Fight of 1873
by Raymond A. Smith, Jr. 2

Growing Up in Iowa City: Recollections of an Historian
by Carl B. Cone 14

A Great American Journal Comes West:
Cedar Falls' Own *North American Review*
by Maureen McCoy 24

Cover: *The Currier and Ives print of the prize fight between John C. Heenan and Tom Sayers which took place in England in April 1860. The fight, which ended in a confused draw, was probably the most famous bareknuckle fight of the century. (Robert A. Ryan/Dennett-Muessig Associates)*

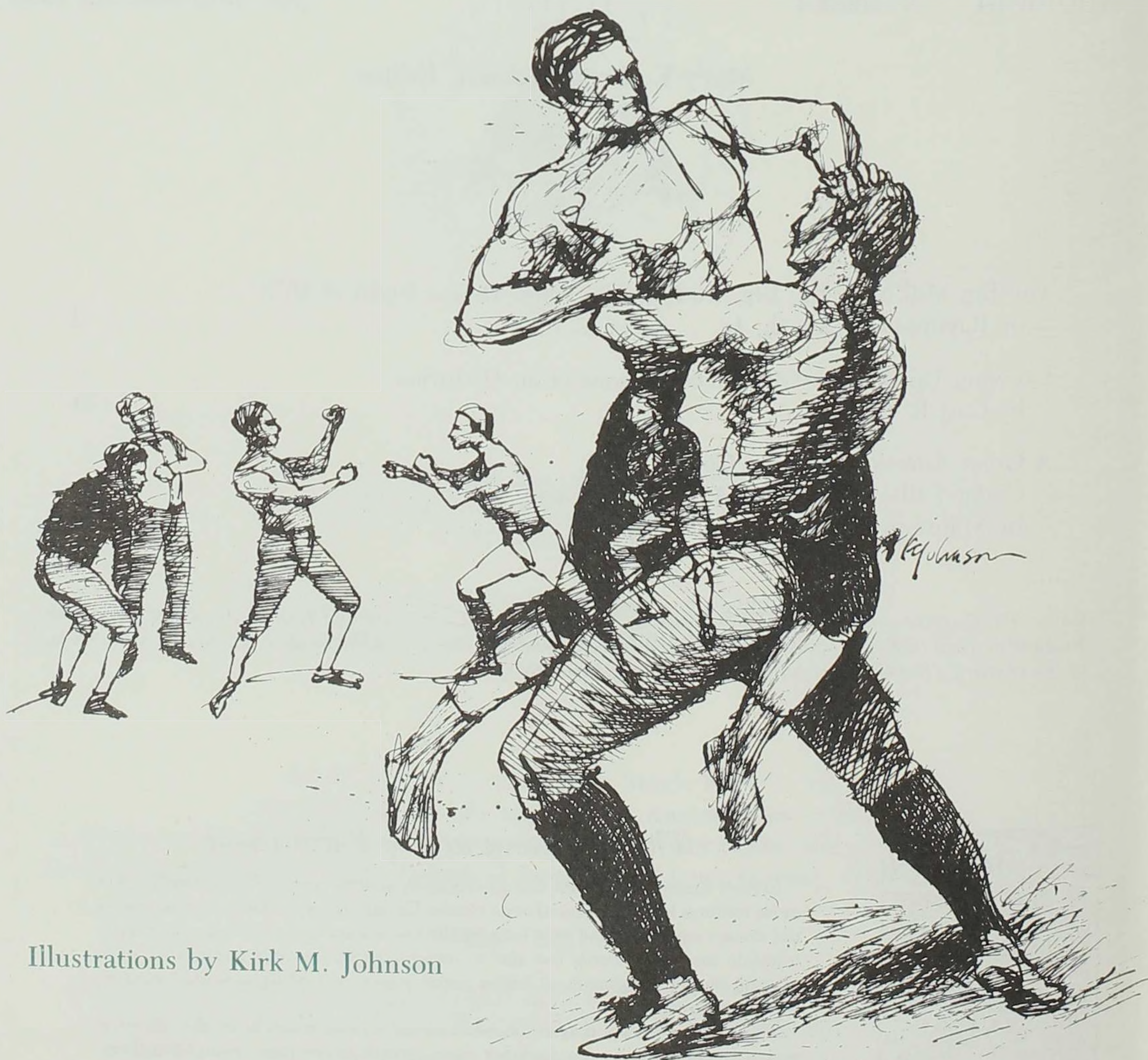
The Meaning of the Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete, and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

The Big Mill Near the Big Muddy:
The Allen-Hogan Fight of 1873

by Raymond A. Smith, Jr.



Illustrations by Kirk M. Johnson

Knock him down, throw him down, put him down in one fashion or another.

On 18 November 1873 there occurred, near Pacific Junction, Iowa, a very well publicized prizefight. It pitted Tom Allen, a man who claimed to be the champion of America, against Ben Hogan, one of the most colorful figures to ever step into the prize ring. No fight took place in Iowa in the nineteenth century, or perhaps even in the twentieth century, which was quite so notorious as the one between Allen and Hogan. It was billed as a championship fight and members of the sporting fraternity came from as far away as New York City to witness the attempt of the feisty Hogan to defeat the conqueror of Mike McCoole, and thereby to claim the championship of America.

What the spectators at the fight witnessed was a typical prizefight of the period. It was ugly, it was probably crooked, it ended in mayhem, and no one came away satisfied. It would have set back the cause of prizefighting were it not for the fact that prizefighting in America in the early 1870s was at its nadir. It simply could not be set back.

* * *

The history of prizefighting in this country is not a particularly edifying one. The sport had gone through several phases in the early years of the nineteenth century. The first prizefighters of note were American blacks who found their way to the prize rings of England as early as the first decade of the century. The greatest of them was probably Tom Molineaux who fought two very famous battles with the great English champion, Tom Cribb, in 1810 and 1811. In addition to Molineaux, Bill Richmond, Black Sam Robinson, and Young Molineaux from New York, as well as Henry Sutton from Baltimore, Jem Johnson from Norfolk, Virginia, and Joseph Stephenson from Havre de Grace, Maryland (all Blacks), fought in England in the first years of the century.

The pugilistic tradition in America was to be forged by a number of English and Irish toughs who began to fight with some degree of seriousness in New York in the 1840s and 1850s. A series of champions emerged of whom the most

The classic stance of the bareknuckle fighter.

© Iowa State Historical Department/Office of the State Historical Society 1983 0031—0360/83/0102—0002. $1.00

important were Tom Hyer, Country McClusky, Yankee Sullivan, John Morrissey, and John C. Heenan. They battered each other into various states of retirement and ultimately John C. Heenan emerged as the American Champion by virtue of having forced Morrissey into retirement although Heenan actually lost the great fight between them. Heenan had then gone to England where he took on Tom Sayers in what some have considered the classic bare-knuckle fight of all time. Heenan had height and weight and reach over his opponent when he climbed into the ring against Sayers in April 1860, but Sayers had speed and sand. After forty-two brutal rounds, from which Sayers emerged with a broken arm and after which Heenan was led from the ring virtually blind, both men claimed victory, but the fight was termed what we would call a draw and two special belts were awarded to the combatants. Heenan entered the ring only one more time, against Tom King in 1863, and he was defeated in a fight that some claim he threw. John C. Heenan was a champion of the old school: his record in the prize ring consisted of one draw and two defeats (one of which was highly suspect).

Prizefighting was not a gentlemanly sport in the nineteenth century but it tended to be a popular one. On 5 May 1863 Joe Coburn and Mike McCoole fought for the championship near Wilmington, Delaware, and the *New York Times* was forced to comment that "even the general public was tainted with a curious desire to find out whether COBURN or MCCOOL [*sic*] was the better man, and looked for the solution of that momentous problem, with a concern that could not be wholly suppressed by a more legitimate anxiety as to the success of Gen. HOOKER's operations."

The appearance of Mike McCoole on the scene marked the beginning of a third phase in the history of the American prize ring. McCoole was the rough-and-tumble champion of virtually the entire Mississippi River valley, and though Coburn defeated him in 1863, Mike was ultimately to claim the championship and take it to St. Louis, where he was joined by a great collection of rowdies and toughs and sporting types. They fought one another on the Mississippi, they fought up and down on the Ohio, and finally they took their pugilism to the upper reaches of the Missouri in the environs of Council Bluffs and Omaha. There were Bill Davis, Handy Duffy, Con Reardon, Patsey Sheppherd, Mike McCoole, Aaron Jones, Tom McCann, Butt Riley, Dublin Tricks, Dick Hollywood, Tom McAlpine, Tom Allen, Charles Gallagher, and many, many others. In the main, they were of English or Irish descent, for prizefighting in the nineteenth century was largely an Anglo-Saxon-Celtic sport. The reference to these people as "rowdies" is mild enough. Their prizefights in the late 1860s and early 1870s were exercises in violence on the part of fighters, cornermen, and spectators. Fights could end fatally, fights could end feloniously with the stakeholder absconding with the stakes, or fights could end farcically with the ring ropes torn down, the spectators invading the ring, and a riot ensuing. Whenever one fought, one always took a lot of friends and hoped that one's friends outnumbered one's opponent's friends. Pugilism was at best an inexact and unpredictable science at this time.

* * *

In general, prizefighting was illegal in America. When prizefights took place they did so under rules of the London Prize Ring which provided for rounds of indefinite length, terminated only when one or both of the fighters were either knocked or thrown down. There were supposedly thirty seconds between rounds during which time seconds could administer to the needs of their fighters. Fights lasted until one fighter was knocked out and could not return to the scratch after thirty seconds or when a second threw in the towel or the sponge or otherwise indicated that his lad

had had it. Fighters fought for purses put up by themselves and their backers and the purses were deposited with a stakeholder whom both sides thought they could trust with the money. Referees were usually decided upon when all parties were in the ring and the choice of a referee could be extremely difficult because the referee had the power to disqualify either fighter by acknowledging a claim of foul lodged by a fighter or his seconds. That meant that the referee had the ability to deliver the fight to one or the other of the fighters if he so chose.

Such fights could be terribly brutal. The bare fists of the antagonists opened massive cuts and closed eyes and raised lumps and occasionally broke bones. There were sometimes sells, and shams, and even farces, but the graphic newspaper accounts of some prizefights indicate the seriousness with which the brawlers could come together. And those graphic accounts give some indication of the language of the ring which had been first put to literary use by Pierce Egan, that most masterful of all fight reporters in London in the first half of the century. The Egan style was copied by all who were caught up in the spirit of prizefighting. The following portions of an account of a 12 January 1869 fight between Tom Allen and Bill Davis appeared in the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer:*

> *Fifth Round — This round opened with some slight exchanges, and Davis managed to get in a sockdologer somewhere above Tom's breadbasket. Tom returned the compliment, and visited the nasal organ of his antagonist in a very unwelcome fashion.*
>
> *Ninth Round — Davis' face continued to grow more disfigured and ruddy; Allen dealt him another terrific blow square on the potato trap. Davis was rapidly losing ground, and betting on him had nearly ceased.*
>
> *Thirteenth Round — Davis walked up to his man and managed to get in a right smart blow on the cheek, and in return took one on the left side of his knowledge-box, and he went down, Tom smiling at him very pleasantly all the while.*
>
> *Twenty-ninth Round — Davis was slow in coming to time, and all hopes of victory had vanished from his vision; still he fought on, and determined to die game.*
>
> *At the end of the forty-third round Davis was completely played out, and Mike McCoole threw up the sponge in token of defeat. Davis was badly punished about the head and face, the latter being cut in dozens of places. Allen had one or two cuts on the face; his nose was skinned, and his lower lip was badly swollen. The fight lasted exactly forty-four minutes.*

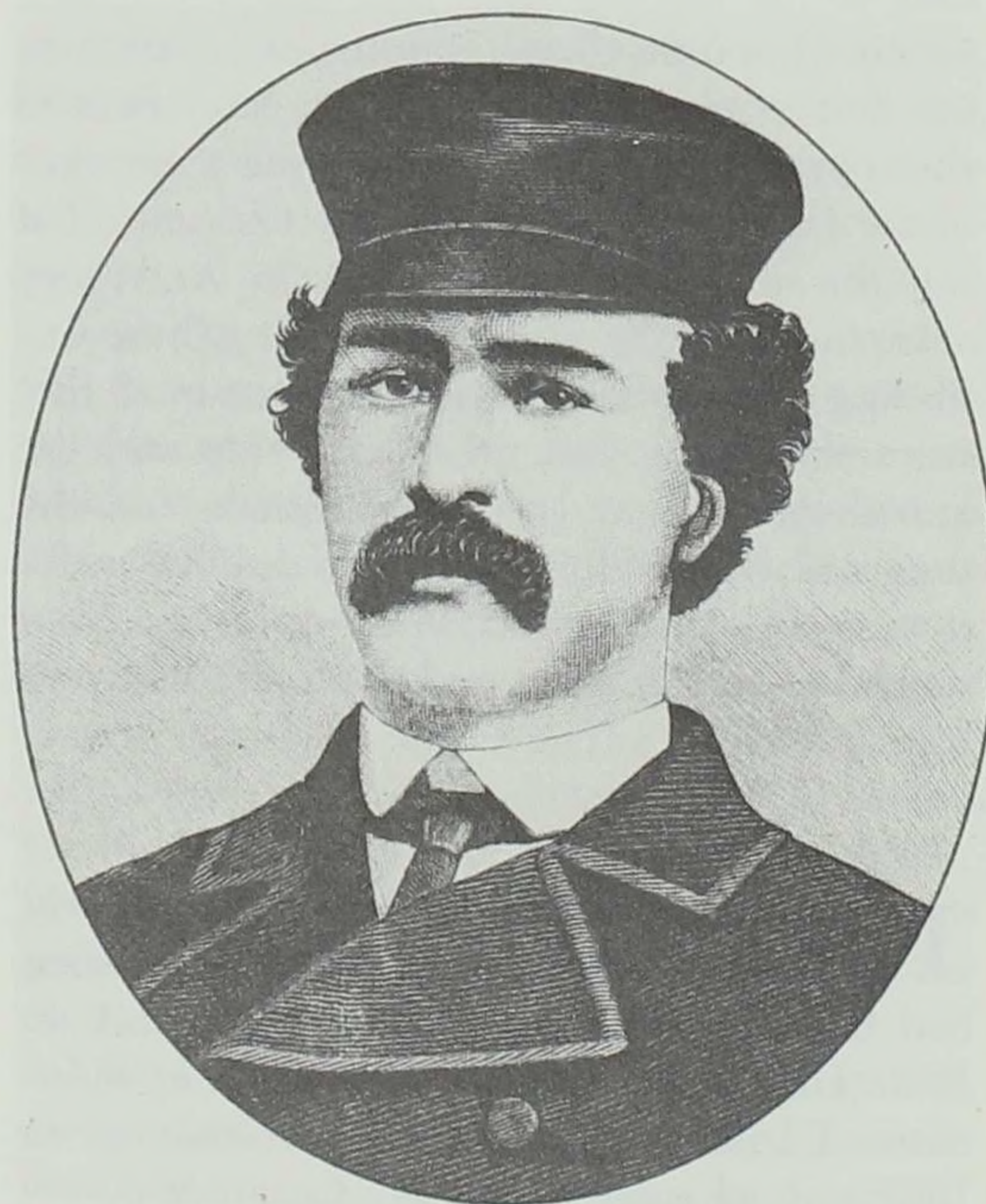
The language of the prize ring was a rich one. One didn't have a fight; one had a mill or a set-to. One didn't have stamina or endurance; one had sand or grit or bottom. A follower of the sport wasn't simply a fan; he was a member of the fancy. One didn't simply toss one's hat into the ring; one flung his castor in. And there were undercuts as well as uppercuts, there was fibbing and nobbing, and the targets of all that were the optics and the potato trap and the knowledge box and the frontispiece and the mug and the smeller. And blood didn't flow for it was claret that flowed. When someone went down he went to grass and that often in a very literal sense.

* * *

The world of the prizefighter was the world of Tom Allen and Ben Hogan. Tom Allen had been born in Birmingham, England, in 1840. He had first entered the prize ring in his native England but he came to this country in 1867 and achieved a certain amount of notoriety by seconding Tommy Kelly in a fight with Billy Parkinson at Acquia Creek, Virginia. It

seems that in the course of the fight Allen pulled a revolver and ordered the referee to award the fight to Kelly on a foul. Afterwards he joined Kelly in St. Louis where a large community of pugilists had gathered by the late 1860s.

As indicated above, the easiest description of men like Mike McCoole, Charley Gallagher, Bill Davis, Sherman Thurston, Dublin Tricks, Jack Looney, Butt Riley, and Val McKinney would be that of ruffians, rowdies, and ne'er-do-wells. They were typical midwestern representatives of the sporting element and their records (police and otherwise) were unsavory. They welcomed Tom Allen into their midst in 1869, however, with a series of the most unsatisfying and unfortunate prizefights in the annals of the ring. It all began on 12 January when Allen won his only fight of 1869 by defeating Bill Davis in forty-three rounds. The fight was the last bit of pugilistic good fortune that Tom Allen was to have for three or four years. He fought three more times in 1869, and, in each case, the results were disastrous for him. In February 1869 he fought Charley Gallagher, a strapping lad with two fights under his belt. The fight was staged on a Mississippi River island and lasted but two rounds. Allen managed to close the first round by knocking Gallagher down but Gallagher ended the second round by putting Allen to sleep for something like twenty minutes.



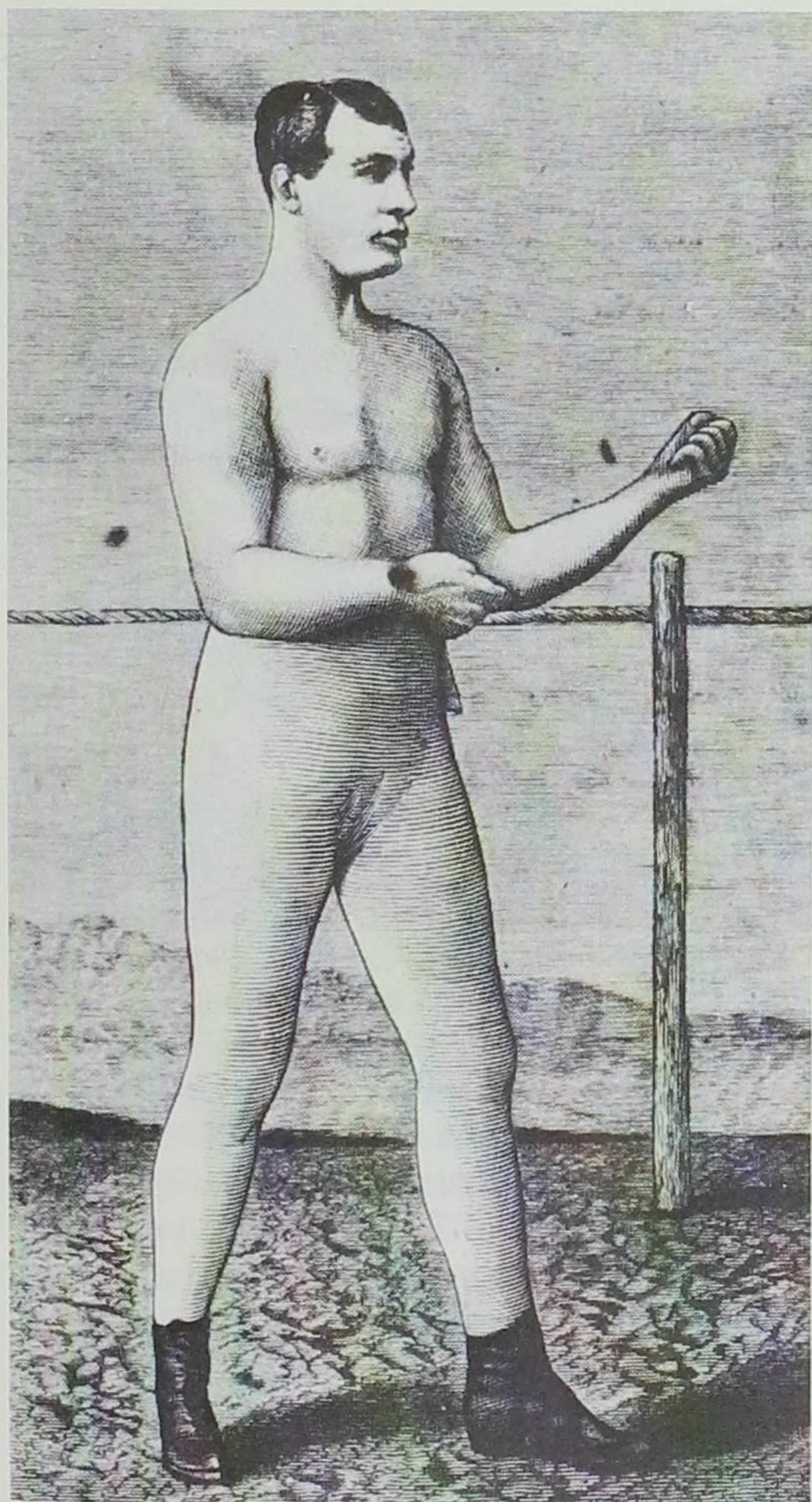
Tom Allen, one of the principals in the big mill near the Big Muddy.

Having won one fight by a knockout and lost another in similar fashion, Allen then stepped up in class and took on Mike McCoole. It was thought that the knockout of Allen by Gallagher had been a fluke, and fight fans came from New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other eastern points to take in the event. Laws passed at a recent session of the Missouri legislature forced the fighters back onto the river. They boarded the good ship *Louisville* with a full complement of fans, all of whom had purchased tickets which carried the words:

McCOOLE AND ALLEN'S
Strawberry Festival.
COMPLIMENTARY TICKET.
Good For Excursion on Stmr. Louisville.

The fight was all Tom Allen's until somebody cut the ring ropes and a crowd rushed into the ring and the proceedings came to an abrupt halt. From McCoole's people came the cry of foul. The referee, being of a cautious nature, refused to make any decision until he was back in the safe precincts of St. Louis. There he made his decision, sending it to the papers on a card, and immediately departing for even safer precincts well away from St. Louis. The card read:

> *I, Valentine McKinney, will give my decision in the late fight between McCoole and Allen in favor of McCoole there being a foul committed by Allen on McCoole in the last round, by gouging his eye.*
>
> V. McKINNEY, REFEREE.



Charley Gallagher, twice an opponent of Tom Allen in 1873.

Thus, by the middle of 1869, Allen had fought three times, and had nothing much to show for it. He still had the loss to Gallagher to set right and so, in August, he went off to an island in the Mississippi with Charley Gallagher and perhaps a thousand others, once again on the steamer *Louisville*. Provision was made to prevent a reoccurrence of the riotous outcome of his previous fight with McCoole by the appointment of twenty "ring-keepers" who were hired to keep order. It was a strange fight but probably no stranger than some of his earlier ones. In the eleventh round, cries of "Foul!" came from Gallagher's corner, the claim being that Allen had struck their man while he was on his knees. The claim was not allowed, time was called for the twelfth round, and then a sponge came flying out from Gallagher's corner. Allen, thinking he had finally won a fight of some importance, crossed the ring, held out his hand, and was promptly socked on the smeller.

Poor Tom. He didn't win that fight either for, on the trip home, the referee decided to call it a draw. Later Allen tried to get a fight with McCoole, then was defeated by Jem Mace in New Orleans in 1870. He finally, however, got a fight with McCoole and he punched the Irishman out in twenty-nine rounds just two months before he stepped into the ring with Ben Hogan in November 1873.

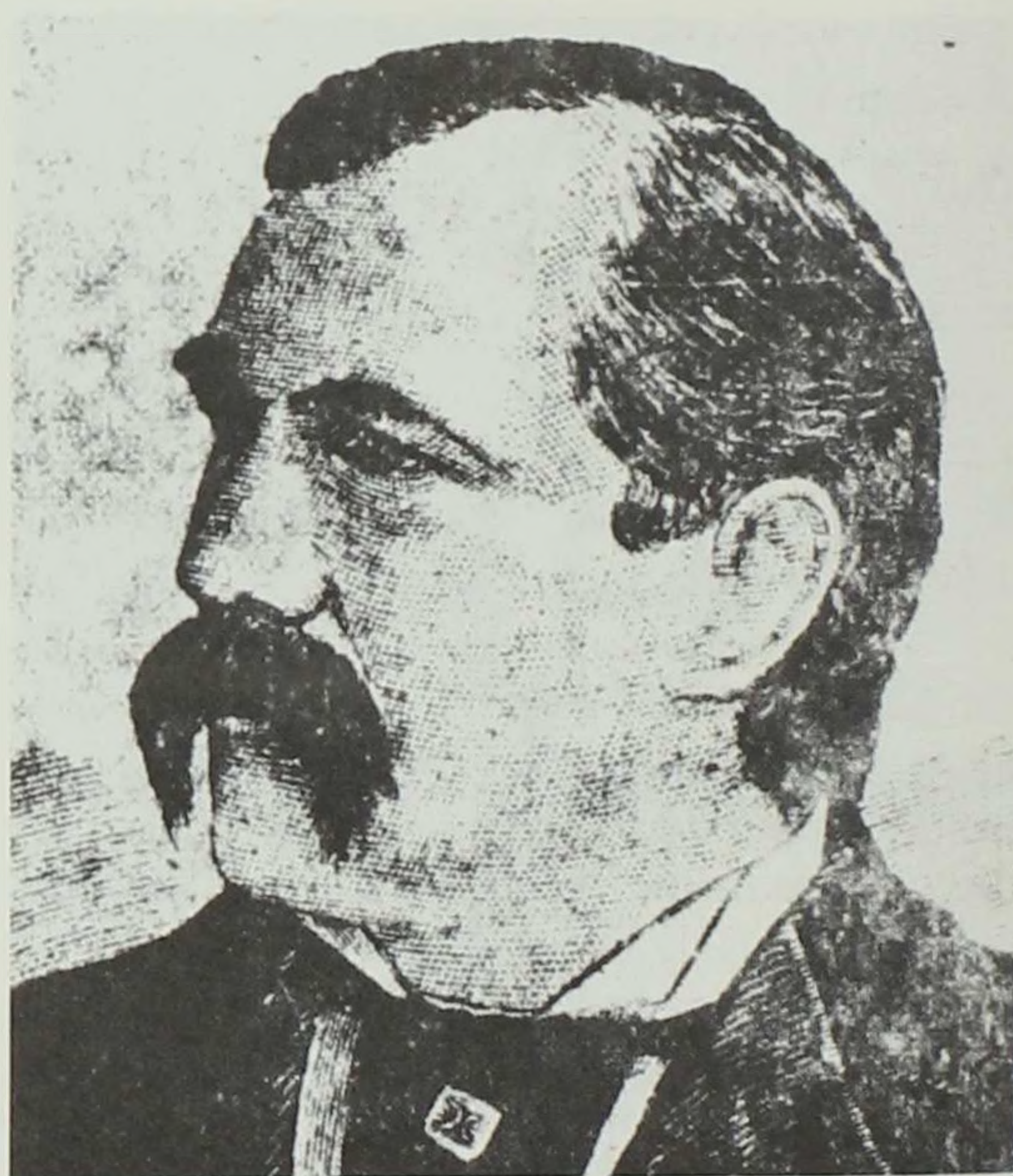
Ben Hogan's life, as it comes down to us, is a most improbable tissue of some of the most marvelous lies ever foisted off on a gullible sporting public. He claimed, in addition to being a pugilist, to have been a Civil War deserter many times over, a Northern spy in the Confederacy, a gambler in the oil regions of Pennsylvania, a saloon keeper, a reformed drunk, and, last, but certainly not least, an evangelical preacher. In the last-mentioned capacity, he traveled from one end of this country to the other. He preached hard, he told the story of his life many times over, and he tried to save souls.

In an interview with a reporter of the *Oil City Derrick*, Hogan once spun great yarns about his wayward youth and his even more wayward later life. He told of sailing as a pirate out of Charleston and later sailing back into Charleston after the outbreak of the Civil War with a load of whiskey and tobacco and other items for the army of General P.T.A. Beauregard. When he was about to be captured by U.S. naval vessels, Hogan and a couple of others slipped overboard with most of his pirate-cum-smuggling profits and headed for

Canada. Shortly thereafter he began his career as a spy out of Nashville, but spying didn't really keep him occupied, so he took up the business of enlisting young men in the Union army for their enlistment bonus. Ultimately, Hogan went in for bounty jumping, claiming later that he made almost $16,000 in the process. His luck eventually ran out, he was tried, and he was sentenced to be shot. Hogan claimed that he received a presidential pardon while sitting on his coffin awaiting execution.

After the war Hogan was off for the oil regions where he followed the twin professions of pugilist and gambler. The oil regions were without doubt one of the toughest areas in the United States at that time, and Hogan fit right in. He was a gambler, a fighter, a shooter, an intimidator, and an all-round tough. Ben Hogan's fights seemed invariably to end badly with guns and knives being pulled, and crowds of toughs milling and threatening, and referees wondering why they had ever agreed to step into the ring and officiate at such events. If he had not fought as often as Tom Allen, he had fought in the same kind of milieu and in the same kind of fashion.

Ben Hogan was in St. Louis in 1873 and was fresh from the oil fields. He had hopes that through a match with Tom Allen he would make a name for himself and perhaps cash in on the name in a series of exhibitions and benefits throughout the eastern portion of the United States. But first Tom Allen had a match with Mike McCoole and he had to beat McCoole because Ben Hogan wanted no part of Mike McCoole who, he admitted, "was too big for him." So Ben Hogan challenged Tom Allen and the preliminaries were worked out in a series of meetings between Allen and Hogan in Jack Looney's saloon in St. Louis in mid-September 1873. Each of the fighters put up $500 and Hogan went immediately into training while Allen finished off his preparations for his upcoming fight with Mike McCoole.



Ben Hogan, perhaps a Prussian, possibly a pugilist, but certainly a preacher at the conclusion of his career.

The McCoole-Allen fight was not to be held in Missouri for the two principals were arrested on 21 September 1873 and forced to put up bonds of $1,000 each to insure that they would not disturb the peace of the state of Missouri for some ninety days. That only meant that they took to the river on the steamboat *Continental*, headed for Chauteau Island, and held their fight outside the jurisdiction of the Missouri authorities. The fight was a great and overdue victory for Tom Allen who triumphed over McCoole in eight rounds and twenty minutes on 23 September 1873. The career of Mike McCoole was over and the way was paved for a fight between Tom Allen and Ben Hogan.

On 25 September 1873 articles of agreement were drawn up between Hogan and Allen. They provided for a fight which would take place on 28 October 1873 for $1,000 a side with the site to be picked by the two men. Hogan was already busily training while Allen was enjoying the fruits of his victory over McCoole.

Everyone was confident of victory. In the ensuing days Ben Hogan was tendered a benefit at Deagle's Theater in St. Louis and Bret Harte delivered a lecture in Omaha and generally people looked forward to a fight which would take place somewhere in the environs of St. Louis in late October. But it was not to be. On 28 October 1873 the usual events preceding a prizefight began to happen in St. Louis. Jack Looney and Mike Gauley ambled down to the steamer *Continental* and were soon joined by a rough group of individuals intent on going on some sort of excursion. Ultimately the *Continental* steamed upstream a ways, then turned and steamed downstream, but the boat drifted to the Illinois shore where a bevy of East St. Louis policemen took Looney and others into custody and the fight was definitely not on for that day. Hogan and Allen later showed up in St. Louis and announced that the fight had been postponed for at least two weeks.

On 29 October 1873 Allen and Hogan and the backers and seconds met again at Jack Looney's and decided to hold the fight somewhere other than Illinois. They thought perhaps the fight could be held in Canada, somewhere in the vicinity of Detroit, and W.E. Harding of the *National Police Gazette* was commissioned to see if an excursion boat could be found in Detroit. But on the following day it was clear that the way to Detroit lay through Illinois and no one wanted to test the patience of Governor Beveridge of that state. It was decided to hold the fight in Nebraska or the vicinity thereof, which was much safer than crossing Illinois to get to Canada.

By 5 November 1873 it was clear that the laws of Nebraska would probably preclude any prizefight taking place in that state but that the laws of Iowa were much milder and covered prizefighting only with general injunctions against assault and battery, which carried a penalty of $100. It was fairly clear that the fighters would head for Omaha, probably train there, avail themselves of the relatively greater population of the area to make a few dollars through benefits and exhibitions, and then depart for the safer areas of rural Iowa where a prizefight could be held without overly much fear of interference from the authorities.

The next few days were filled with activity. Allen and his retinue headed up the Missouri for the Council Bluffs-Omaha area, stopping at Kansas City for a little sparring exhibition. Hogan and his crew moved up also, stopping at St. Joe. While the principals moved north, various individuals were scouting the islands of the Missouri River in hopes of finding a spot out of the jurisdiction of all officials of the law. Allen arrived in Omaha on 10 November and Hogan arrived the following day. The newspapers got into the spirit of the affair and the *Omaha Republican*, the *Omaha Daily Herald*, and the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* all had pithy comments to make on the upcoming fight and the people who were to engage in it. Typical of such editorial comments were those of the *Herald* which were really typical of an editor who wanted to cover news which he knew he should assail in his columns. On 12 November 1873 the editor of the *Herald* wrote:

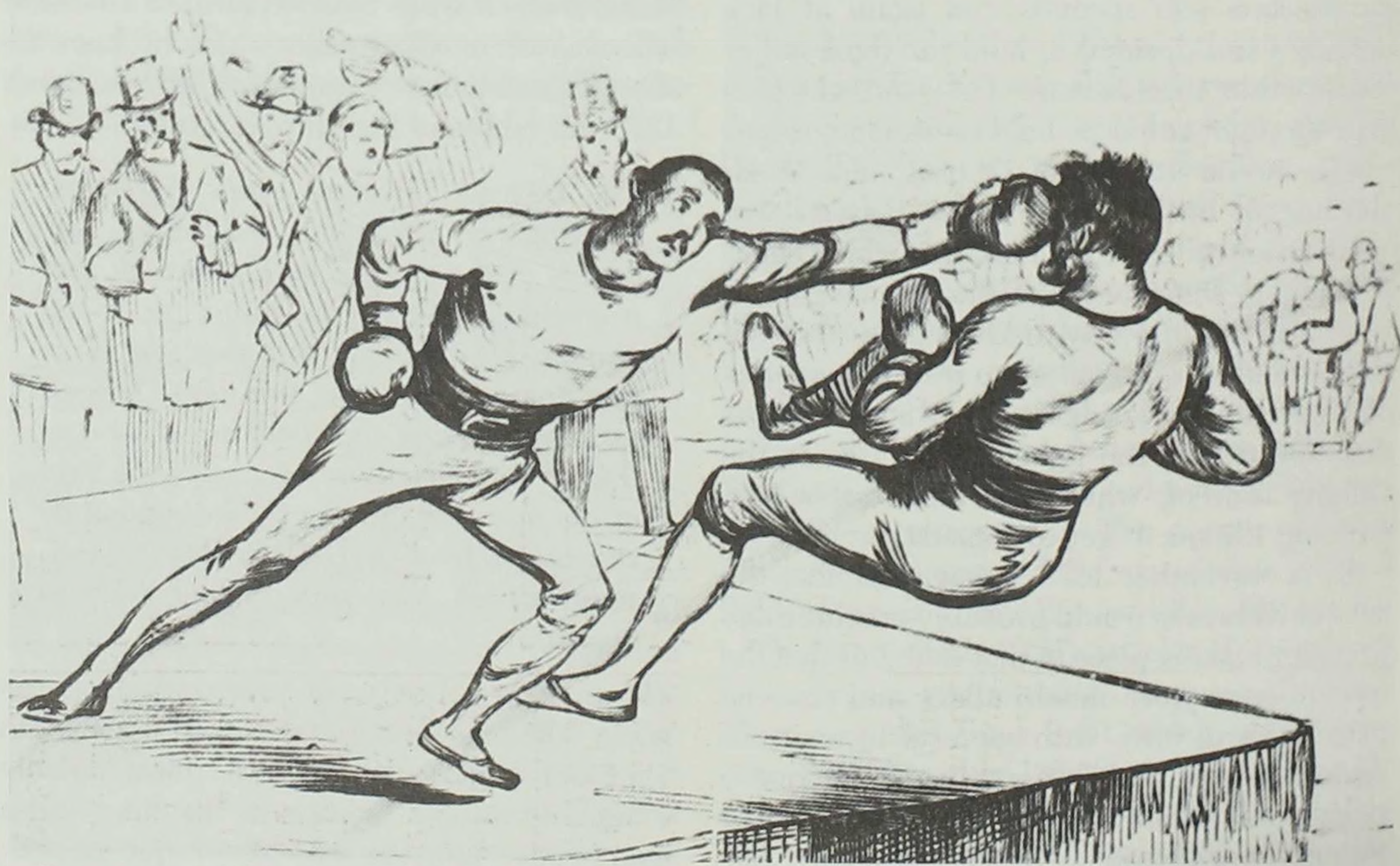
> *The* HERALD, *like all other first-class newspapers, will contain complete accounts of the coming battle, and all that precedes in the preparations for it. Its responsible Editor is now engaged in ascertaining whether he can nerve himself up to witnessing the combat. So soon as this preliminary question is decided, that of the morality of the proceeding will be considered from that high religious standpoint which this paper never fails to occupy.*

There were all sorts of preparations to be made. The selection of a site was turned over to Sherman Thurston, one of the most notable rough-and-tumble fighters of the time and a man whose honesty was never questioned. There were tickets to be printed up. There

were benefits and exhibitions to be held and there were interviews with the fighters. Excitement ran high in Omaha (and Council Bluffs) in mid-November 1873. It was ultimately decided that the fight would be held on the Iowa side of the river somewhere south of Council Bluffs on the Kansas City, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs line. The tickets were priced at $5.00 and read simply "From Omaha to ____ and return."

And the exhibitions played to full houses. On 14 November Tom Allen packed the Belle Union theatre and sparred with his trainer, Tom Madden, while on the 15th Ben Hogan pulled a crowd to the Academy of Music where he put on an exhibition with his former trainer, a man named Sweeny. Apparently Allen demonstrated all the science as did Hogan but the question was really whether Hogan could stand up to Allen in the long run.

By the 16th and 17th large delegations of the sporting fraternity were arriving in Omaha and Council Bluffs from places like St. Louis, St. Joseph, and Kansas City, and people were expected from as far away as Chicago and even New York. It was hard to deny that a very important prizefight was about to take place and the question that had to be asked was what the authorities in either Nebraska or Iowa intended to do about it. As long as the prizefighters and their supporters departed the state of Nebraska in peaceable fashion without engaging in any prizefighting or otherwise breaking the law, there was little interest that the Nebraska authorities would take in them. The Iowa authorities on all levels of government faced a real challenge, however, from the men who would stage a prizefight on Iowa territory. On 16 November a number of prominent citizens of Council Bluffs fired off a telegram to Governor Cyrus Clay Carpenter requesting that he use his power and military force to



A sparring exhibition as rendered by a Harper's Weekly *illustrator.*

prevent the fight from taking place. The Governor temporized momentarily and asked for a bit more information. The good citizens gave him a bit more information in the following terms:

> *Can't something be done to prevent the Allen-Hogan prizefight in Iowa tomorrow? Fifteen hundred roughs are in Omaha, and the local authorities are powerless. Can't you send military companies from Des Moines to prevent their coming into the State?*

The Governor did indeed send a detachment of Olmstead Zouaves and another of Crocker Guards from Des Moines. They arrived in Council Bluffs at a late hour on Monday, 17 November. They were placed at the transfer depot in the hopes of preventing the prizefighters and their fellow toughs from either entering Iowa or from proceeding past the transfer depot to a spot in Iowa where they could put up their ring and have their prizefight.

On Tuesday, 18 November, the day set for the fight, the excursion set out at 9:00 a.m. They arrived in Council Bluffs and the crowd there was indeed a motley assortment of types. The *Nonpareil* described it as including "the well-to-do business men, the sleek-faced, stylish clerk, the bronzed laborer, the gambler of childlike and bland demeanor, and even the meek newspaper reporter." About 10:00 the train backed down from the St. Joseph depot to the transfer depot and there picked up the group of roughs, toughs, and ruffians from Omaha. At the transfer depot, the forces of law and order met the members of the sporting world and the result was a great stand off. Allen and Hogan were not on the train and thus could not be arrested and taken before a judge to post bonds to keep the peace in the state of Iowa. Without Allen and Hogan, Sheriff Doughty of Pottawattamie County was virtually powerless to detain the train, its passengers, or to make much use of the militia which had been sent from Des Moines to aid him in preventing the fight. He made an attempt to join the excursion with the militia but the promoters of the fight informed him that that would be impossible unless he was willing to come up with $5.00 for himself and each member of the militia. The Sheriff opined that the state would be good for the fares but that was not good enough for those who were selling tickets and so the Sheriff stepped down from the train with the militia and allowed the train to continue southward on its way.

Hogan and Allen had, of course, crossed over from Omaha in carriages earlier in the morning and were well on their way to the ground selected which was some distance south of Council Bluffs near Pacific Junction in Mills County. All the paraphernalia necessary for a prizefight — stakes and ropes — were there thrown out of the baggage car and a twenty-four foot square ring was rapidly put up. That was the so-called inner ring. A thirty-foot square ring was put up around that and the intervening space was given over to the press and individuals who had purchased, for two extra dollars, the privilege of seeing the fight at a little closer range.

A referee had to be selected and a timekeeper appointed as well. The choice of a referee caused a great deal of discussion but finally Tom Riley of Kansas City was found acceptable to everyone and when he agreed to act as timer as well that left little more to be done before the fighters met at the scratch. Allen came forward with his seconds, Arthur Chambers, the lightweight champion, and Jack Madden, and tossed his hat into the ring. Then Ben Hogan appeared and sat down in the opposite corner with his seconds, Sherman Thurston and John Sweeny. There was a momentary interruption as the Sheriff of Mills County made a token attempt to stop the fight by reading a warrant and then departing the scene. Hogan pitched his cap into the center of the

ring and all was ready.

It was a miserably cold and blustery day with a strong wind blowing from the northwest. The fight is best described in the account which appeared in the *St. Louis Democrat* of 19 November 1873:

THE FIRST ROUND.

Allen advanced, as usual; with his head thrown back and his arms well advanced. Hogan walked round him, keeping both fists constantly at work. Allen was evidently measuring his antagonist, when Ben let go his left and caught Allen in the nose without a return. This nettled the champion, and he forced the fighting, but Ben avoided it by dancing away. Tom then let go his left at the body, and was countered on the neck. Both men worked into Hogan's corner, and Allen was forced to the ropes. They then separated and as Hogan hit a body blow Allen slipped and fell. First blood and first knock-down claimed and allowed for Hogan, amid tremendous cheers.

SECOND ROUND.

Both men responded promptly to the call of time, and Allen at once went to work in earnest, but Ben's sparring was decidedly scientific and took his friends completely by surprise. Give and take was the order of the day, and both men were evidently terribly in earnest. Several times did the men come to close quarters, and finally Hogan was knocked down by a body blow, amid many cries of foul, but as Ben, who was evidently the favorite, was having the best of the battle, the claim was not insisted on.

THIRD ROUND.

When time was called both men came up fresh and smiling. Allen got his work in at once, and Hogan appreciating the fact sent out his left, but was short. They clinched and pounded each other in the neck and ribs, finally broke, and sparring was indulged in. On coming to close quarters again Allen shot out his left, catching Hogan on the nose and knocking him down. It was here that Carroll and the Western mob got their work in, and Allen was treated in the same manner as in his first fight with McCoole. At the conclusion of the round, which was decidedly in the champion's favor, the ropes were cut and pistols drawn.

An Omaha rough stepped up to Allen, calling him a s-- of a b----, and said he could not win under any circumstances. Tom responded that he did not deserve abuse, never having insulted the party in question. It was at once evident that the fight was at an end. Riley refused to either entertain the claim of foul or render a decision till Omaha was reached.

Later on the train trip back to Omaha, the referee rendered his decision which was that the fight had ended in a draw. The stakeholder, Jim Eagan, claimed the men would have to fight again for the money, but on his return to Omaha he was arrested on a charge of embezzlement at the suggestion of Hogan's entourage. The fight was a fiasco, or a sell, or a sham, or a farce, or all of the above. It had lasted exactly sixteen minutes; it had settled nothing; and, as was usually the case in the nineteenth century prize ring, very few people were satisfied with the result. Hogan's backers felt that he had been jobbed. Allen's backers were sure that he had been taken. The press was outraged. The Governor of Iowa was appalled at the actions of Sheriff Doughty and his inability to prevent the shameful event from taking place. Only the papers of Omaha, engaging as always in a competitive and endless war with their neighbors to the east found something to crow about in the affair. On 20 November the *Omaha Daily Herald* offered the following gleeful commentary upon the event:

The peace and dignity of Iowa may have been very much disturbed by Tom Allen and Ben Hogan at or near Pacific City, but all will agree that its civil authorities were disgraced by the ridiculous fiasco of the military overtures of Gov. Carpenter to stop the fight. The performance of the "milish" was farcical beyond even the HERALD'S *power to describe.*

The fighters and the toughs who had come from distant places finally departed from the area. Mr. Eagan was released from jail and departed for St. Louis. Tom Allen, on his arrival in St. Louis with Arthur Chambers on 21 November, was promptly arrested upon the request of Governor Beveridge of Illinois who was still pursuing the principals in the Allen-McCoole fight of two months before. Ben Hogan remained in Omaha long enough to give another exhibition at the Academy of Music on 26 November 1873 and then headed south to St. Louis to explain his side of the big mill near the Big Muddy. Shortly after his arrival he was arrested on a vagrancy charge.

There were some battles ahead for the Mississippi River rowdies in the squared circle but the frontier was no longer a tolerant frontier and increasingly they were harassed by authorities as laws were enacted, tightened up, and enforced against them. Prizefighting remained at a nadir point throughout the remainder of the 1870s and into the early 1880s. It was only with the coming upon the scene of the legendary John L. Sullivan that an upturn was in evidence. On his great exhibition tours of 1884 and later, John L. took sparring and the manly art to cities and towns throughout America and began to make of boxing something more than prizefighting. He put gloves on his fists, put science into the sport, and put on a great show. That had not happened near Pacific Junction in November 1873 when Tom Allen met Ben Hogan in what was probably Iowa's most notorious prizefight. □

Note on Sources

There is no worthwhile comprehensive history available on prizefighting in the United States in the nineteenth century. By far the greatest amount of material for this article was found in contemporary newspapers which included the *St. Louis Democrat*, the *Omaha Daily Herald*, the *Omaha Republican*, the *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, and the *Iowa State Register*. Materials for the period prior to the appearance of John L. Sullivan on the scene are very scanty, and little has been written of the gamblers and toughs who made up the sporting scene in the third quarter of the century. W. E. Harding published a number of quasi-historical articles in the *National Police Gazette* in the 1880s which were colorful but of limited value. The sport, if such it is, awaits its historian.

GROWING UP IN IOWA CITY:
Recollections of an Historian

Iowa City as seen from the top of the East Hall, c. 1905. The thoroughfare on the right is Iowa Avenue. (The University of Iowa AVC Photo Service)

by Carl B. Cone

When the time for retirement neared, we seriously considered only two alternatives. We could stay where we were, or we could return to Iowa City forty years after we had said good-bye. We decided finally to remain in Lexington, Kentucky, our home for the past thirty-five years.

That decision did not forbid us from wondering occasionally whether we could have gone home again. We have always thought we could and not be sorry. We visited Iowa City often enough after 1942 to know that we still knew it. Though it was more than twice as large and new but not strange neighborhoods had sprung up, the business district, though much rebuilt, was still across the street from what we called the campus. (Or perhaps I should use the fancy name "Pentacrest.") Many of our friends from school and college days had never left home. We could have easily resumed life in Iowa City.

The reasons that persuaded us to stay in Lexington were practical ones. If the sentimental ones weighed more heavily, they'd have directed us up I-75 to I-74 to its terminus at I-80 in the city of my birth, then off I-80 at what we knew as the Solon road, entering Iowa City from the northeast through my boyhood neighborhood of Goosetown, and on a little farther to Mary Louise's neighborhood in the south end, in the parish of St. Patrick's. We'd have been home again.

Of the sentimental nostalgic reasons that argued for return, there were two in particular and they merge into one. Though we had spent only the first third of our lives in Iowa City and had since put down roots in Lexington, we were still Iowans. The song "My Old Kentucky Home," even at the Derby, doesn't move us as the Iowa Corn Song does. No childhood

© Iowa State Historical Department/Office of the State Historical Society 1983 0031—0360/83/0102—0014 $1.00

memories attached to it. In Iowa City we spent our growing up years, the ones that leave indelible impressions. We had enjoyed living in Louisiana, but we were ready to leave when the opportunity came to move to Kentucky. From the perspective of Baton Rouge, Lexington seemed to be almost the Middle West. Once settled in Lexington, we never felt a strong urge to leave. I did not negotiate over any of the four subsequent invitations to go elsewhere, even though I knew that in coming to Kentucky we had not returned to the Middle West. (Kentucky is not Iowa, and Lexington is not Iowa City.)

When we look back to the times when we were young in Iowa City we are grateful that we grew up there. As the twenties ended we were in high school. The thirties saw us finish high school and graduate from the University of Iowa and we were still in Iowa City when the war came. Ours was Iowa City between the wars. I did not then know the girl I eventually married. We lived across town from one another, went to different schools, and did not meet during our university years. The Iowa City I speak of is the one I knew, and though it was for the most part hers also, I saw it from a somewhat different perspective and amidst different associations.

The essential character of the town was the same for both of us. Iowa City was thoroughly a university town. People either worked for the university or in businesses dependent on it or on the farmers of Johnson County. It was just out of the small town stage but, because of the university, it had considerably more to offer a young person, child or teen-ager, than many larger cities. It takes an effort to realize that, just a few years before we were born, Oskaloosa was bigger than Iowa City.

Because the university gave the town its character, it strongly influenced the lives of children who grew up there. Dominated would perhaps be a better word. Some of my earliest memories are of university professors I knew as a small child. They impressed me favorably and profoundly; they awed me. Playing with my wagon on the front sidewalk of our home on Iowa Avenue, I learned to know dapper little Professor Rockwood as he walked jauntily by on his way to the Chemistry building, or kindly Professor "Bugs" Wyckham, the zoologist. He died when I was taking a course from him in my sophomore year at the university. Professor Gilbert Houser was another zoologist neighbor. From his course which I took as a freshman I remember one solemn pronouncement. Pausing in his lecture, looking at the ceiling at the rear of the room with his long nose above the horizontal, he asked rhetorically, dramatically, and with profound gravity, apropos of nothing I can recall, "Who ever heard of a constipated bird?"

Those gentlemen, and a few others like them, persuaded me that a professor was a very special person living an enviable life. From outward appearances they seemed to be at peace with themselves and the world. They were unhurried, benign, regular men who lived lives that today would be considered routine. In my boyish eyes they were great men. I never learned anything about them in later years that diminished their stature. I think they, and some others on the university faculty I came to know in those years, were by my personal definition, great men. My opinion of professors did not change even when I caddied for some of them and saw them in other positions. I was able to separate the professor from the duffer with the bizarre golf swing whom we caddies delighted in imitating derisively.

I can say with some confidence that acquaintance with them influenced my ultimate decision to dwell always in academe. Today we call such men role models. The term grates on me but it describes a reality I experienced long before I entered graduate school and came under their tutelage.

At the age of four and one-half my neighborhood horizons widened. I entered kindergar-

Fire station in the City Hall, c. 1920. The author can be seen beneath the horse's head. The two gentlemen on the fire wagon are Mayor Jack Carroll and the author's father. (courtesy Carl B. Cone)

ten at Horace Mann School and began a happy period of twelve years in the Iowa City public schools. If it were possible to live that time again, I do not think I would want anything about my schooling to be different. Today we use a bit of jargon — "quality education." If the term means what I think it ought to mean, we enjoyed quality education under circumstances as congenial as any that I can imagine. Our teachers were true professionals; teaching took first place in their lives. Partly that was because the females among them, the majority of my teachers, were almost without exception spinsters. Teaching for them was a full-time vocation, not, as so often today, simply a source of supplemental family income, one among the activities competing for time and attention and often coming out third or fourth best.

The school bus did not set the school schedule and tyrannize over the lives of the pupils. We always had an hour and a half at noon. Most of us, all the way through high school, went home for lunch. In elementary school that meant we could pass a football or play catch with a baseball on our way to lunch and back to school, or in season play marbles in the automobile ruts of unpaved Dodge Street. Basketball was not yet important in our lives; today under similar circumstances we would probably dribble a basketball to and from school. I feel sorry for pupils today who don't know the fun and joy of walking to school or meandering home after school. Poor things, they wolf school "lunches" and return to their classrooms all within the half an hour the school bus schedule permits them.

On one occasion our third grade walked to MacBride Hall at the university to see a performance of *Peter Pan*. It was the month of May; a rain shower had ended but the streets were damp and buds from the trees were thick on the sidewalk. It was one of those deliciously moist spring days, full of promise of summer. Even since then *Peter Pan* has been associated in my mind with a rainy warm spring day. Walking along Bayswater Road in London on

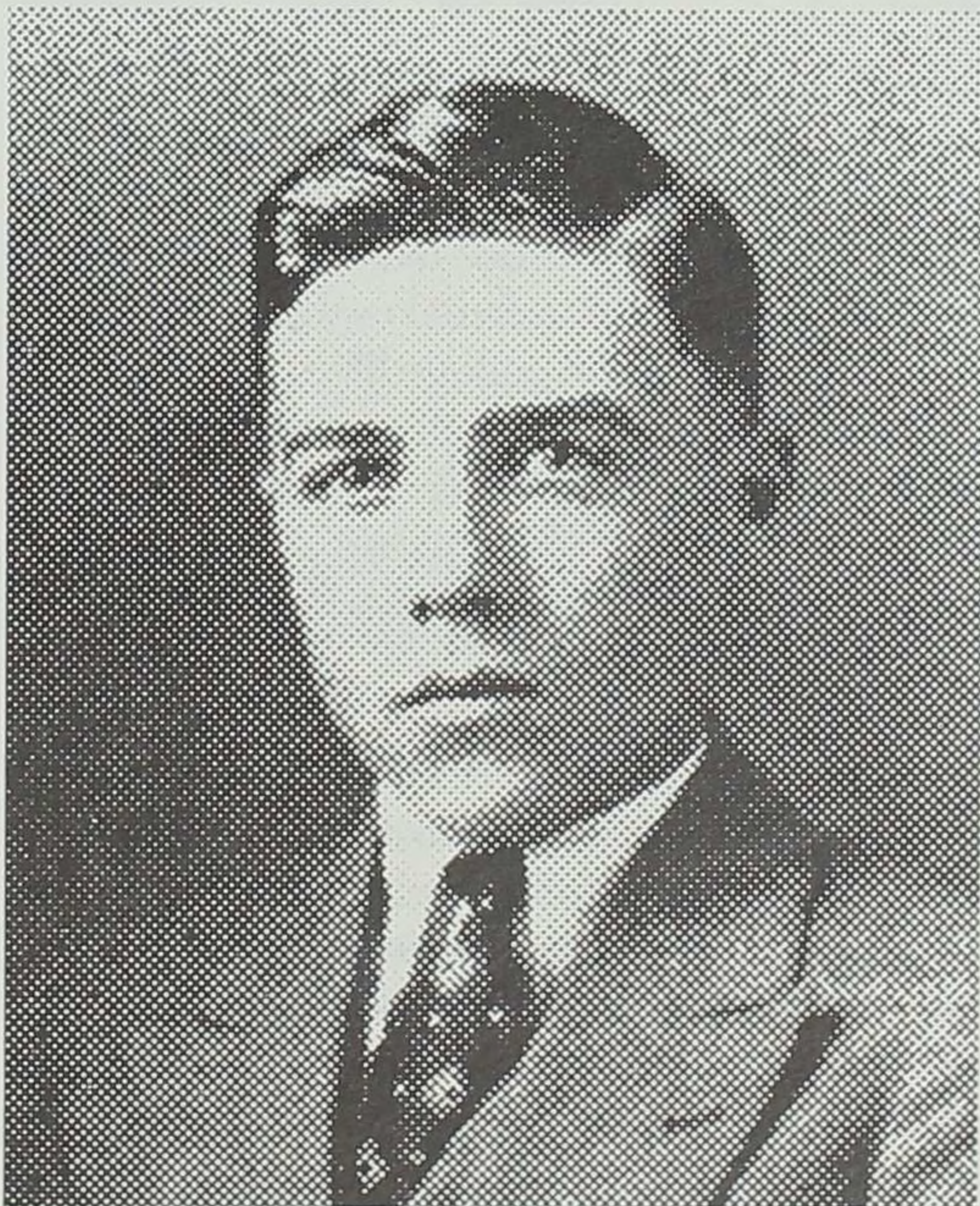
just such a day about twenty years ago I passed a house with a blue plaque on the wall near the front door. It had been the home of J.M. Barrie. The association was reinforced — *Peter Pan*, Barrie, and a showery spring day. Similarly, because I read *The Brothers Karamazov* as a university student on winter nights so cold that the snow squeaked under the feet of passers-by, I want to make it a winter's tale.

Through twelve grades the university impinged upon our lives. A graduate student in speech, Loren Reid, came regularly from the university to judge our high school debates. Later, at one stage of my career professing history, I was closely associated with some people in the field of speech, and Loren Reid was one of them. I encountered him when I taught summer school at the University of Missouri in Columbia. In his biography of Charles James Fox he cited one of my books, a book written by one whom Loren had judged twenty-five years earlier as a high school debater in Iowa City.

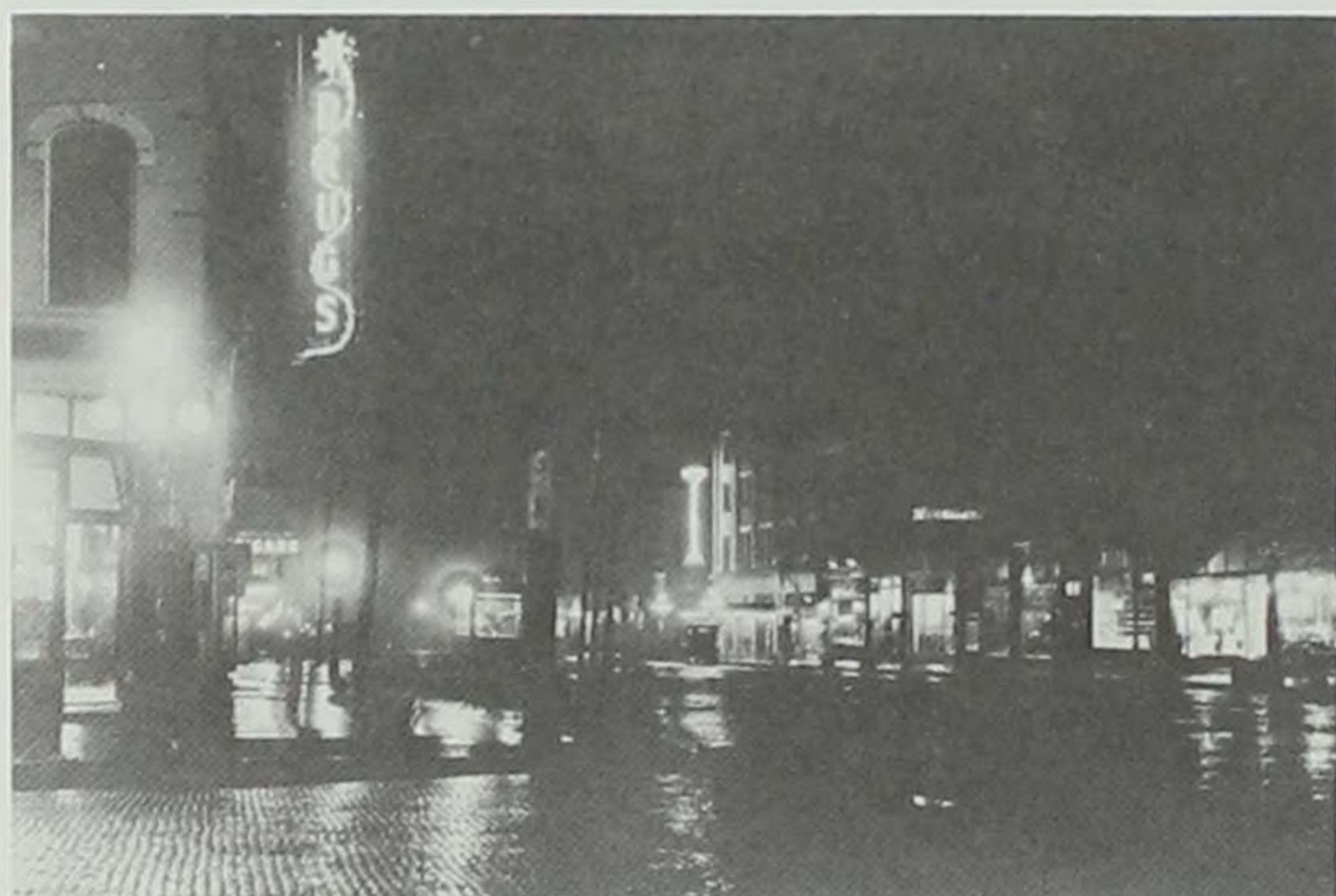
The Iowa City public schools embarked seriously upon an instrumental music program about the time I entered junior high school. In my senior year of high school the band director was Gerald Roscoe Prescott, well known for his success at Mason City. He was a graduate student in music at the university. Later I saw him at the University of Minnesota where he was director of bands and nationally prominent in band circles.

Speakers from the university faculty came regularly to speak to our high school assemblies. Always well received and long remembered was, for example, Homer Dill. He conducted the university program in museum methods and told about expeditions to collect zoological specimans for the museum. He taught the late Jack Musgrove, one of my boyhood pals. Jack was one of those unusually fortunate persons who spent his life following out interests that took hold of him during boyhood. Some may remember him for his book on the wild fowl of Iowa, or as director of the state museum in Des Moines. Another popular speaker from the university was Professor Ed Lauer, who later went to the University of Washington. Still later, after the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* published one of my articles, he wrote to ask whether I was the son of the Carl Cone he had known in Rotary in Iowa City.

The relations between town and gown in Iowa City in those years were good. A young person growing up there could take advantage of the opportunities the university offered, notably the university lecture series. There, even before I was in the university, I was able to see and admire the polished performances of Benjamin F. Shambaugh who always introduced the speakers. His introductions were gems of composition and delivery. One memorable speaker was Hamlin Garland. He appeared at the time when we were reading *A Son of the Middle Border* in seventh grade English. Though I cannot remember the contents of his



Carl B. Cone as a high school student, c. 1930. (City High School, Iowa City)



Whetstone's Drug Store on the corner of Clinton and Washington streets. (SHSI)

lecture, I cannot forget his appearance or the impression it made upon me. He was tall with white hair, and altogether he was someone to be remembered.

There were other kinds of university related interests in Iowa City that I would have encountered in few other places. We lived next door to the Phi Gamma Delta house. One day, after students had left for the summer vacation, I found a book in a pile of trash the students had thrown out. So it came about that I read Percy Marks, *The Plastic Age,* at an earlier age (before eight) than would usually be recommended. Because I already knew, I think I can say, something about college life, I had enough background to appreciate this book as a college novel. The background was all around me and in the air of Iowa City. It was not long after this, with the remarkable freedom for children in Iowa City at that time, that we accustomed ourselves to read magazines at Whetstone's drugstore. We paid our rental fee, so to speak, with a nickel for a wonderful pink fountain drink called Persian Sherbert, with a scoop of ice cream in it for another nickel. We smirked and chuckled knowingly over *Frivol,* the campus humor magazine, and *College Humor;* the illustrations by John Held, Jr., and his imitators, exaggerated only a bit the sheiks and flappers we saw on the streets of Iowa City in raccoon coats and bell-bottom trousers, short skirts, high heels, and silk stockings. One coed from Des Moines drove a yellow Stutz Bearcat; tin lizzies were all over town.

Professors and lecturers and "intellectual" phenomena had to compete for young people's interests with university athletes and sports heroes. If at the age of five I knew "Bugs" Wyckham, I also knew George Thompson who had the good fortune or bad luck, depending on how one looked at it, to be the "other tackle" on that great 1921 Iowa football team. He was a Phi Gam. Now and then I was an honored guest for dinner there. Seeing me at play outside, the fraternity men would take me in, wash my face and hands, and then to my great pride and glory, they'd plaster down my hair with Stacomb, a pink pomade much favored at that time. We would assemble in the living room to await the call to dinner. To pass the time, the men tossed me around like a football and of course big George with his ruddy face and his "I" sweater was among those who tossed and caught me. In the meantime, Mrs. Walsh, the fraternity cook, had told my mother why I wouldn't be home for dinner. Mother could see me at dinner because our kitchen window was opposite the dining room windows of the fraternity. The men sang at the table after dinner. When I returned home it was important to peel off my sweater without mussing my sleeked down hair.

George Thompson was a better tackle than common fame allowed. Because the other tackle was the incomparable Duke Slater, people tended to overlook George. When opposing teams stayed away from Duke's side of the Iowa line, George received the assault against his. At the end of the season in those days, the athletic department sold off old practice footballs. My father brought one home to me. He told me a scratch on the cover was the mark of Duke's thumbnail. I was the envy of my pals. My father never changed his story; I doubt on reflection that it was true; but it was a glorious story at the time.

The first university football game I saw was on a beautiful October day in 1925. Dad telephoned during the morning to say that the telephone people from Des Moines for whom he bought tickets would be unable to come. If I would come to his office downtown after lunch, we would go to the game. With a shiny red Jonathan in my pocket, we took our seats in the stands. Illinois was the opponent. The first play of my first college game had Red Grange receiving the kickoff in the southeast corner of the old Iowa field and returning it untouched on the diagonal for a touchdown. But Iowa had Nick (Cowboy) Kutsch. The headline next morning in the *Des Moines Register's* sports section — green, not peach then — read "Grange great, Kutsch greater." He was, so to speak, by two points — 12-10.

There were other lasting memories. When Iowa beat Yale in 1922, the town went wild, first on Saturday when the news arrived and later on Monday when the team arrived at the Rock Island depot. I had to be in school on Monday, of course, but I was downtown on Saturday and after school on Monday and saw the festivities. I was six years old. Then, and it remained true later, I and most other kids in Iowa City enjoyed freedom of movement. We walked or rode our bikes wherever we went and we went wherever we chose to go. About the only limitation on my freedom was the rule that I had to be home at mealtime.

We knew how to sneak under the wall along the interurban tracks bordering old Iowa field. Until I became a Boy Scout and ushered at football games, that was the means of access to see such as Herb Joesting shred the Iowa line in the dismal days when Coach Burt Ingwersen was under attack. That was the period when the bitter saying was heard in the land, Minnesota 40, Iowa fights. We heard it again in the middle thirties when Pug Lund and Stan Kostka ran up the Minnesota scores against Iowa.

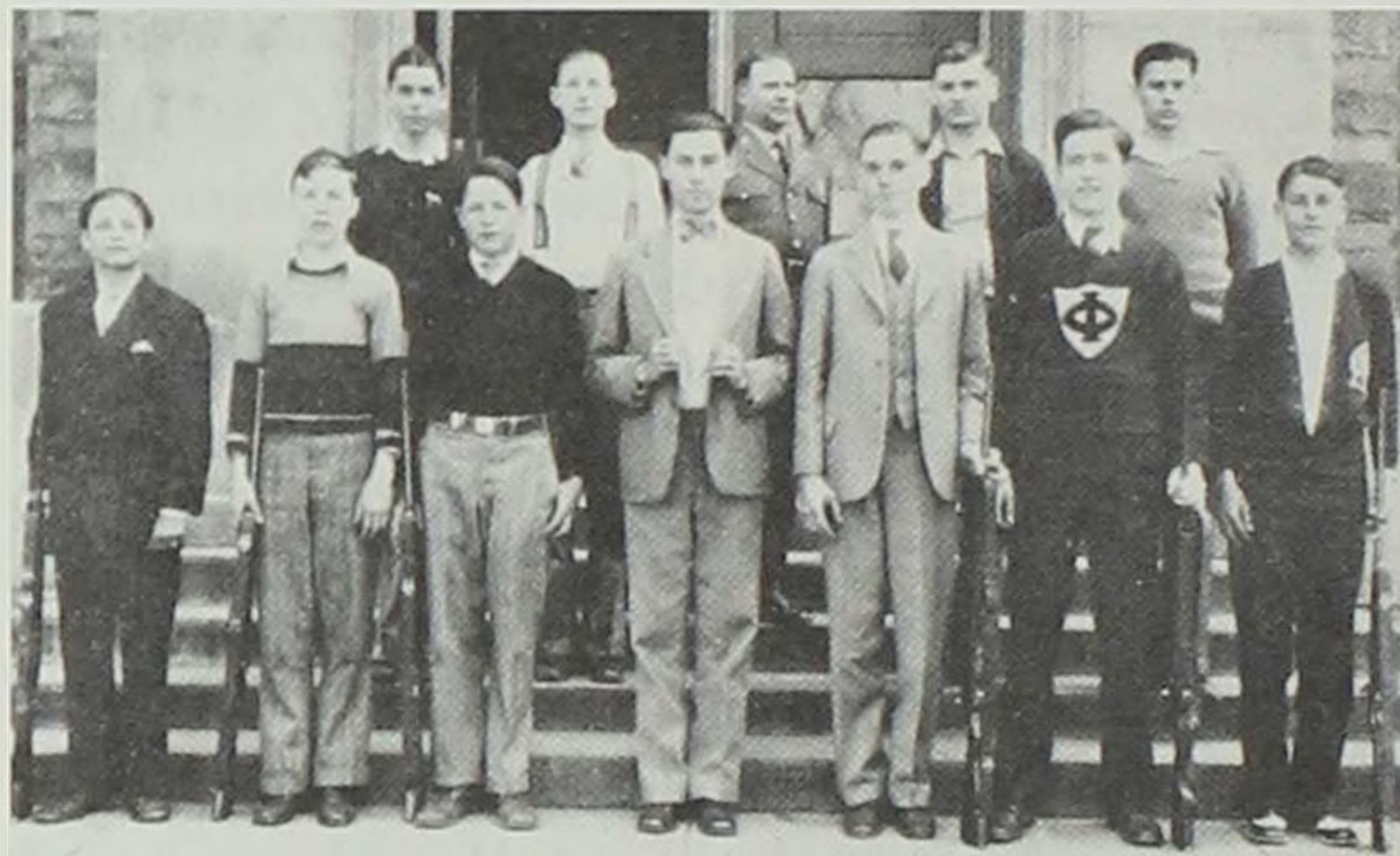
But in between, Iowa did beat Minnesota. I was a Boy Scout usher when I saw Nanny Pape break loose for a touchdown and Irving Nelson drop kick the point after to beat Minnesota 7-6. The next year, 1929, the Minnesota game was played in the new stadium across the river, and history repeated itself. Bronko Nagurski broke through the Iowa line. Like a wounded buffalo he galloped on, with tacklers bouncing off him, and he went about forty yards for the touchdown. But hold, here's Pape again. Late in the game he scored Iowa's only touchdown to beat Minnesota 9-7.

The Homecoming Monument created for the 1928 Iowa-Minnesota football game. (SHSI)

Childhood events remain vivid, especially when they were so spectacular, or seemed so to me. Some great athletes played for or against Iowa in the days of my childhood, and it was my good fortune, growing up in Iowa City, to see many of them. I learned to think of the Big Ten as the premier collegiate athletic conference. When teaching at LSU and then the University of Kentucky, prudence told me my attitude

toward the Southeastern Conference was best left unspoken. My youth in Iowa City continues until now to influence my views of intercollegiate athletics. For one thing, at an early age I learned something about the seamy side of intercollegiate athletics. Because of Iowa's suspension from the Big Ten in 1930, I was disabused of thinking that college athletics were all purity, sweetness and light.

Later personal experience taught me about callousness in athletics and gave me a reason for thinking I understood why Iowa athletic fortunes were at their nadir in the 1930s. In the fall of 1935 I received a letter from the registrar informing me of a university rule by which, because of my superior grades, I had accumulated more than enough bonus credits to make me eligible to graduate at the end of my seventh semester. I went to the athletic department to inquire of the effect of graduation on my eligibility to continue on the varsity rifle team during the following spring semester. I remembered the man I talked with from my childhood days on Iowa Avenue, not as a kindly Bugs Wyckham but as an arrogant coach of gymnastics and fencing. He had not changed. He was rude and could not have been less interested. With his feet on his desk while I stood in front of it, his hands clasped across his fat belly, he simply said that under Big Ten rules I would be ineligible to compete, even if I chose not to take my degree, because I had enough credits to graduate. I said that it was strange to be ruled ineligible because of superior grades. He shrugged his shoulders to signal that he was done with me. He did not know that the spring before at the Big Ten matches at the University of Illinois, my performance earned me the national intercollegiate, and thus the Big Ten individual rifle championship. But the coach of Minnesota remembered and, alone among Big Ten rifle coaches, he refused to ignore the so-called rule and permit me to compete. The others simply would not accept that the intent of the rule governed my case. I did not fuss



The City High Rifle Team, 1930. The author is second from the left in the first row. (City High School, Iowa City)

about the matter and went on into graduate work. If Nile Kinnick in his senior year had played a spring sport, would he have been ruled ineligible because of superior grades? That would have been a cause célèbre. Or was the rule repealed by that time? Or was the athletic director's representative wrong in the first place? I suspect he was because he only half listened when I explained my situation. I wonder whether I hold a unique distinction — ineligibility for Big Ten varsity competition because of grades that were too high!

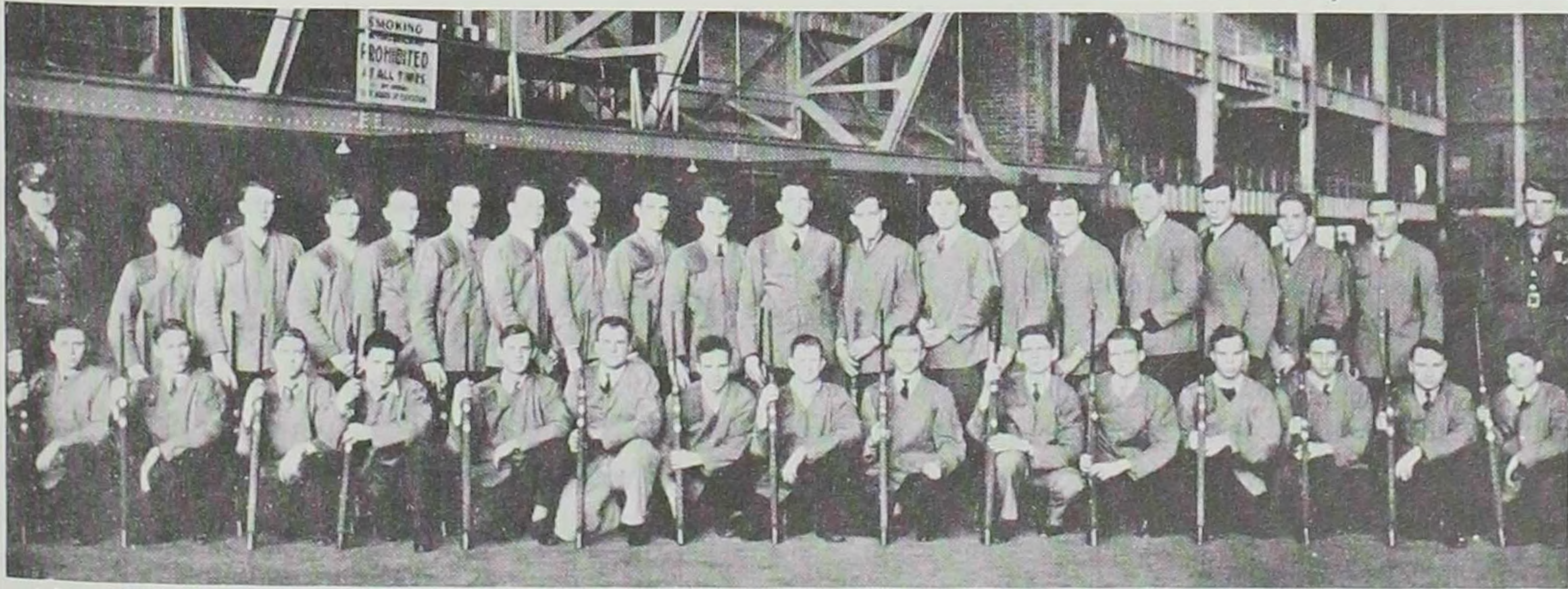
Maybe, to take the worst view of it, that was delayed retribution for sharing in a sin. Our high school rifle team, coached by an R.O.T.C. sergeant from the university, sometimes went on team trips with the university rifle team. We went to the big annual midwestern match at Kemper Military Academy in Boonville, Missouri, or to the University of Minnesota where matches were arranged with Twin City high schools. I'm sure that the professor of military science and tactics, the R.O.T.C. colonel, was acting out of kindness, in part. It never occurred to us to wonder whether Colonel Lewis had something else in mind. In those depression days he could reasonably expect us to attend the University of Iowa and he was right. In my first year at the university, four of the five members of the freshman rifle team were from Iowa City High School. We

already had experienced the tensions of shoulder-to-shoulder competition in the difficult sport of rifle shooting. It was difficult because it was about nine-tenths nerves and mind.

A later, less innocent and more cynical age, which has seen more recruiting irregularities in intercollegiate sports than we ever dreamed of, would say that the colonel was recruiting likely prospects for his university rifle team. I have no doubt he was, but he did it openly and above board; he simply took us along because there was room for us. Because the rifle team did not interest the people who controlled university athletics, even though it was a varsity sport, they simply ignored it. We had encountered that attitude in high school, even though we noticed with malicious pleasure the jealousy of members of the high school's notoriously poor football and basketball teams. Those "athletes" showed their dislike when we wore our high school letters. So we asked them where they'd been lately. They could only answer Cedar Rapids, perhaps, where Grant High had clobbered them, or Davenport where they were smeared while we had come home victorious over the Davenport High rifle team. If the colonel's beneficence was the kind that would provoke recruiting investigations today, so be it. We were the objects of it only because we lived in the shadow of the university.

There is another sequel to this story, involving a further bit of retribution. By my junior year in the university a new P.M.S. and T. had taken over. His love of Scottie dogs might have been taken, looking backwards, as an omen. He conceived of a bagpipe unit, but he needed money to get it started. So he economized at the expense of the rifle team. Henceforth, for example, we traveled in an old army ambulance, which we suspected was of World War I vintage. It was open at the rear and on a trip to Fort Des Moines one winter day we froze up so stiff that we weren't unthawed by the time of our match with the 14th Cavalry. We lost. Our love for that particular colonel was not fulsome. Some years later I was teaching at Lousiana State University. In that old "War Skule" the R.O.T.C. tradition was very strong, and it turned out that this colonel, complete with his Scottie dogs, was P.M.S. and T. When I met him at a reception he invited me to assist in coaching the rifle team. It was a pleasure to say "No," though I would have liked to have refused in more colorful words.

All of this, by the way, tells something of the origins of the later, famous Iowa Highlanders. If people might wonder why a Scottish outfit was at the University of Iowa, considering that there was no strong Scottish tradition at the university or in the state, the answer is at hand. There was once at the university a P.M.S. and



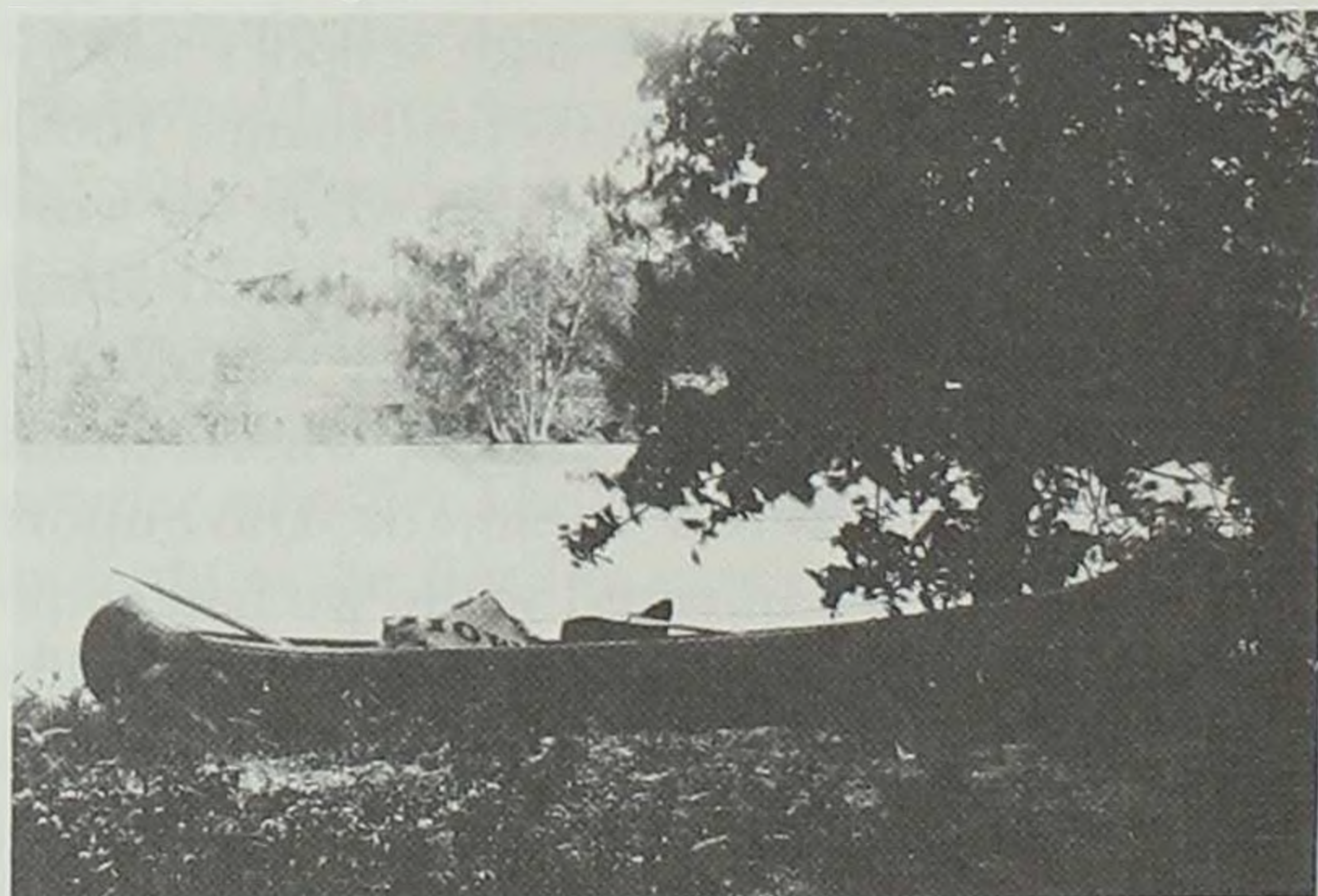
The University of Iowa Rifle Team, 1935-36. (Hawkeye Yearbook, 1936)

T. whose background and affections were predominantly Celtic, and over the years one of his dreams became reality. I hope admirers of the late Highlanders will pardon me for acknowledging a lack of enthusiasm for their pipes and drums and sword dances. It is only that I know how it all got started and the memory recalls to me among other things an unpleasant trip to Fort Des Moines.

Sometimes I think growing up in Iowa City in the 1920s and 1930s enabled me to learn more about the university than I needed to know. I seemed to be more interested in university matters than my friends and I know I read more about them. Consequently, I developed a certain skepticism about some things. But second thoughts make me reconsider. By the time I enrolled in the university I had already shed some of the awe and naiveté that other first year enrollees had to grow out of. Fortunately I had things in proper focus and knew quite early in my undergraduate experience that I wanted to go into academic life. I never had to agonize over a career choice. Looking back, I think that my early childhood experience pointed me toward the academic life and for that I am grateful.

I still have difficulty in separating the city from the university. The interaction between the two was continual and changed with the seasons. In the winter, as Boy Scouts, we had access to the big swimming pool in the new field house on Saturday mornings. In the summer we swam in the Iowa River at the old City Park bridge. In the winter I used the university library when I could not find what I wanted in the public library and the desk attendants never raised any questions. On summer evenings when we did not have scheduled games in the city league, we practiced on the baseball diamond at the old Iowa field, never expecting some watchman to run us off. Life was free and easy then, it seemed, so long as we did not abuse privileges that we mostly took for granted.

We enjoyed one unusual spring sport, if I may use that word. In that season, the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women at the university began to look more worried than usual because the pattern of student activities changed. As town kids we accommodated to it easily. University students were beginning to think of final exams while rushing to complete course requirements. The university calendar of special events, such as lectures, became less crowded. Generally there seemed to be less going on. But after dark on warm May evenings, some students of the 1920s, perhaps those who did not have cars, enjoyed one of the attractions of the Iowa campus, the Iowa River. When we were junior high and high school freshman age, some of us shared in it. Where



(R.J. Vigars Collection, SHSI)

now is a parking lot just north of the Memorial Union there was then Fitzgerald's boathouse on the riverbank to provide rental canoes. The scene upriver from the Union on a spring evening was a pretty one, canoes dotting the water up to the island opposite the City Park and around the bend to the country club. There was no barrier until the Coralville dam, but few men and their dates intended to paddle that far. They had other business in mind, and the island, or at farthest the country club, was a distant enough destination at which to beach their canoes and recline in the moonlight on the riverbank. Being curious, or inspired to educate ourselves in the behavior of humans

stimulated by Eros, a group of us would also be on the river. We'd chip in a nickel or dime apiece, two of us would engage a canoe and, once out of sight of the boathouse, we would pick up the other three or four. The ensuing education in college life took me a bit beyond *The Plastic Age* and *College Humor*. It was not bookish learning, but we were introducing ourselves to what is now called, to strain a term, experiential education. I doubt that kind of education was as readily available in other Iowa cities.

But there was life in Iowa City apart from the university, especially during the summers. My side of town was the north end, that is, tank town, so called because of the water tower on North Dodge Street, or Goosetown, because it was the Bohemian (Czech) part of town. It was on the edge of Oakland Cemetery, and beyond the cemetery was open country. When I was nine we moved from Iowa Avenue to North Governor Street, as close (as I learned later) to the heart of the precisely defined historic Goosetown as it was possible to live, given the street pattern. It happened that the kids in the neighborhood enjoyed hunting and fishing and skating and skiing or merely tramping in the open spaces beyond the cemetery.

There was nothing unusual in small town (Iowa City was only 15,000 in the 1920s) boys in Iowa having ready access to the countryside. That was one of the advantages of growing up in Iowa. But Iowa City was not merely a rural Iowa town. There was in it, open to any young person who desired to benefit from it, the stimulating presence of the university.

Doubtless there were other great universities in middle-sized towns or small ones where a growing boy could have had the best of two worlds. I can't attest to that because I only had time to grow up in one small town. That was a full-time vocation. I can not think of any important thing I would change if I could live that period of my life again. That is because there was no better place to grow up in than the Iowa City of the twenties and thirties.

By leaving Iowa City to live in Louisiana and then Kentucky for the rest of my life, I have been able to understand better what growing up in Iowa meant for me. To see Iowa from a distance is to see it more clearly and with an understanding improved by comparative perspectives. Life in Iowa is freer and safer than I have known it elsewhere, and I say that realizing that life has changed everywhere. The comparative freedom from crime in Iowa is only one part of the freedom and security I am thinking of. Physical and social movement are easier, if I may speak of them in the same breath. They are functions of geography, of the absence of great urban concentrations, of a rural society which makes the ethos of the state rural. Small towns and middle-sized cities are not far removed from the country. The urban population, because of proximity to the country and community of interests, participates in the rural ethos and shares a similarity of outlook. In the end there is a total community of spirit. That spirit is equalitarian, not doctrinaire egalitarianism. It is an equalitarian society in which deference to social and economic superiors is only the politeness accorded to equals. Frankness and openness in relations with others presupposes that pretenders to superiority must merit it by superior achievements that do not confer special privileges. Ancestors did not earn a claim to superiority for their descendants for all time to come. It makes no difference who were the grandparents. There are no old family names to whose current bearers deference must be shown and special consideration or prior place yielded because they happened to inherit a name. Perhaps a frontier spirit lives on in Iowa. "If I passing, should speak to you, why should I not speak to you, and why should you not speak to me?" Walt Whitman lives in Iowa. □

A Great American Journal Comes West

Cedar Falls' Own *North American Review*

by Maureen McCoy

The North American Review, published in Cedar Falls, Iowa, is the oldest literary magazine in the United States, and, in 1981, it shocked such newsstand giants as *Esquire* and the *Atlantic* by winning the prestigious National Magazine Award for fiction. Dr. Kenneth Lash, director of the University of Northern Iowa's humanities program and a contributing editor and columnist for the university-owned *North American Review*, said in a *Des Moines Register* interview: "It's almost unheard of for a literary magazine published by a university to win this award. I don't know if it's ever been done before. It's certainly extraordinary and we're extremely thrilled."

William Tudor, Jr., the first editor of the North American Review.

The *North-American Review and Miscellaneous Journal*, as it was first titled, was founded in the East as were other respected journals in the early nineteenth century. A group of Harvard graduates nurtured the "Old North," as it was known, into existence in Boston in 1815. At that time, American magazines had only local circulations; the nation's publications were still essentially provincial in character. But the *Review* took a forward approach, envisioning a national audience with its high standards and the quality and variety of the subject matter it presented.

One of the *Review's* founders, William Tudor, also became its first editor. In fact, he wrote most of the articles in the magazine's first four volumes. In an early issue, a proposal in a letter to the editor sparked a minor religious controversy. The letter writer simply suggested that the customary second church service on Sunday be moved from the afternoon to the evening to avoid the heat of the day. When the *Review* published the letter, however, it was immediately condemned by Robert Walsh, the editor of the *National Gazette*, for being "lax in its religious tone." In another issue, a letter from another reader requested a list of all the plays so far produced in America. Letters and articles like these in the early volumes of the *Review* quickly established its reputation as a magazine concerned with literary matters and currents, and it is a reputation

© Iowa State Historical Department/Office of the State Historical Society 1983 0031—0360/83/0102—0024 $1.00

that has continued to be the *Review's* trademark to the present day.

Poetry appeared in the *Review* as early as 1816, and by 1817 it was publishing examples of literary work that have since become well-known classics. William Cullen Bryant's poem "Thanatopsis" appeared in the *Review* in the fall of 1817 and "To A Waterfowl" appeared the next year. Interestingly enough, "Thanatopsis" had arrived on the editor's desk with neither the author's name nor a title on the work — a practice unheard of in today's competitive literary world. At this time, however, editors routinely published writers anonymously, though they were accustomed to knowing the author's identity themselves.

The editorship of the *Review* changed hands frequently during the first decade of its publication. Jared Sparks began a one-year term as editor when Tudor left the position in 1817, and a concern for American history gained a firm footing in the *Review*. In the year that followed, 1818-1819, Edward T. Channing guided the magazine's course. In 1820, when Channing accepted a Harvard professorship, the young and talented Edward Everett became editor.

Under Everett's direction the *Review* prospered. The magazine's circulation figures increased from roughly 500 in 1820, Everett's first year, to 2500 in 1822. Writers in a variety of fields contributed to the *Review;* political questions were studied for their social and economic effects, science (chemistry, geology, botany, and medicine) was given new attention, and an increased emphasis on travel books and travelers' accounts suggested an editorial Europe-mindedness. Also, the magazine presented translations of several German writers and thinkers, including Goethe.

Everett's tenure as editor ended in 1823 and he was followed, in 1824, by the return of Jared Sparks, who had earlier written to Everett complaining of a "lack of an all-American vision in the magazine." Sparks continued to increase the *Review's* readership figures, successfully gaining new subscribers in the nation's South and West. Today, mass circulation is vital to a magazine's success, but the pursuit of a national audience was an innovation in communications in the early nineteenth century. By 1826, the magazine's circulation stood at just under 3,000, and it remained at roughly this level until the 1850s.

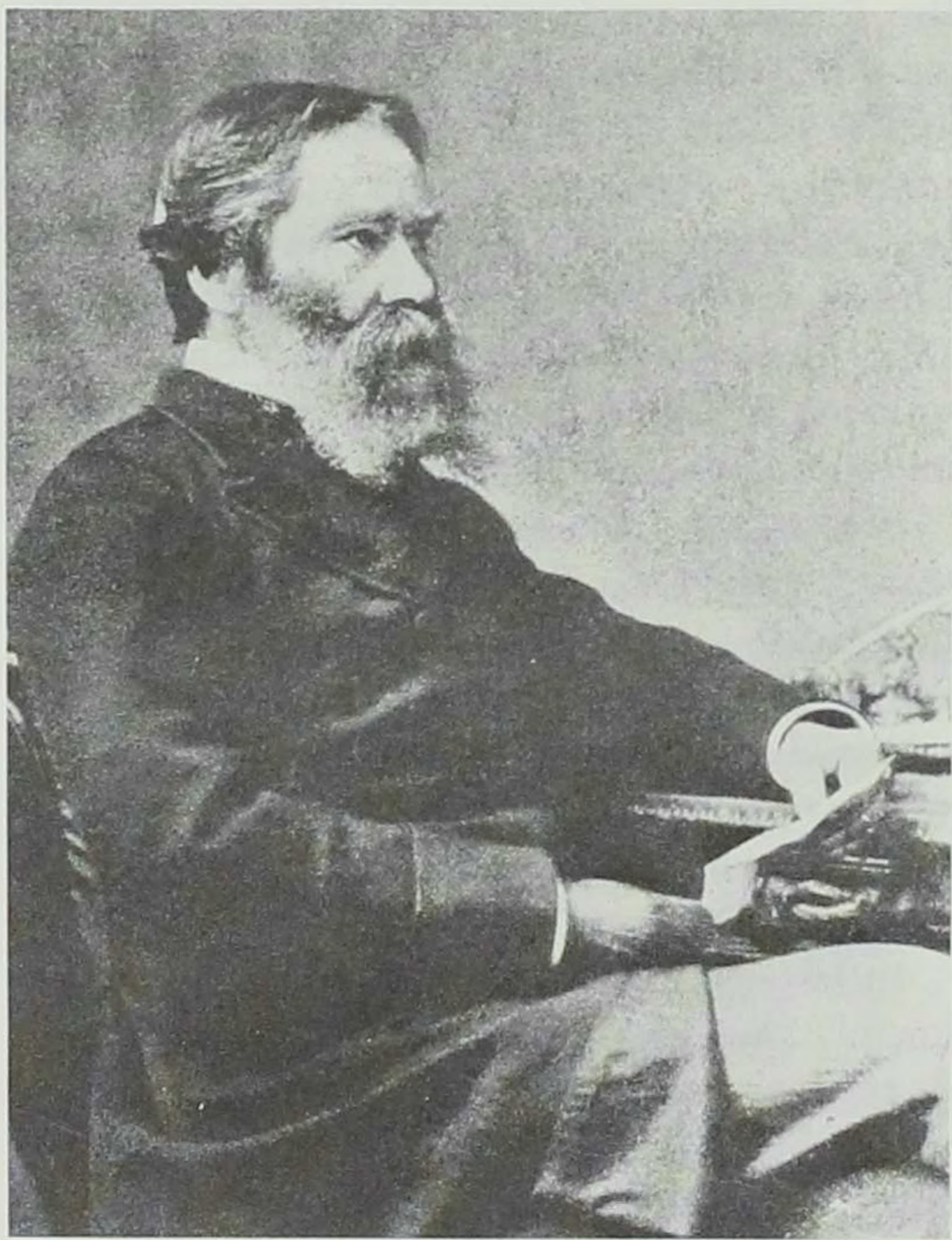
In the 1820s much of the space in the quarterly issues of the *Review* was devoted to biographical writing, which it promoted as a serious form of literary endeavor. Under Sparks' editorial guidance, the *Review* established itself as a commentator on travel, literature, history, science, political economy, and philosophy, as well as a promoter of fiction and poetry.

In hopes of obtaining high quality material for its issues, the *Review* in 1823 began to pay its authors a dollar a page for their articles. This was unheard of in magazine publishing. One contributor returned his check to the *Review* with the statement that "I must be permitted to act without any other reward than the hope to promote a most useful and important publication."

In 1830, Alexander Hill Everett, brother of Edward Everett, assumed the position of editor, and his years as editor from 1830 to 1836 proved to be a high point in the magazine's history. The new editor kept his readers abreast of American political problems and European topics. As the *Knickerbocker* magazine of New York declared in its May 1835 issue,

> *In every respect, the* North American Review *is an honor to the country. In politics, it is liberal and impartial. We hail it as the sole exponent, in its peculiar sphere, of our national mind, character, and progress; and are proud to see it sent abroad, with the Christian Examiner, as an evidence of indigenous talent, high moral worth, and republican feeling.*

In the late 1830s and 1840s, however, with first



James Russell Lowell, one of the most distinguished editors of the North American Review.

John Gorham Palfrey and then Francis Bowen as its editors, the *Review* sank into a certain dull routine. A Harvard professor of philosophy and economics, Bowen's contributions to the *Review* were largely on philosophical topics. Bowen's approach diminished the magazine's popular appeal. In 1849 the Boston *Chronotype* referred to the *Review* as "a slow coach." In the decade of the 1850s, however, a new editor, Andrew P. Peabody, tried to spruce up the magazine to fortify it against the bright new publications that were then springing up as rivals. One welcome change was a new easier-to-read typeface for the *Review*.

The Civil War decade brought two distinguished co-editors to the *Review:* James Russell Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton. Lowell concentrated on Lincoln and on contemporary political issues during the war. After the war, the *Review* returned to its literary bent. Essays on Rousseau, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and Chaucer abounded, most of them drawn from Lowell's lecture notes. The essays laid the foundation for Lowell's reputation as a learned critic, and fostered a tradition of literary criticism in the pages of the *Review* as well. Meanwhile, the ponderous weightiness of the *Review* was lightened, as Norton saw "an opportunity . . . to make the North American one of the means of developing the nation, of stimulating its better sense, of holding up to its own ideal."

Other innovations also appeared. First, in 1868 the *Review* began publishing the names of its authors, a policy that some considered a "staggering blow to anonymity of writers." Second, the *Review* followed the trend of the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's* in the 1870s in deciding to accept advertising.

Further changes of editors occurred also. In 1868, Norton resigned to go abroad and he was replaced by E.W. Gurney, who served as co-editor with Lowell until 1870. In 1870, the *Review* added another name to its succession of distinguished editors; Henry Adams, grandson of President John Adams, replaced Gurney. Adams became the sole editor when Lowell resigned in 1872. Adams expressed a certain trepidation at editing a magazine with such a long tradition, noting that "My terror is lest it should die on my hands."

The *Review* did not die in the 1870s, but when Allen Thorndike Rice purchased the magazine in 1878 he moved it to New York and made it a free forum welcoming any and all expressions of opinion. It was to be, Rice declared, "an arena wherein any man having something valuable to say could be heard." The "Old North" had maintained a dignified and retiring quality for years; its scholarship had always been steady if sometimes ponderous. Now Rice plunged it into the "maelstrom of contemporaneity." At times the *Review* under Rice seemed almost journalistic in its chronicling of current events. Concluding that fresh

writing on lively topics would be profitable, Rice set out to invigorate the *Review's* pages with it. Controversy became the order of the day, though the *Review* itself remained politically neutral, and since the magazine paid well now, it attracted many contributors.

Francis Parkman, in his article on "The Woman Question," prayed to God to deliver America from that most reckless of experiments: the movement toward women's rights. This brought an immediate response from such feminist leaders as Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Later, a series of discussions and essays on religious beliefs and affiliations sparked still more excitement and controversy. The issues of the *Review* included, for example, E.E. Hale's essay "Why Am I a Unitarian?" as well as essays on "Why Am I a Heathen?" by Wong Chin Foo, and "Why Am I an Agnostic?" by Robert Ingersoll. By 1888 the *Review* had diversified its opinions and its interests to the point of even presenting a lively defense of prizefighting.

In its new guise, however, literary material was still very important to the *Review*. The question of whether Sir Francis Bacon was the real author of Shakespeare's works was explored at length in its pages, and the *Review* also published a two-part autobiographical article by composer Richard Wagner. The issue of February 1881 was typical of the *Review* in this period. It included an essay on "The Pulpit and the Pew," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, speculations on "The Poetry of the Future," by Walt Whitman, and an article on the proposed Nicaraguan canal by Ulysses S. Grant.

Rice's emphasis on publishing controversial issues while maintaining the *Review's* interest in literary affairs proved very successful. Between the time when he purchased the *Review* in 1878 and his death in 1889, Rice saw the magazine's circulation figures rise from 7,500 to 17,000. As a result, when Lloyd Bryce took over after Rice's death he pursued the same general policies. Under Bryce, the *Review* published debates between the English Prime Minister William E. Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll on the question of home rule for Ireland, as well as articles on the American labor movement, the free silver issue, Catholicism, immigration, and the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands.

But Bryce also began to published clever and sophisticated essays on contemporary social life, manners, friends, servant problems, courtship, and sports. In the 1890s Mark Twain emerged as a valued contributor. His remarks might be serious, as in "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences," or anecdotal, as in his "Private History of the 'Jumping Frog' Story." In his "Private History" Twain recounted his discovery of an ancient Greek legend that was nearly identical to his short story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." His conclusion was that no plagiarism had occurred; imagination had simply made a froglike leap of several thousand years. Articles like these caused the *Review's* circulation to rise to a peak of 76,000 by 1891.

Colonel George Harvey purchased the *Review* in 1899. He sought to give it a more international outlook. The Boer War, which was then running its bloody course in South Africa, became a favorite topic of discussion. Under Colonel Harvey the *Review's* list of contributors expanded to include such international figures as Leo Tolstoy, Maurice Maeterlinck, and H.G. Wells. A "World-Politics" department, begun in 1904, regularly solicited correspondence from the major European capitals.

In these years, too, politics and literature often mixed in the pages of the *Review*. Mark Twain's essay "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" was a bitter condemnation of what men called "civilization." Henry James' novel *The Ambassadors* was first serialized in the *Review*. Critics concluded that the work was not a popular one, but that it certainly belonged in the *Review*. One said of James that "He has come

to his own and his own has taken him in."

Under Colonel Harvey, the *Review* abandoned its traditional political neutrality. In 1904 the magazine spoke out in favor of Theodore Roosevelt, only to turn against him in 1906, when it published an article titled "Whom Will the Democrats Next Nominate for President?" Author Mayo Hazeltine's prophetic answer was Woodrow Wilson. When Wilson eventually gained the Democratic nomination in 1912, two magazines, the *North American Review* and *Harper's Weekly*, were credited with having given him the nationwide popularity that delivered him the nomination.

In 1913 Harvey began the custom of making the first article in each issue an editorial pronouncement. He used this column to oppose American entry into World War I and then, after the war, American participation in the League of Nations. Significantly, Alan Seeger's poem, "I Have a Rendezvous with Death," the forebodings of a soldier in the trenches, saw publication in the *Review* in 1916.

Throughout these years, the *Review's* circulation figures were declining. From a peak of 76,000 in 1891, the figure fell to 25,000 by 1910 and 13,000 by 1924, when Colonel Harvey took the *Review* off the newsstands and turned it into a quarterly.

Harvey finally sold the *Review* in 1926 to Walter Butler Mahony. The new owner and editor modernized the magazine's appearance and published a wide range of articles on social, economic, political, literary, and artistic topics, and rounded out each issue with a few short stories. Though he included well-known authors as his contributors, Mahony specifically sought out new and varied talent to bring fresh viewpoints to the magazine's pages. In 1935 Mahony turned over the editorial chair to John H.G. Pell, and Pell in turn sold the *Review* to Joseph Hilton Smyth in 1939.

It was under Smyth's editorship that the *Review* became involved in a scandal that eventually led to its suspension. Smyth pleaded guilty to having served, along with his associates, as an agent for the Japanese government without registering with the State Department as a foreign agent. This scandal severely damaged the reputation of the *Review*, and it ceased publication in 1940.

Between its founding in 1815 and its suspension in 1940 the *North American Review* went through a vast number of changes. Though Jared Sparks had sought to give it an "all-American vision" in his years as its editor, the magazine had remained provincial, with close ties to Boston and Harvard. Sometimes, too, the scholarly works the *Review* published were quite dull. Nevertheless Sparks, the Everetts, and other editors did increase circulation over the years. The brilliance of Lowell, Norton, and Adams was followed by the editorship of Allen Thorndike Rice under whom the *Review* became a scintillating, lively journal filled with clashing political, religious, and scientific opinions while still remaining a literary magazine. Under Colonel Harvey's long editorship it became distinguished for its political influence and its international outlook.

In these early days of American magazine publication, the *North American Review* and other national publications succeeded in changing and enhancing the nature of communication across the country. The *Review* vigorously educated the public in the nation's cultural heritage, interpreted and put in perspective the world's larger issues, and provided low-cost entertainment in the bargain. During the Progressive Era, the magazine was also responsible in part for a number of social and political reforms. Most importantly, the *Review* and other early national magazines fostered a sense of national community among its readers, a new development in the evolution of the country. Readers knew, however vaguely, that the people across the country who seemed so inaccessible and distant were reading the same things they were, and were seeing the same issues. When the *Review* suspended pub-

lication in 1940, this influence seemed to have come to an end.

But in March 1964 the *North American Review* was revived at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, by poet and teacher Robert Dana, who continued to teach full-time throughout his editorship. In the first issue of the revived magazine, Dana and his editorial staff wrote that "The present publisher and editors guarantee to strive to return the North American Review to its position 'as the highest and most impartial platform upon which current issues can be discussed.' If we die, it will be with open minds in honest poverty." They went on to say that they hoped to establish a new kind of magazine. There already were general mass circulation magazines, little magazines, and special-interest periodicals, but the *Review*, they said,

> *wants to be the fourth kind of journal, a kind we see as non-existent in America in the 1960's. We want to be an arena for world issues. We want to print good writing and good thinking and to present it to the widest possible audience. The hope is pious. We are not the first ones to express it. But we have a few things working for us: a good name, that of the most distinguished magazine in America's history; we pay contributors – and not badly, at that; we operate, with an unpaid staff, on practically no overhead; we have taste and judgment; we are not isolated from what is going on in the world today; we can sense what people of intelligence and good will will listen to, what will move them.*
>
> *We have no axe to grind, no editorial policy to follow except excellence. We have an anarchist working for the staff, and we have a Goldwater man; we have agnostics and we have Episcopalians.*
>
> *Our first issue is not what we would like to be, but it points in the right direction. We don't have jargon – sociological, theological, literary-critical, or any other kind – we don't have obscurity, we don't have sensationalism. We also don't have advertising, but we've got to get some if we're going to survive.*

With this as a statement of goals and intentions, the first issue of the *Review* from Cornell College got off to an auspicious literary and social start. Distinguished contributors included poets Marvin Bell and Philip Levine, poet and fiction writer Robert Penn Warren, and journalist Frank Luther Mott. Also included were two articles by Roswell Garst, a Coon Rapids, Iowa, farmer who had visited the Soviet Union with a group of American farmers and whom Nikita Khrushchev visited in Iowa in 1959.

Robert Dana, who brought the North American Review *back to life at Cornell College. (Cornell College)*

Garst recounted his experiences with the Russian dignitaries and his observations on the differences in farming techniques between the two nations. The first issue of the *Review* also included literary reviews, and a photo essay by an Iowa photographer, Joan Liffring.

True to its earlier tradition, the *Review* maintained an interest in politics along with its literary interests. In the January 1968 issue, for example, the poet Denise Levertov discussed the Pentagon march and sit-in of the previous October. The March-April issue speculated as to whether Ronald Reagan, who was then the newly elected governor of California, would be the new Republican messiah, a speculation that was reminiscent of the 1906 article promoting Woodrow Wilson as a Democratic candidate.

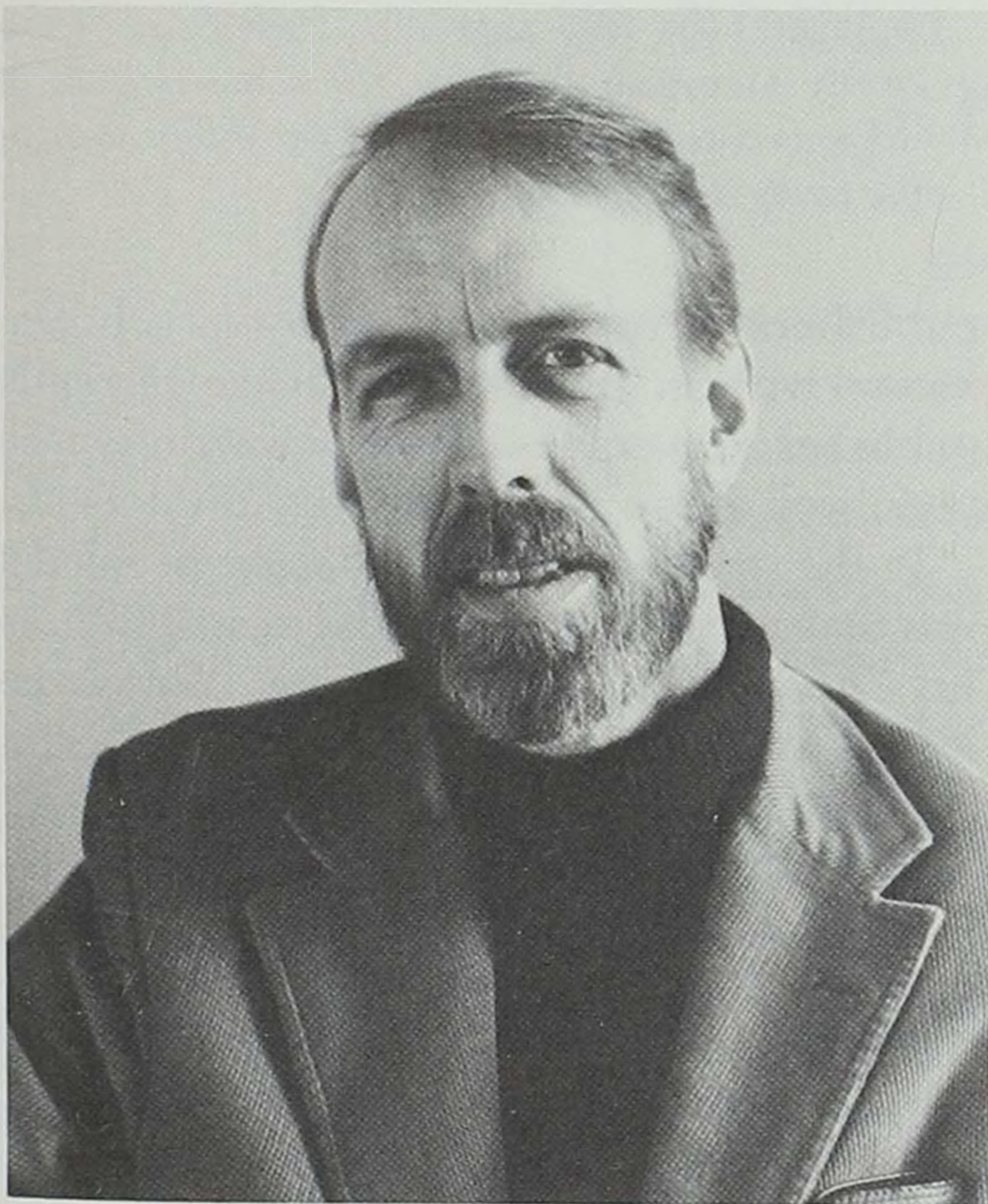
Continuing the policy established by editor Walter Butler Mahony in 1926, the revitalized *North American Review* of the 1960s stated firmly that it would especially seek submissions from lesser-known writers. In 1968 the *Review* devoted one of its issues solely to fiction and another to poetry. In spite of Dana's determination, however, the *Review* did not remain permanently at Cornell College. In his last issue of 1968, Dana included an editorial entitled "The Last Hurrah." In it, he wrote:

> *We are very late with NAR this time; sorry about that. But this is the last issue which will appear under my editorship. At present, we are negotiating the sale of the magazine to the University of Northern Iowa (Cedar Falls). When the sale goes through, NAR will continue unbroken the publishing record it refloated in 1964.*
>
> *It has been NAR's policy to keep editorials to a minimum, preferring to save the space for the knowledgeable and articulate — those writers more truly, somehow, the psychic barometers of that important weather that shapes up west of New York. This policy notwithstanding, however, the occasion seems to demand some comment on the part of the present editor, though it's difficult to determine what's appropriate.*
>
> *One might be expected to sip the bitter salts of defeat, I suppose. But the sale of* The North American Review *cannot be considered a defeat. Its five-year life at Cornell has been something of a miracle really, like living with a transplanted heart. We have always known that the rejection syndrome might wipe us out at any moment. So what? The magazine ran on a budget that never reached $6000 a year. Staff members all worked full-time at something else and were never paid for their work on NAR. We were kept alive by the loyalty of our staff, our contributors, and our ever-renewing libraries. NAR's circulation equaled that of many more established magazines, and in less time. It rarely sank to being clubby or urbanely provincial. It had a toothy candor we like to think was unique among magazines sporting a slick cover. Yet it was never slick in its approach to important issues. Too, we discovered a lot of new talent in the meadows of fiction and poetry, and the off-streets of journalism.*

Dana closed with a list of the many people who had helped to publish the *Review* under his editorship.

Although the magazine had to be sold, Dana insisted that it be kept west of the Mississippi in an effort to entrench the historically important magazine in the heartland. The University of Iowa considered purchasing the *Review*, but eventually it ended up in another obscure Iowa outpost — Cedar Falls.

When the *Review* was purchased by the University of Northern Iowa, its new editor was Robley Wilson, Jr., who taught — and still teaches — creative writing at the university. Wilson devoted his first "Smalltalk" column to a discussion of his reasons for optimism about the *Review's* future:



Robley Wilson, Jr., the current editor of the North American Review. *(courtesy Robley Wilson, Jr., of the* North American Review*)*

It should be remarked that the New Management takes up its work with a feeling of gorgeous optimism — as if simply to gather together an assortment of gaunt, coffee-drinking, cigarette-smoking, or otherwise high-strung types, were in itself a promise of sound journalism and high-class literature. Real though that promise may turn out to be, the roots of our optimism reach far deeper.

First, The North American Review *is a proud old name; you may trace it back in a direct, once-broken line more than 150 years, and it is our belief that in the five years since its revival the* Review *has come far toward recovering and improving the lustre of its best past.*

Second, we begin our tenure with a solid base of nearly a thousand subscribers – and because most of these are libraries (in all 50 states, and in eleven foreign countries), we probably have a good many more readers than the bare circulation figures might suggest.

Finally, we are embarked on a curious kind of adventure. No other quarterly with the Review's *particular aspirations (at least, none we can think of) enjoys the protection and support of a* public *university. Ponder that. Northern Iowa is the rawest of universities, scarcely out of its teacher's college cocoon, located nearly a hundred miles west of the little old lady in Dubuque. If the* Review *during the years to come succeeds in threading its way between our obligations to the state of Iowa and our obligations to a national readership, . . . then who can say that the Enlightenment is not at hand?*

All contrary portents aside, we intend to flourish.

Under Robley Wilson the *Review* has indeed reveled in its status as the only literary magazine owned by a public university. Unlike the editors of the quarterlies and reviews published by other universities, Wilson reported in an interview with the poetry newsletter *Coda* that his position as the editor of the *Review* is acknowledged through a salary and a specific allotment of time. He is able to work steadily as the editor of the *Review*, not simply as an editor "on the side" as many professors responsible for editing university literary publications must be.

In its time at Cedar Falls, the *Review* has continued the tradition of dividing its attention between literary works and articles on national and world affairs. The magazine's concern for social and political issues found expression in the first issue in a sketch of the situation in Nigeria and an article on Indian-white relations first published in the *Review* ninety years earlier. The article, "An Indian's View of Indian Affairs," by Young Joseph, a Nez Perce Indian, presented an eloquent and disturbing account of the tribe's manipulation and subjugation by

whites. Wilson expanded this concern in the winter 1973-74 issue, reprinting twenty articles on Indian-white relations drawn from issues of the *Review* over the previous 150 years. In the second issue, columnist Donald Kaul made his debut as a commentator on one of his favorite topics: the Nixon presidency. Later issues contained discussions of the urban crisis, various environmental issues, the separatist movement in Quebec, and the Vietnam Conflict.

With its literary emphasis, the *Review* continues to divide its space between established writers and new and lesser-known authors. The *Review's* Cedar Falls issues included works by Donald Justice and Vance Bourjaily, who were at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. The *Review* also drew on the workshop for an unpublished story by Flannery O'Connor entitled "Wildcat." O'Connor had written it as part of her work toward a master of fine arts degree at the workshop in 1947. Closer to home, the *Review* devoted its fall 1974 issue to poet James Hearst, a Cedar Falls resident whose published poetry stretches back to the 1930s.

One vehicle that Wilson has used to publicize the works of new authors is to devote issues of the *Review* to a special topic. The summer 1970 issue, for example, printed stories by eight women under the umbrella heading of "a woman's place is at the typewriter." Other topical *Review* issues have included titles like "Long Live the Short Story," "The Great American Love Story," and "Growing Up Woman."

With these policies, the *North American Review* under Robley Wilson's editorship has gained an ever growing reputation in the publishing field. The most prominent evidence of this reputation is its receipt of the National Magazine Award for fiction in 1981. In receiving this award, the *Review* joined the ranks of such nationally prominent magazines as the *Atlantic*, *Esquire*, and the *Saturday Review* as

Opposite: the title page of a 1905 issue of the North American Review. *The wide variety of subjects covered was typical of the publication in the early days of this century.*

publishers of quality fiction by largely unknown writers. In fact, the *Review* currently publishes an average of thirty new writers each year, well above its competitors in the field.

In the spring of 1980, the *Review* decided it was time to celebrate a birthday — its 165th. In his "About This Issue" column, Wilson informed his readers that

> *There's nothing especially symmetrical about the number 165, but we like to think that when you get to be as old as* The North American Review *— "the Old North," as she used to be known — you can celebrate a birthday any time you feel like it. Well, we feel like it; it's been a mild but drab winter, the great powers of the world are acting as if life on this planet were a cheap commodity, and spring can't come fast enough to rescue us all. Herewith: our 165th Anniversary number.*

Maybe the Old North should have birthday parties more often. With a publishing record that stretches back to 1815 in the nation and to 1964 in Iowa, and with a reputation for excellence in both literary works and discussions of social and political issues, this Iowa magazine has certainly earned the right to have as many birthday parties as it wants. □

Note on Sources

The back issues of the *North American Review* provided the most ready source of information for this article. Especially important for putting the early years of the magazine's history into perspective was F. L. Mott's 1935 article, "One Hundred and Twenty Years." For the years since the *Review's* 1964 revival, the editors' columns were valuable. Also helpful was the willingness of the current *North American Review* editor, Robley Wilson, Jr. to discuss the modern history of the *Review* with both the author and the current *Palimpsest* editor.

THE

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

EDITED BY GEORGE HARVEY.

September, 1905.

American Democracy in the Far East, The Rt. Rev. CHARLES H. BRENT, *Bishop of the Philippine Islands.*

John Hay in Literature . . . . W. D. HOWELLS

The Legend of the Standard Oil Company . G. H. MONTAGUE

Our Chinese Treaties and their Enforcement, STEPHEN W. NICKERSON, *Imperial Chinese Consul at Boston.*

The Menace of Mormonism . . . . . SHELBY M. CULLOM, *United States Senator from Illinois.*

State of Primary Education in Ireland . MICHAEL McDONNELL

The New German Customs Tariff . . . . . . N. I. STONE, *Tariff Expert in the Bureau of Statistics.*

Our Failure in Porto Rico . . . . . General ROY STONE

The Urgent Need of Waterway Legislation . LEWIS M. HAUPT

Women on School Boards . . . . KATE GANNETT WELLS

Sergé Iulitch Witté . . . . CHARLES JOHNSTON

President Castro's Message . . . . . A Venezuelan Citizen

WORLD POLITICS

London; St. Petersburg; Rome; Washington

NEW YORK:
FRANKLIN SQUARE.

LONDON: WM. HEINEMANN, 21 Bedford St., W. C. PARIS: BRENTANO'S, 37 Avenue de l'Opéra.

CONTRIBUTORS

RAYMOND A. SMITH, JR. is a Professor of History and Humanities at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. He received his B.A. from Washington State College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Stanford University. He was born and raised in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He is presently engaged in a comparative study of the territorial experiences of Iowa and Washington.

MAUREEN MCCOY is a native of Des Moines. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Denver, and she is currently a student in the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, where she is working on a Master of Fine Arts degree in fiction. Maureen has served as an editorial assistant in the publications program area of the State Historical Society. Most recently, she served as the humanist-in-residence for the Iowa Humanities Board grant project studying the Italian-American community of Des Moines, Iowa.

CARL B. CONE was born in Davenport, Iowa, and received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in history from the University of Iowa in 1936, 1937, and 1940, respectively. He taught history at the university level from 1940 until his recent retirement, serving on the faculties of Allegheny College, Louisiana State University, the University of Missouri, Miami University, and the University of Kentucky. Recipient of numerous awards, fellowships, and grants during his career, Cone served as Hallam professor at the University of Kentucky. Carl Cone has authored several books, including *Torchbearer of Freedom, Burke and the Nature of Politics: The Age of the American Revolution, Burke and the Nature of Politics: The Age of the French Revolution,* and *The English Jacobins.* A new book by Cone was published in 1981, *Hounds in the Morning: Sundry Sports of Merry England; Excerpts from the Sporting Magazine, 1792-1836.* Also, in 1941-42 Carl Cone served as a research assistant at the State Historical Society of Iowa.

THE PALIMPSEST *is published bimonthly by the State Historical Society in Iowa City. Second class postage paid at Iowa City, Iowa. Postmaster: send address changes to State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.*

USISSN 0031-0360

The State Historical Society of Iowa is an Office of the Iowa State Historical Department, a state agency created by the Sixty-fifth General Assembly. Along with the Society the Department includes an Office of Historical Museum and Archives (formerly Iowa Department of History and Archives) and an Office of Historic Preservation.