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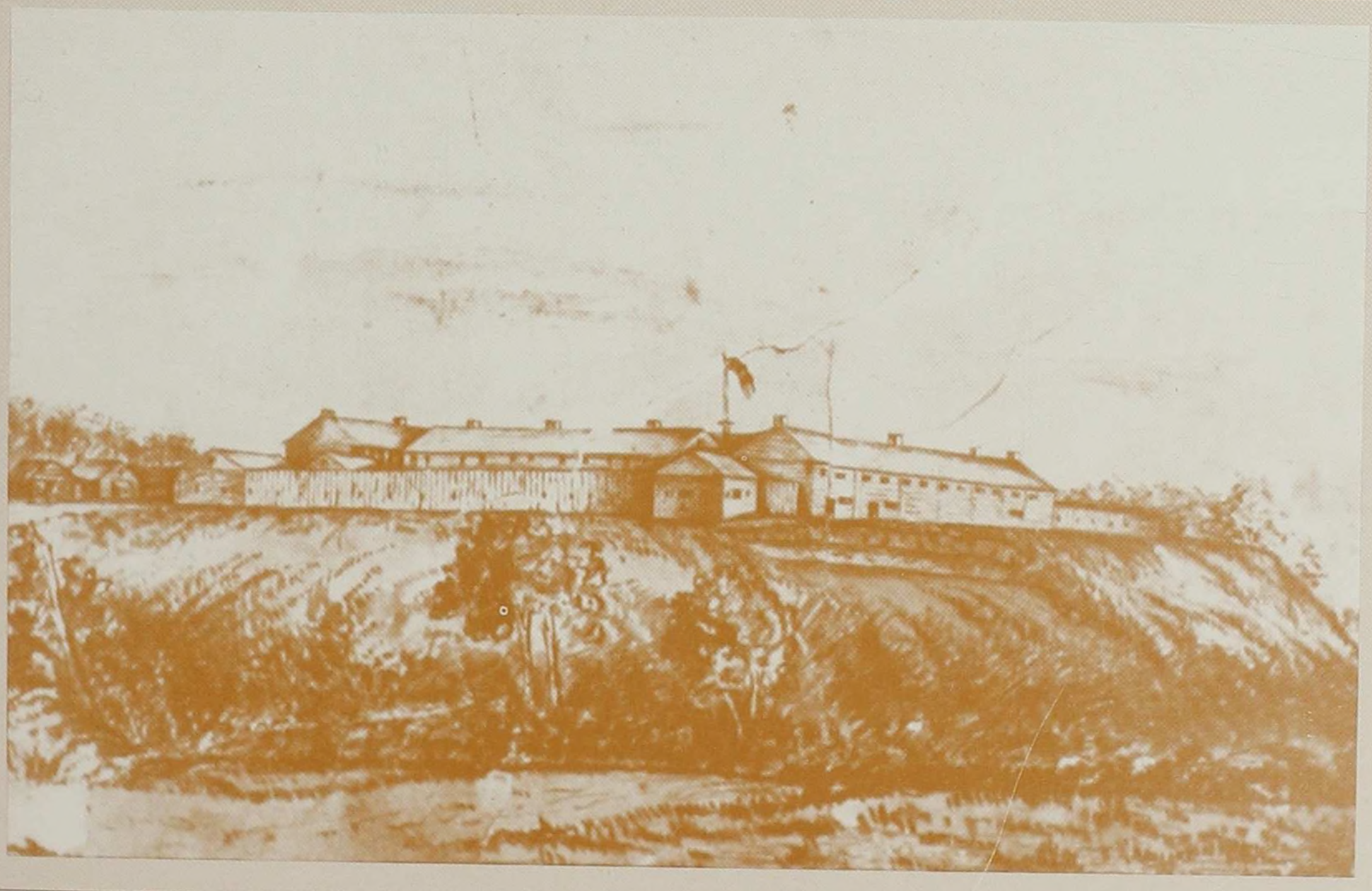

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The PALIMPSEST

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William Silag, Editor

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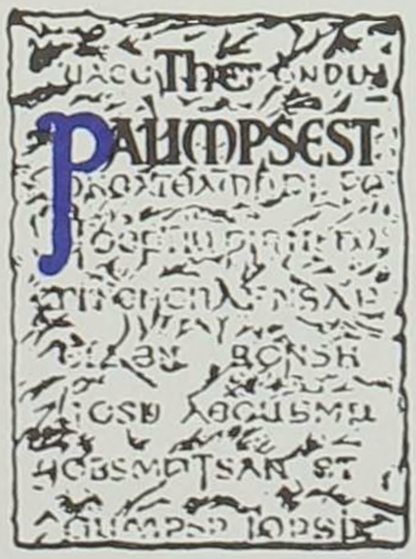
This issue was prepared by Steven J. Fuller.



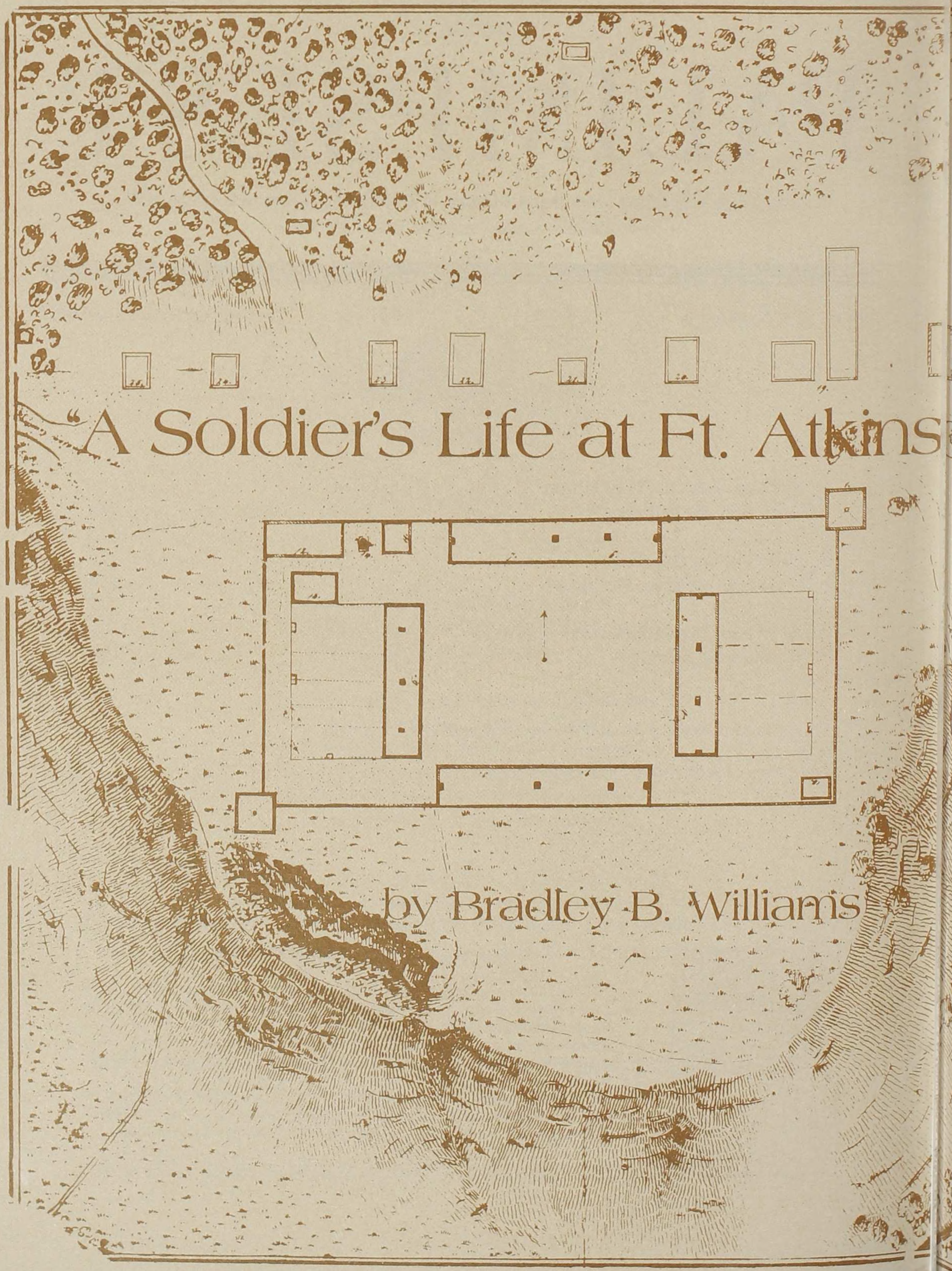
The Meaning of the Palimpsest

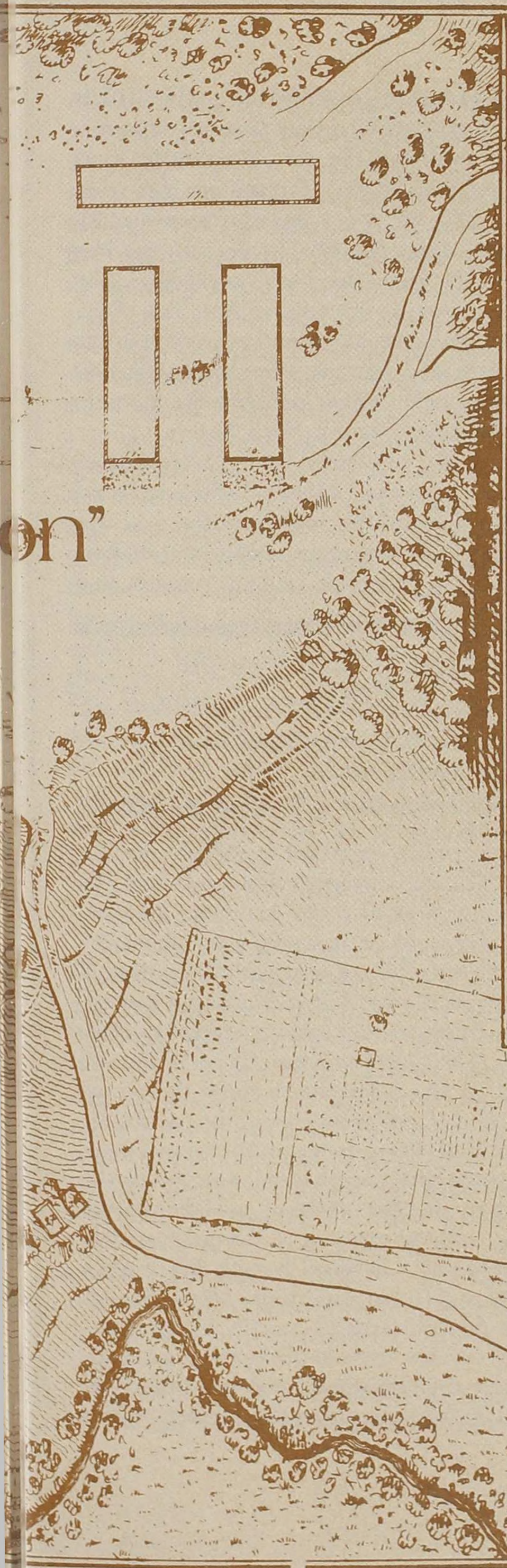
In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete, and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the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

"A Soldier's Life at Ft. Atkinson"

by Bradley B. Williams





"This command in all that may relate to good living," the Inspector General wrote of Ft. Atkinson in 1842, "is upon a par with the garrison of Fort Crawford for it has good gardens, the same liberal government ration, and officers equally attentive to see that the cooks perform their duties properly." Ft. Atkinson was garrisoned between 1840 and 1849 by the United States Army, with volunteer militia replacing the regular troops at the post during the Mexican War. Both infantry and mounted troops—dragoons—were stationed at the post. The soldiers' life at the fort was similar to life at other frontier military posts, but because the post was garrisoned for such a brief time, much of the activity there centered on the construction of the buildings. Still, soldiers found themselves engaged in other activities. In addition to regular military duties such as standing guard and going on patrol, much of a soldier's time was taken up in simply helping sustain the post by working the gardens, cutting firewood, caring for livestock, hauling water and provisions, and similar chores. Not everyone who enlisted considered this to be good living even by nineteenth century standards. Desertion at Ft. Atkinson, as at other posts, was a constant problem. The regimentation of army life was not for everyone.

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A soldier could not expect extended duty at Ft. Atkinson; the post was never intended to be permanent. Like other posts on the frontier, Ft. Atkinson was built in response to immediate problems rather than as a result of long-range military planning. Pressured by the federal government, the Winnebago Indians ceded their ancestral lands in Wisconsin and agreed to move temporarily to northeastern Iowa until a permanent home could be assigned to them. The land they were to occupy in Iowa was the Neutral Ground, a buffer zone between the Sioux and the Sauk and Fox tribes created by treaties in 1825 and 1832. In his negotiations with the Winnebago, Brigadier General Henry Atkinson promised to place a military force on the Neutral Ground to maintain peace among the Indians. Atkinson knew, too, that patrols would be necessary to keep the Winnebagos from slipping back across the Mississippi to their old home and to keep white intruders out of the Indian country. The site selected for the temporary post was on a limestone bluff near the Turkey River about fifty miles west of the Mississippi.

The basic rules of army life were spelled out for every recruit who could read in the *General Regulations for the Army*. For those who could not read, and they were probably in the majority, the officers made sure their soldiers followed regulations. Officers were responsible for carrying out the regulations, and they were familiar enough with the routine of army life that they did not need to constantly refer to the book. The book, in fact, was not always readily available on the frontier. "I would respectfully ask that a copy of Army Regulations be furnished me," wrote a second lieutenant at Ft. Atkinson to the Adjutant General. "I have been in the service over two years and have never had one. And am often so situated that it is impossible to procure one."

From sunup to sundown the soldier's daily life was regulated by orders from his superiors and the routine of the post. One of the most important men at Ft. Atkinson was the company bugler, for it was he who sounded the calls (at the times specified by the commanding officer) that were the basic regulation—the clock, in essence—for the soldier. "Reveille," sounded at daybreak, was the signal for the men to rise, and this was immediately followed by "stable call" which ordered the men to water, feed, and tend to their horses.

"Stable call" was heard two additional times each day: about forty minutes before noon and at sunset. Care of the animals at the post was one of the most important tasks of the soldier. The dragoons depended on their mounts, and each trooper was expected to care for his animal by keeping it watered, fed, and shod. Officers in the dragoons often had more than one mount and were occasionally fussy about the care their horses received. The distinctions of rank and social class between officers and enlisted men sometimes even extended to their mounts. The Quartermaster General allowed officers at Ft. Atkinson to have their own horses shod at public expense at the post blacksmith, but declined to permit the construction of a separate stable for those mounts unless the troops provided the materials and labor for the building without expense to the government.

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In addition to dragoon horses, there were teams of mules and oxen to be taken care of. The number of teams kept at Ft. Atkinson depended on the quartermaster. In general, when the cost of hiring local teamsters was high, more teams were kept at the post. When

the cost was low, the public teams were sold and contracts were let for hauling forage, firewood, and the like. There were, however, always a few teams kept at the post for general drayage. In December of 1842, for example, the quartermaster's department kept two six-mule teams and two six-ox teams for general work and a four-ox team for hauling water up the bluff. The cost for maintaining these teams was a major expense at the post. In 1845, Lt. J.B. Plummer estimated that for the coming year he would need over 1,900 bushels of oats, more than 1,300 bushels of corn, and 74 tons of hay to feed the 17 oxen and 12 mules in his care, and that the bill for this would approach 3,000 dollars. He estimated that a quarter of the time the animals would be in pasture, feeding on grass. Feed and supplies were usually obtained locally, giving farmers an outlet for their crops and the local economy a boost. However, it was not always easy to find people who could fulfill a contract. An 1843 contract for oats was given to one James Watson, "whose bid was the lowest that had good and sufficient surity [sic] offered for its fulfillment." The other bidders, the acting quartermaster reported, "were men of but doubtful character at the best and their surity insufficient."

The General Regulations suggested that unmarried officers "form themselves into a mess, and live together." By 1843, there were two buildings used for officers' quarters at Ft. Atkinson. One was built of logs and sat on the west side of the fort, while the other, which was made of stone, was located directly across the parade ground, and served as the commanding officer's quarters. Enlisted men lived and ate separately from the officers. Their barracks enclosed the other two sides of the parade ground, and like the officers' quarters, the earlier barracks (located on the south side of the parade) was of logs while the north barracks was stone.

Two bugle calls soldiers always responded to, though with differing degrees of enthusiasm, were "peas-upon-a-trencher," the signal for breakfast, and "roast-beef," the signal to assemble for dinner or to draw provisions. Nothing better describes the class distinctions between officer and enlisted man than the behavior expected of the officer while dining. "Deportment at the mess should be marked with all that propriety which characterizes the society of gentlemen," the regulations stated. "The rules of good breeding must, therefore, be punctiliously observed, and the infringement of them, at the mess, will be considered a military offense, calling for the interposition of the authority of the senior officer present, to check the same, or other irregularity." No such guidelines were offered for the common soldier.

Contrary to the names of the bugle calls, peas and roast beef were not a regular part of the soldier's diet. Bread and soup were the usual fare. Since the soup was supposed to be boiled for at least five hours, food preparation was one of the more time-consuming tasks at the post. Privates working in rotation did the cooking in the company kitchen on a cooking stove shipped from St. Louis. Much of the food the soldiers ate came from the area around the fort. A herd of beef cattle was pastured nearby, so boiled, not roast, beef may have been a prime ingredient in the soup the soldiers ate. Fresh vegetables were probably used, since company gardens were a source of pride as well as an important source of food. A good garden was important enough to Company B, 1st Dragoons that Private John Putman, who must have had a green thumb, was sent to Ft. Atkinson to prepare the ground and plant a company garden two months before the company ar-

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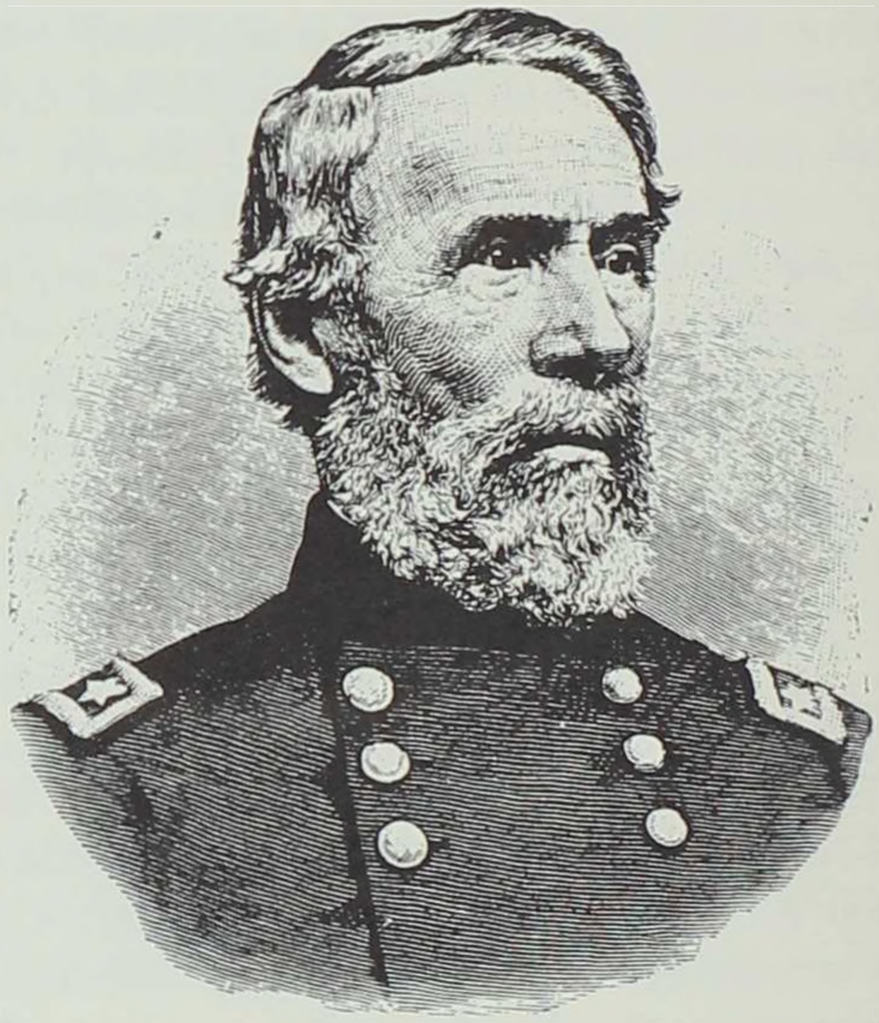
rived at the post.

Food and provisions that were not available near the fort were purchased on contract. The provisions purchased for the post in 1844 consisted of 125 barrels of pork, 160 barrels of flour, 40 bushels of beans, 1,150 pounds of soap, 500 pounds of candles, 15 bushels of salt, and 500 gallons of vinegar. These supplies were delivered at a warehouse owned by H.L. Dousman, a Prairie du Chien entrepreneur, and Henry Rice, the sutler at Ft. Atkinson, who later became a U.S. senator from Minnesota. From the Dousman and Rice warehouse, located on the Mississippi River, the supplies were hauled by wagon to the fort and stored in the commissary. To supplement his diet or to obtain amenities that the "good living" provided by the army somehow overlooked, the soldier visited the sutler's store at the fort. Henry Rice stocked a range of goods—from cooking utensils to household furniture—that a soldier could purchase at prices set by a council of administration composed of officers. In addition to ensuring fair prices at the sutler's store, the army took care to see that all supplies received at its posts arrived in good condition. A board of survey was appointed to inspect all questionable provisions which, if found to be tainted, could then be declared "unfit for issue."

At the sound of "troop" the men assembled each morning for duty. The duty to which a soldier was assigned depended to some extent on the type of work he had done in civilian life. Since much of the work in the first few years revolved around the construction of the post itself, skills in the building trades and crafts were especially sought. Soldiers' skills did not always match the job to be done, however. Captain Isaac Lynde, for example, complained in 1841 that his company had only three indifferent carpenters, only one stone mason, and no plasterers or brick masons. Men with these skills were needed to build the fort, and if skilled men were not available in the ranks,



Major-General Edwin V. Sumner, who served as a Captain at Ft. Atkinson. (courtesy Minnesota Historical Society)

civilians were hired to do the work. Workmen were often hired in St. Louis by the quartermaster's department and transported up the Mississippi by steamboat. At least one workman employed at the fort found the situation agreeable. Leverett Rexford, a civilian hired as a carpenter at one dollar and twenty-five cents (in gold) per day, wrote a relative that "Uncle Sam is a good paymaster." If a soldier lacked specific skills, he might find himself carrying stone from the quarry on the edge of the bluff for the masons or felling trees for picketwork and for whipsawyers to cut into boards. If a soldier had previous experience as a blacksmith, his skill was in great demand. Not only were there at times as many as 100 horses and mules at the post to keep shod, the blacksmith also made much of the hardware for the buildings. The demand for hinges and latches kept him particularly busy in the next few years.

Most of the workshops for the post stood in a row about one hundred feet long outside the north wall of the stockade. These included the

blacksmith shop, the carpentry shop, the bakery, the quartermaster's stable, and the dragoon stables. Despite the fact that different skills and trades were practiced at the fort, some crafts that would have been useful at the post were not included. Harness-making, for example, would be especially appropriate for a dragoon post, but apparently all horse equipment for the entire regiment was made by one outside supplier. "It may be some time before the Horse equipments are ready to be forwarded," the Quartermaster General replied to an 1842 inquiry by Captain Edwin Sumner, "as orders have but recently been given to enter into contracts, at Philadelphia, for a supply of those of the new pattern."

Much of the work at Ft. Atkinson was simply the routine of sustaining life at the post. A soldier who knew the techniques of baking bread could be kept busy on duty in the bakehouse. Other duties pertaining to food preparation included tending garden, slaughtering and butchering beef, cutting ice in winter for the ice house, and, of course, duty as a cook. Water had to be hauled to the stockade cistern from nearby springs. Men also found themselves assigned the task of hauling supplies. Because of the severe winters common in northeastern Iowa and the drafty barracks the men lived in, soldiers were assigned to cut firewood often. The construction of the post consumed many of the available trees, and the soldiers were sent farther and farther from the post for fuel. If fuel supplies ran low, soldiers would be assigned to this duty even in the dead of winter. January 1843 found one non-commissioned officer and twenty-five privates on detached service cutting wood. Fuel supplies must have been low, because the following month an officer and twenty privates were away from the post cutting more wood. One task the enlisted men probably did not perform, but which had to be done nevertheless, was laundering clothes. Regulations allowed each company to employ four women as laundresses, and these women were usually the wives of enlisted men. The women and their husbands lived together in quarters supplied at the post. At Ft. Atkinson, three log cabins were built at the western end of the row of workshops to serve as laundresses' huts. With two families living in each cabin, it is possible there were six laundresses at the post, which with two companies stationed there was below the number permitted by army regulations.

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Among the more martial duties at the fort were patrol duty, sentinel or guard duty, and policing the fort. According to the regulations, an officer of police, directed by the officer of the day, was "to make a general inspection into the cleanliness of the camp or garrison; to suffer no fires to be made in camp, except in the kitchens;" and "to cause all dirt or filth to be immediately removed, and either burnt or buried." After "reveille" each man was expected to put his bunk and quarters in order. While it seems likely that Ft. Atkinson was kept in good police, the historical record seems to suggest that inspection of the post, when formalized by written orders, may have been infrequent. On February 27, 1845 Major Greenleaf Dearborn, the commanding officer, issued post orders number eleven: "The Council of Administration consisting of Capt. E.V. Sumner, Capt. A.S. Miller, and Asst. Surgeon W.S. King will assemble to morrow [sic] at half past 8 o'clock a.m. for Inspection and muster will commence at half past nine." In April, sixty-one days later, by post orders number twenty-two, Major Dearborn ordered the Council of Administration to make an inspection commencing at 9:00 a.m. the following day. Then, in another sixty days, in late June,

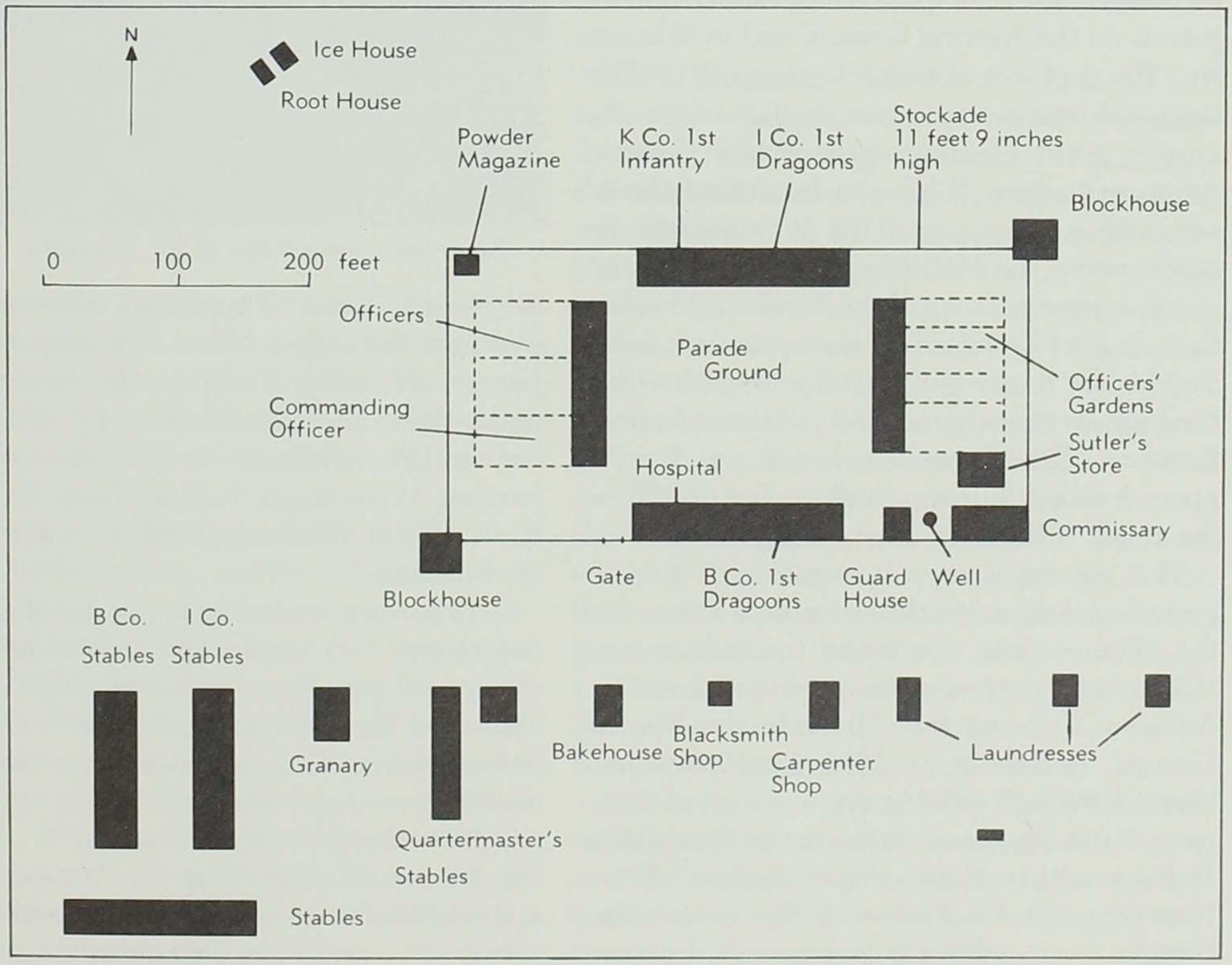
by orders number thirty-eight, the council was directed to conduct an inspection the next day "at half after 8 a.m." No records exist for other commands, and it is possible that Major Dearborn's seemingly infrequent inspections were idiosyncratic. It is also possible that less formalized, but equally important, inspections were the order of the day when the men were mustered for duty.

The number of guards at any fort depended on the extent of the post to be defended and the size and strength of the garrison. It is not clear how many guards were posted at Ft. Atkinson. The threat of attack at the post was slight, so slight in fact, that the principal defensive positions of the fort, the two blockhouses, were among the last buildings completed and were used to house commissary stores before the building was finished. Generally, sentinels were stationed at the principle points to be guarded, such as the main gate, the guard house, and the powder magazine, but it may also have been necessary to post guards at the commissary and quartermaster's stores to prevent pilfering and in the hospital to maintain order. It is also possible that a sentinel's beat was built along the south wall of the stockade extending fifty feet from a shelter in the southeast corner. This position would have afforded a good view of any movement below the bluff. Officers of the guard were responsible for the security and general order of the post. Discipline was not a major problem at Ft. Atkinson. Men might be confined to quarters as a disciplinary measure or in severe cases arrested or imprisoned in the guard house. For more than half the one hundred and three months troops were stationed at the post, how-

Imported English China found at Ft. Atkinson, which was used by officers and their families. (SHSI)

ever, no one was confined to quarters or under arrest. On the other hand, in September 1842 there were eight men either under arrest or confined to quarters, and in August 1843 there were seventeen. These were exceptional cases; it was more common to find from one to four soldiers facing disciplinary action. Out of two companies of soldiers, this was a rather small percentage. In an unusual month—July 1843—thirteen men faced discipline, yet they represented only about 8 percent of the 169 men stationed at the fort.

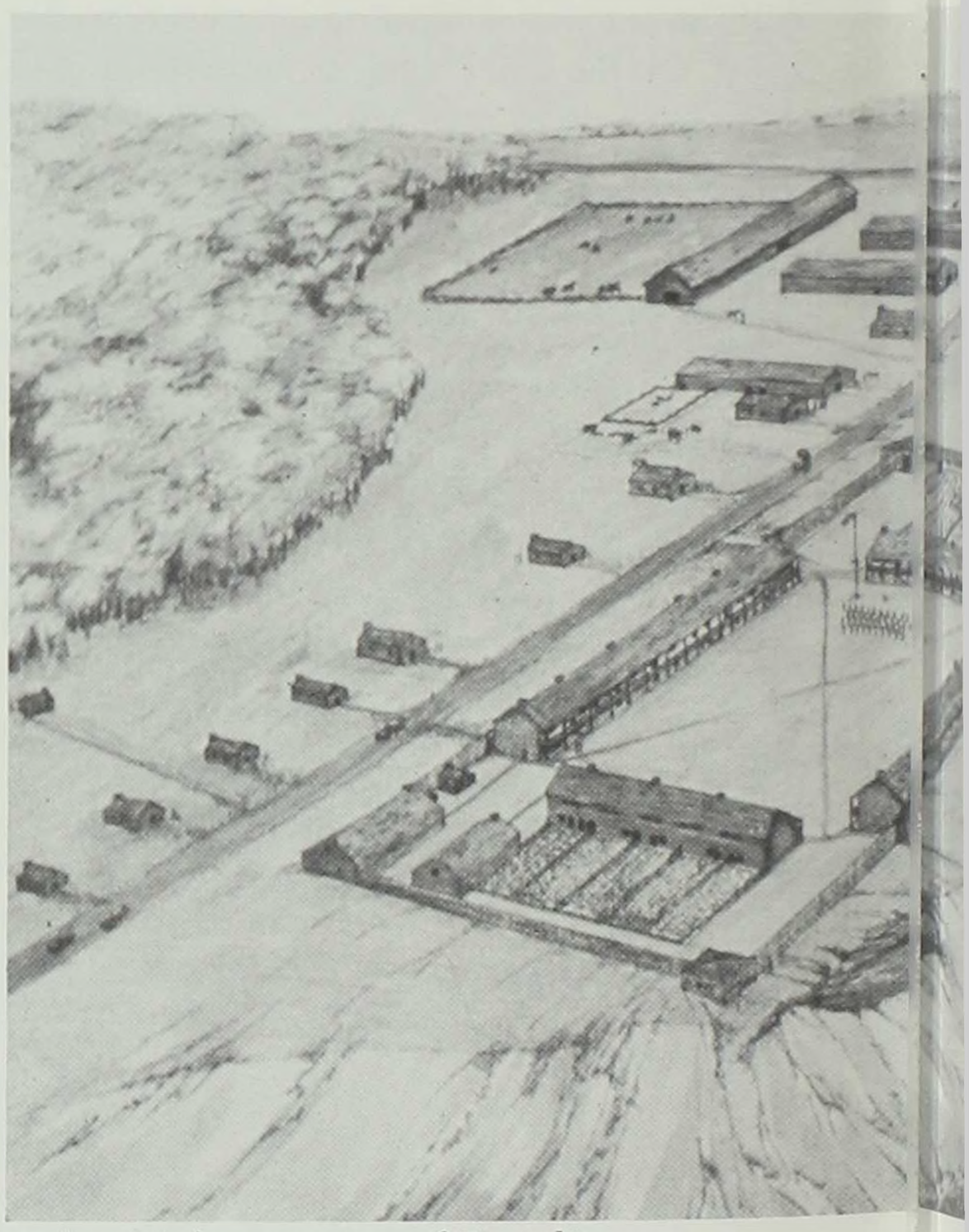
Recruiting new soldiers and preventing desertion were continuing problems for the army. Roll calls were taken five times a day—after reveille, before breakfast, before dinner, at sunset, and after "tattoo" when no one was to be out of his quarters—as a check on the men. This did not always stem the problem of desertion. At Ft. Atkinson there were desertions thirty-six months out of the seventy-two months regular troops were stationed at the post. Usually the deserter went alone; only one deserter is reported for each of 16 months. In the most unusual month, December 1840, seventeen men "went over the hill." It was especially difficult to predict who would desert. While on detached service in Wisconsin pursuing Winnebago Indians, "an old and experienced Sergeant" of the dragoons, "whose character stood high and in whom every confidence was placed," deserted on horseback, taking his equipment and company funds totalling one hundred seventy dollars with him. To offset the number of men lost from desertion or discharged at the end of service, new soldiers were sent from the recruiting depots in Louisville and St. Louis. In



August 1840, for example, thirteen new soldiers arrived at Ft. Atkinson. Eighteen men joined the garrison in August of the following year. From December 1841 to April 1843, however, no new recruits arrived at the post. In the same period, seventeen men deserted.

Because Ft. Atkinson was built to maintain order among the Indians on the Neutral Ground, to prevent whites from trespassing on Indian land, and to keep the Winnebagos from returning to Wisconsin, patrol duty was an important part of military life at the post. Although the removal of most of the Winnebagoes to the Neutral Ground was completed in the summer of 1840, the problem of Indians slipping back across the river to Wisconsin began that fall. In November, Brigadier General George Brooke went so far as to suggest that another fort be built, at Prairie La Crosse, but the suggestion was rejected in favor of frequent patrols on the Neutral Ground and in Wisconsin. The problem of Indians returning to their ancestral homes was acute enough, from the army's point of view, to provoke General Atkinson's anger. "I have to direct that should any further incursions of the Winnebagoes be made across the Mississippi, that you will arrest the principal men of the Bands and confine them at Fort Crawford till further orders, and I should like to see them well whipped with a cowhide on their bare backs," Atkinson wrote Brooke. "This, however, I will not for the present order, but say to them that it will be the result if they repeat their aggressions."

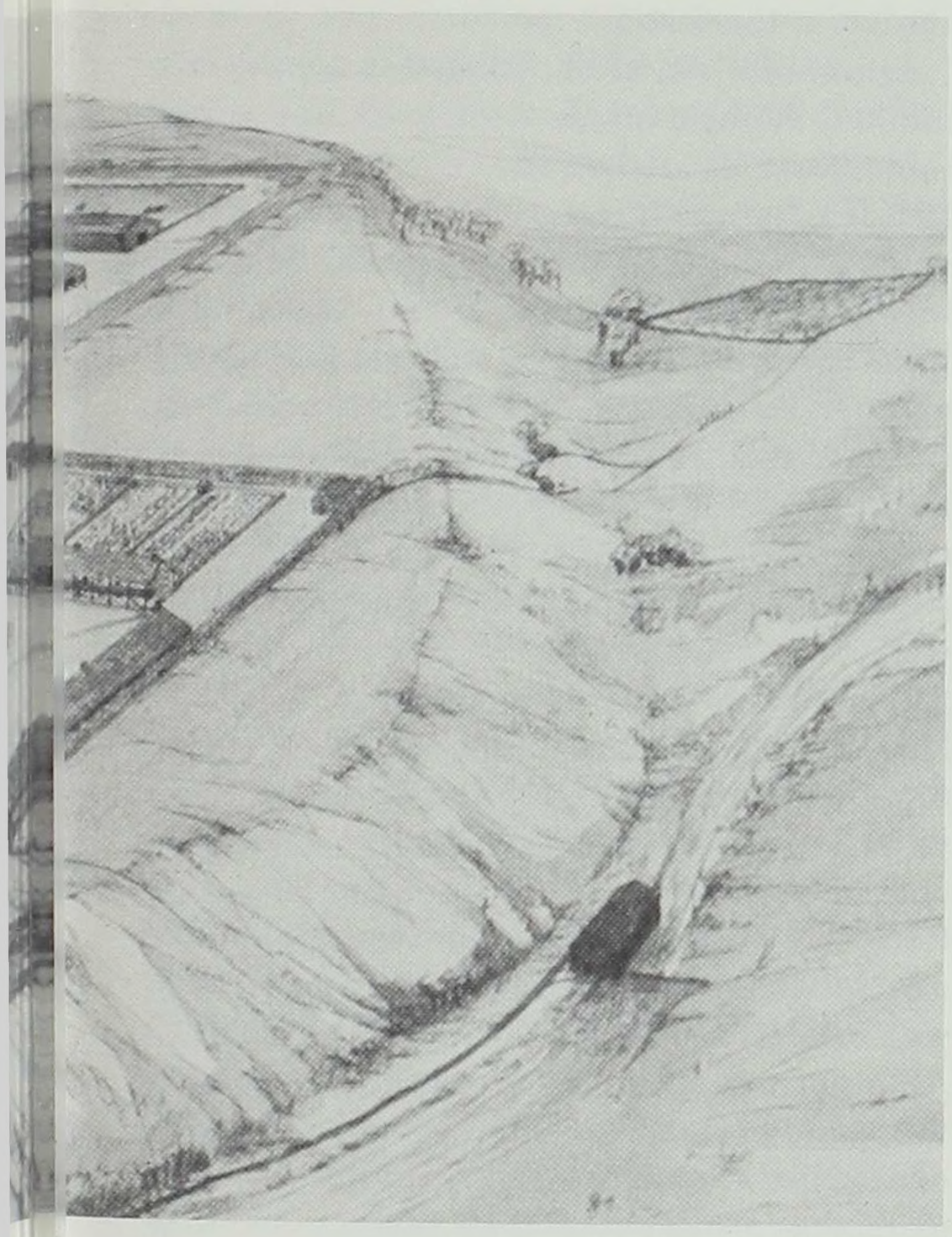
The record does not mention if Brooke passed on Atkinson's threat to the Indians, but the Winnebagoes continued to cross over to Wisconsin. Patrols were sent out from Ft. Atkinson to bring them back to the Neutral Ground. In September 1843, Lieutenant Jenkins left the fort with twenty-one men of Company B, 1st Dragoons, "to keep the Winnebago Indians within their proper limits." From November to December of the same year, Captain Sumner led a detachment of dragoons



An artist's conception of Ft. Atkinson.

in pursuit of the Winnebago. The dragoons were not the only soldiers sent on patrol. On January 21, 1844, Company K, 1st Infantry, under the command of Captain J.J. Abercrombie, left Ft. Atkinson "for the purpose of removing Winnebago Indians from the West bank of the Mississippi River west of the 20-mile line."

Patrols were not always in pursuit of Indians. Sometimes they were sent out to demonstrate the army's presence on the Neutral Ground. Such was the case with the small mounted force—one captain, one brevet second lieutenant, two corporals, one bugler, and nine privates—that left the fort on May 8, 1843 for the Raccoon Forks of the Des Moines River and returned three weeks later. At other times patrols were sent to be on hand at the payment



of annuities to Indians. One subaltern and thirty-two men of B and I companies, 1st Dragoons, were on hand at the Sauk and Fox Agency, for instance, in August of 1842 when payments and goods were distributed to the Indians there.

The Neutral Ground was closed to all except Indians, Indian agents, and the U.S. Army, but this did not prevent others from being attracted to the bountiful land that was to be Iowa. In 1839, H.H. Sibley, then a fur trader for the American Fur Company and later the first governor of the State of Minnesota, led a hunting party out for sport into the Neutral Ground. "Game was extremely abundant," Sibley reported. "Deer were to be seen at all times of the day, standing in groups of three, four, or a half a dozen, gazing at us without much alarm, these solitudes having long been undisturbed by the visits of the hunter." Sibley's group bagged a lot of game, and even returned a year later to try again. Not everyone was so fortunate. Willard Barrows, a sometime surveyor who also hunted the Neutral Ground surreptitiously, told of what might happen to trespassers. "We felt secure as long as the Winnebagoes were away. We had no right on their lands without their permission, or that of the Indian agent," he told readers of his book of 1869. "When whites were caught hunting or fishing there, their property was considered by the Indians as lawful prize." When caught by the army, trespassers were escorted out of Indian territory. Some people, attracted by the fertile soil, even tried settling on Indian land. Three officers and thirty-four dragoons were sent from Ft. Atkinson in June of 1842 "to remove Citizen Settlers from the Indian Country."

With the neutral Ground closed to all but authorized people, visitors to Ft. Atkinson were few. The shortage of room at the post may have helped to discourage visitors, but those who did travel to the fort were treated well. Willard Barrows visited the fort in 1842 and wrote: "The first night we were entertained within the walls to our full comfort." The unfinished state of the buildings may have contributed to his decision to move to the Indian agency five miles downstream for the rest of his visit. "The agent then provided for us during the ten days that we remained," Barrows added. Patrol duty to keep trespassers out of the Neutral Ground and Indians in was probably not unpleasant. It was most likely considered a welcome relief from the drudgery of the routine of the post, though troopers may not have looked on winter patrol too favorably.

Not every man was able to report for duty each day. At the sound of "surgeon's call," men who had become sick during the night were led to the post hospital by the first sergeant of the company. The amount of health care available

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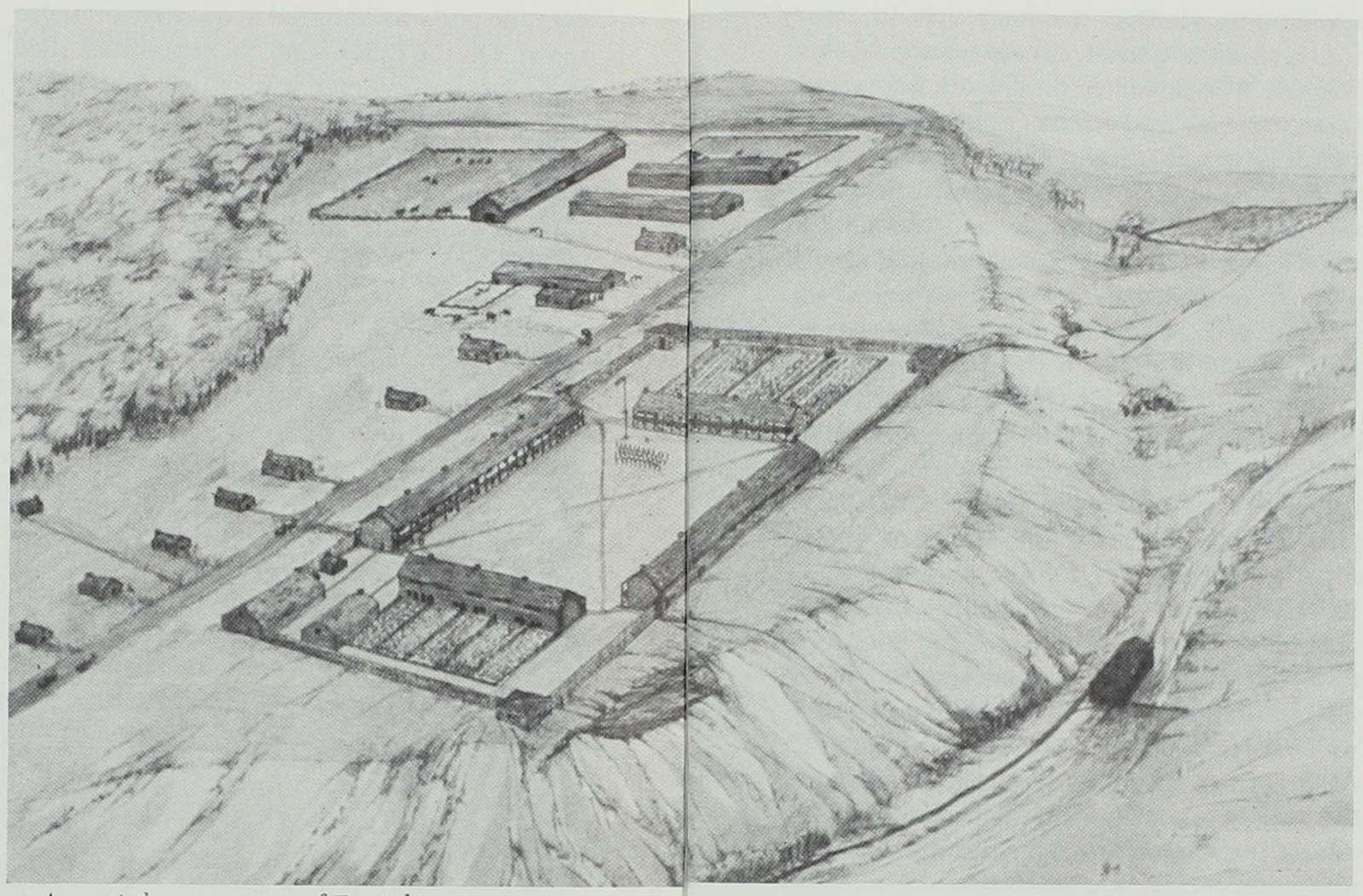

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in pursuit of the Winnebago. The dragoons were not the only soldiers sent on patrol. On January 21, 1844, Company K, 1st Infantry, under the command of Captain J.J. Abercrombie, left Ft. Atkinson "for the purpose of removing Winnebago Indians from the West bank of the Mississippi River west of the 20-mile line."

Patrols were not always in pursuit of Indians. Sometimes they were sent out to demonstrate the army's presence on the Neutral Ground. Such was the case with the small mounted force—one captain, one brevet second lieutenant, two corporals, one bugler, and nine privates—that left the fort on May 8, 1843 for the Raccoon Forks of the Des Moines River and returned three weeks later. At other times patrols were sent to be on hand at the payment of annuities to Indians. One subaltern and thirty-two men of B and I companies, 1st Dragoons, were on hand at the Sauk and Fox Agency, for instance, in August of 1842 when payments and goods were distributed to the Indians there.

The Neutral Ground was closed to all except Indians, Indian agents, and the U.S. Army, but this did not prevent others from being attracted to the bountiful land that was to be Iowa. In 1839, H.H. Sibley, then a fur trader for the American Fur Company and later the first governor of the State of Minnesota, led a hunting party out for sport into the Neutral Ground. "Game was extremely abundant," Sibley reported. "Deer were to be seen at all times of the day, standing in groups of three, four, or a half a dozen, gazing at us without much alarm, these solitudes having long been undisturbed by the visits of the hunter." Sibley's group bagged a lot of game, and even returned a year later to try again. Not everyone was so fortunate. Willard Barrows, a sometime surveyor who also hunted the Neutral Ground surreptitiously, told of what might happen to trespassers. "We felt secure as long as the Winnebagoes were away. We had no right on their lands without their permission, or that of the Indian agent," he told readers of his book of 1869. "When whites were caught hunting or fishing there, their property was considered by the Indians as lawful prize." When caught by the army, trespassers were escorted out of Indian territory. Some people, attracted by the fertile soil, even tried settling on Indian land. Three officers and thirty-four dragoons were sent from Ft. Atkinson in June of 1842 "to remove Citizen Settlers from the Indian Country."

With the neutral Ground closed to all but authorized people, visitors to Ft. Atkinson were few. The shortage of room at the post may have helped to discourage visitors, but those who did travel to the fort were treated well Willard Barrows visited the fort in 1842 and wrote: "The first night we were entertained within the walls to our full comfort." The unfinished state of the buildings may have contributed to his decision to move to the Indian agency five miles downstream for the rest of his visit. "The agent then provided for us during the ten days that we remained," Barrows added. Patrol duty to keep trespassers out of the Neutral Ground and Indians in was probably not unpleasant. It was most likely considered a welcome relief from the drudgery of the routine of the post, though troopers may not have looked on winter patrol too favorably.

Not every man was able to report for duty each day. At the sound of "surgeon's call," men who had become sick during the night were led to the post hospital by the first sergeant of the company. The amount of health care available

to soldiers, undeveloped as it was, was considerably better than that available to settlers on the frontier. A doctor was always on hand at Ft. Atkinson. A member of the army, the post surgeon was considered an officer, and the assistant surgeons who served at Ft. Atkinson held ranks equal to captains if they had served five years or first lieutenants if they had served less. Despite the attention to good health that the army tried to foster, or perhaps because of it, the number of men at Ft. Atkinson responding to "surgeon's call" was relatively high. There were only six months out of the entire time the post was garrisoned by regular troops that no one reported to the hospital. Months when eight to eleven men reported sick were not uncommon. Most of the men must have recovered, because between June 1840 and February 1849 only seven deaths were recorded at the fort.

Leisure activity at Ft. Atkinson was probably limited. With so much of the work in the first three years focused on the construction of the fort, it is hard to imagine that the soldiers had much free time. Of the six years Ft. Atkinson was garrisoned by regular troops, three were spent constructing the fort. When a soldier was off-duty, he could earn extra pay by working on the buildings, and many men took advantage of this opportunity. Once the buildings were completed, men could still supplement their pay with extra-duty painting and general repair work. At some frontier posts there was organized recreation. Ft. Snelling and Ft. Crawford, for example, had long histories of staging dramatic productions for the amusement of visitors and the rest of the garrison. Ft. Snelling was twenty years old and Ft. Crawford thirteen by the time Ft. Atkinson was founded and the drama societies at the older posts were well established. The relatively short time Ft. Atkinson was occupied, the lack of visitors to the post, and the cramped quarters (which offered little room for making and storing props and scenery) make it unlikely that any budding thespians trod the boards at the fort.

Most common were informal recreational activities. The commanders at some frontier posts complained that officers passed their off-duty hours smoking, drinking, and playing cards. Considering the army regulations' admonition that officers act as gentlemen, it is not far fetched to assume that these were even more popular pursuits for the enlisted men, who felt no such constraints. Whiskey had ceased to be a part of a soldier's daily ration in 1830, so drinking by enlisted men at Ft. Atkinson was probably done on the sly. Fragments of brandy, bourbon, wine, and even champagne bottles were uncovered in archaeological excavations of the officers' privies, so it is likely these beverages were enjoyed by officers at the post, if not by the enlisted men. The same excavations uncovered a large number of frag-

Note on Sources

The principal sources used in this article are the military records found in the *Territorial Papers of the United States: The Territory of Iowa 1838-1846*, National Archives and Records Service Microfilm supplement M325. These include records from the Office of the Inspector General, the Adjutant General's Office, the Office of the Quartermaster General, the United States Army Continental Commands, and the Headquarters of the Army. Other military records consulted include Returns from U.S. Military Posts 1800-1916 in the records of the Department of War. *General Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1841* (Washington: J. and G.S. Gideon, 1841) was consulted to reconstruct the basic pattern of life at the post. Other useful manuscript sources are S.S. Reque, "History of Fort Atkinson, 1840-1849," and the John Lillibridge Papers at the State Historical Society and Daniel A. Wiltfang, "Historic Bottles from Fort Atkinson" and Margaret L. Tobey, "An Analysis of Clay Tobacco Pipes from Ft. Atkinson, Iowa" at the Office of the State Archaeologist, Iowa City, Iowa. Marshall McKusick describes his archaeological investigation of the fort in "Fort Atkinson Artifacts," *Palimpsest* 56 (January/February 1975), 15-21. H.H. Sibley's visit to the neutral ground is recorded in "Hunting in the Western Prairies" in *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in All That Relates to Guns and Shooting* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1846). Willard Barrows describes his brief stay at the post in *The General, or Twelve Nights in the Hunter's Camp* (Boston: Lea and Shepard Publishers, 1860). Bruce Mahan, "Old Fort Atkinson," *Palimpsest* 2 (November 1921), 333-350, and Roger L. Nichols, "The Founding of Fort Atkinson," *Annals of Iowa*, 3rd series, 37 (1965), 589-597, discuss the establishment of the post, while Francis P. Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet* (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1953) gives a broad overview of life on the military frontier in the Northwest.

ments of clay smoking pipes, a number of carved bone dominoes, and a jew's harp, suggesting that the officer's smoking and gaming may have had some musical accompaniment.

Such was not the only recreation at Ft. Atkinson. Ft. Snelling and Ft. Crawford both had post libraries, and it is possible that Ft. Atkinson also had one, since a library would not take up much space. Even if there were no library, officers probably lent books among themselves and possibly to the men. Newspapers received in the mail no doubt made the rounds. Although it was a job ordered by the commanding officer, mail duty may have been considered by the men as welcome relief from the routine of the post. A soldier who left on Monday for Prairie du Chien spent his first night at Joel Post's half-way house and arrived at the river town late Tuesday, and he was not expected back at Ft. Atkinson until Thursday. While hardly a city, the settlement at Prairie du Chien offered a variety of life unavailable on the Neutral Ground.

The weekly mail duty was assigned to all ranks from private to captain. Officers, however, were assigned exclusively to duty that would take them farther from the post. Trips to buy horses for the dragoons, like Lieutenant P.R. Thompson's 1843 trip to Springfield, Illinois, gave officers a chance to visit more settled areas. Other extended duty away from the post, such as service at a general courtmartial or recruiting service, broke the monotony of army life. For example, Second Lieutenant Leonidas Jenkins of the 1st Dragoons spent six months away from Ft. Atkinson on recruiting service in St. Louis, a duty that had obvious rewards. Still, most soldiers had to content themselves with a pipe, a game of "bones," or other informal leisure at the fort.

When "retreat" was sounded at sunset each day, the men of Ft. Atkinson assembled to hear the orders for the following day. The soldier might then reflect on the work of the day, contemplate the next day's duties, and perhaps look forward to an evening of dominoes, smoking, or perhaps even reading in the barracks. When "tattoo" sounded, the soldier was to stay in his quarters until reveille the following morning when the "good living" at Ft. Atkinson would begin again.


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Smith Wildman Brookhart

by George William McDaniel

"He represented the progressive spirit in Iowa at a time when the Iowa Farmer was in great trouble." — Henry A. Wallace

Of the thirty-three men who have represented Iowa in the United States Senate none was as well known in his own time as Smith Wildman Brookhart.

Newspapers from the New York *Times* to the San Francisco *Examiner* reported his speeches and expressed editorial opinion about him. Articles by and about him appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* and an article about him was in the first issue of *Time* magazine. A favorite target of editorial cartoonists, especially the Des Moines *Register's* Ding Darling, Brookhart was called a radical, an insurgent, a Progressive, a socialist, a communist, a buffoon, and was numbered among the Senate's "sons of the wild jackass."

Brookhart began his life on February 2, 1869 in Scotland County, Missouri. His middle name, which was to follow him as an epithet for the rest of his life, was his mother's maiden name. The Brookhart family moved several times before settling in Van Buren County, Iowa. Young Smith Brookhart received his early education in country schools, went to Bloomfield for high school, and attended the Southern Iowa Normal School in the same city. He taught in a number of rural schools and filled his spare time by reading law. It was while doing this that he had his first contact with national politics. The lawyer with whom he read was the brother-in-law of James B. Weaver, Greenback candidate for president in 1880 and soon-to-be Populist candidate for president in 1892. Smith Brookhart spent afternoons in the Weaver home drinking tea and listening to Weaver talk of Populism. Years later Brookhart admitted that although he had scoffed at Populist doctrines in those early days, with time he came to see their wisdom.

After passing the bar examination in 1892 Brookhart moved to Washington, Iowa, his home for the rest of his life, and began practicing law. Iowa was in the midst of a liquor law controversy in the early 1890s, and because of this Brookhart became involved in elective politics within a short time of his arrival in Washington. He was, in his own words, a prohibitionist "from his mother's breast." In 1893 the Iowa legislature passed a series of liquor laws that had the effect of creating a local option policy. To insure that Washington County remained dry, a group of older politicians convinced Brookhart to run for county attorney, the office that would enforce the new liquor laws. He was elected in 1894 and won bids for

reelection in 1896 and 1898. But these were to be his only successful elections until he ran for the United States Senate in 1922.

At the turn of the century, the Iowa Republican party was in turmoil. The standpat, old-line conservative Republicans and the insurgent progressive Republicans were fighting for control of the party. The dominant political and economic force in Iowa at this time was the railroads. In southern Iowa, where Brookhart lived, this meant the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, whose political affairs were managed by Joseph Blythe, the railroad's general counsel. The standpats tended to support the railroads' interests. The Progressives, through a series of reforms, fought to free the political process from railroad control and at the same time free farmers from the high freight rates that had given the railroads enormous economic power. While sympathetic to the progressive cause and its leader, Albert B. Cummins, who was elected governor of Iowa in 1902, Brookhart disagreed with Cummins' "wet" stance on the liquor question and withheld full support from the candidate.

Brookhart had left the county attorney's office in 1900 and resumed his private law practice, but by 1904 Brookhart began to think of running for office again. At the urging of friends, Brookhart went to see Joseph Blythe to get his blessing as a candidate. Blythe showed him a stack of letters from grateful politicians whom the railroad counsel had helped into office and hinted that if Brookhart played along he, too, could be elected. Brookhart would have none of it and walked out.

The following year Brookhart attended a railroad rate regulation convention organized to support President Theodore Roosevelt's efforts to give rate relief to farmers. Brookhart listened to a variety of speeches condemning abuses by railroads and came away convinced that "people do not intend longer to submit to the lawlessness and anarchy of the big corporations." Brookhart was now a full-fledged Pro-

Smith Brookhart's home in Washington, Iowa. (SHSI)

gressive. Putting aside his earlier reservations about Cummins' liquor stance (Brookhart observed that the governor had enforced the Iowa dry laws) he threw himself into the governor's 1906 re-election campaign with what was to become characteristic Brookhart enthusiasm. Responding to the support, Cummins observed: "You must be omnipresent, for I hear of your work everywhere. I did not believe it was possible for you or anyone to infuse such energy into the campaign as is now manifest in your part of the state."

In 1910 Brookhart ran in the Republican congressional primary. Although Blythe was dead, the political machine he had built was not. Brookhart was defeated but undaunted. "I was buried deeper than anybody else under the avalanche," he wrote to Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver in the aftermath of the election, "but have already crawled out and ground my battle ax for the next encounter. I would rather be right than be regular any day."

In the decade of the First World War Brookhart occupied himself with two activities: the newspaper business and rifle marksmanship.

In 1911 Brookhart, along with his brother and two others, bought the *Washington County Press*. He took an active part in the business and used the editorial pages to advance the progressive cause and continue his fight against railroad abuses.

Brookhart's military service included joining the Iowa National Guard in the 1890s and serving in the Spanish-American War. While in the army he became convinced of the need for rifle training, and gained repute as a world-class marksman. He trained many award-winning National Guard rifle teams and in 1912 captained the team that won the world marksmanship trophy. During World War I he taught marksmanship to thousands of American officers.

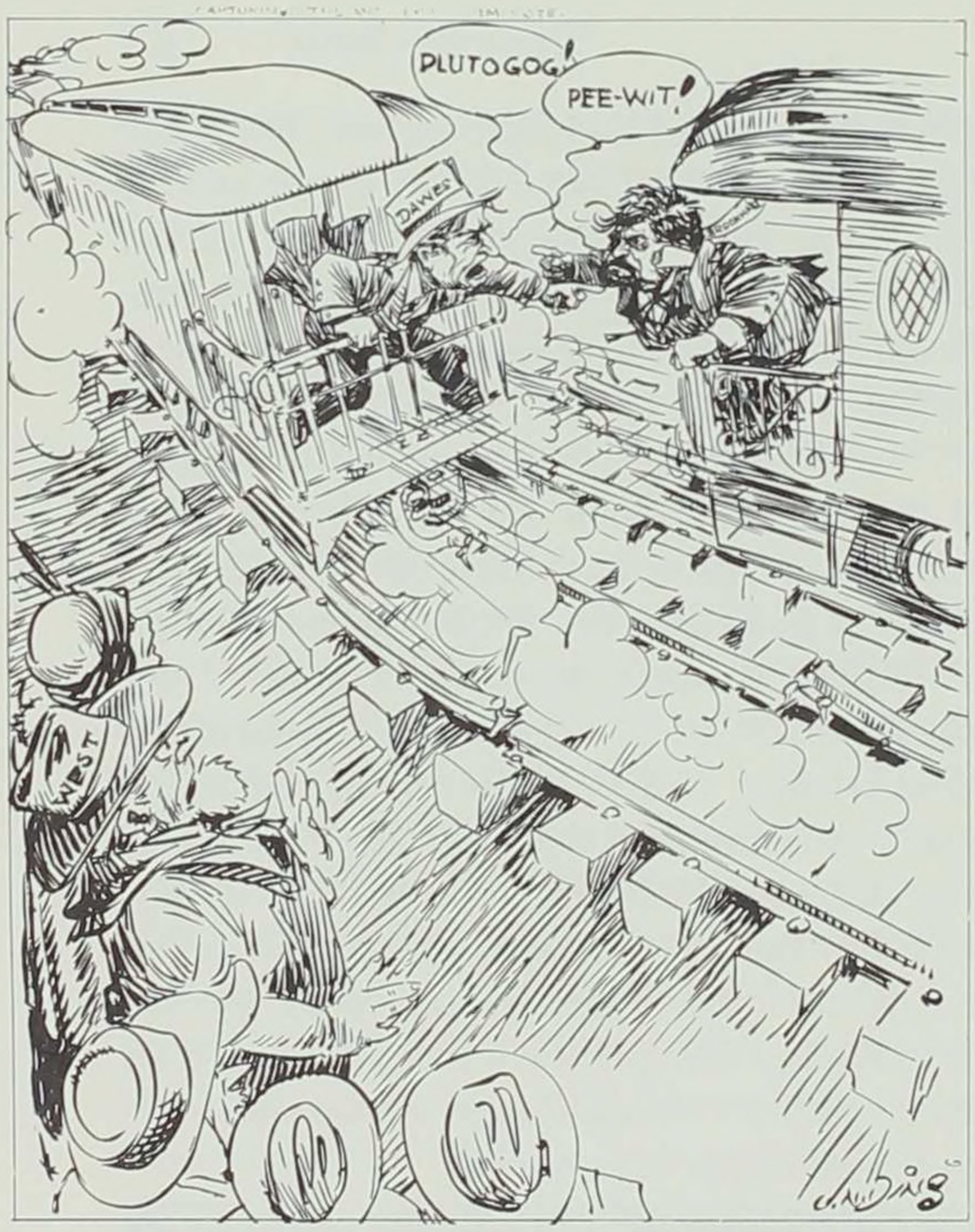
Following the war Brookhart returned to Iowa and rekindled his political ambitions. He was convinced that only government ownership of the railroads would protect consumers from exorbitant rates, so when his old ally Senator Cummins co-sponsored a bill to return the railroads to private ownership after wartime government operation, Brookhart believed Cummins had betrayed the progressive cause. Brookhart ran against Cummins in the 1920 senatorial primary, and although he lost, Brookhart became a statewide figure. By challenging Cummins, however, Brookhart earned the enmity of the Iowa Republican party.

The 1920 primary election set Brookhart against the state party organization. The organization won. In the next six years Brookhart would run for the Senate six more times and in each of those elections the state party organization would do all it could to defeat him. But in each of these succeeding elections Brookhart beat the organization, and his success was based on a factor not present in the 1920 election—a statewide farm depression.

In the years immediately following the war farmers rode the crest of a wave of prosperity. Backed by high crop prices and a generous credit situation, many farmers went deeply into debt to expand their operations. The prosperity wave crashed on a rocky shore in late 1920 when, in an attempt to tighten credit nationwide, the Federal Reserve Board began to demand repayment of farm loans. The rate of bank failures rose, farm prices fell, many farmers were forced to sell out to pay off their loans, and a farm depression set in. Already convinced that farmers had suffered as a result of exorbitant railroad rates, Brookhart now added the Federal Reserve Board and Wall Street bankers to his list of enemies of the farmers. Brookhart soon had a chance to champion the farmers' cause in an active way. In 1922 Iowa's junior senator, William S. Kenyon, was appointed to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, and Brookhart sought to fill the vacancy. He ran on a platform that attacked Wall Street and the Federal Reserve Board and demanded relief for farmers.

Smith Brookhart in his WWI uniform. (SHSI)

Smith Brookhart as seen by "Ding" Darling



The nation was astounded to hear Republican candidate Brookhart demand that Republican vice-presidential nominee Charles G. Dawes be taken off the ticket.

During his 1926 campaign against Albert B. Cummins, Ding portrayed Brookhart as a petulant boy who had been thrown out of school.

Cartoons courtesy Special Collections Dept., University of Iowa Libraries

The Iowa Republican party fought back. Still smarting from Brookhart's rash 1920 challenge and concerned that if elected they could not control him, the party portrayed Brookhart as a dangerous radical whose espousal of government ownership of the railroads was communistic. To deny him the nomination, the party attempted to take advantage of the Iowa primary election law that stated that unless a candidate received 35 percent of the vote the choice of a nominee would be made in the party convention. They believed that if there were enough candidates in the race no one would receive the necessary 35 percent, and they could name whomever they wanted. Brookhart took his case to the people, received 41 percent of the votes cast in the primary, and easily won the general election in the fall despite being ignored by the party.

With only two years remaining in Kenyon's term, Brookhart had to campaign again in 1924. He easily won the primary and seemed assured of a runaway victory in the fall. Several forces, however, combined against him: the Iowa Republican party, the American Legion, Hanford MacNider of Mason City and the Republican Service League (a veterans group that had unoffical ties to the Legion), and finally Brookhart's own rhetoric. In September Brookhart wrote the chairman of the Republican National Committee and demanded that vice-presidential nominee Charles G. Dawes be thrown off the ticket. Dawes, Brookhart charged, had not done enough for agriculture and was an "agent of international banking powers." In October, in a speech at Emmetsburg, Brookhart charged that President Coolidge was a tool of Wall Street and

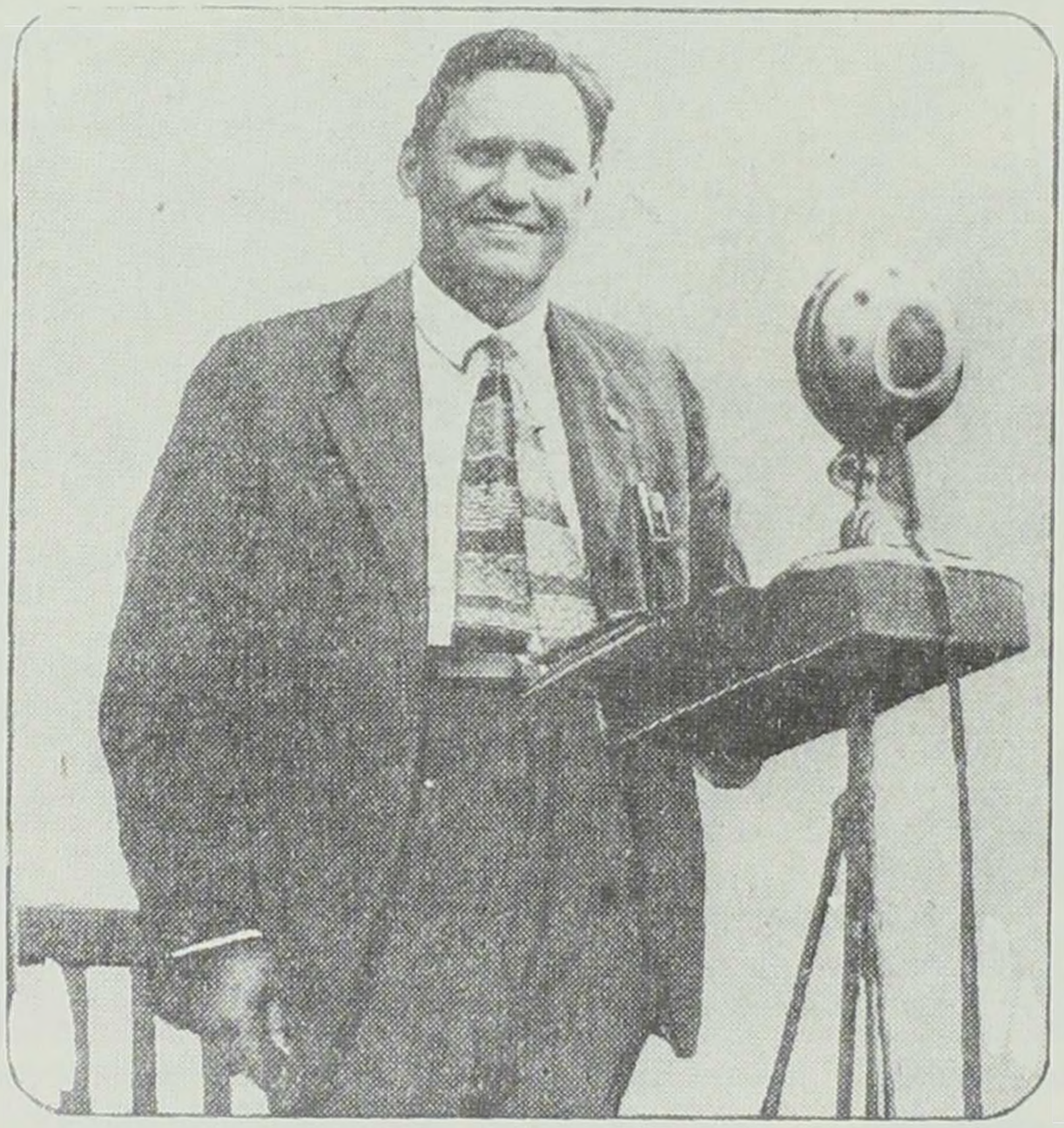
After the 1924 campaign, Brookhart's party affiliation was brought into question. Brookhart and three other senators had their seniority and committee assignments taken away.

Brookhart blamed eastern bankers and the financial centers for the farm depression, and used the epithet "tool of Wall Street" to describe anyone he felt was against the farmer.

promised to "do as much for Coolidge as he would do for me," that is, nothing. Because of this, and also because of Brookhart's sympathy for Robert M. La Follette's Progressive party candidacy for president, the Iowa Republican party called Brookhart a "bolter" and openly supported his Democratic opponent, Daniel Steck.

Brookhart won the election by 755 votes, and after a recount the Iowa secretary of state issued a certificate of election. Almost immediately, Steck announced he would challenge the results on the floor of the Senate. The state Republican and Democratic parties joined in the challenge and the Republican Service League began to raise funds to help Steck in his fight. The U.S. Senate Committee on Elections and Privileges took fourteen months to reach its decision—Brookhart had lost. The committee awarded the seat to Steck after counting ballots the canvassers in Iowa had thrown out as marred by extraneous marks and therefore invalid. The Senate ruled that even though they were marred the ballots indicated it was the intent of the voter to vote for Steck. On April 12, 1926, Smith Brookhart was declared to have lost the election of 1924 and Dan Steck was sworn in as Iowa's junior senator.

Brookhart immediately returned to Iowa and entered the June primary election against Iowa's senior senator, Albert B. Cummins. Angered by the Senate's decision, Iowa voters gave Brookhart 49.5 percent of the primary vote in a five-man field. "We sent Brookhart to Washington and we're going to send him back," a Polk County farmer said. "We'll show the Senate that when we have sent a man down there we'll see to calling him home when we



Brookhart's years in the senate saw the introduction of many campaign innovations. Shown here using a public address system in 1928, Brookhart also made use of the radio and the airplane.

Brookhart greets Hoover at his birthplace in West Branch.

A critic of the Coolidge administration and its failure to give relief to depressed farmers, Brookhart supported Herbert Hoover in 1928 after Hoover assured Brookhart he would work for farm relief. The amity present as the two met in West Branch during the campaign soon disappeared.

Brookhart and Wisconsin Senator Robert M. La Follette were closely allied during their years in the senate. During La Follette's third-party presidential bid Brookhart lent his support but refused to join the Progressive party. In return for Brookhart's support La Follette came to Iowa to help with Brookhart's campaign.

want him."

Thus in five elections, Brookhart had won without the help of the Iowa Republican party, or at the very most, with their grudging support. In spite of large primary victories in 1922 and 1924, the party did its best to ignore him at its state conventions, to the point of not even allowing him a seat on the dais. It was not much different in 1926. Less than two months after Albert B. Cummins' defeat in the primary, Iowa's senior senator died. The party met in convention to select a candidate to serve the remainder of Cummins' term ending March 4, 1927. Brookhart was already the party's nominee for the full term, and it would have been logical for the party organization to choose him to serve the remainder of Cummins' term. Instead, in a final nod to the memory of Cummins and the Brookhart-Cummins battles of the preceding years, they chose Sioux City attorney David Stewart. With the death of Cummins, more party members supported Brookhart now than in the past, but this support was more in the spirit of resignation than real enthusiam for him. In the fall Brookhart was easily elected to the full term.

As a senator, Brookhart allied himself with the progressive group, whose members included Senators Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, George W. Norris of Nebraska, and William E. Borah of Idaho. Although he steadfastly insisted he was a Republican, Brookhart did not participate in the Senate Republican Conference, and he even temporarily lost his nominal standing with the Conference when they took away his committee assignments because of his support for La Follette in 1924. The only committee chairmanship Brookhart ever held was the 1924 Select Committee to Investigate Attorney General Harry Daugherty.

In the Senate, Brookhart's principal concern was to obtain relief for farmers. Like many others, he believed agriculture should receive the same government protection that other industries received. Arguing that farmers had suffered at the hands of Wall Street bankers and the Federal Reserve Board since 1920, Brookhart advocated laws to permit farmers to take matters into their own hands by establishing cooperative banks and marketing cooperatives. Although introduced in several forms, the plan never passed, and Brookhart eventually supported the farm relief program proposed by Congress, the McNary-Haugen Bill.

Small businessmen also had a champion in Brookhart. To protect independent businesses he drafted anti-chain store legislation. He also introduced legislation to protect independent movie theater owners from losing control of their businesses to large motion picture companies. Long an advocate of government ownership of the railroads, Brookhart thought other utilities, including the budding radio industry, should be operated by the government in the public interest. And finally, the long-time prohibitionist ended his elected career where he had begun it—fighting relaxation of liquor laws and repeal of the Eighteenth

Note on Sources

There is no published biography of Smith Brookhart. The most complete unpublished work is Ray S. Johnston's "Smith Wildman Brookhart: Iowa's Last Populist," (M.A. thesis, State College of Iowa, 1964). This article relied on Johnston's work as well as newspaper accounts of Brookhart's career (from the New York *Times*, the Des Moines *Register*, the Washington *Evening Journal*, the Washington *County Press*, the Washington *Gazette*, and various newspapers across Iowa.)

Manuscript sources consulted included the papers of Brookhart's contemporaries in the Senate, especially Senators George W. Norris and Robert M. La Follette, both of whose papers are in the Library of Congress, and the records of the various executive departments and in the congress of the United States housed at the National Archives. The records of various Iowa politicians were also a rich source, but none more so than the papers of Albert Baird Cummins and Charles Rawson at the Museum and Archives in Des Moines and the papers of Hanford MacNider at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch.

There is no body of Brookhart manuscripts; what letters and papers exist are owned by the senator's daughter Dr. Florence Brookhart Yount, who has generously allowed me access to these papers. A smaller group of letters written by the senator's wife, Jennie, is owned by their grandson, Charles E. Brookhart, who was equally generous in permitting their use. Of inestimable value was the time and patience spent by Dr. Yount and her brother, Smith W. Brookhart, Jr., and sister, Edith Brookhart Millard, in answering my many questions.

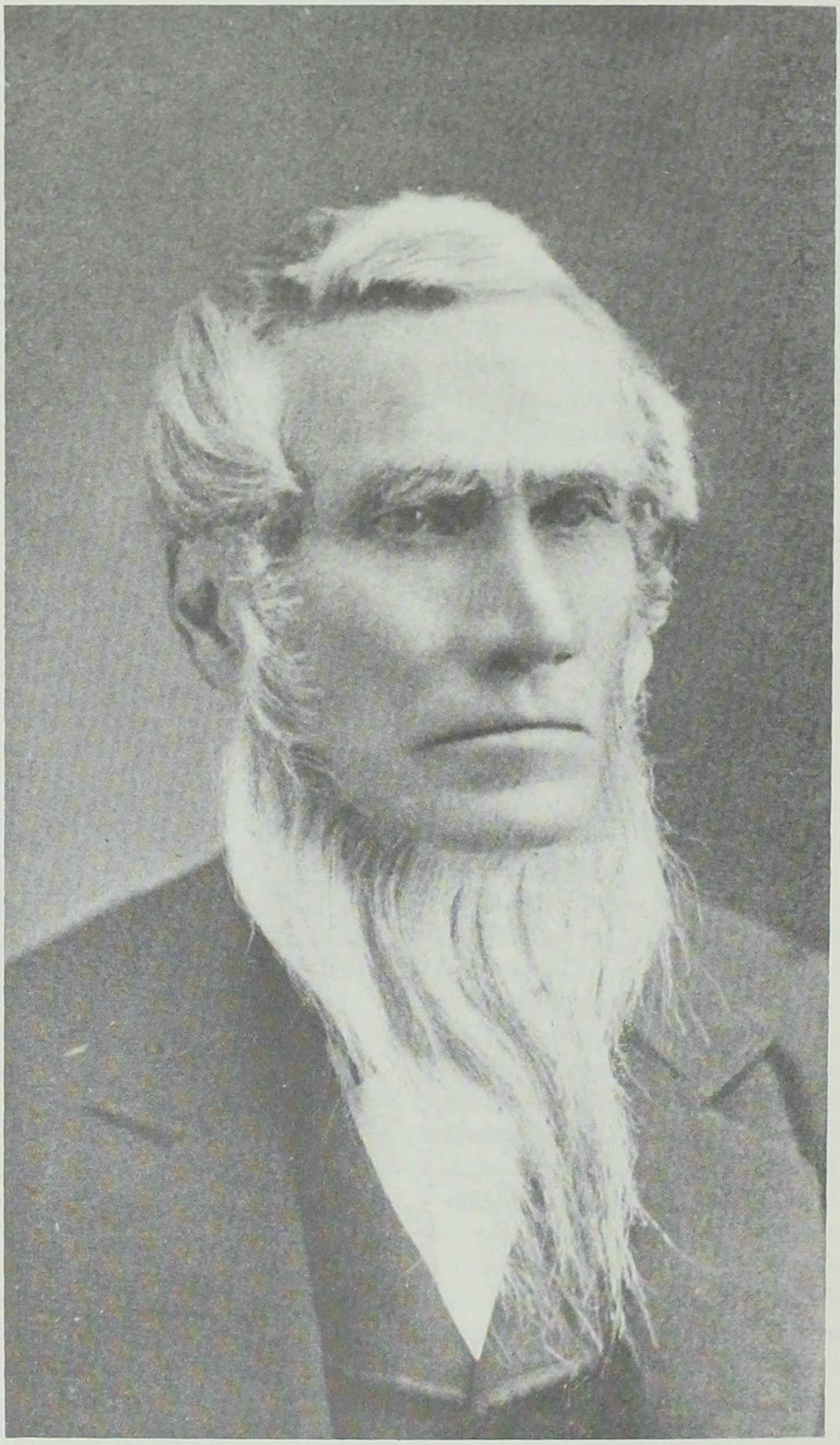
Amendment.

Perhaps Brookhart's most controversial position was his support of Soviet Russia. He made a much publicized trip to Russia in 1923, and on his return he admitted that although the revolution had committed inexcusable excesses, Russia had a stable government and the peasants were better off than under the Czar. "The recognition of a government does not mean its approval," he wrote in 1923; however "the recognition of Russia . . . may tend to settle the world unrest and to restore world prosperity."

By 1932 the rest of the country had joined the Iowa farmers in the Great Depression. But although he had been telling the country of their plight since 1920, Brookhart had been unable to obtain legislative relief for Iowa farmers. So in the 1932 senatorial primary Iowans looked elsewhere and nominated Henry Field of Shenandoah.

Brookhart supported Franklin Roosevelt for president in 1932 and 1936, and in return Roosevelt appointed Brookhart as special advisor for Russian trade in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. It was not surprising that Brookhart ended his public career working for a Democrat. Throughout his public life he never wavered from his belief that where individual rights and welfare were threatened it was the duty of the government to step in and insure those rights. New Deal Democracy was a logical step from his earlier populism and progressivism. As former Iowa Democratic Congressman Otha Wearin remembered Brookhart, "He should have been [a Democrat]. He thought like a Democrat."

When Smith Wildman Brookhart died on November 15, 1944, he had been out of the public eye for a number of years. Prosperity had returned with the war, and the attention of Americans was focused on events around the world. Many remembered him, however. "As you know, I knew your father well," former Postmaster General James Farley wrote Brookhart's family, "and I liked and respected him. He made a notable contribution to our country's progress." And Vice-President Henry A. Wallace wrote: "I wanted to write you concerning your Father, who suffered from the disadvantage of being ahead of his time. He sensed the eventual possibilities of Russia better than most of us. He also sensed some of the eventual difficulties of the social system here in the United States. He battled resolutely and courageously for that in which he believed. He represented the progressive spirit in Iowa at a time when the Iowa farmer was in great trouble."



James Weed: Iowa's Renaissance Man

by Loren N. Horton

Few people in Iowa history have matched the scope of James Weed's interests and achievements. Weed served as a doctor, a dentist, a horticulturist, an agriculturist, a livestock breeder, and a philanthropist. He was born on December 26, 1813 in Connecticut and studied medicine at Yale University. In 1839 he moved to Muscatine with his parents; here his father, Benjamin Weed, set up a medical practice. James Weed himself opened a dental practice, which was well received. Weed's advertisements claimed he could treat and extract teeth and also furnish customers with "a full assortment of S.W. Stockton's LATEST IMPROVED AND INCORRUPTIBLE TEETH which he will insert in any number from one to whole sets and in a manner so perfectly to rival nature as to deceive the most observing and in most cases without the slightest pain." Weed soon left the practice of dentistry, however, to pursue the many interests and activities that might have easily earned him the title of Iowa's Renaissance Man.

In 1843 Weed bought a 320-acre homestead northwest of Muscatine and, along with his brother Chester, founded the Iowa Pomological and Horticultural Gardens. In an advertisement in the *Northwestern Farmer*, he stated that his nursery occupied over forty acres and contained the largest stock of extra-size trees to be found west of the Allegheny Mountains. The nursery, according to the advertisement, had 20,000 seedling apple stocks, in addition to dwarf apples, grape vines, currants, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, roses, lilacs, and other shrubs and flowers. Customer orders could be packed and delivered at railroad depots or steamboat landings, in exchange for a modest packing charge. Orion Clemens, editor of the *Tri-Weekly Muscatine Journal* and brother of author Samuel Clemens, described the gardens and their proprietor as they appeared in June 1854:

Last Monday, upon the invitation of Dr. James Weed, we made a visit to his fine grounds, about one mile from this place [Muscatine].

Our attention was first directed to a pair of fat, chub-faced, good natured looking Suffolk pigs, that seemed to enjoy a conscious pride in the fact that they could fatten on what would reduce an ordinary hog.

Then we looked over a portion of the Doctor's two hundred cattle; among them some full blood and half blood Devon stock, with their everlasting, uniform red color. Good cows of this stock are worth a hundred dollars, and bulls from one hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars. "Charlie" is a royal looking fellow, and carried his sixteen hundred pounds with an easy dignity that seemed to indicate pride in his large size, fine form and velvety skin.

Next we drove over the grounds in which are situated the nursery, orchard,

etc. Here we noticed a fine site for a residence, with the brow of the ascending ground sweeping round in a semicircle, commanding a view of the river, and on which the Doctor intends arranging a carriage drive.

Two thousand apple trees capable next year, of bearing a bushel of apples each, form an orchard occupying about fifty acres of ground; twenty acres are devoted to gardening purposes; four acres to a vineyard for cultivating grapes for market and making wine for domestic use; eight or ten thousand Spanish chestnut plants are growing rapidly and thriving well; a crop of buckthorn is growing up, which the Doctor is satisfied is better than Osage Orange for hedging in northern latitudes; forty acres are devoted to a nursery, which is constantly being extended.–How many trees are in it now, is almost beyond calculation. Some idea of the number may be formed from a statement of the fact that every fall two nurserymen go through the nursery to examine for 'borers,' a work that occupies three weeks' time, even with occasional assistance from others. About fifty thousand seedlings and twenty thousand grafts have been set this spring.

After making serious inroads upon the Doctor's cherries, strawberries and flowers, we returned home well pleased with the hospitality of himself and lady, and convinced that he deserved credit from farmers for well directed efforts to improve the stock in this part of the country, and generally for the distinguishing marks of his enterprise, which will assist to give our vicinity a name abroad.

We add that Mr. Chester Weed, of this city, is associated with his brother in the operations above noticed, and that the two together hold seven hundred and sixty acres, valued at fifty dollars an acre.

Weed's nursery business was successful and its owner quickly rose to prominence in the state as a nurseryman. Actively involved in various horticultural and agricultural organizations, Weed helped found the Muscatine County Agricultural Society in 1852 and participated in many other groups, including the Iowa State Agricultural Society, the Iowa Horticultural Society, and the Committee for the State Fair. Weed's interest in the Iowa State Fair dated back to 1854, when the first such fair was held in Fairfield. This event was sponsored by the Iowa State Agricultural Society, an organization of which Weed was a board member; Weed also served as a fair manager representing Muscatine County.

By 1856 James Weed was not only intensely involved in managing the fair but was also a major exhibitor. Nurseryman Weed's fruit exhibits were entered in the professional category. At the 1857 fair his exhibit included forty-five varieties of apples and four varieties of pears. He placed second best in the fruit category, won five dollars for his apple display—cited as the best and largest variety of apples—and placed first in the pear category. At the same fair, Weed won several other first-place awards; for best garden squash, for largest and best variety of apples, for best fall eating apple, for best winter cooking apple, and for best display of pears.

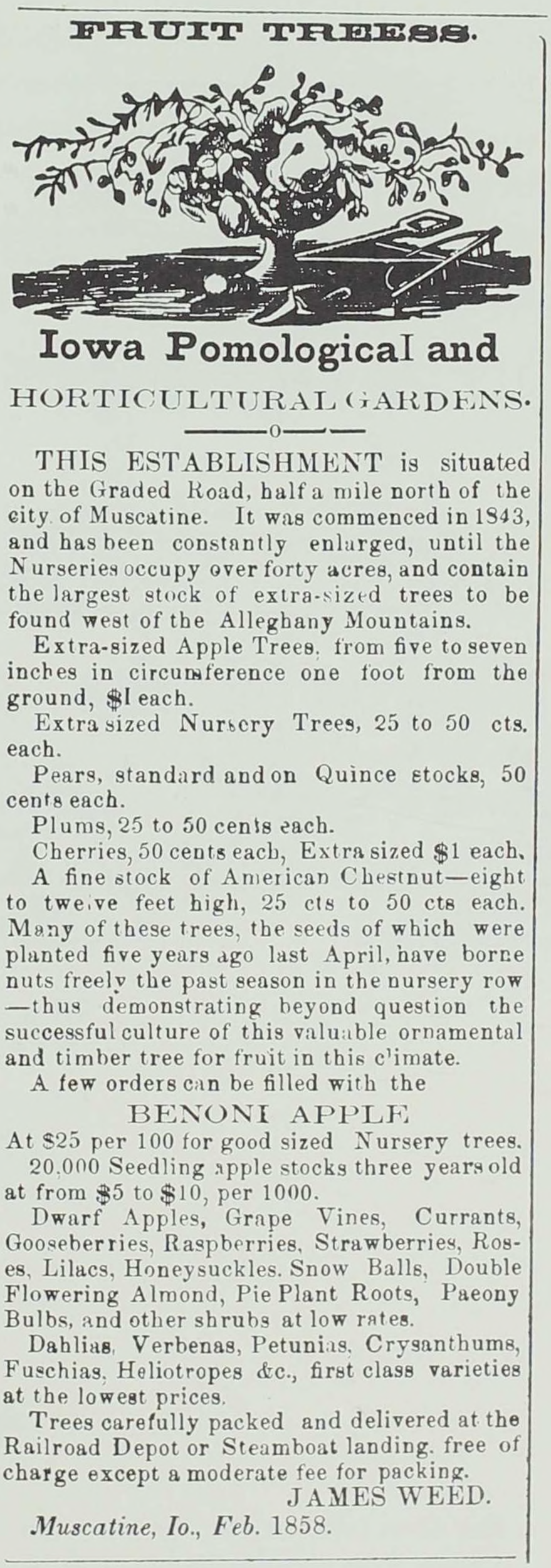
Weed continued to exhibit at the fair in subsequent years, and he continued to win awards. At the eighth State Fair, in 1861, he received five awards for his apples, and the

following year again won five awards for his apples. Weed continued exhibiting his fruit at the Iowa State Fair as late as 1874.

With the continuing success of his nursery, Weed earned the respect of his fellow nurserymen and was often called upon to describe his methods and to give advice about the growing of fruit. The 1858 annual report of the Iowa Agricultural Society, contains Weed's lengthy essay describing his fruit-growing methods and making a number of general observations about cultivation in Iowa. This discourse was intended as a reply to inquiries from Society members and the Fruit Committee of the State Fair:

> *I had in my collection in the winter of 1855-56 about 300 varieties of the apple, the most of which showed no injury from the severity of that memorable season. I attributed my immunity from more severe losses principally to having some years previously adopted the practice of cultivating my trees but moderately to secure their hardihood and partially to the use of seedling stock. . . . I have had but little practical experience with orchard growing in the open prairie. I have one orchard located on what was originally a small prairie surrounded by hazelbrush and oak grub land. The soil is unlike the latter in appearance and much like that of the wide prairies. The orchard has done well except when in some seasons it has been too wet and I am decidedly of the opinion that orchards will succeed finally on the open prairie if the soil is properly under-drained and a too rapid growth is not encouraged.*

Weed also gave practical advice on such matters as plant diseases, insect problems, and which varieties of fruit to grow. He wrote several other articles on nursery techniques for the *Northwestern Farmer and Horticultural*



FRUIT TREES.

Iowa Pomological and

HORTICULTURAL GARDENS.

THIS ESTABLISHMENT is situated on the Graded Road, half a mile north of the city of Muscatine. It was commenced in 1843, and has been constantly enlarged, until the Nurseries occupy over forty acres, and contain the largest stock of extra-sized trees to be found west of the Alleghany Mountains.

Extra-sized Apple Trees, from five to seven inches in circumference one foot from the ground, $1 each.

Extra sized Nursery Trees, 25 to 50 cts. each.

Pears, standard and on Quince stocks, 50 cents each.

Plums, 25 to 50 cents each.

Cherries, 50 cents each, Extra sized $1 each.

A fine stock of American Chestnut—eight to twelve feet high, 25 cts to 50 cts each. Many of these trees, the seeds of which were planted five years ago last April, have borne nuts freely the past season in the nursery row—thus demonstrating beyond question the successful culture of this valuable ornamental and timber tree for fruit in this climate.

A few orders can be filled with the

BENONI APPLE

At $25 per 100 for good sized Nursery trees.

20,000 Seedling apple stocks three years old at from $5 to $10, per 1000.

Dwarf Apples, Grape Vines, Currants, Gooseberries, Raspberries, Strawberries, Roses, Lilacs, Honeysuckles. Snow Balls, Double Flowering Almond, Pie Plant Roots, Paeony Bulbs, and other shrubs at low rates.

Dahlias, Verbenas, Petunias, Crysanthums, Fuschias, Heliotropes &c., first class varieties at the lowest prices.

Trees carefully packed and delivered at the Railroad Depot or Steamboat landing, free of charge except a moderate fee for packing.

JAMES WEED.

Muscatine, Io., Feb. 1858.

J. WEED.
Cider-Mills.

No. 198,476. Patented Dec. 25, 1877.

Fig 1.

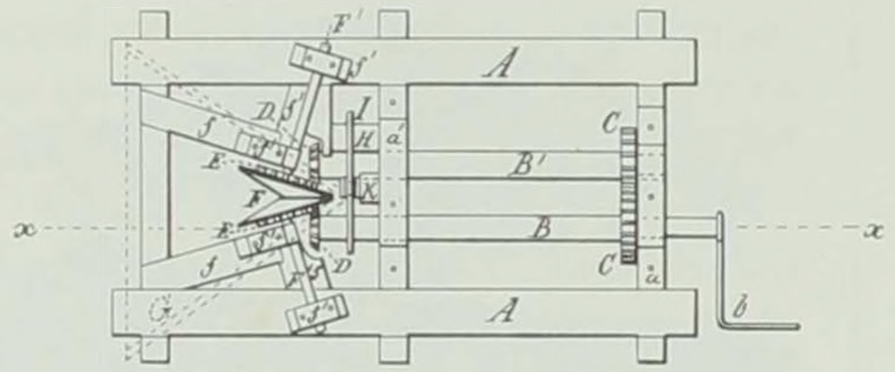


Fig 2.

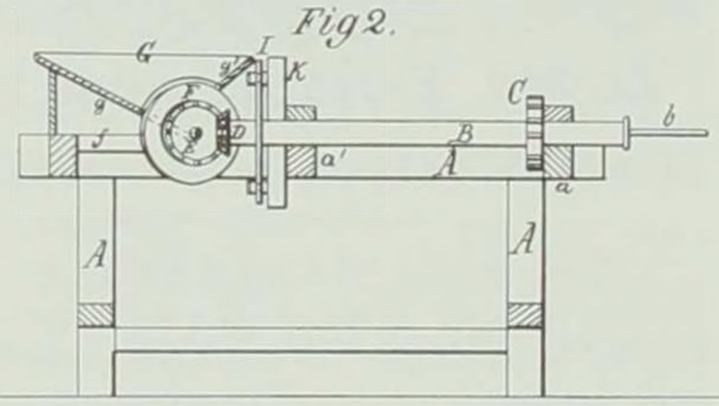


Fig 3.

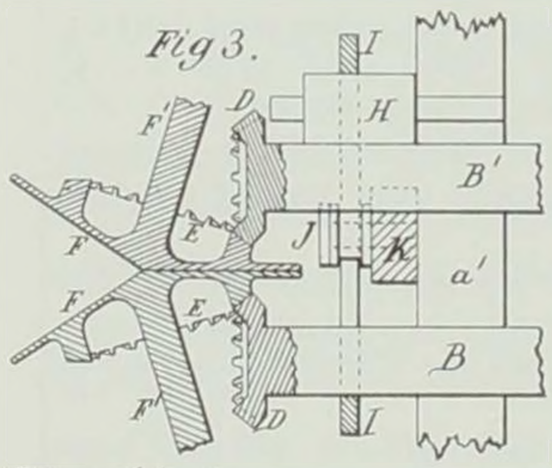
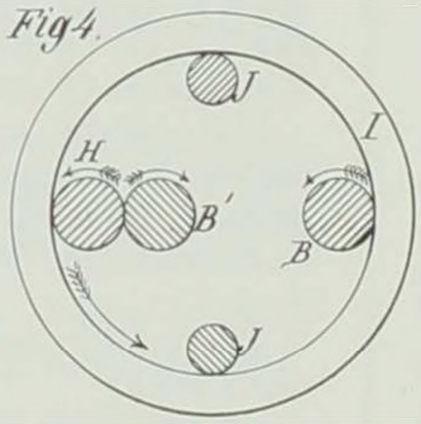


Fig 4.

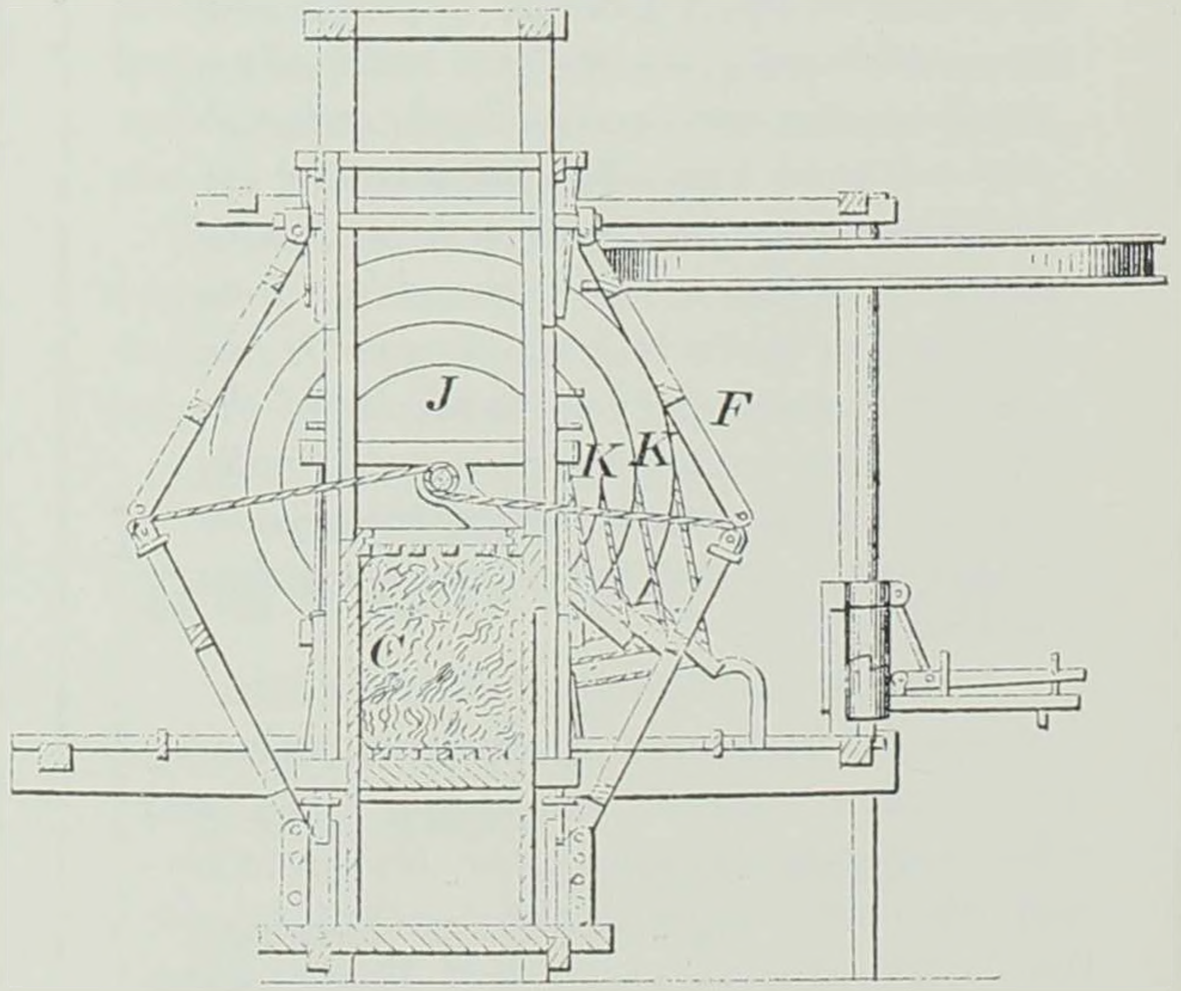


Witnesses:
James Martin Jr.
J. Theodore Lang.

Inventor.
James Weed
by
Mason, Fenwick & Lawrence

Nothing demonstrate
Weed better than his

Cider Mill (1877) – Figure 1 is a top view. Figure 2 shows a side view, while Figure 3 offers a close view of the cones which did the crushing. Figure 4 illustrates the mill's unique feature, a movable ring which allowed the cones to "give," allowing the pulp to pass through.



Hay Press (1860) – The hay press that Chester Weed probably used on his farm.

tes he versatility of James
s ventions.

J. WEED.
Automatic Gates.
No. 152,888. Fig. 3 Patented July 7, 1874.

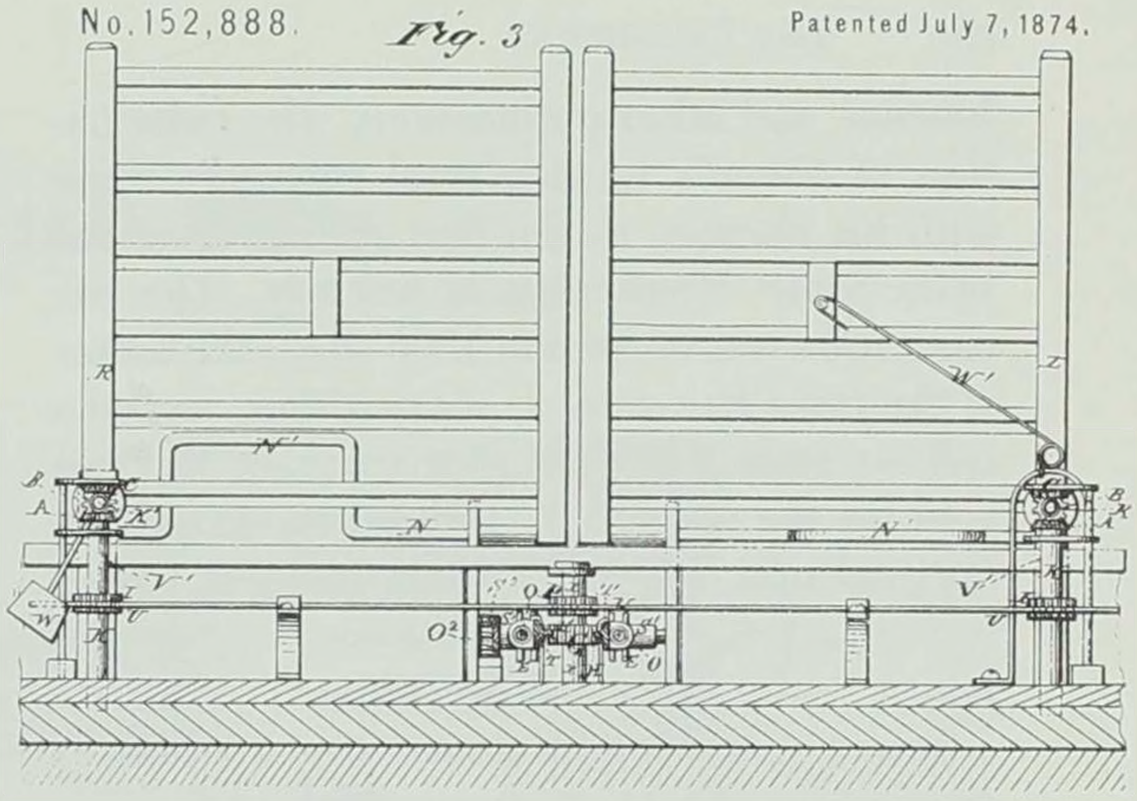
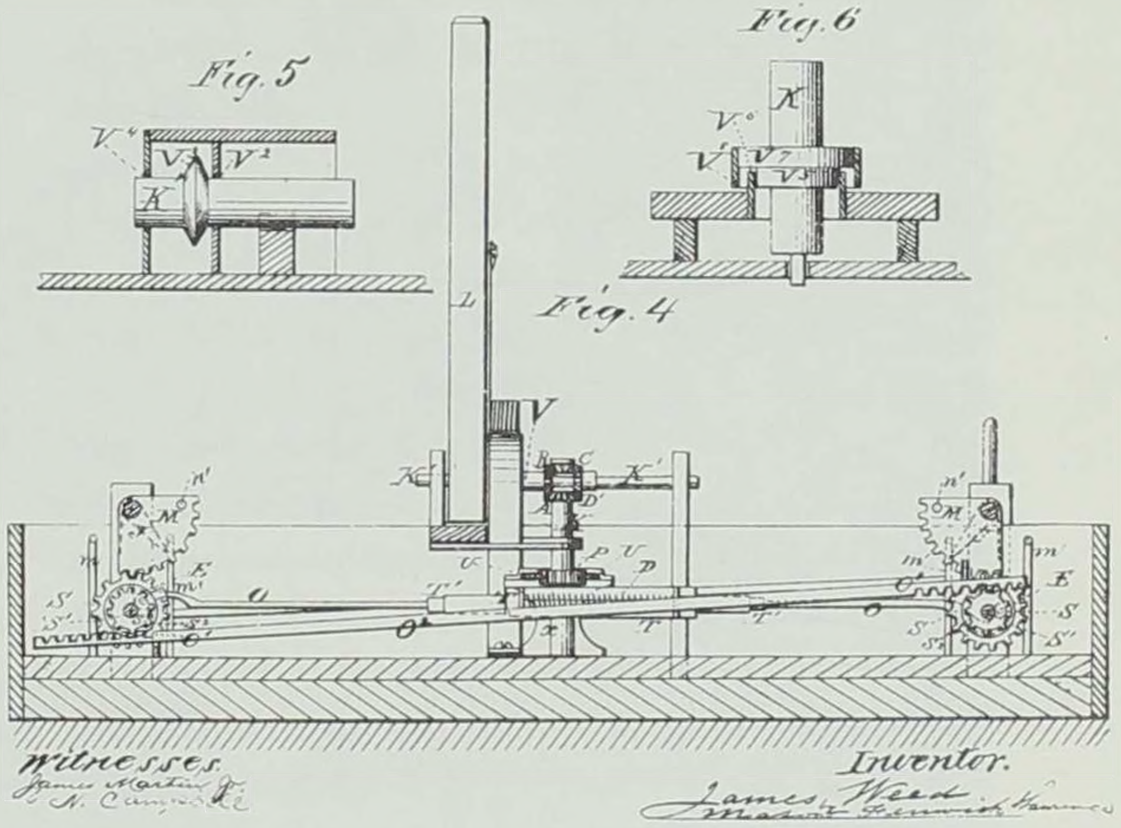


Fig. 6

Fig. 5

Fig. 4



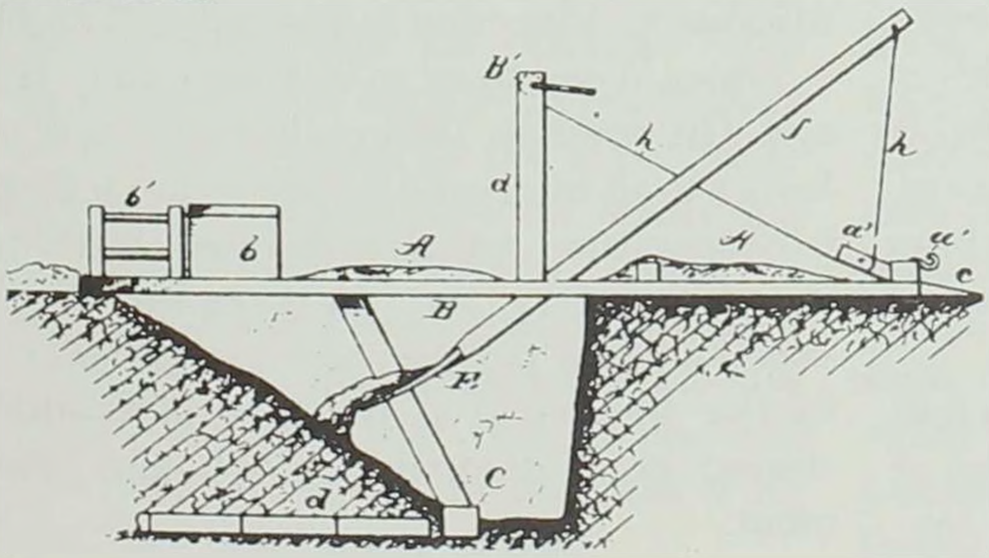
Witnesses.
James Martin Jr.
N. Campbell

Inventor.
James Weed
Munson Penniman & Sawyer

Automatic Gates (1874) – The mechanism for the gates was placed underground in a water-tight compartment. Figure 3 is a frontal view of the gates, and Figure 4 offers a side view. The wheels of a carriage would push down a crank, causing the mechanism to open the gate. An identical mechanism on the opposing side would cause the gates to close as the carriage wheels passed through.

307,246. DEVICE AND METHOD EMPLOYED IN CUTTING DITCHES FOR AND LAYING TILE DRAINS. JAMES WEED, Muscatine, Iowa. Filed Apr. 19, 1884. (No model.)

Brief.—A platform adapted to be drawn over the leveled surface of the proposed ditch carries a forward leveling-cutter and a bar carrying a cutter for grading the ditch-bottom, while a long-handled spade, operated by chain and windlass and pulley, enters, pries out, and carries rearward the earth.



Journal, and other publications. The culmination of Weed's horticultural interests came with his election as the first president of the Iowa State Horticultural Society. The organization was formed in 1866 when the editor of the *Iowa Homestead*, Mark Miller, issued a call for state horticulturists to meet in Iowa City for the purpose of facilitating systematic horticultural efforts. Twenty-eight horticulturists met, adopted a constitution, and elected James Weed their first president.

While his horticultural successes would have satisfied the career ambitions of most men, this was only the highlight of Weed's career. In addition to his nursery Weed raised prize-winning cattle, as mentioned by Orion Clemens. In 1856 Weed exhibited his livestock at the State Fair, his entries including about forty head of Devon cattle, one Suffolk boar, and two other boars. He won awards for best bull, best bull calf and second-best bull calf, and best and second-best cow. His entries were not limited to Devon cattle; he received five awards for other breeds of cattle, as well as awards for his swine entries. But his Devon cattle won the most praise and awards over the years. In "The Devon Herd Book," a section of the 1862 Iowa State Agricultural Society Report, many of the entries included were cattle directly from James Weed's farm or from animals that originated on his farm.

Weed the inventor generally directed his work toward horticultural and nursery concerns. His first invention was a power press, patented in 1860, intended to make baling hay a simpler and more efficient process. Weed's brother, Chester, began shipping hay bales to St. Louis in 1861, and although he probably used the machine it was not a financial success. In August 1861 there was a fire on Weed's farm in which he lost his stable, shed, farm tools, a wagon—and his hay press.

Undaunted, Weed next patented a tree and plant protector, consisting of a combination of fixed and movable trellises. He received several other patents after these early attempts, but perhaps his most intriguing invention was an automatic gate, patented in 1874. The gate was designed to open as a carriage approached it, and the invention enjoyed success throughout the western United States. The original gate was installed at Weed's home, The Gables.

With all of his achievements, Weed did occasionally encounter failure. The first plank road legislation in Iowa was an act granting James Weed and others the right to construct a graded toll road from Muscatine to Benton County by way of Tipton. The company formed for this purpose—the Muscatine and Linn County Graded Road Company—also had the legislature's consent to construct the road with an eight-foot width and charge a higher toll, if desired. The people of Muscatine held a meeting to appoint delegates to a plank road convention but the building of the road, a monumental task in 1850, was never undertaken. Weed attempted another toll road, from Muscatine to Iowa City, but this project was also stillborn.

Although Weed's attempt to better Muscatine and the state of Iowa by improving transportation failed, he later showed his concern for city betterment and his generosity by donating over sixty acres of land to the city of Muscatine for a park. The land, which he donated in 1899, included not only a portion of the original Pomological and Horticultural Gardens but also included a number of prehistoric Indian mounds. The park, still in existence, is located on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River and is now called Weed Park.

James Weed lived to be over ninety years of age. His death in 1904 ended the life of one of Iowa's most interesting early settlers. Devoted to horticulture, scientific farming, and his community and its betterment, James Weed—while perhaps not a renaissance man in the historical sense—certainly demonstrated great diversity, talent, and achievement.

The Gables

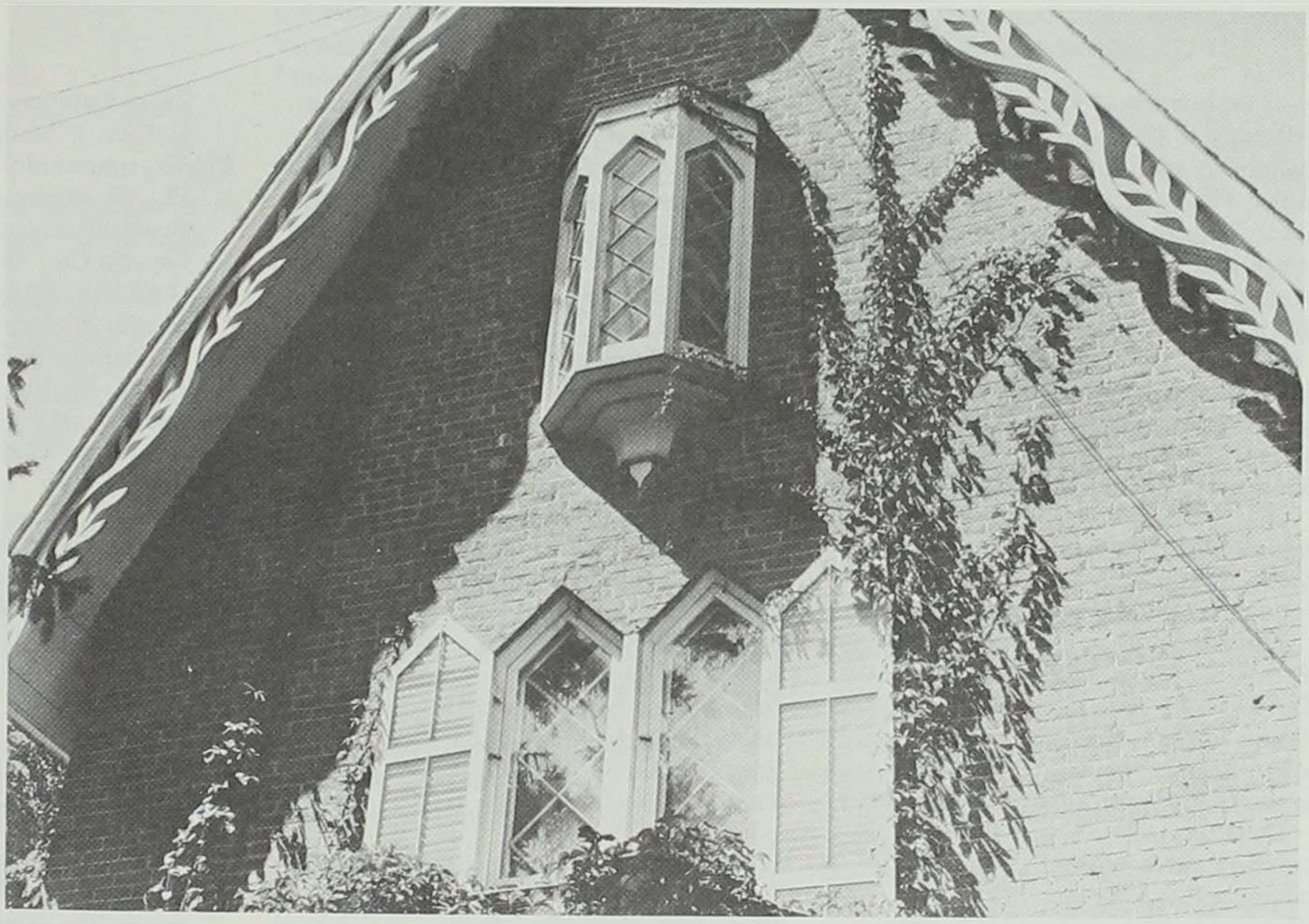
James Weed's home, The Gables, was built in 1855. The house is architecturally significant for several reasons. The Gables received its name from the sharply angled Gothic gables that characterized its exterior. Each gable was different, and each reflected Weed's interests. It was designed as the appropriate home for a horticulturist by a local Muscatine architect, Josiah Proctor Walton. The front gables were ornamented with bargeboards that had leaves, berries, and grapes carved into their design. The end and rear gables had leaves, and the side gables on the rear wing were decorated with flower petals.

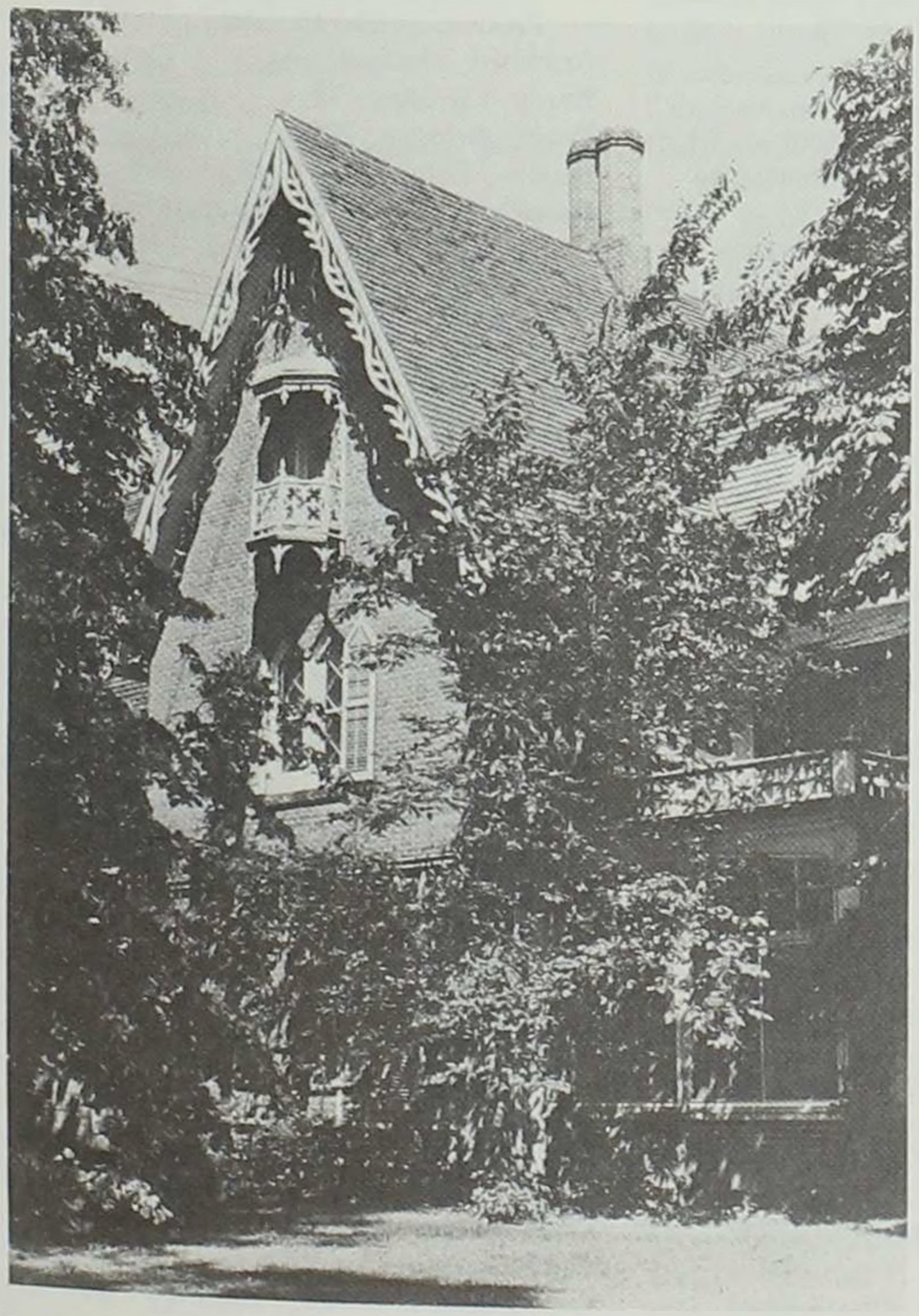
The house itself was built of red brick and the original mortar was tinted to match. Heavy rubblestone, with a band of sandstone as a water table, provided the foundation for the house. The three-story, L-shaped house contained eleven rooms. The floor-length windows on the two lower stories used a diamond arch design. A huge bay window projected from the main gable, with diamond-shaped panes. Above this was an oriel window of the same design. Ventilation in the attic was provided by a star-shaped opening created by four juxtaposed diamond-shaped windows of different shapes. Outside shutters, louvered and

with diamond arched tops, covered all the windows. One third-story window was faced with a small balcony decorated with wooden lace work. The exterior chimneys consisted of octagonal flues clustered in pairs.

The interior of The Gables, when it was occupied by James Weed, was equally impressive. The first floor included a large parlor with a bay window, a hallway with a semi-circular stairway, a dining room, a kitchen, a pantry, and a utility area with a back stairway. The second floor contained a master bedroom and three smaller rooms, as well as a large central hallway divided into three parts by partitions. An open stairway in the back hall led to the third floor, intended as servants' quarters. There were finished areas under the eaves for storage, and a small enclosed stair led to still another level at the peak of the main house section. The principal rooms were heated by fireplaces. The shallow design of the firebox and the arrangement of the stairways, which excluded extremely high open areas throughout the house, made heating easier. The interior finish reflected simple good taste. The doors were distinguished by two vertical full-length panels trimmed with a shallow molding. The stair balustrades were turned from cherry wood, with spindles and newel posts tapered and delicately fluted. The balustrade enclosing the stairwell on the second floor was kidney-shaped in the area over the bend in the stairs.

It was an impressive house, fitting for a man distinguished in so many fields of intellectual and practical activity. In this house James Weed lived from the time it was finished in 1855 until his death in 1904. The house still stands, adjacent to Weed Park in Muscatine, and is still inhabited and in good condition.





Note on Sources

Information about James Weed was obtained from material found in a variety of Muscatine city and county histories, directories, and newspapers. Especially useful were three volumes of the collected writings of Josiah Proctor Walton, *Scraps of Muscatine History, Pioneer Papers*, and *Early Recollections of Bloomington and Its Surroundings*. An article in *The Iowan* in 1965 by Berry B. Tracy and Marilyn Jackson was very helpful, as were the annual reports of the Iowa State Agricultural Society and the Iowa State Horticultural Society. The *Index of Patents Issued from the United State Patent Office* confirmed some details. Various issues of the *Northwestern Farmer and Horticultural Journal* were valuable, as were several earlier issues of *The Palimpsest* and *Annals of Iowa*. The *WPA Graves Registration for Muscatine County*, as well as various gazetteers published by Bailey and Hair, and by R.L. Polk provided some data.

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CONTRIBUTORS

George William McDaniel holds a B.A. from St. Ambrose College and M.A.'s from the Aquinas Institute of Theology and the University of Iowa. Currently on leave from his faculty position at St. Ambrose, Father McDaniel is a doctoral candidate at the University of Iowa. A recent publication by McDaniel, "Prohibition Debated in Washington County, 1890-1894: Smith Wildman Brookhart's Introduction to Politics," appeared in the Winter 1981 issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

Bradley B. Williams received an A.B. in English from the University of Southern California and a M.A. in American Studies from San Diego State University. He is now completing work on a doctorate in American Studies at the University of Iowa. In 1979-80 he was consultant to the Iowa State Preserves Advisory Board on the Ft. Atkinson State Preserve.

Loren N. Horton was born near Hopeville, Iowa and received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Northern Iowa, and his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. He was a teacher in Iowa schools for 18 years, and has served on the faculty of Palmer Junior College, Shimer College, the University of Iowa, George Washington University, and Brown University. Articles and book reviews by Horton have appeared in *Community College Social Science Quarterly, Annals of Iowa, The Public Historican, Journal of the West, Nebraska History, Journal of the Iowa Archaeological Society, The Iowa Churchman*, and *The Keyestone*, as well as earlier issues of *The Palimpsest*. He has been the author or editor of chapters and monographs published by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. At the present time Horton serves as the Field Services Representative for the Iowa State Historical Department.

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