

*The*  
**PALIMPSEST**

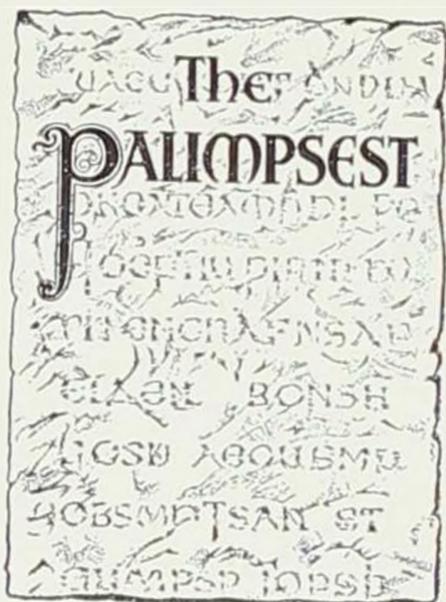


IOWA NATIONAL GUARDSMEN

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## *The Meaning of 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 records 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.

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## *Contents*

### IOWA IN 1951

ROBERT RUTLAND

Cold, Windy, and Wet	337
Agriculture and Industry	343
Religion and Education	350
The Web of Life	357

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## *Cover*

*Front* — Iowa National Guardsmen arrive at a dusty weapons range during summer training at Fort Leonard Wood.

*Back — Top:* Davenport watched the Mississippi overwhelm man-made barriers in April, 1951, when the river invaded this railroad yard.

*Bottom:* On the other side of Iowa, the Maple River overflowed its banks to engulf Turin, in Monona County.

*Pictures* — The Sioux City plane crash wirephoto was furnished by the Associated Press. All other pictures were loaned by the Des Moines Register and Tribune.

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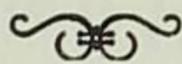
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# THE PALIMPSEST

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## Cold, Windy, and Wet

Come what may in politics, foreign affairs, or domestic events, Iowans can always be sure of one thing — unpredictable weather. During 1951 the Iowa weatherman's costume ran the gamut from a fur-lined cap and hightop boots to a raincoat and sunglasses. By the close of the year statistics showed 1951 to be one of the coldest, wettest, and windiest years since statewide weather recording began in 1873. Hardest hit by the unseasonable weather was the farmer, who harvested a comparatively poor corn crop.

January blustered in with snow and sleet, then reversed itself in mid-month with a "heat wave" that took the mercury up to a record 69° at Hamburg. Before straw hats were in order, however, the temperature dipped again until it was 43° below zero at Decorah on January 30. A steady flow of bulletins from highway officials warned motorists of icy roads, but auto supply stores reported little change in the demand for tire chains and car heaters. By Lincoln's Birthday, the ther-

mometer reading had edged back up to a record 67° at Council Bluffs, and farmers were complaining because of the lack of rain, which forced them to "import" water for their livestock and homes.

Late in February the first major flood threat of the year was reported at Hamburg when an ice jam several miles long formed on the Missouri River. A similar threat on the Mississippi near Davenport ended when dynamite charges were used to break the jam, which experts blamed on the unseasonably warm temperatures. The first day of March dispelled any notion that the winter's worst was over; a fourteen-inch snow blocked many northern Iowa highways, and snow generally blanketed the state.

The earlier flood threats were hardly forgotten before creeks and rivers began to overflow again. In western Iowa the citizens of Turin, near the confluence of the Little Sioux and Maple rivers, were forced to higher ground when flood waters invaded stores and homes. Torrents from flooded creeks overran highways, ripped away bridges, and caused harried officials to estimate the damage "in the thousands." Tireless sandbag crews at Sabula fought off the Mississippi when it reached a crest of almost twenty-one feet. Rains added to the deluge caused by melting snows in the north. Few Iowans were looking for their first robin when Davenport was threatened by high water. At Waterloo, the Cedar River left

its banks, covered the famous Dairy Cattle Congress showgrounds, and forced a thousand residents from their homes.

The last ten days of April turned into a nightmare for countless Iowans along the Mississippi as they fled their dwellings to seek shelter at emergency relief stations. Twelve hundred were homeless at Davenport. Eighty city blocks in the Dubuque area were under water. Three hundred National Guardsmen and a Coast Guard detachment from Chicago were called to help at Muscatine, where the levee seemed in peril as the flood crest moved southward. Muscatine finally recorded a crest of nearly twenty-one feet, fourteen inches higher than the memorable 1922 flood. But the thirteen miles of levee held firm, thanks to the efforts of Guardsmen, volunteers, and even school children who helped prepare sandbags.

Heavy rains continued to fall on Iowa in May. Ponds and even shallow lakes covered farms. Spring had officially reached Iowa on March 21, but still the unpredictable antics of the weather continued, feigning fall one day and winter the next. Nor were rain and cold the only culprits. Marshalltown was hit by a tornado on June 1, which destroyed one million dollars worth of property. In the Des Moines area, sixty families were warned to move to safer ground when the Raccoon River approached the flood stage.

Marshalltown's residents had hardly recovered

from the first tornado when another twister struck the community on June 19, toppling electric high lines and trees. The same freakish high winds caused \$160,000 damage loss at Elliott. Severe crop damage was reported near Tama. A few days later, on June 25, the town of Duncan was hit by a tornado which killed one person, injured eight, and damaged property estimated at \$500,000. Every one of the town's twenty-five homes was either partially or totally destroyed.

Meanwhile, farmers complained that their corn, oat, and hay crops were damaged by the excess moisture, and cultivation of the all-important corn was delayed.

A July thunderstorm of unusual violence caused widespread damage in northern counties, while hail and rain swept across the eastern areas. At Iowa City a greenhouse owner sadly reported six hundred broken window panes. On the Fourth of July, when the corn was supposed to be "knee-high," Iowans learned the state's 1951 corn crop was in critical condition because of the excessive rains. Crop experts made their forecast, with considerable gloom, of 464,000,000 bushels — "the poorest in years" — almost a hundred million bushels less than the 1949 crop. Corn prices advanced when this news was released, but the farmer found this slight compensation in the face of a diminished crop. A break in the bad news seemed imminent, however, when the state

weather bureau released figures which showed the October corn moisture content average was 35.1 per cent, or less than the average in 1950.

After the cool summer, most folks expected a warm autumn. The farmers particularly hoped for dry weather which would aid their corn crops. But cloudy skies and rain prevailed, to dog the steps of both the farmer and the football fan. Early in November cold winds, clocked at up to seventy-three miles per hour, crossed the state in the wake of a temperature drop which sent the mercury close to the zero mark. Three-inch snows covered scattered portions of the state, and wind damage to farm buildings and trees was reported at Newton. On November 20 the corn moisture content still averaged 27.3 — highest since statewide records were inaugurated in 1928. Agricultural experts conceded that the moisture content of the 1951 corn crop was so high, grain growers would lose millions of dollars "unless some satisfactory means of handling it can be worked out." But if the moisture content was excessive, there was some cause for cheer as the final harvest netted over seven million more bushels of corn than the pessimistic July forecast had predicted. And the wet season had favored a record hay crop.

November of 1951 was Iowa's coldest since 1911, and the seventh coldest since 1873. No relief seemed likely in December. Sibley recorded 19° below on December 22, and a white Christ-

mas for most of Iowa was assured when an eight-inch snow fell in Dubuque, moving westward across the state while crowds did their last minute shopping. Clinton had a record 27.9 inches of snow in December.

Weather-wise, the Iowans would remember 1951 as a year that was cold, windy, and wet. The early threat of drought had turned into the actuality of floods, high water, and soaked fields. Precipitation for the year averaged 42.22 inches, almost eleven inches above normal. Only in 1881 and 1902 had the amount of precipitation been exceeded in Iowa, and the snowfall total was the greatest on record — 53.2 inches. The annual temperature averaged 45.6 degrees, three degrees below the normal, while 1951 was marked down as Iowa's coldest year since 1917. The 1951 summer was also one of the "coolest." It was the seventh summer since 1879 in which the temperature failed to reach the 100° mark.

A few Iowans were ready to charge the freakish 1951 weather to the atomic bomb explosions which had occurred in various parts of the world. But old-timers were inclined to smile at these stories as they recalled extraordinary weather had played hob with Iowa long before the Atomic Age, even as late as 1934 and 1936 when dust storms and hot winds had plagued the land.

ROBERT RUTLAND

## Agriculture and Industry

The youngster 1951 had barely arrived when the Beau Geste farms of Oskaloosa sold a Suffolk ewe lamb for a record-smashing price in the United States — \$1,010. That sale was a harbinger of things to come in Iowa during the new year, for before 1951 ran its course, there were abundant signs that the prices for both farm products and industrial goods would continue to rise.

Iowa produced a whopping four billion dollars worth of goods — both agricultural and industrial. The farm parity ratio in Iowa (with the 1910–1914 modified average of prices as a base) was up 7.5 per cent. Iowa's industrial workers earned over half a billion dollars. Furthermore, these increases occurred in the face of a comparatively poor corn crop and tightened restrictions in some industrial fields because of the continued war in Korea.

The gross value of manufactured products outstripped Iowa's farm production again — \$2,700,000,000 in industrial output compared with \$2,372,705,000 in farm income. But a large portion of industry's income came from the value added to farm products through manufacturing, such as food processing.

Corn remained king during 1951 despite a sizeable drop in corn production caused by a cool, wet growing season and unfavorable fall drying weather. The price of corn remained relatively steady throughout the year. On January 3, March corn brought \$1.76 a bushel, and on December 30 the price had edged upward to \$1.90. Production fell to only 471,780,000 bushels, or considerably below the 1940-1949 average of 533,540,000. Despite this drop, Iowa farmers generally received 17.5 per cent more for their products in 1951 than in 1950, while the prices they paid for goods had advanced only 9.6 per cent during the year. Pork prices proved the exception, however. Hogs brought \$19.75 per hundredweight top in January, but high receipts forced prices down steadily, with a top of \$17.65 noted on December 30.

The 1,800 hard-working employees at Fort Madison's Sheaffer Pen Company got profit-sharing checks totaling 20 per cent of their first three month's wages. Not so fortunate were employees at Morrell's in Ottumwa, where union representatives unsuccessfully demanded portal-to-portal pay for their members, plus a paid holiday on the worker's birthday, and a fifteen-pound ham at Christmas! Wages were up throughout the state, however, and the per capita earnings (after taxes) for Iowa were \$1,446, or slightly above the national average of \$1,423. This was a per capita increase of \$142 over 1950. Davenport's per cap-

ita income of \$2,074 was the state's highest, a fact which helped erase memories of 1935, when Scott County citizens had an average "spendable income" of \$817, and ranked second in the state.

Like his city cousin, the Iowa farmer in 1951 used more gasoline, drove more miles in newer automobiles, accumulated more savings, and found more uses for electricity than ever before. Sidney Phelps, a Bayard farmer, built his home without a stairway but installed an electric elevator, along with sixty electric outlets on the main floor. Even with such modern equipment in many homes, the old pioneer spirit of neighborliness still prevailed, as George Schmidt of West Union could testify. When Schmidt's son was fatally injured in a tractor accident, his neighbors pitched in to help with the corn crop. Putting good neighborliness on an international scale, Mrs. Raymond Sayre, of Ackworth, visited with thousands of other farm wives in her globe-circling tour, as president of Associated Country Women of the World, which covered 50,000 miles.

Bank debits increased 12 per cent in 1951. One almost forgotten debt, a 93-year-old mortgage on 31 acres in Cerro Gordo County, was lifted after considerable delay. Department store sales were up slightly, but because of the inflated prices, gains were in dollar volume rather than unit sales. A price war in Cedar Rapids developed at mid-year when several electric appliance dealers declared

they would not be undersold. Other towns witnessed similar price wars. New Sharon had one which finally ended after regular gasoline sold briefly for 14.4 cents a gallon.

Construction, both residential and commercial, fell off in Iowa during 1951 despite scattered local booms. A shortage of steel and other metals needed for defense production was blamed for the building decline. Notable among the structures which were erected amidst these obstacles were the \$3,000,000 municipal airport at Waterloo, the Willkie House community center in Des Moines, and the "dream" library at the State University of Iowa. Hard-pressed steel consumers got an indirect promise of more material when the Manchester and Oneida Railroad announced on October 27 it would end fifty years of operation by selling its rolling stock and the entire 8.23 miles of track to salvage dealers.

Iowa livestock won high honors at the Denver and Chicago expositions. Toby, a 1,240-pound Aberdeen-Angus from the Iowa State College farms, was proclaimed the grand champion steer at the International Live Stock Exposition. Cornelius Wolf of Remsen exhibited Commando, the grand champion steer, at the National Western Fat Stock Show in the Colorado capital. Two teenagers from Hampton, Jay and David Van Wert, probably deserved a blue ribbon for their sow which had a litter of eighteen piglets shortly

after they paid \$80 for her. The boys reported a net profit on their project of \$1,237.11 in less than ten months.

The price of farm land was mounting steadily in 1951. The average price rose \$15 an acre, Professor W. G. Murray of Iowa State College reported, to reach a record of \$212 per acre. The top price for a large farm perhaps was the \$705 an acre paid near Orange City. A farm journal voiced a discordant note at the rising costs of farm land, which had averaged only \$88 per acre in 1941. "One of the worst effects of a land boom is what it does to young farmers," *Wallaces' Farmer* declared. "To keep a healthy agriculture, we need to make it easy for capable young men to start to farm."

When the available farm labor supply grew short in August, 250 natives of the British West Indies were brought to Iowa to detassel corn. Their employers reported they were good workers, but found their British accents somewhat jarring. Displaced persons from Europe also formed a new source of labor for Iowa farms, with most of the 2,563 DPs in Iowa living in rural areas.

Labor in the cities found numerous jobs available with top wages. In June, a new record for workers in nonagricultural pursuits was reached when 620,350 Iowans reported for jobs. Industry had 162,050 workers, of whom 49,350 were employed in food processing plants, and 38,000 in

construction jobs. The Quaker Oats Company at Cedar Rapids experienced some difficulty when workers left their jobs in what the company called a "strike" and the union termed a "lockout." Sporadic labor troubles developed over the state, but these were settled amicably. The days of violence in labor disputes seemed far away. One of Iowa's oldest manufacturing firms, the Maytag company of Newton, produced its seven millionth washing machine during colorful ceremonies which celebrated the opening of a new plant north of the city.

The expected warm, dry weather during Iowa's "Indian summer" was missing, which caused observers to predict the corn crop would yield less than final figures indicated. Many farmers had already switched to hay in time to produce a profitable yield; by late December nearly seven million tons had been sold or stored, almost half a million tons more than in 1950. Shades of the old west appeared at Rock Rapids, where cattle rustlers were reported operating in a self-imposed blackout with nearby pickup trucks used for a fast getaway. Hog, sheep, and cattle receipts were well ahead of the 1950 totals, but there were fewer horses and mules on Iowa farms in 1951. Hay, once consigned to work horses and mules, was going to sleek Herefords and Holsteins. The Iowa farmer was doing his work with 239,022 tractors, 44,344 trucks, and 92,881 mechanical corn pickers.

The horse was on the way out, but one other form of transportation was making a tremendous comeback. Along the banks of the Upper Mississippi deep-throated echoes told listeners that tow-boats were moving again. In 1951 Colonel Delbert B. Freeman of the United States Army Engineers reported a record twelve million tons of traffic had been transported on the Upper Mississippi, compared with 104,810,855 tons of freight hauled by the Class I railroads in Iowa. On the Missouri slope, oil men were drilling a "wild cat" near the Little Sioux River in Harrison County. No flowing gushers were reported in sight, but the increased activity in the Williston Basin in North Dakota seemed to have stimulated test drilling in western Iowa.

The full dinner pail and the growing bank account furnished evidence that Iowa industry and agriculture found 1951 deserving of that warm phrase — as the Parkersburg *Eclipse* put it — "a good year." But the war in Korea had affected management, labor, the farmer, the housewife; and perhaps no year when America's young men are called to battle deserves the unqualified title of "a good year." Nevertheless, 1951 was a year when Iowa and America continued to expand and develop. And if 1951 was not a year of peace, it was at least a year of plenty.

ROBERT RUTLAND

## Religion and Education

No less important than the advances in the world of business and agriculture were the forward strides Iowa made during 1951 in the fields of education and religion. Education has always been a "big business" in Iowa. In 1951 public school property alone was valued at nearly four billion dollars. Tangible religious gains could be seen in the numerous newly dedicated churches in town and country.

One problem facing Iowans was the crowded condition in public schools. Since the end of World War II, classrooms in many cities and towns were found woefully inadequate for the ever increasing number of youngsters who each September surged through school doors. A check of the statistics helped explain the situation. In 1939-1940 school children in the first three grades totaled 114,821, but ten years later 135,303 were enrolled. A typical solution was Cedar Rapids' new ultra-modern Grant Wood School, named in honor of the Iowa artist who had achieved fame as one of America's greatest painters. With a total enrollment of 485,549 in the elementary and high schools, the 9,736 school buildings in Iowa still added up to a classroom shortage. Despite

new construction, classroom space was still at a premium in many communities at the year's end.

Gone were the days when the young Iowan trudged to school through all kinds of weather. Over three thousand school buses were in operation to assist rural Iowa's education program. Another fast disappearing custom was the home-made lunch, as school cafeterias served 19,368,228 lunches during the school year. Of this number 675,338 lunches were offered either free of charge or at a reduced cost to hungry Iowa youngsters. Teacher salaries were brought in line with the national average in 1951, with kindergarten teachers in consolidated schools receiving an average of \$2,313 and women high school teachers in the larger cities averaging \$3,647, according to the Iowa State Education Association's survey.

There were other encouraging signs in the field of education in 1951. A nationwide contest launched to determine the "Best Teacher of 1951" ended with the selection of Sister Mary Edward of Dubuque's St. Columbkille's school. Sister Mary won on the testimony of Lorna Butters, her thirteen-year-old pupil who wrote that "Sister Mary makes us want to do the right thing."

The carpentry classes at Clinton high school also seemed to be doing the right thing. Students learned the use of tools, and the community was enriched by the completion of the third home built by the classes since World War II ended. Six-

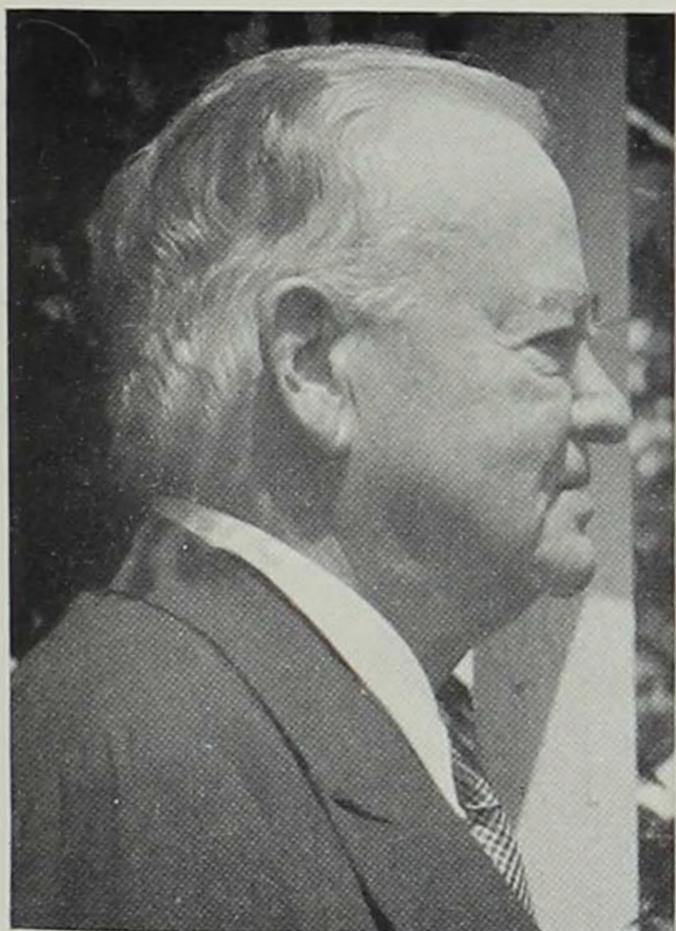
teen-year-old David Albaugh of Burlington spent his after-class hours over the piano keyboard to turn out a concerto and four-part cantata. Pretty Carolyn Gibbs, a seventh-grader from Mount Union, was finally eliminated in the fifth round of the National Spelling Bee at Washington, D. C., after she spelled "consomme" with only one "m."

Education and young Iowa were also in the spotlight in 1951 because the wave of juvenile delinquency which swept the nation did not leave Iowa untouched. A fifteen-year-old truant shot a hunter in the back, robbed him, and spent part of the loot on a trinket for a girl friend. Offsetting such deeds were happy occurrences like that at Manning, where twelve hundred gleeful youngsters celebrated their annual Children's Day with free carnival rides and soda pop.

Higher education was not forgotten. The 54th General Assembly appropriated \$6,300,000 for both the State University of Iowa and Iowa State College. The Senate turned down a proposed "loyalty oath" measure after heated debate in which opponents of the proposal charged it would lead to "witch hunts" at state institutions.

College campuses beckoned nearly thirty thousand young Iowans in 1951, according to the Des Moines *Register* preliminary campus survey. The State University of Iowa had an enrollment of 7,362, Iowa State College had 7,250, and Iowa State Teachers College had 2,322. The enroll-

IOWA VISITORS IN 1951



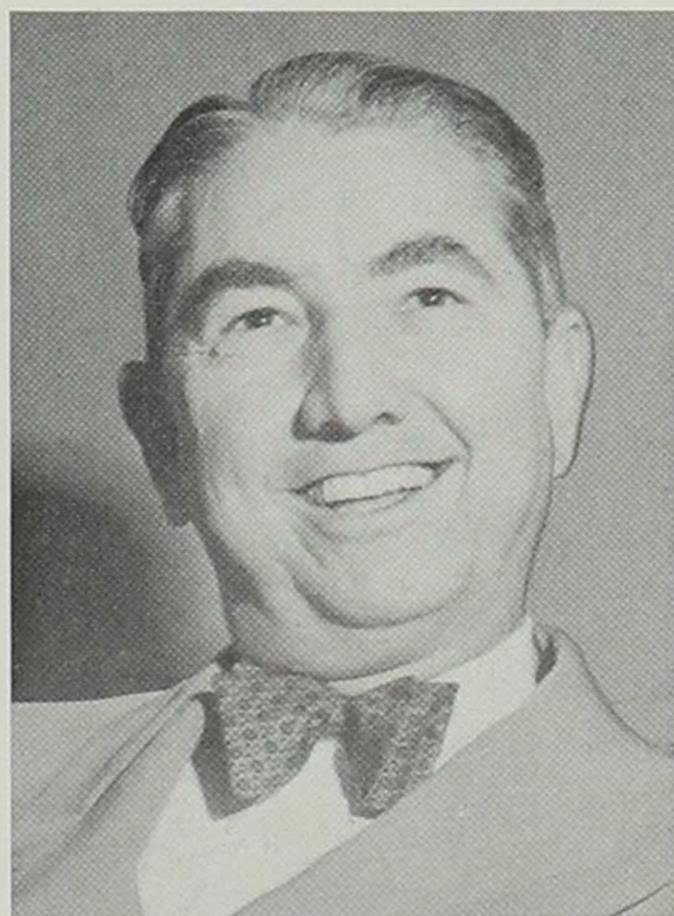
HERBERT C. HOOVER  
Ex-President of the U. S.



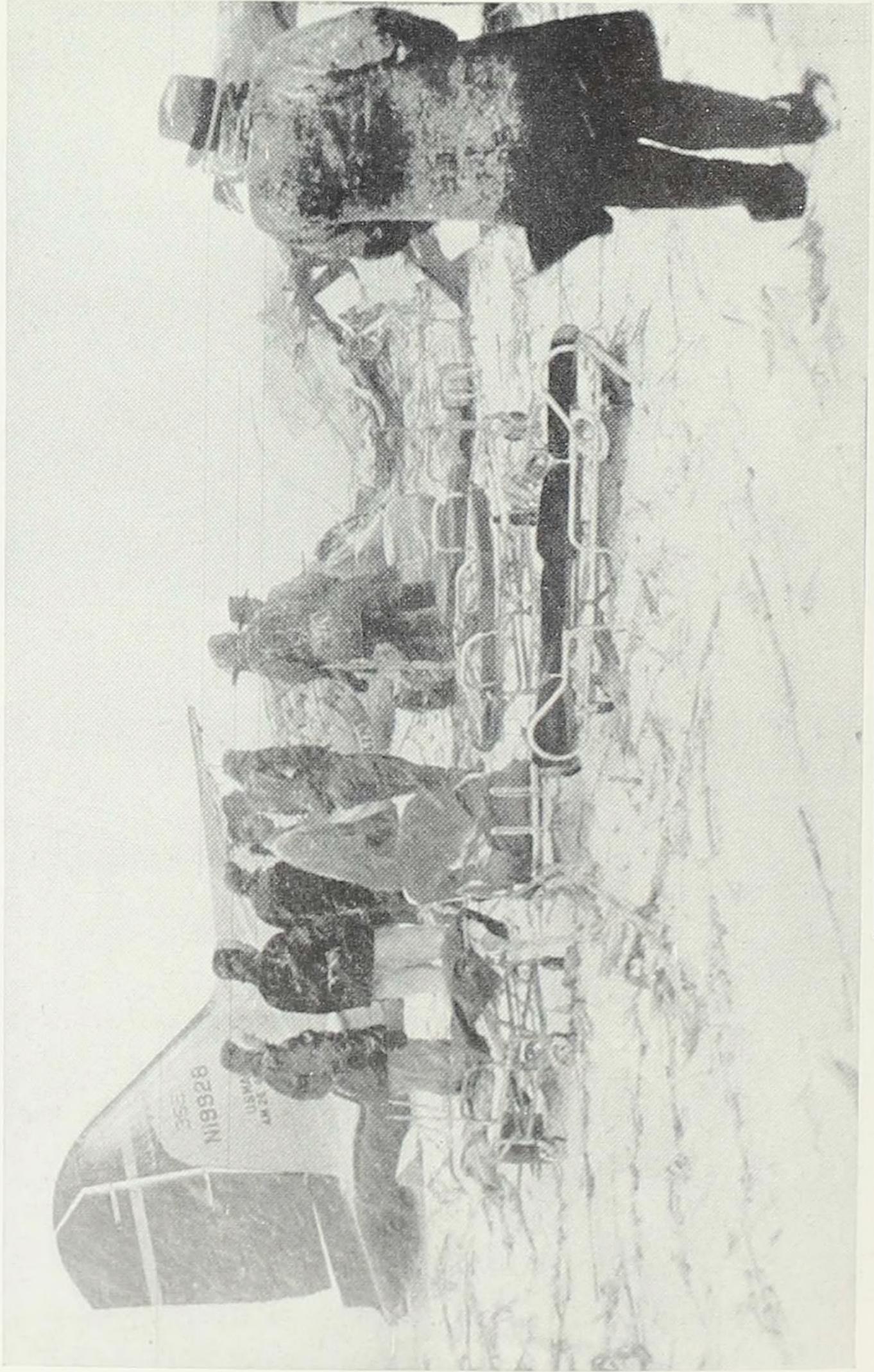
ROBERT A. TAFT  
U. S. Senator



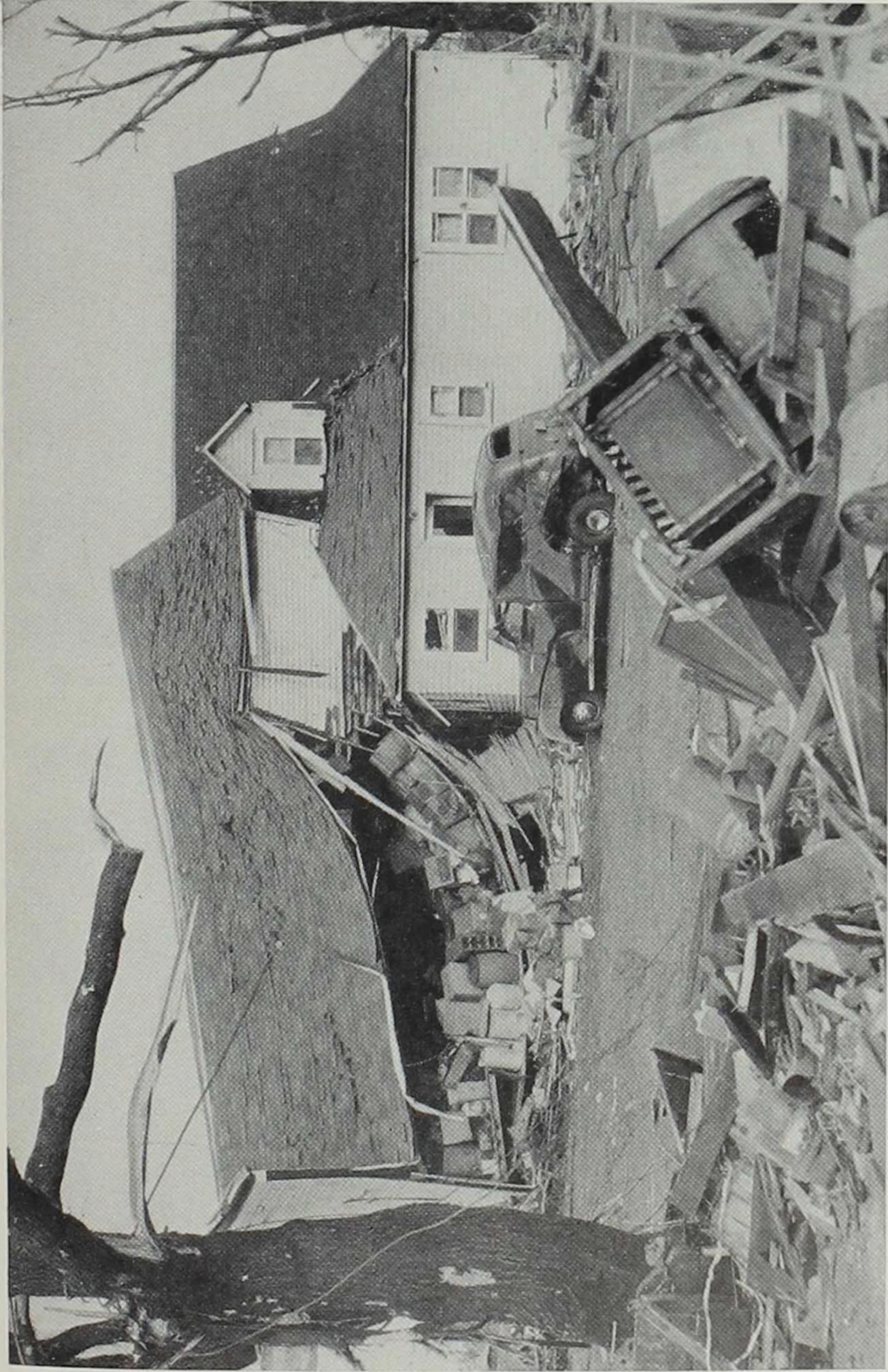
ANTHONY EDEN  
British Foreign Secretary



THOMAS C. CLARK  
U. S. Supreme Court Justice



Iowa's First Airline Crash Near Sioux City



The Devastating Duncan Tornado



Sister Mary Edward and Lorna Butters Surrounded by  
Admiring Young Relatives



Marilyn Maxwell Home from Hollywood  
Former Clarinda Girl Poses for Family Portrait

ment pinch which came with the decline of veteran students going to college under the "GI Bill of Rights" was marked in 1951. The state's twenty-three privately endowed or denominational colleges reported a total enrollment of 11,697 students, a considerable drop from the peak years of 1946-1948. Educators promised that the lag in enrollments would be only temporary, however, as the first of the "depression babies" born during the low birth rate years of the 1930's were beginning to enroll in college.

Several signs noted throughout 1951 indicated the Iowa collegian was more sedate than his counterpart of the 1920's. Cornell College at Mount Vernon relaxed its 1928 ban against the use of Greek letters by local fraternities and sororities, but kept a bar against national affiliations. Hundreds of draft-eligible college students took selective service qualifying examinations at stated intervals, and draft boards were notified of the scores, for "appropriate action." Julia Miller, eighty-four, announced from her Davenport home that she was only thirteen credit hours away from her bachelor's degree at the State University of Iowa. She started working on it in 1904, was delayed, and began correspondence work in 1927.

Reports of basketball "fix" scandals in neighboring states brought demands from some fans for simon-pure athletics in Iowa colleges and universities. A gridiron incident drew national atten-

tion when Drake University's all-American John Bright received a broken jaw in a game with Oklahoma A. & M. Bill Reichardt, University of Iowa fullback, brought some luster to his team's tarnished Western Conference record when he was voted the Big Ten's most valuable player, the first Iowa player to achieve the honor since the late Nile Kinnick won the award in 1939. In high school athletics, Hansell defeated favored Monona, 70-59, to capture the girls' state basketball championship. Davenport turned back a game Roland quintet, 50-40, to win the boys' trophy.

The importance of religious institutions in Iowa was re-emphasized in 1951 by the numerous church centennial celebrations. Early in the year Iowa had a taste of the evangelism which Iowa-born Billy Sunday had preached in the state four decades ago when the dynamic Billy Graham spoke to thousands who gathered in a Des Moines theater. Over 500 delegates to the Lutheran Laymen's League national convention at Sioux City heard the Reverend Lawrence Acker declare "man apparently does not want peace on earth." He told the convention the civilized world has known peace in only 227 of the 3,447 years since 1496 B. C. Peace also was an issue for two Iowans who refused to pay all of their income tax because part of the payment would support the Korean war. Federal officials auctioned off their automobiles to make up the deficit.

A public opinion poll taken among Iowans indicated the people had regained confidence in churches within a three-year span. Fifty per cent of the polled group expected churches to exert more influence in human affairs. In 1948, only 36 per cent of the people polled had expressed reliance upon the churches' role in everyday concerns. At Allerton, nine persons including the pastor were injured when a riot developed over a proposal to oust the minister. The melee took place during the regular church service, and in addition to the cuts and bruises one parishoner suffered from a heart attack. A Harlan minister and several Bible students were disillusioned when federal agents arrested a phony colonel who had promised to find a place for them in a "G-12 Corps."

Iowans who believed that even in this day of indecision certain values could be pinpointed found the term "Christian" confusing. A Black Hawk County district court declared part of the will of a Waterloo doctor was "unenforceable and invalid" because it left \$70,000 for the benefit of "persons who believe in the fundamental principles of the Christian religion and the Bible. . . ." The judge said it was asking too much of a court to decide what constituted a Christian. Judge Shannon Charlton decided it was a "metaphysical problem" beyond the bounds of the court, and left the way clear for seven heirs to claim the money.

Public libraries, which often form the core of

a community's cultural life, contributed their share to both religion and education in 1951. The Des Moines Public Library circulated 640,410 titles to book-hungry readers. Webster City's library checked out 86,662 titles; of cities with less than 5,000 population, Iowa Falls led with 65,278 titles circulated. The Iowa State Education Association began serving schools and libraries with its 2,000-volume "book-mobile" in September.

Discontent over national politics caused some ruffles in Iowa's 1951 religious pattern. When President Truman announced he had appointed an ambassador to the Vatican, Senator Guy M. Gillette indicated he would oppose the move as a violation of the historic separation of church and state functions in America. The appointment never reached the Senate for confirmation, however. The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist conference approved a resolution denouncing the federal internal security act as a measure calculated to undermine personal liberty.

The Iowan of 1951 understood, as his ancestors before him had, that religion and education would form powerful molds for the future character of the prairie state. Still confident that a God-fearing, educated people would be better equipped to work out their destiny, Iowa clung to her old traditions in a fast moving 1951 society.

ROBERT RUTLAND

## The Web of Life

Had some strange suspension of time and space allowed an Iowan to fall asleep in 1851 and awaken one hundred years later, he would have found himself in a new and strange world. This Hawkeye Rip Van Winkle would have been overcome by the scientific progress which had remade the America of another century. In his day there had been no telephones, no electric lights, no automobiles, no motion pictures. The Iowa of 1851 numbered 192,214 souls, but the western half of the state was virtually unsettled. The telegraph had reached the state only three years earlier, and the iron horse had not yet linked the Atlantic with the Mississippi at Davenport. In 1851 Iowa's newspaper editors were gravely debating over whether the plank road or the railroad was the coming thing. In that same year the Sioux treaty erased the last Indian claims to the soil of Iowa.

To startle this returned Iowan, 1951 presented a scene of immense contrasts. Sleek silver streamliners carried passengers and freight over 8,576 miles of railroad track. Concrete and asphalt had triumphed over wooden planks, and nearly six thousand miles of hard-surfaced roads were serving Iowa motorists. Fifty radio stations, two tele-

vision outlets — augmented by stations at Rock Island and Omaha — and 835,000 telephones provided Iowans with entertainment and communication.

Of course, this new society had problems which had not troubled the 1851 Iowan. Neighbors could no longer pitch in to help build a homestead in a few day's time. Neither Davenport nor Dubuque had found traffic officers necessary in 1851. Radio commercials posed no problem, and there were no party telephone lines open to inquisitive ears when Stephen Hempstead was governor.

In both 1851 and 1951 it seemed that Iowa was about to turn the corner. The question was: What was around that corner? Jules Verne was twenty-three in 1851, and had not yet written his famous work of fiction, *From the Earth to the Moon*. In 1951, on the other hand, a trip to the moon no longer seemed like a laughing matter, particularly since men were already traveling with the speed of sound.

The year had opened with many Iowans dividing their attention between the annual New Year's football bowl games and the latest reports from faraway Korea, where an enemy offensive was under way. The war in Asia was more than six months old, and thousands of Iowans were personally interested, what with sons, husbands, and sweethearts on the fighting lines.

The first week in January saw recruiting offices

in Iowa packed with crowds of young men volunteering for military service. By mid-year over 160 Iowans had died in the rice paddies and on the hillsides of Korea. Sergeant First Class Junior D. Edwards of Indianola was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his single-handed attack on an enemy gun position.

When the truce talks gave the United Nations troops a breathing spell, many an anxious Iowa mother awaited word from the enemy prison stockades. Finally, news came that "at least 55 missing Iowa servicemen are alive" in North Korean camps. By the year's end hopes for an armistice remained. Through the armed forces rotation plan hundreds of battle-weary Iowans realized the soldier's dream of "being home for Christmas."

Even when the Korean war was not in the headlines, there was plenty of news to remind Iowans they were living in a time of crisis. Thus, a spring call of reservists and National Guardsmen took 2,000 Iowans back into uniform. The 194th Field Artillery battalion, made up of men from Humboldt, Algona, Spencer, Estherville, and Mapleton, received orders to sail for Bremerhaven, Germany. Major General Hanford MacNider of Mason City retired as commanding general of the 103rd National Guard division to end a long career as a citizen-soldier which dated back to Mexican border campaigns. The red-faced crew of a nineteen-ton tank which fell through a bridge

near Iowa City, after National Guard maneuvers in the area, learned the bridge was built to withstand a nine-ton load. When the *USS Iowa*, the world's largest battleship, was recommissioned and sent to Hawaii on a shakedown cruise, fourteen prominent Iowans went along as part of the "crew."

There were indirect repercussions from the Korean battlefield which made Iowa news in 1951. After General Douglas MacArthur was recalled as supreme commander, Iowa's congressional delegation divided on the incident on party lines. When Sergeant First Class John Rice, a Korean casualty, was denied burial in a Sioux City cemetery because he was a Winnebago Indian (and not a Caucasian), President Truman promptly arranged for his burial with full military honors in the Arlington National Military Cemetery. Sioux City later held its own ceremonies honoring Rice, and the cemetery's officials explained the whole affair was "an unfortunate mistake."

Despite the war Iowa kept its sense of humor in 1951. Among the many items which came before the 54th General Assembly was a Des Moines youngster's request that the legislature legalize the sale of caps for toy pistols. A sympathetic lawmaker fashioned the necessary bill, but it was defeated by a 52-49 vote. A survey of the estate left by a Fairfield widow disclosed the accumulation of over five hundred dresses, ninety-six pairs

of shoes, "mounds of sheets and blankets," and even an unopened package of children's stockings which the childless woman had purchased in 1919. Charges of distributing obscene literature against a Dubuque news dealer were dropped after an investigation disclosed that books by John Steinbeck, W. Somerset Maugham, and a book of old masters' paintings with works by Titian and Velasquez had been designated "questionable."

Even among the sordid accounts of crime, a trace of humor occasionally appeared. A large grocery chain finally sued a young bandit for \$1,207 taken from one of their stores in a holdup, after other attempts to regain the captured man's cache had failed. A Des Moines steamfitter used an 1869 model "collector's item" gun in a holdup which netted him fifty cents. The presiding judge meted out a twenty-five year sentence for this act. A Sioux City attorney announced he was defending a man charged with forgery on the ground that his client did not know how to write. Definitely on the lighter side was the \$2.00 paid by the Charles City mayor who fined himself for running a red light. A Des Moines man was arrested and charged with driving a horse and buggy while intoxicated.

While sociologists puzzled over the motives for crimes, Iowa law enforcement officials battled a car theft ring which operated across state lines, victimizing innocent purchasers. The final page

in the tragic story of Dr. Robert C. Rutledge, Jr., was written when the young doctor took his own life near Houston, Texas, after the Iowa Supreme Court ordered him to begin serving a seventy-year sentence for a Cedar Rapids murder. Sheriff George Christian reported new rumors were circulating about the unsolved 1912 Villisca murders.

Bank robbers took almost identical sums (around \$11,000) from vaults in Minburn and Epworth, but fast work by police gave them little opportunity to spend their loot. Eighty-eight Iowans were charged by state officials with accepting unemployment checks while they were working at regular jobs, and told to return the money or face criminal charges. The jilted boy friend of an attractive Des Moines girl stabbed his former sweetheart while she walked to a cathedral communion rail. She recovered, and he was found to be insane. At Jewell, a fourteen-year-old boy shot and killed his father after they had an argument over raking leaves in their yard.

The young and the old also helped make news in 1951. Three-year-old Nancy Myrton of Aurora received national publicity when it was learned that she was an accomplished seamstress. Five-year-old Larry Joe Rathje, a cancer victim, tugged at Iowa's heartstrings when he asked for a chance to meet a genuine cowboy. A visiting rodeo sent one of its most eligible cowhands to call on Larry Joe. W. O. Dowden, a ninety-five-year-old resi-

dent of Spirit Lake, took the driver's license examination and read the visual test without glasses. Mrs. Annie Hensey, seventy-five years young, the oldest pilot at the Boone airport dedication, flew from her home at Jefferson to attend the dedication breakfast. New Providence got a new citizen when Matrena Ignatenkwa, a ninety-nine-year-old displaced person from Russia, joined the community. A Council Bluffs couple, divorced for 46 years, decided to mend their broken marriage after a chance meeting on the street.

The political scene was quiet after the General Assembly closed shop, but visiting political dignitaries reminded voters a presidential election was only a year away. Senator Robert A. Taft, an announced candidate for the Republican nomination, made several visits to Iowa for speaking engagements. Governor Beardsley early declared himself in favor of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the GOP standard-bearer in 1952. Henry Wallace, the Progressive party nominee in 1948, returned to the state to attend a funeral but dodged political questions.

Former president Herbert Hoover sent his hometown telegraphic congratulations when West Branch celebrated its centennial. A month later he visited the State Fair at Des Moines to accept the first "Iowa Award" from the state for his contributions to the nation.

Women helped make the news in Iowa during

1951. Mrs. E. T. Hubbard of Iowa City was named Iowa's "Mother of the Year." Mrs. Florence Lynch, the national Democratic committeewoman for Iowa from Le Mars, declared the Reconstruction Finance Corporation loan to a firm which she served as vice-president was a "normal business transaction." In the women's own special department — beauty — Miss Nancy Norman of Shenandoah was chosen "Miss Iowa of 1951," and Mrs. Elaine Evans of Davenport won the "Mrs. Iowa" title.

Accidents plagued Iowans in their homes, on the highways, and at their jobs in 1951. Fifteen persons were killed on March 2 when an airliner plunged into a cornfield near Sioux City during a snowstorm. It was the first fatal crash of a commercial airliner in Iowa. Traffic deaths accounted for 625 lives, the highest in Iowa history. Three crewmen died in a train wreck at Woodbine, but an even greater disaster was averted near Panama when forty-five boxcars, including five loaded with 16-inch naval ammunition, left the rails. Death often marred holiday outings: six members of the Postel family from Waterloo were drowned when their car fell into the Des Moines River. Drama and tragedy were entwined in the successful rescue of a coal miner trapped in a shaft near Plano. A doctor being lowered to aid in the rescue was critically injured when the cable holding the elevator snapped.

Although deaths by accident were high, public health officials reported heart disease and cancer were the worst killers in Iowa during 1951. Over 26,000 deaths occurred, 9,693 from heart disease, and 4,106 from cancer. Accidents took 1,703 lives. Health officials were cheered by the fact that tuberculosis was the only contagious disease among the twelve main causes of death, ranking twelfth on the list with 175 victims.

Infantile paralysis or "polio," which has caused growing anxiety in recent years among parents, claimed 462 victims in 1951, but the number of fatalities was low. Health officials said the 1951 total of victims could be considered "fairly light." Medical history was made in Des Moines when Mrs. Fred Thomas' heart stopped beating for two minutes during an operation. A fast-thinking doctor revived Mrs. Thomas by massaging her heart muscles with his fingers. The decline in Iowa's maternal mortality rate since 1930 continued, with only 5.7 deaths per 10,000 births in 1951.

Among the notable Iowans who died during 1951 were T. Henry Foster, meat packing executive; Dr. Charles Reuben Keyes, famous Cornell College educator and archaeologist; Garrett Wyckoff, Grinnell College professor and sociologist; Stephen W. Stookey, geology professor at Coe College; Dr. W. H. Stevenson, world renowned agriculturist and professor emeritus at Iowa State College; Merrill Bernard, international

authority on climatology and hydrology; Bishop George Allen Beecher, an Episcopalian churchman for fifty-one years; F. W. Fitch, founder of the famous hair tonic firm at Des Moines; Ellison Orr, authority on Iowa's Indian mounds and relics; James Norman Hall, World War I aviator and author; William E. Cotton, internationally known veterinarian and teacher; Mount Pleasant-born Samuel M. Shortridge, former United States senator from California; John W. Rath, co-founder of the packing firm that bears his name; and Frank C. Pellett, naturalist and apiarist.

Iowans, who have been eagerly volunteering for various services ever since the Mexican War, kept up this habit in 1951. United States Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer paid tribute to 10,000 volunteer weather observers in Iowa, including W. S. Slagle of Alton and Mrs. M. T. Disney of Le Claire, both with over fifty years service. When a mock atomic bomb was "dropped" on Cedar Rapids, 309 private airplanes, probably the largest all-civilian airlift in history, brought 110,000 pounds of simulated supplies into the city to help emphasize the need for an alert civil defense setup in Iowa. Augmenting volunteer services was the radar defense screen erected in cornfields as part of the national air defense program. The screens were reported to be 150 miles apart and operating on a 24-hour schedule.

For a while it appeared likely that Iowa's first

contact with white men dated from the fourteenth century. An iron axhead found near Iowa Falls was first thought to have been a weapon brought to America by Norsemen long before 1492. A careful examination of the axhead by Prof. R. W. Breckenridge of Iowa State College convinced him of its authenticity. Just when the discovery portended a revision of Iowa's history books, more iron axes turned up, all with the same shape and design. Then many old-timers agreed they had seen the "weapon" used as plug tobacco cutters for a brand — "Battle Axe" — which had been popular in Iowa many years ago.

On the national sports scene, Iowa-born Bob Feller signed his Cleveland Indian's baseball contract for a reported \$50,000. To earn the money, he posted a 22-8 pitching record, one of the best in the major leagues, and became the first modern pitcher to hurl his third no-hit game when he bested Detroit, 2-1. Sioux City won the Western League playoffs by defeating Denver, while Cedar Rapids lost the Three-I League finals to Quincy. Professional golfdom invaded Iowa on two occasions. Marty Furgol of Chicago won the Western Open at Davenport. A month later, Buck White of Greenwood, Mississippi, won \$2,400 and the Sioux City Open title. Mrs. Leo Johnstone of Mason City won the women's state golf championship. Anglers cheered when an agreement between Iowa and Illinois was signed in June which

allowed fishermen licensed by either state to enjoy equal privileges on the Mississippi "so far as flowing water is concerned."

At the year's end, Iowans could soberly reflect that another twelve months of steady gains had passed. Assuredly, there was more money in the bank accounts, more luxuries available to the people, and splendid cities of stone and steel now stood where sod-houses and log cabins were built a hundred years ago. Balanced against these advances was the fact that most Iowans were in an uneasy, restless state of mind.

It was ever thus. Prior to the Civil War countless pioneers forsook the ease and comparative certainty of their eastern homes and migrated to Iowa. However, security and stability which pioneers had envisioned seemed to many by 1951 like an unattainable goal for a dynamic but uncertain society. Indeed, some believed there was no bedrock of confidence in a progressively greater civilization which loomed just ahead. But if many an Iowan's brow was furrowed in 1951, so were his hillsides, and the precious soil of Iowa still held the key to her future.

ROBERT RUTLAND

# IOWA'S VITAL STATISTICS

## Population

	1940	1950
Total .....	2,538,268	2,621,073
Urban .....	1,084,231	1,250,938
Rural .....	1,454,037	1,370,135

## Prices for Farm Products

	1941	1950	1951
Corn (per bu.) .....	.59	1.28	1.58
Oats (per bu.) .....	.33	.73	.88
Wheat (per bu.) .....	.85	2.01	2.16
Soybeans (per bu.) .....	1.23	2.46	2.89
Hay (per ton) .....	6.85	16.72	16.55
Hogs (cwt.) .....	9.20	18.01	19.93
Cattle (cwt.) .....	10.00	25.30	31.16
Sheep (cwt.) .....	4.80	10.14	15.36
Eggs (per doz.) .....	.20	.29	.40
Chickens (per lb.) .....	.14	.19	.22
Farm land (per acre) .....	88.00	197.00	212.00
Total number of farms* .....	213,318		203,159
Total farm income .....	\$957,000,000	\$2,114,869,000	\$2,372,705,000

## Farm Production

Corn (bu.) .....	464,814,000	475,203,000	471,780,000
Oats (bu.) .....	184,489,000	270,580,000	182,886,000
Soy beans (bu.) .....	16,608,000	42,460,000	32,508,000
Wheat (bu.) .....	2,943,000	5,454,000	2,212,000
Hay (tons) .....	5,578,000	6,472,000	6,961,000
Hogs (marketed) .....	11,930,000	11,920,000	13,321,000
Cattle (marketed) .....	2,666,091	5,007,000	5,208,000
Dairy Cattle .....	1,412,000	1,007,444	940,957
Eggs .....	2,769,000,000	4,622,000,000	4,773,000,000

## Finance

	1941	1951
Public Debt of United States .....	\$48,961,443,536.00	\$255,221,976,815.00
Per capita debt .....	\$ 367.09	\$ 1,653.37
Value of consumer's dollar (1935-39 average = \$1.00) .....	\$ .88	\$ .54
Iowa owned life insurance (January 1940 and 1951) .....	\$ 1,710,408,108.00	\$ 3,450,000,000.00
Retail sales .....	\$ 822,905,000.00	\$ 3,110,315,000.00†

## Education

Public school enrollment .....	490,934	485,549
College and university enrollment .....	21,848	29,631

\*Number of farms based on 1940 and 1950 census returns

†Based on sales and use tax receipts

