

# The PALIMPSEST



The Irish in Iowa

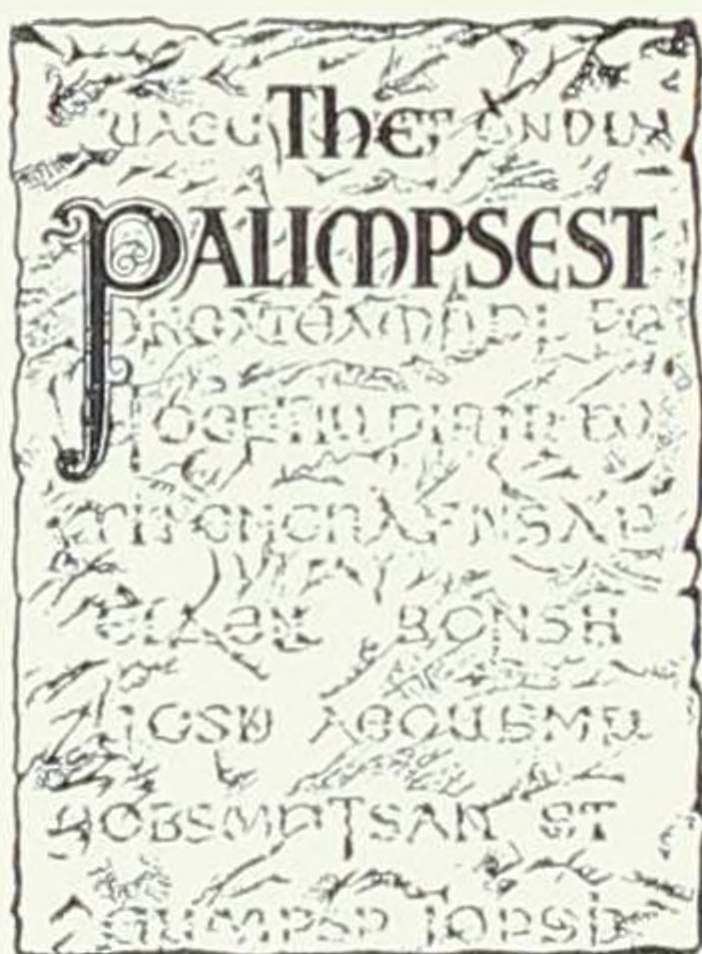
Published Monthly by

The State Historical Society of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa

FEBRUARY, 1964





## *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 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.

## *Contents*

### THE IRISH IN IOWA

HOMER L. CALKIN

The Irish Homeland	33
Exodus to America	38
Encouragement to Move West	43
Settlers on the Iowa Frontier	48
Some Typical Irish Communities	56
The Irish in Politics	65
Life Among the Irish	75
Builders of the Hawkeye State	87

## *Illustrations*

All illustrations, unless otherwise noted, are from the State Historical Society of Iowa collections. Dr. Calkin prepared the four statistical maps and the compilation on the inside book cover. Vincent J. Meerians of Cedar Rapids provided the postcards for the front cover.

## *Author*

Dr. Homer L. Calkin is Management Analyst, Office of Operations, Department of State, Washington, D. C.

THE PALIMPSEST is published monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City. It is printed in Iowa City and distributed free to Society members, depositories, and exchanges. This is the February, 1964, issue and is Number 2 of Volume 45. Second class postage has been paid at Iowa City, Iowa.

PRICE — Included in Membership. Regular issues, 25¢; Special—50¢  
MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$3.00  
ADDRESS — The State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa



# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XLV

ISSUED IN FEBRUARY 1964

No. 2

*Copyright 1964 by The State Historical Society of Iowa*



## The Irish Homeland

Ireland has been called the "soft, green isle of the ocean." Her mountains and her lakes have long been noted for their beauty. To most people the Emerald Isle suggests romance and charm. In reality, the song of Erin's harp has been one of melancholy. In proportion to total population, no other country has lost so many people by emigration.

Ireland was first invaded in 1169. Since then the country has been conquered several times. Land was confiscated and distributed to new owners time after time. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Irish were near extinction. After Cromwell's conquest and resettlement of the island only about one-half million Irish survived.

Many thought Ireland's status would improve with the enactment of the Act of Union of 1801. The two countries, England and Ireland, were made one. The Irish economy was to be assimilated into that of England, and the Parliament at Westminster would legislate for both.



Actually, the result was very different. Ireland seemed to be brought more into subjection. To many, Ireland was "the lonely and the lovely Bride, whom [the English] have wedded, but have never won." At the time of Union, she was compared to an heiress who was dragged, protesting, to the altar.

Ireland had a phenomenal growth in population during the early 19th century. Between 1779 and 1841 the increase has been estimated at 172 per cent. At the time of the famine in 1845 there may well have been nine million Irish.

Two-thirds of Ireland was largely dependent upon agriculture. Farms were divided and subdivided frequently. In 1841 forty-five per cent of the people had only one to five acres and only seven per cent had over thirty acres. One man in Donegal had his land in forty-two places. In Lisceanawn, County Mayo, there were 167 acres divided into 330 portions, each of 110 inhabitants having three portions.

Manufacturing was largely limited to the Belfast linen industry. Flax growing and weaving were carried on in the surrounding districts. Fisheries were as yet undeveloped.

Poverty and misery were common. It was reported,

In many districts their only food is the potato, their only beverage water . . . their cabins are seldom a protection against the weather . . . a bed or a blanket is a rare lux-



ury . . . and in nearly all their pig and a manure heap constitute their only real property.

In parts of Ireland more than three-fifths of the houses were one-roomed, windowless mud cabins.

Another writer described conditions as follows:

Cabins of single rooms are frequently occupied by a large family, with sometimes a widow or an old man lodging with them, or occupied altogether by several widows, or by one or more, and one or two old men, and all (pigs included) sleeping in the different corners of the room. The families are those of labourers, who generally get but very little employment; and the old men and widows subsist chiefly by begging, except those who are wholly or in part supported by their children, who give them all that they can spare of the wages they earn at service.

The evicted and the unemployed — more than two million had no regular employment — put roofs over ditches, burrowed into banks and existed in bog holes. Others swarmed into the slums of the towns where “they die in a little time.” Furniture was a luxury. In 1837 the nine thousand inhabitants of Tullahobagly, County Donegal, had only ten beds, 93 chairs and 243 stools among them.

The pre-famine Irish were not all gloomy. Sir Walter Scott said “their natural condition is turned toward gaiety and happiness.” He found “perpetual kindness in the Irish cabin; buttermilk, potatoes, a stool is offered, or a stone is rolled that your honour may sit down.”



Long winter evenings were spent in their cabins, fiddling, talking and telling stories. Illicit whiskey apparently was plentiful. "If there be a market to attend, a fair or a funeral, a horse race, a fight or a wedding, all else is neglected and forgotten."

As has been mentioned, potatoes were eaten by all. With a spade one could grow enough on an acre and a half to feed a family of six for a year. This was unfortunate when the potato blight appeared in 1845. In October of that year several counties reported that "potatoes bought a few days ago, seemingly remarkably good, have rotted."

The next year was worse. In Galway the people "were like walking skeletons, the men stamped with the livid marks of hunger, the children crying with pain, the women, in some of the cabins, too weak to stand. . . . all the sheep were gone, all the cows, all the poultry killed; only one pig left, the very dogs had disappeared."

Another wrote,

Some of the women and children that we saw on the road were abject cases of poverty and almost naked. The rags they had on were with the greatest difficulty held together, and in a few weeks, as they are utterly unable to provide themselves with fresh clothes unless they be given them, they must become absolutely naked.

Bishop Loras, when he visited Ireland in 1849, was moved by the misery of the Irish.

The scene of poverty in some quarters was wonderful; and I am told it is still worse in other counties. I saw many



cottages covered with straw and half buried in the ground, and occupied by poor Catholic tenants who cultivated in the sweat of their brow small fields divided by poor green hedges or half tumbled walls. . . . Many of these cottages were crumbling in ruins and abandoned by their tenants, who had emigrated to some more hospitable shore.

By 1851 Ireland had  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million less people than a decade earlier. At least a million had probably died from the famine. Nearly 360,000 mud huts had also disappeared.

Many writers noted the contrasts before and after the famine. In County Donegal

there was no trade in the world then but some man of Beltany could try it—the best weavers in the country were there; there were masons, carpenters, coopers, thatchers, and every kind of trademan you could name in this townland; and after the famine years neither tale nor tidings of them was to be found. They all went into strange and distant lands and never returned since; the ruins of the houses were there until the land was divided and they were cleared and fences made of the stone, leaving no trace of them to be seen now.

The impact was far reaching and has continued long since. "Sport and pastimes disappeared. Poetry, music and dancing stopped. They lost and forgot them all and when the times improved in other respects, these things never returned as they had been. The famine killed everything."



## Exodus to America

From 1820 to 1950 more than 4,600,000 Irish crossed the Atlantic to find new homes. The famine accounted for more than a million of these. The peak year for migration was 1851.

There were many motives other than the famine for leaving. In general, emigration was prompted by a desire to escape from Ireland. Some were convinced the country held nothing for the future. There was widespread unemployment; wages were reduced while rentals were often raised; political and religious dissension occurred frequently; friction because of absentee landlordism was constant.

In 1849 emigration was

going on but of those people only whom one would wish to keep — farmers with 1 or £200 in their pockets. They cut the corn on the Sunday, sell it on Monday morning, and are off to America in the evening, leaving the waste lands behind them and the landlords without rent.

In County Cavan that same year

you could scarcely travel a mile on any of our leading roads but you would meet two or three cart-loads of people all eager to escape from the land of their birth, to push their fortunes in Transatlantic climes. If emigration proceeds at this rate, we shall not have hands enough to till



the ground. Those who are going are our able-bodied and moneyed labourers.

Others told the same story. One correspondent wrote the United States Minister in London in 1851,

I had an opportunity not only to view the Country, but to see and converse with all classes: and I can say with truth, that all the humbler, or working people, and many in comfortable circumstances, desire to go to the United States. Large numbers . . . were leaving the land of their birth without a pang. . . . They entertain the idea that the United States is a land of promise, where they may be prosperous and happy. Their most sanguine expectations rarely fail to be realized there. . . . The migration of persons from their native soil in such numbers is something new in modern history; and the effect it may produce upon the United Kingdom, should it continue, is yet to be solved.

A short time later the *Clare Journal* elaborated on the great migration of Irish to America.

All parties among us are seemingly turning their faces to the far West — the home beyond the deep. Old, middle-aged, and young are on the move, leaving the old country, where there seems to be no hope for the young. . . . The streets are daily crowded by families on the move. . . . The old remembered faces that disappeared a few months since are waiting, with the blush of hope, to assist them to leap ashore on the land of their adoption, and to sleep once more under the same roof with son or daughter that they never hoped to see on this side of the grave.

Most of these emigrants were peasants and laborers of the most destitute class. Many were



doubtless persons of small means who had lived in squalor and rags for years to amass sufficient money. In addition there was a great amount of money sent from the United States to pay for passages.

The human stream flowed principally through London and Liverpool. There the majority took steerage passage. The Atlantic voyage was not an easy trip in those famine years. Some of the vessels were described as "mere tubs." In 1849 the average time from Liverpool to New York was thirty-five days although some voyages lasted as long as 160 days. The ships were equipped with wooden bunks and straw-stuffed sacks for mattresses.

The Irish were advised to bring their own food — oatmeal, rice, flour, bacon, ham, fish, butter, milk and eggs. The ham and butter spoiled quickly. Heat was not always available so food was eaten raw. Steerage passengers lived chiefly on oatmeal porridge, sweetened with molasses. The principal meal of the day was usually herring and potatoes. The supply of fresh water was used up before the end of long voyages so there was no water for washing.

Dysentery and "ship fever," a kind of typhus, were common. Toilet facilities were shocking. Lice and itch were universal afflictions. Medical help was unavailable, and there was no privacy. One traveler found



the friendless emigrants, stowed away like bales of cotton, and packed like slaves in a slave ship; confined in a place that, during storm time, must be closed against both light and air, who can do no cooking, nor warm so much as a cup of water. . . . Nor is this all . . . passengers are cut off from the most indispensable conveniences of a civilized dwelling. . . . We had not been at sea one week, when to hold your head down the fore-hatchway was like holding it down a suddenly opened cess pool.

The journey was not always so dismal. Many evenings were spent listening to fiddlers whose music was "better than medicine." Although space was limited

on the first landing, . . . lads and lassies danced, not more than three at a time for lack of space, in jigs and reels and hornpipes. . . . The dancing was but feebly carried on. The space was almost impracticably small . . . and such the sleepy indifference of the performer, that the tune would as often as not be changed and the hornpipe expire into a ballad before the dancers had cut half a dozen shuffles.

Some emigrants played games and cards and sometimes gambled away money they could ill afford to lose. The women spent many hours knitting and sewing.

Emigration did not stop after the famine. During the American Civil War, William West, American Consul in Galway, reported that there "are many thousands of strong young men & women who sigh for good employment in the U.S." Everywhere people "were overwhelmed with dis-



tress, and in the agony of despair look wistfully to America for relief." In 1863 it was estimated that at least 100,000 of "the young and hale" were ready to leave Ireland if they had passage money.

Priests, the press and landlords were "generally opposed to the emigration of the bone and sinew of the country." In spite of this, emigration continued for several decades with few signs of slackening. Tens of thousands landed "like tired migratory birds on the eastern shores of the shelter continent" — America.



## Encouragement to Move West

Most Irish emigrants settled in Boston, New York and other eastern cities. The Irishmen abhorred the thought of the wilderness. However, Iowa had an interest in every emigrant ship which left the shores of Ireland. People were needed to mine, farm, build railroads and do the many other jobs in a frontier area.

Charles Corkery, one of the first settlers in Dubuque, was an early advocate of Irish immigration to Iowa. On January 14, 1841, he wrote the Philadelphia *Catholic Herald* as follows:

My sole desire is to direct the attention of Catholics (Irish Catholics more particularly) to the country little known, and less appreciated in the East. . . . I have had ample opportunities of bearing witness to the testimony of many able and respectable writers (travellers and others) who unite in giving Iowa the happy cognomen of "the garden of America," The Eldorado of the West. . . . Irishmen unite in saying that our wheat and oats are nothing inferior to those of Ireland, and I have never seen better potatoes in Ireland . . . than those raised in the mining district.

Bishop Loras, soon after he arrived in Dubuque in 1839, began to encourage people to come to Iowa. Whenever he found a group he thought would become useful citizens, he ardently urged



their emigration. He repeatedly wrote letters to the *Boston Pilot* and other papers in which he invited people in eastern states and Europe to come west. When he was unfamiliar with areas of Iowa, he turned to Corkery for information. In 1854 Loras wrote, "Let good emigrants come in haste to the west of Iowa. . . . They will soon make whole Catholic settlements — some Irish, some German, and some French."

Before Iowa had gained statehood, the *Burlington Territorial Gazette* was favorably inclined toward Irish settlements. "Of all the foreigners who come amongst us," the editor declared, "the natives of the Emerald Isle are the most enthusiastic in their admiration of our institutions."

Various organizations, such as the Irish Emigrant Society of New York, urged the Irish to go west:

We would tell all to avoid the Atlantic cities, and to distribute themselves throughout the lands. . . . Thousands continually land entirely penniless and are at once in a state of destitution; whereas such person should have at least five pounds on his arrival to enable him to prosecute his journey to the interior.

The *Boston Pilot* likewise urged all emigrants to go west. The newspaper pointed out that the great numbers who joined the California Gold Rush were making the Midwest a better place to go. The paper suggested the unemployed Irish in New York and Boston should start walking west.



Yes, on foot! I advise them to walk a day and work a day, until they find a home. The best experience they ever got would be twelve months' journey Westward, walking and working as they went along. The man who does this, and faces toward the setting sun, will find the home he seeks at last.

The *Pilot* frequently published letters from Irish in Iowa. Michael O. Sullivan of Dubuque wrote early in 1850 that emigration to California was beyond all conception. Farmers were selling at a great sacrifice and now was the time to buy land cheap. It was actually selling for less than half what it did a year before.

Land could be obtained at a reasonable price in Dubuque, Jackson, Linn and Jones counties. At least 10,000 people could be taken care of. Woodland would cost \$4 to \$8 an acre in Dubuque County, \$2 to \$4 in the others. A good yoke of oxen would cost \$45 to \$55.

In another letter Sullivan wrote that he had seen indications of suffering and partial destitution around Boston. He had no doubt that any part of the West "affords the hardy laborer and the mechanic facilities that it would be vain to expect in any of the old settled states." Miners and farmers were earning \$13 and board per month. Provisions were cheap, he wrote; first quality flour cost \$4 a barrel and chickens seventy-five cents a dozen. Many people who came five or six years ago penniless now owned 160 to 640 acres, all paid for.



An area, where there was nothing but forest two years ago, "now resounds with the noise of machinery and the hum of industrious mechanics and laborers. Cities and villages spring up, as it were, by magic. It appears more like fancy than actual reality." Another inducement to the Irish was the moral, religious and social order of the community. Robbers and swindlers were not countenanced. "They are hunted like beasts of prey till they are banished from our land."

Sullivan had a word of warning for the Irish.

They must not be too sanguine. They must consider the genius of a rising community. They must not be shocked at the idea of living in a log cabin or of wearing rough clothing, and, at first, of sacrificing many things perhaps they enjoyed in the old home. If they come fortified with industrious and steady notions they will most certainly prosper.

He could speak with assurance on the latter point. At the time he wrote there were at least 1,722 Irish in Dubuque County out of a total population of 8,236. Although they were less than twenty-five per cent of the population, they had property valued at \$355,000 or more than a third of the total for the county.

Edward Gillin was another who wrote letters to the *Pilot*. He called attention to DeWitt where there were already a half dozen Irish families. He thought that mechanics, especially blacksmiths, joiners, wagonmakers, saddle and harness makers,



tailors and shoemakers, could do pretty well in the West. Certainly there was no real danger of starving. Gillin summed up his views, "As for Iowa, I have not travelled much of it as yet; but as far as I have seen, I have met nothing to surpass it, little, if any, to equal it."

The year 1859 was another in which Irishmen of moderate means were again urged to move west. "Farms that would have brought \$50 an acre in Illinois or Iowa a year ago, can be readily purchased for from \$15 to \$20 an acre, and this is the finest land in the world!" Land purchases were attractive because many were going to Pike's Peak.

First hand accounts were also given the Irish. In 1869 Samuel Sinnett of Muscatine visited Ireland where he made known the beauties of Iowa. Upon his return home, he received a number of letters asking for more information.

The Boston *Pilot* summed up the situation thus:

We would exhort every one who may read what we write, to turn their thoughts and their faces away from the overcrowded and tax-oppressed seaboards, where the flood of immigration is filling the pauper houses. Even as *paupers*, the new comers would have a far better chance in the cities and settlements of the interior, where food is far cheaper than here. Everything counsels a quick departure from the seaboard cities; the apprehension of penury, and pauperism, and crime, not less eloquently exhort our people to go to the West, then the sure promises of competence, comfort, and ultimate opulence which its agricultural resources offer them.



## Settlers on the Iowa Frontier

Settlers did not wait very long to respond to the appeal of new homes in Iowa. A group of fifty-one miners, at least two-thirds of whom were Irish, went to Dubuque in 1830. Some struck lead and remained until driven out by troops after the return of the Fox Indians. While in Dubuque they drew up a set of rules on June 17, 1830, known as the Miner's Compact. These were probably the first laws drawn in Iowa.

By 1833 a much greater influx had started. A number of Irishmen held important positions in those first years. Patrick Quigley was one of the leaders in early Dubuque. He ran a store in partnership with Alexander Butterworth, another Irishman.

Quigley was the first justice of the peace. He was later elected to the House in the Territorial Legislature of Wisconsin, and from 1837 to 1844 he was trustee and treasurer of Dubuque. John Foley was elected to the Wisconsin Territorial Council. F. K. O'Farrell, merchant and realtor, was mayor from 1844 to 1846. Charles Corkery was probate judge of Dubuque County from 1844 to 1857.

A letter from "Joseph Buttereggs" in the Du-



buque *Iowa News* in 1839 tells of the forming of a regiment of soldiers. It was made up of many newcomers — Irish, Germans, Dutch, French, etc. "Such a heterogenous mixed multitude of nations, tongues, languages and people is to be found nowhere on this earth except in the Du Buque Lead Mines."

"A Wolverine Among the Hawkeyes" was also impressed by the mixture of peoples in Dubuque. "I was forcibly struck with the mixed mass of Germans, French, English, Irish, ect. [sic], intermingling with each other in that cheerful manner, which is the true indication of happy hearts and smiling prospects."

Within a few years of the first settlements in Dubuque the Irish tide began to sweep across Iowa. The town of Temple Hill in Jones County was started mostly by Irish direct from Europe. Between 1840 and 1842 Irish were starting to settle at Bellevue, Charleston (now Sabula) and Concord Township in Dubuque County. A large percentage of Irish were among the early immigrants to Bankston, Farley and Dyersville, while about fifty Irish families settled along the Maquoketa River near Cascade in 1842.

The 1850's saw many Irish settlements started throughout the state. After careful consideration of several frontier areas, Rev. Terence J. Donaghue, Vicar General of the Dubuque Diocese, decided to establish a settlement near New Melleray.



He wrote Father James Maher of Craigue, County Carlow, for emigrants from Leinster.

Colonists should sail by March 1. Wheat could not be sown the first season. Donaghue would give lessons in raising Indian corn, oats and potatoes, as good as they ever had. The emigrants must "be smart for we are a go-ahead people here."

Father Maher, in addressing a group of Leinster farmers, said men skilled in agriculture would be most likely to succeed. They should have enough money to buy 40 to 80 acres. It would be best to go in small bands and form a society. Thus depression of their spirits and roaming around the country would be prevented. "We shall take all possible care to admit none to our colony except those who have laid aside all foolish, exaggerated expectancies, and have formed . . . correct ideas as to the duties and laborious life of the emigrant." However, no such colony arrived in Dubuque County in 1850.

The first real colony of Irish was established by Rev. Thomas Hore in Allamakee County. Hore, a native of Wexford County, came to Arkansas in 1850 but could find no satisfactory location. He arrived in Dubuque on January 23, 1851.

After staying several days with the Trappists, he set out to explore the country. He selected and obtained title to several thousand acres. Only eighteen families arrived at Lafayette Landing that spring. Apparently most of the large party which



left Ireland stayed in St. Louis. Those who did come to Iowa built homes and started a log church. Soon other Irish families joined them.

Keokuk was a boom town in 1853. Many Irish who had stopped in the east came here by way of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Others came by way of the Gulf of Mexico directly from Europe. The Creightons were among the prominent men of Irish extraction in Keokuk at that time. They projected and started to build what developed into the Des Moines-Mississippi Canal. This gave plenty of work to fellow Irishmen for a time.

An academy or "select" school was started in 1853 in Keokuk. Many Irish sent their children there. Among those who paid tuition or contributed money were Mr. I. McCune, \$2,608.10, Mary O'Brien, \$35, and Michael Groghan, \$40 in cash and \$60 worth of cows.

Prominent Irish in Keokuk in the early days included Dr. O'Connor, doctor and druggist, Gregg and Madden, merchandisers, Patrick Gibbons who ran the distillery, and Martin Stafford, who operated the largest steamboat supply store.

In Monroe County the majority of the early Irish came from Pennsylvania or St. Louis by way of Keokuk. Almost all of them worked for a time on railroad construction. Many helped to build the Keokuk-Fort Des Moines Railroad and then bought land at \$1.25 per acre with their wages.

Fort Madison had a few Irish in the 1850's.



Among them was Richard Fahey, a stone mason, who contracted to erect the penitentiary.

By 1856 a large group had located in Chickasaw County. They formed a rural community known as "The Reilly Settlement." Floyd County received Irish families about the same time, while Irish settlements near Independence, Fairbanks and Monti were started in Buchanan County.

Typical of these people were the ten or twelve families who settled at Masonville about 1860. "Often these hardy settlers travelled by team or horseback to attend Mass at Independence, the trip involving two day's time and effort."

The Irish colony of Gilbertville was started in 1854. A number of young men stopped on the Cedar River, liked the location and decided to found a town. A plot of the proposed town and glowing accounts of the advantages and opportunities of the area were sent to various large cities to entice settlers. Gilbertville became for a time the leading town in Black Hawk County. All stages from the east made it a station; freight wagons from Dubuque made it headquarters.

By 1856 the Irish in Des Moines were numerous enough to build a frame church at 6th and Locust Streets. The location was considered to be somewhat out of town at that time. One of the members wrote: "Instead of following the road we would go along the cowpaths through the hazel-brush, as we did not want to meet the Know Nothings."



The first drayman in Des Moines was Michael Kennedy who settled there in 1855. Another early settler was the "generous, good hearted" Michael McTighe. He was a prominent Democrat and member of the City Council. He also operated the well-known Shamrock House on 2nd Street between Vine and Market.

Frequently the Irish and Germans were establishing settlements about the same time. Both located south of the Pella Hollanders on Coal Creek, sometimes called Dutch Ridge. The Irish selected fertile lands and were soon living in comfort. The Germans picked the ridge lands.

In 1849 Colonel Mason of the 6th United States Infantry was ordered to choose a site for a military post on the Upper Des Moines River to protect settlers. He picked a point near Lizzard Creek. The next year Major Samuel Woods was sent to the new post, Fort Clarke, later changed to Fort Dodge. Among the first complement of soldiers were thirty-four Irish.

However, it was not until 1855 that the Irish began to establish homes in northwestern Iowa. In Pocahontas County, Michael and Roger Collins, John and Patrick Calligan, Charles Kelly, Michael Walsh and others started the Lizzard Settlement. At the same time another group was carving out farms in nearby Jackson Township, Webster County.

In 1856 John Rourke, James Maher, Patrick



Conlan and other Irish located at Island Grove in Emmet County. In the southern part of Island Grove was a gang of outlaws. Disguised as Indians, they would make frequent raids on these early settlers. Patrick Conlan was one from whom goods were stolen. He took his revolver and forced them to return the things. They soon left the area.

As early as 1838 Irishmen were entering western Iowa. The first known settler in Fremont County was a bachelor named Flanagan. He also had the dubious distinction of being the first man to die in the county, being murdered for a small sum of money in 1842.

Many of the Irish settlements in this section occurred after the Civil War. Thomas Ryan came to the United States from Tipperary in 1852. In 1867 he was placed in charge of building a section of the Chicago, North Western Railroad across Iowa. Two years later he helped surveyors lay out a town and named it Vail after a railroad official. The early settlers were nearly all from Ireland so Vail soon became the largest Irish community in Crawford County.

Imogene was settled even later. Frugal Irishmen came here as late as the 1880's. Since the farm land around Imogene was rich, they soon amassed considerable wealth. At least as late as 1942 the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in this small community, population



303, annually sponsored an essay contest for high school students. The winner was awarded a scholarship to some leading school.

Many emigrants had fond memories of their homeland and looked forward to reunions when there was enough money to bring loved ones. Pat, an Irishman who worked in the wood market, described to a Dubuque *Herald* reporter his girl friend in Ireland as "a fine, stroppin' goil wus Mary as iver tied a shafe of corn or driv a lump of a pig to market. The divil a bit of harm was in her and she was full of fun as an egg is of mate. She was as straight as a rush wid the complexion of the rose and peaches united in one."



## Some Typical Irish Communities

According to the *Boston Pilot*, the "West is full of colonies of Dutchmen, Norwegians, Portuguese and Hollanders, while the Irish though they are *everywhere* in units are nowhere together." This might be true of many Irish in Iowa, but there were a number of areas where there was a definite Irish settlement. A closer look at some of these communities reveals how they were established and grew.

### *Garryowen, Jackson County*

In 1838 and 1839 a settlement known as Makokiti was started about twenty miles from Dubuque by Irish who were mostly from Cork and Limerick. The first church was built in 1840, with the first mass being offered that year by Reverend Samuel Mazzuchelli, an Italian. It is interesting to note, too, that the priest in this Irish parish ten years later was a Frenchman, John C. Perrodin.

By 1840 there were scarcely one hundred Irish in the parish. The number rose to 260 in 1841 and six hundred by 1843. One early group came from New York. Other families arrived in the United States in the winter of 1841-42. They waited in St. Louis while one member went to select a home. He reported that he found nothing equal to the Makokiti settlement in either Missouri or Illinois.



A school was erected in 1842. One of the instructors was Dennis A. Mahoney. He initiated the move to change the name to Garryowen. For a number of years there was conflict between the Cork Irish and those from Limerick. Finally Limerick won out.

By 1850 most of Butler Township around Garryowen was occupied. A check of sixty-five families living in one area shows that all but four were farmers. John Phillips and George Morrow were laborers, John McCartney, the shoemaker, and Michael Burke, the country schoolteacher. In addition, there were fourteen single men, two single women and three widows without families living in the neighborhood.

Although Garryowen and the surrounding territory had not been settled long, fifty-five had been able to acquire land valued at \$47,000 or an average of about \$850 per family. Some holdings were valued at only \$125, while Daniel O'Herrin had a farm worth \$3,000 and Michael Redden one valued at \$9,000.

Both husband and wife were Irish except in two cases. William Green was born in New York while his wife, Margaret, was Irish. William Matthews' wife, Mary Ann, was born in Pennsylvania. The William Rink, Richard Donovan, David Burke, Henry Burke, Henry Mahaney and Daniel O'Herrin families were among the first arrivals at Makokiti, all being there before 1840.



The others came year by year in no organized movement. At least half had lived in some other state or in Canada before coming to Iowa. Some lived first in the south — Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi or Louisiana; others stopped in New Brunswick or Newfoundland. Several families lived in New England (Massachusetts or Maine) or in Pennsylvania, New York or Maryland. Still others migrated from nearby states such as Missouri, Illinois or Ohio.

The famine seemed to have a limited effect on migration. All but nine of the families had left Ireland prior to 1845. The presence of five orphans may indicate that the Irish were caring for children whose parents had died during the famine.

Fifty-one of the families had children ranging in number from one to thirteen. Many apparently did not leave home upon becoming of age. Instead, they continued to work on their fathers' or some neighbors' farms.

#### *The Irish Settlement*

Irish farmers settled first south and west of Des Moines in Polk County. Then, in 1853, Reverend Timothy N. Mullen brought a number of Irish families fifteen miles southwest of Des Moines to form "The Irish Settlement" and "Churchville." The first group came from Wisconsin in covered wagons drawn by ox-teams. Good land was the attraction.

Among the early arrivals was Felix McManus,



who operated a general variety store in Bevington. He came from County Down. Patrick Dowd was a native of County Roscommon; James Gillaspie and William Kennedy were from County Derry and Patrick Smith from County Cavan. All arrived in 1856.

By 1860 the Irish Settlement had become well and favorably known. It spread over four townships — Lee and Crawford in Madison County and Linn and Jefferson in Warren County.

In Madison County there were forty Irish families in the two townships in 1860, with a total of 225 persons. Of these, 126 or 65 per cent, were second generation Irish-Americans. Eighteen adults were unable to read or write. Even in a short time they had been able to accumulate considerable wealth, reporting to the census taker \$9,420 personal property and \$37,070 real estate.

Ten years later the number of Irish families had risen to sixty-three with 371 children and adults. The number of second generation Irish had decreased by about five per cent. On the other hand, there were at least sixty-three who could not read or write. In acquiring property, the Irish had been especially successful. In personal property it amounted to \$91,789, and in real estate, \$152,881. John Cunningham was by far the most prosperous. In 1860 he had only \$11,000 of property, but in 1870 it had catapulted to a fabulous total of \$57,220.



*Emmetsburg Township, Palo Alto County*

Seven Irish families and two single Irishmen set out from Kane County, Illinois, in 1856 to find new homes. With six ox-drawn wagons they crossed the Mississippi River at Dubuque and followed the old trail many others had used through Manchester, Independence and Waterloo. Their destination was to be some place near Sioux City. Their only protection was a gun and pistol.

After several weeks of weary travel, they reached Fort Dodge. Here they met a fellow Irishman, Lynch, who had been up north the previous year with a government surveying party. He advised them to go up the west fork of the Des Moines River. There they would find plenty of timber, an abundance of water and excellent grass which proved the soil must be fertile.

The party's final choice was Section 14 near Medium Lake. Upon arrival they began to fell trees, hew logs and construct log cabins. The first cabins had clay floors and sod roofs. It was too late for a crop. However, they began breaking up the prairie by doubling up their ox teams on the plows. The next task was putting up hay and building sheds to protect the live stock. Supplies and provisions were obtained from Fort Dodge.

The first party was made up of James and Anastasia Nolan and their children, Maria, James and John; John and Bridget Nolan and son Charles; John and Margaret Neary and children, Ann,



Ellen, John and Myles; Martin and Mary Laughlin and children, Lott, John, Patrick and Ellen; Thomas and Ellen Downey and daughter Ellen; Orrin Sylvester and his wife; Patrick Jackman and Thomas Laughlin.

They were joined early in the fall by James and Margaret Hickey. The Hickey's daughter was the first white child born in the county. Late in the fall Jeremiah Crowley arrived with his wife and five children. In January, 1857, Patrick Nolan and Michael Maher were new additions. After the return of the Spirit Lake Massacre Relief Expedition, the group went to Fort Dodge for protection. Most returned with the coming of spring and at least six of the families were still living in the area in 1870.

Early in 1858 three Fort Dodge speculators, Hoolihan, Cahill and Cavanaugh, came to Palo Alto County and made extensive plans for laying out a town. A site was selected on the west bank of Medium Lake. The town was staked out. They built a log court house, store and blacksmith shop. The first postoffice was at John Nolan's.

Hoolihan, well-educated and an enthusiastic champion of the cause of the oppressed Irish, suggested that they name the town after Robert Emmet, Irish patriot. The town was never officially platted or filed for record in this location and was later moved to its present location.

The same year the county government was or-



ganized. The first officers who were elected were James Hickey, county judge, Felix McCosker, clerk of court, John Mulroney, treasurer and recorder, John Shea, drainage commissioner, James McCosker, county surveyor, Orrin Sylvester, coroner, and Thomas Tobin, sheriff. All were from the Irish colony or nearby.

*Neola Township, Pottawattamie County*

Neola has been described in recent years as being an area largely occupied by descendants of Irish settlers. An early Irishman in the area was John O'Brien. Others took claims as early as the 1850's.

This section of the state gained little prominence until the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad came in 1869. The town was platted and three years later a petition to form a new civil township of Neola was approved.

About twenty families organized a Catholic church which they completed in 1874. The first church, which was twenty-eight by forty feet, was built by Philip Mooman at a cost of \$800. The first priest was the Reverend B. P. McMemory. By 1882 there were 100 families in the parish.

In 1880 there were fully thirty-one persons in Neola Township who had been born in Ireland. There were also seventy-eight persons whose parents were born in Ireland, but who themselves had been born in Canada or one of the states. In addition to being farmers, they held such occupations



as school teacher, shoemaker, hotel keeper, cook, saloon keeper, liveryman, lawyer, grocer, dress-maker, and a scattering of laborers.

*Dubuque*

Dubuque from the very first had many Irish. As early as 1846, the city was divided into wards. The First Ward, which made up the southern part of Dubuque, was called "Dublin" and became well-known as the home of many Irish. The *Dubuque Herald* said that nearly all who lived there were guilty of the crime of being poor. Whiskey was their greatest enemy, the newspaper said.

Of the 13,045 inhabitants of Dubuque in 1860, 13.9 per cent or 1,800 were born in Ireland. This included 992 married adults, 317 single women, 183 single men, 98 widows, 18 widowers and 182 children under sixteen. The 992 married adults represented 535 families.

Among the men there were 305 day laborers, most of whom lived in the First Ward. In addition, there were fourteen teamsters and twelve draymen. Nine ran boarding houses or inns while another eleven were saloon keepers. Sixty-three were following the building trades — carpenters, tinnerns, painters, bricklayers, plasterers, and stonecutters and masons. As might be expected near the Dubuque lead mines, fifty-six were miners. River and rail transportation employed some as mail agents, express drivers, ferrymen, boatmen and baggage men.



There were fifteen merchants and fourteen grocers. Only one Irishman was a butcher, grain dealer, druggist, poultry dealer, or confectioner, although eighteen were shoemakers and sixteen tailors. Only eight were manufacturers of any kind. Their products included glass, carriages and wagons, stoves and cabinets.

Most of the single women were servants, 196 in all. Some worked in the boarding houses and hotels, while many worked for the wealthier families of Dubuque. Widows were more likely to be washwomen, housekeepers and dressmakers.

Fifteen men could be classed as professionals. They were lawyers, printers, teachers, an editor, an architect and an engineer. Only two held government positions — both were justices of the peace.

The *Herald* was correct in saying many knew only poverty. Only 151 owned real estate. It was worth \$543,950, or 10.8 per cent of the total in Dubuque. Fully 199 had personal property worth \$99,200, or 7.4 percent of the total. There were exceptions, of course. Among these were J. Sullivan, a mason, who had property worth \$40,000; W. P. Young, glass manufacturer, \$155,000; Joseph P. Nagle, saloon keeper, \$20,150; Lawrence Mahoney, merchant, \$117,000; Mathew Curran, day laborer, \$7,150; and the widow, Ellen Sullivan, worth more than \$50,000 at the age of 35.



## A LANE IN CORK, IRELAND



*Harper's Weekly*, March 3, 1888

*In respect to slums, Cork, in the south of Ireland, is a small edition of London. . . . One of the most miserable quarters is on the hill where stands St. Anne's, Shandon, the Protestant church whose bells are said to sound so grand on the pleasant waters of the river Lee. . . . The people are too mute and listless from want of food and work to do harm even if they had any desire to assail one. . . . The adults are miserable enough, but the children seem to absorb nutriment from the thick air, for their dirty faces shine with red and their little legs are fat. The constant cry is lack of work. . . .*



## A GALWAY EVICTION



*Harper's Weekly*, March 10, 1888

Preparing to Resist an Eviction in Galway



*Harper's Weekly*, March 17, 1888

A Galway Eviction in Progress.

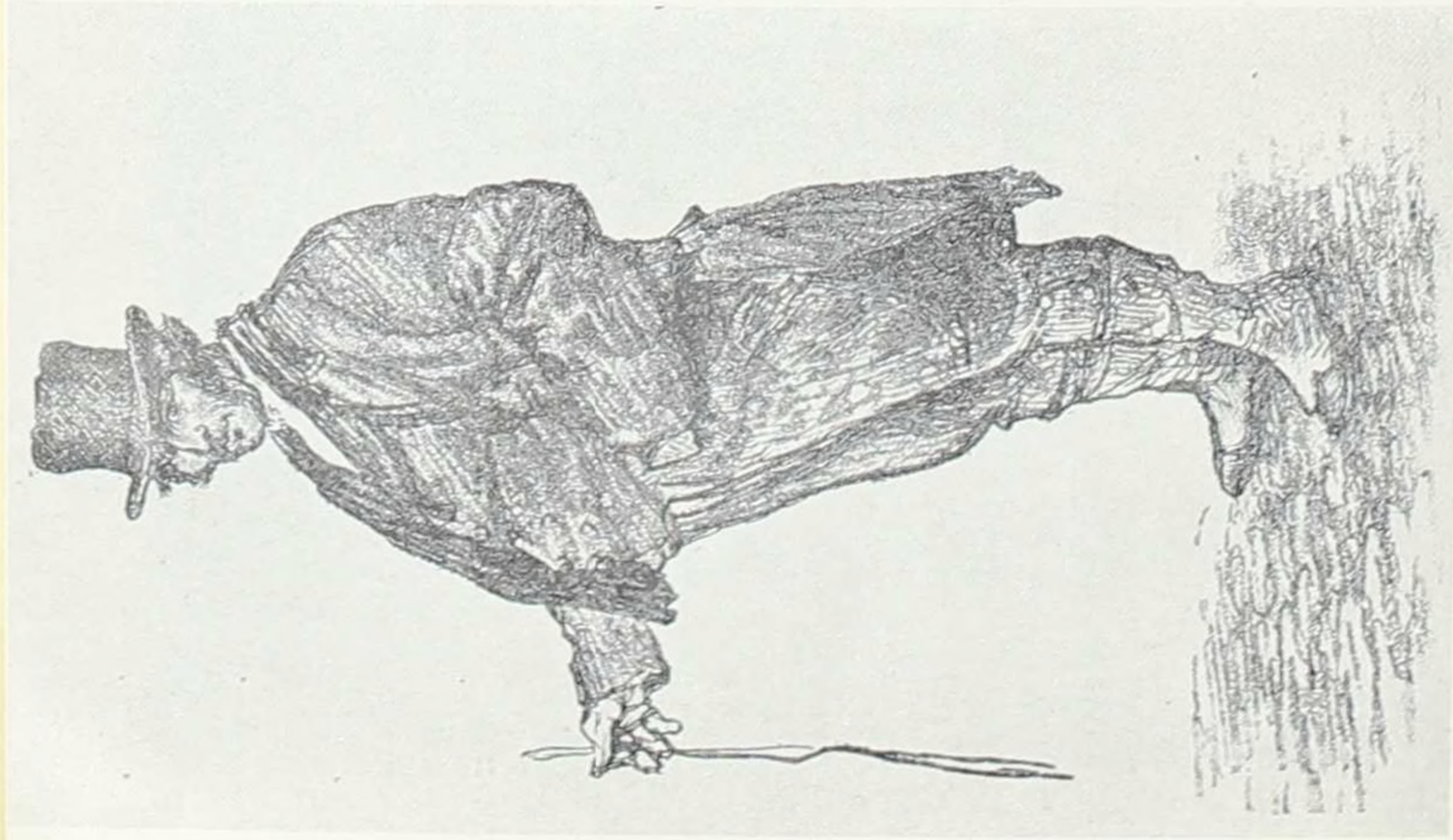




*Harper's Weekly*, March 17, 1888

Children Carrying Lumps of Peat to Pay for Their Schooling.





Type of Country Farmer, County Galway

*What wonder that they look sadly westward across the Atlantic and wish that Ireland might be anchored near American shores?*

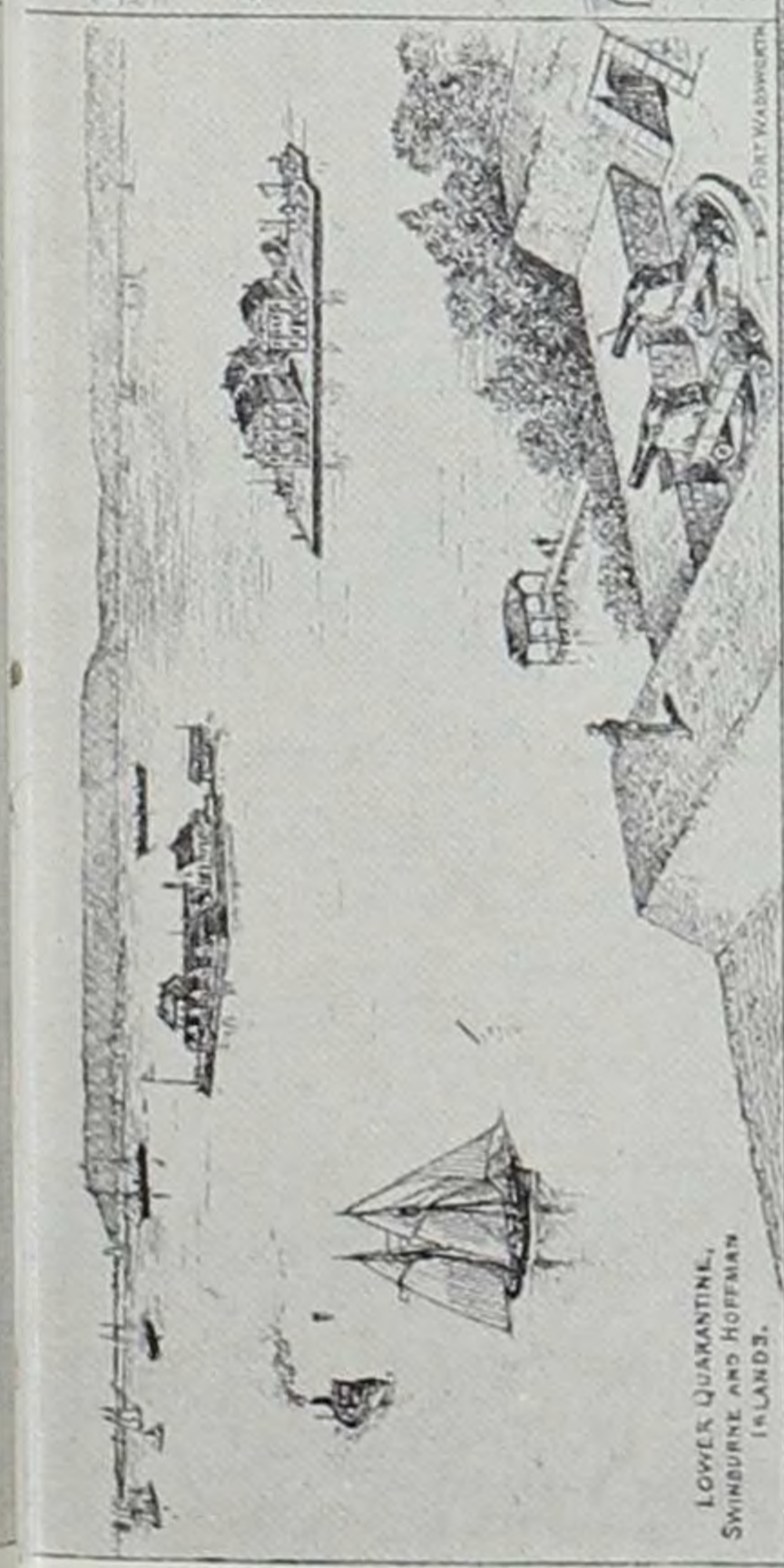


CHARACTER SKETCHES IN WESTERN IRELAND

*Harper's Weekly*, February 11, 1888

La Belle Alice — A Beggar in a Country Town, County Galway.

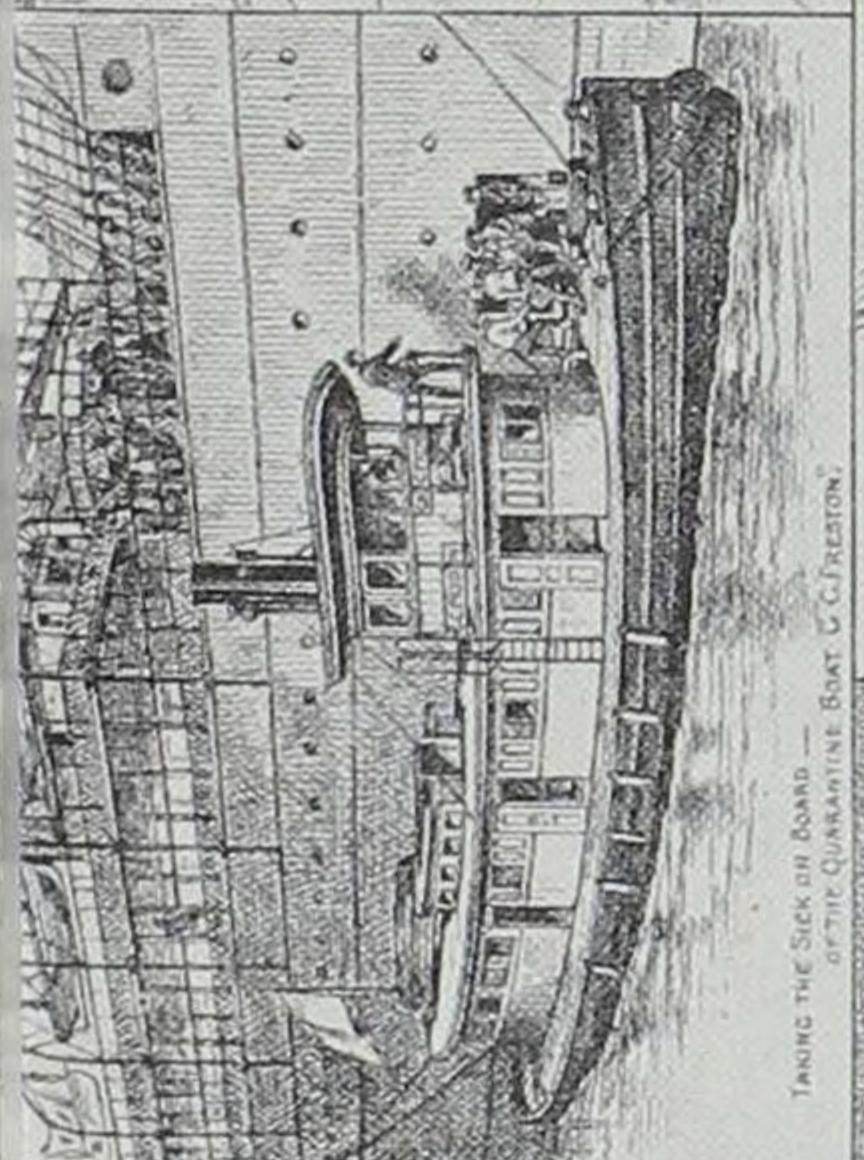




LOWER QUARANTINE, SWINBURNE AND HOFFMAN ISLANDS.



ON BOARD THE ISLANDS—SIGNALLING.



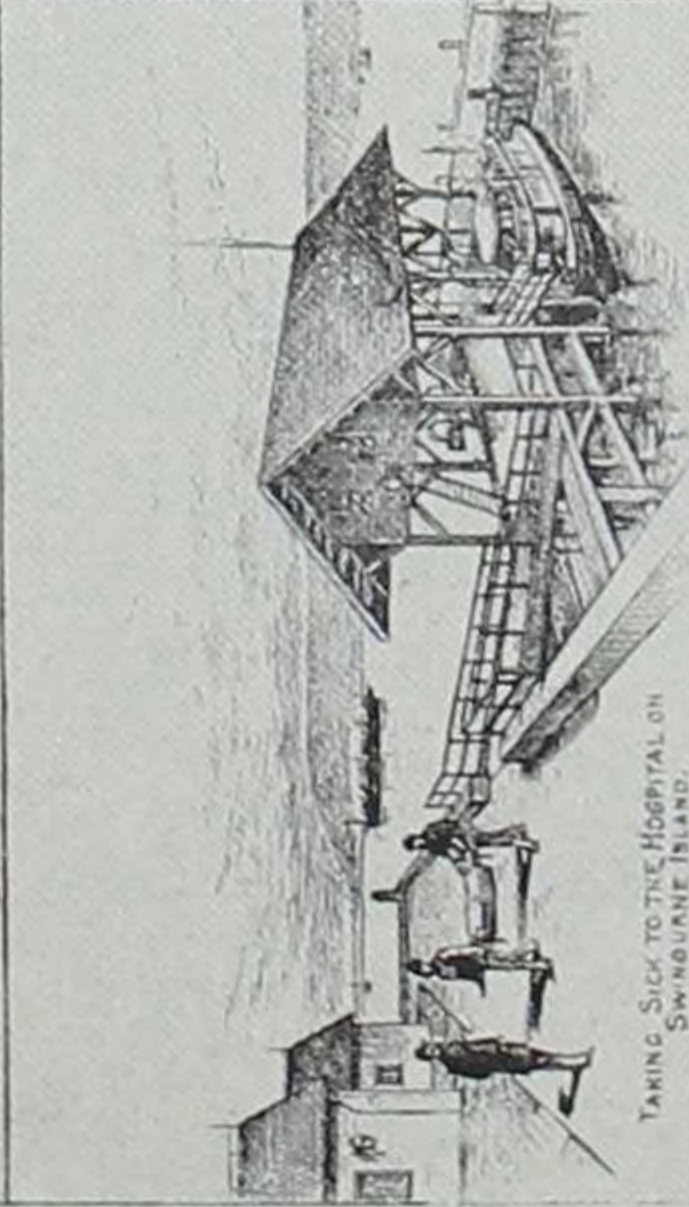
TAKING THE SICK ON BOARD—OF THE QUARANTINE BOAT—C. G. PRESTON.



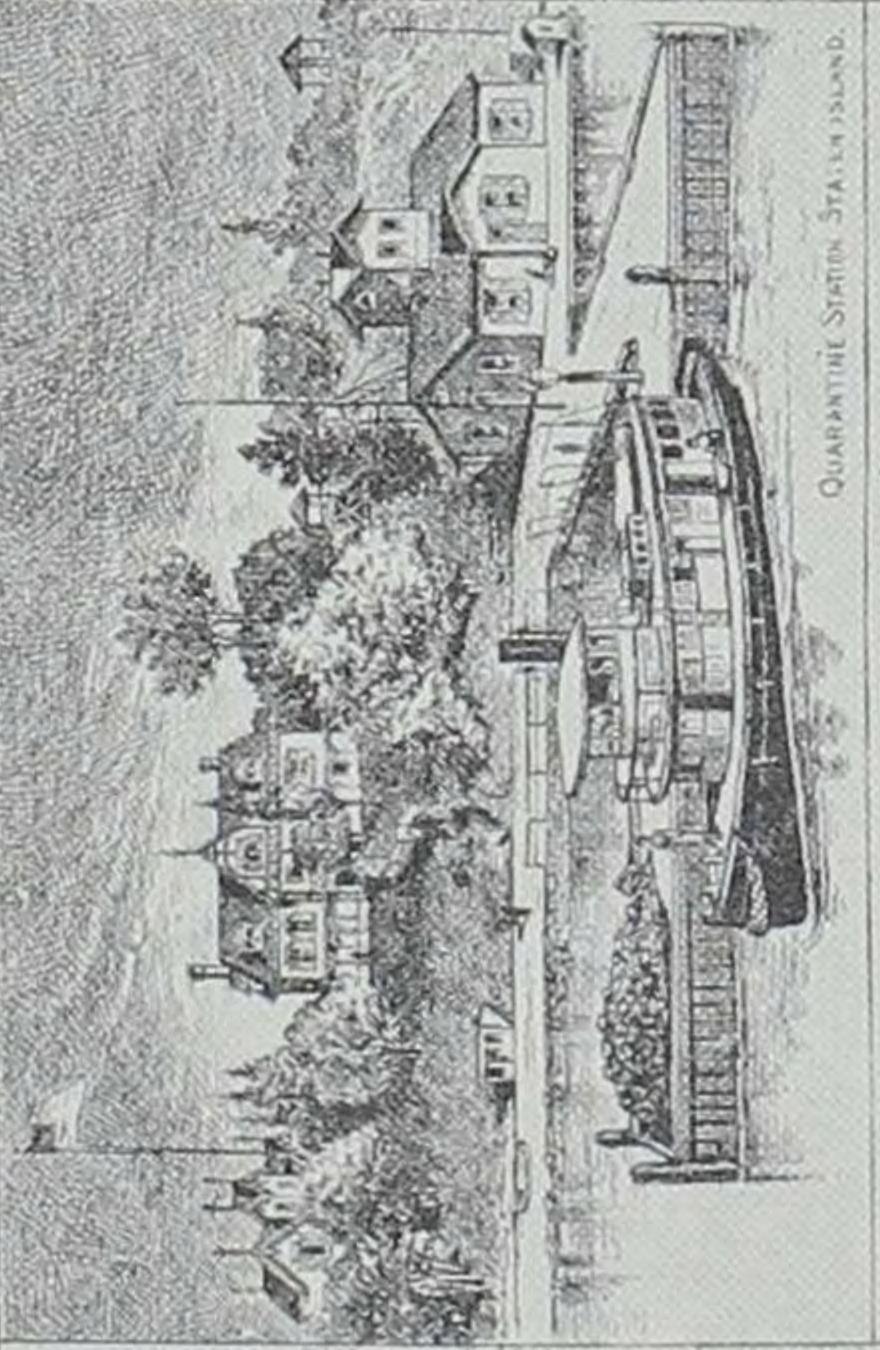
DOCTOR'S CABIN, HOFFMAN ISLANDS.



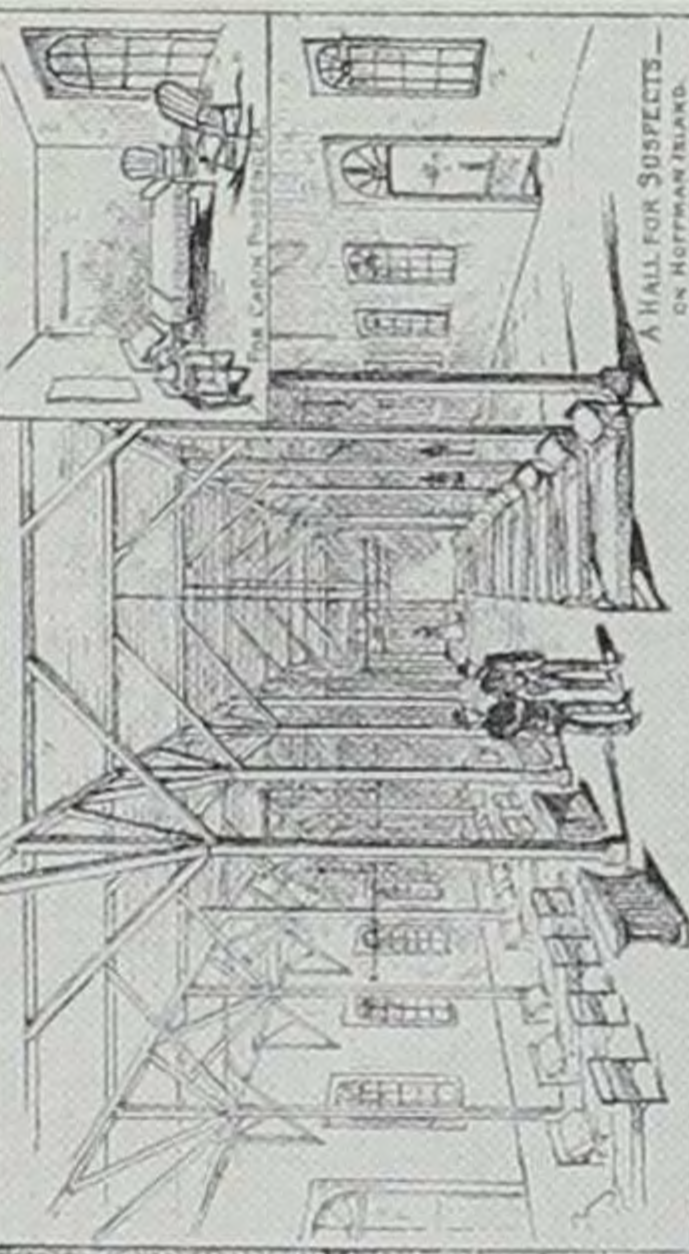
ON BOARD OF THE QUARANTINE BOAT.



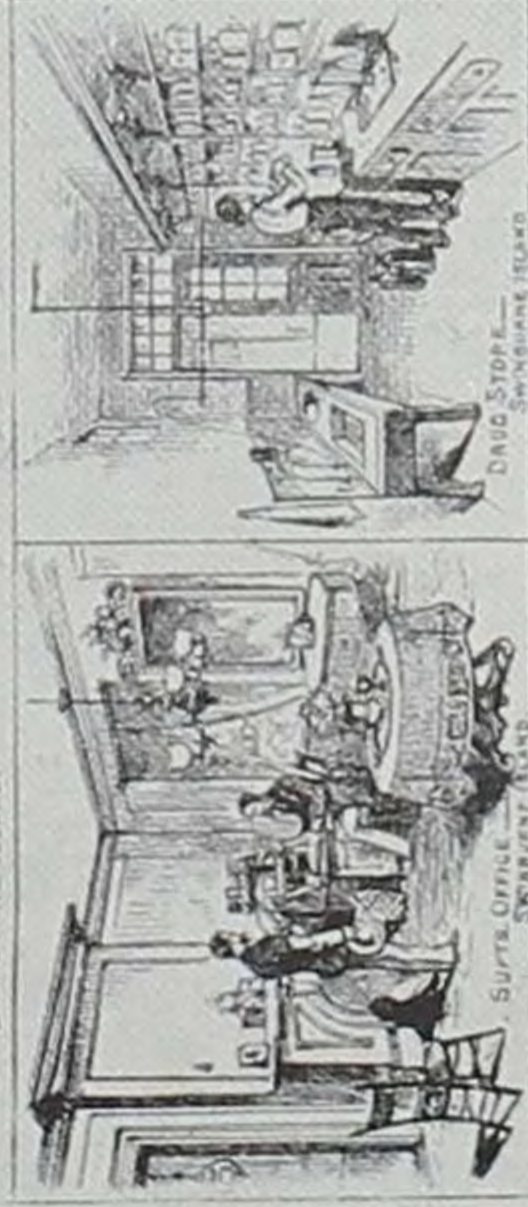
TAKING SICK TO THE HOSPITAL ON SWINBURNE ISLAND.



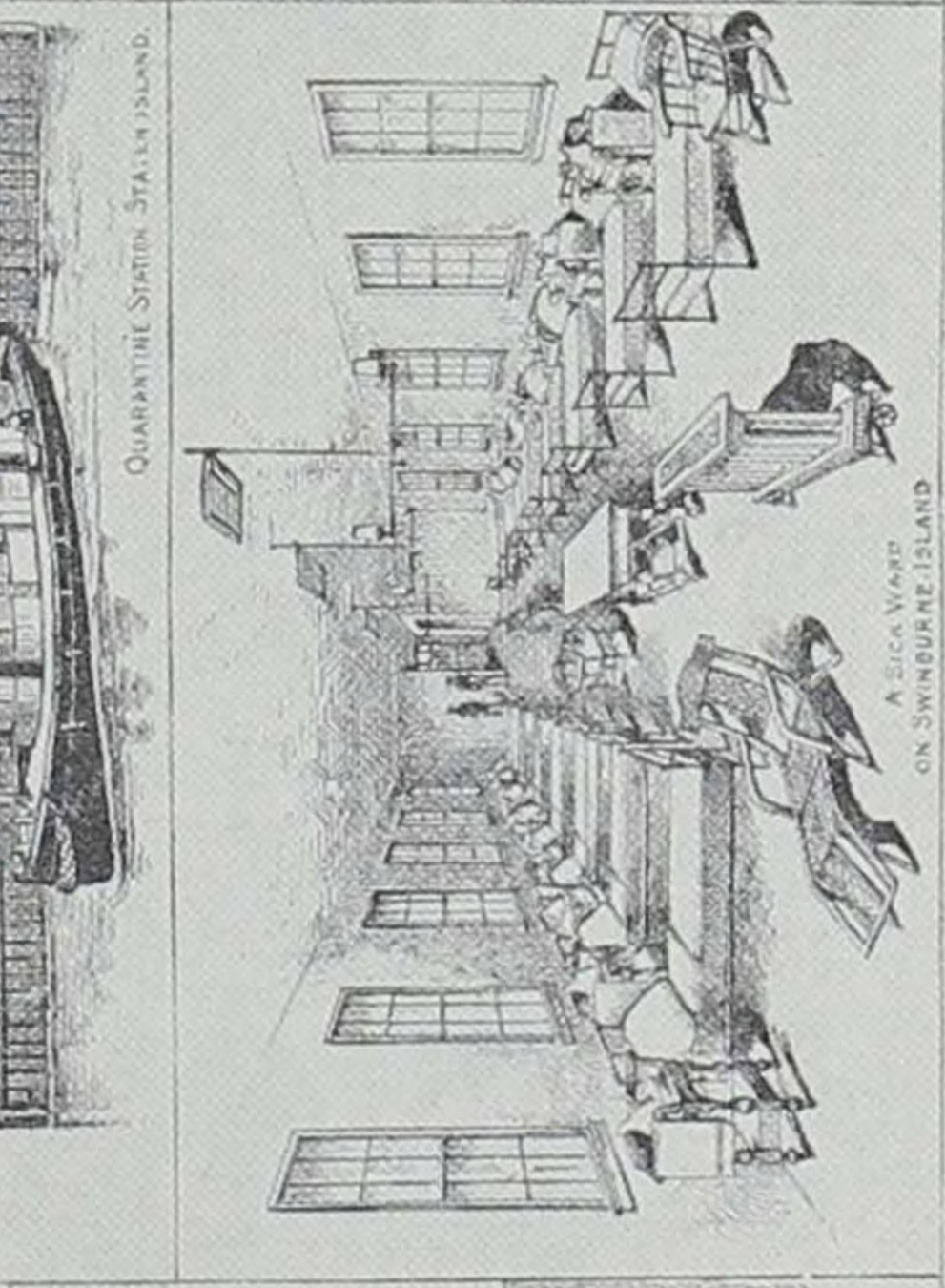
QUARANTINE STATION, STATALEN ISLAND.



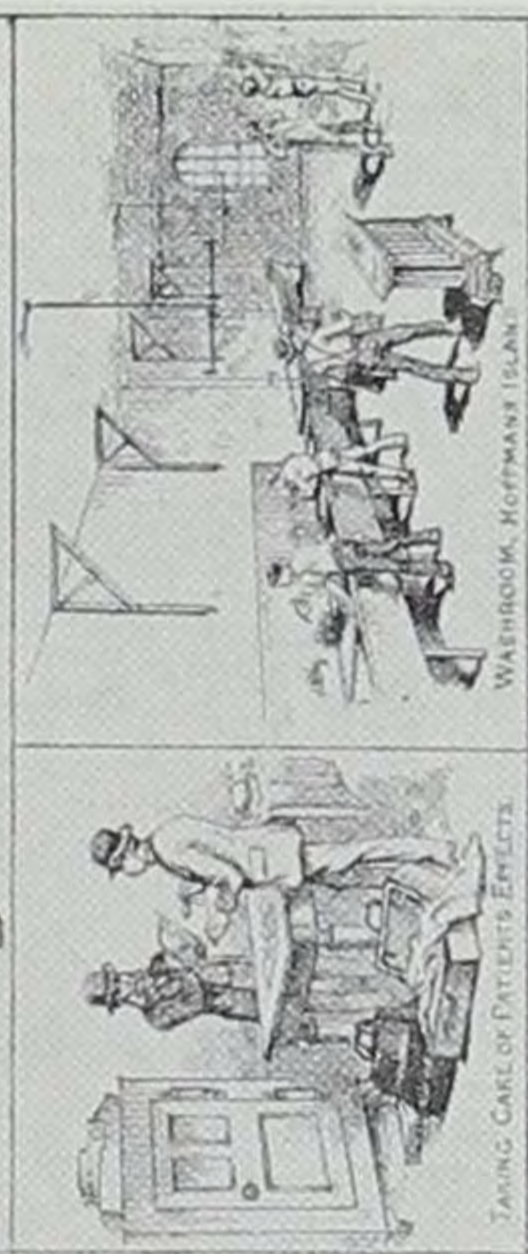
A HALL FOR SUSPECTS ON HOFFMAN ISLAND.



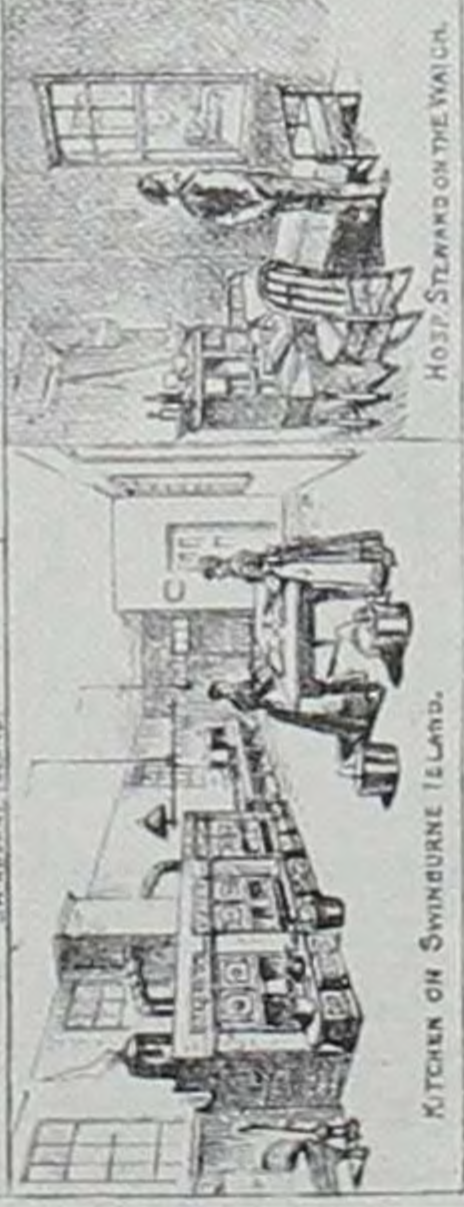
DRUG STORE—SWINBURNE ISLAND.



A SICK WARD ON SWINBURNE ISLAND.



WASHROOM, HOFFMAN ISLAND.



KITCHEN ON SWINBURNE ISLAND.



FUMIGATING ROOM.



BURIAL GROUNDS, SEGIRES Pt. STATALEN I.

SKETCHES OF THE NEW YORK QUARANTINE ESTABLISHMENT.

Ships were subject to rigid health inspection before permission to land.

Harper's Weekly, October 8, 1887







# HARPER'S WEEKLY.

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION.

Vol. XXXI—No. 1592  
Copyright, 1887, by HARPER & BROTHERS.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1887.

TEN CENTS A COPY.  
\$4.00 PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE.



WITH UNCLE SAM'S COMPLIMENTS.

A RETURN QUOTA OF ASSISTED (AND ASSORTED) EMIGRANTS PRESENTED TO JOHN BULL.





*A twisted official*

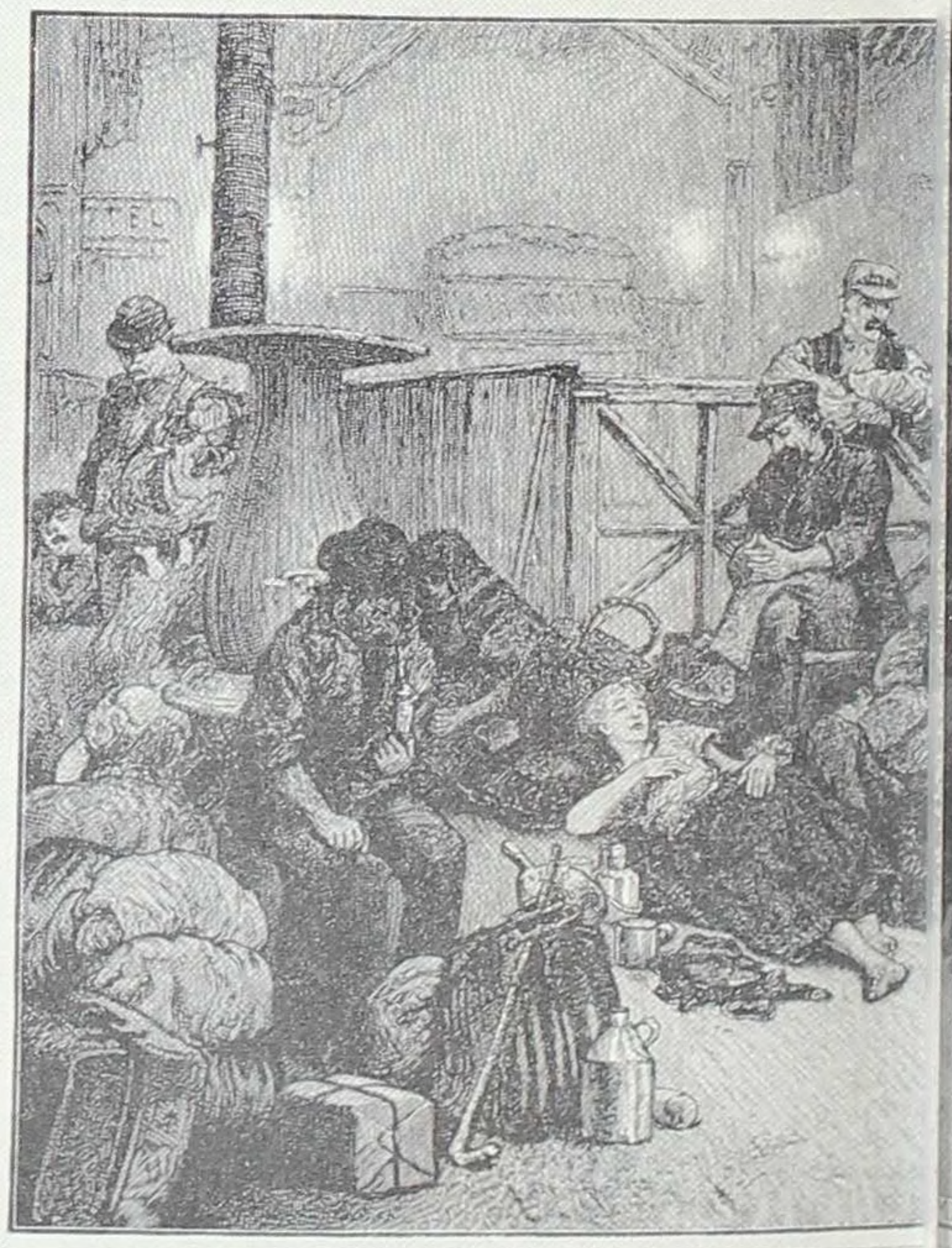


*Getting on*

*A Future Legislator*



*Money Changers*



*A well-known face*



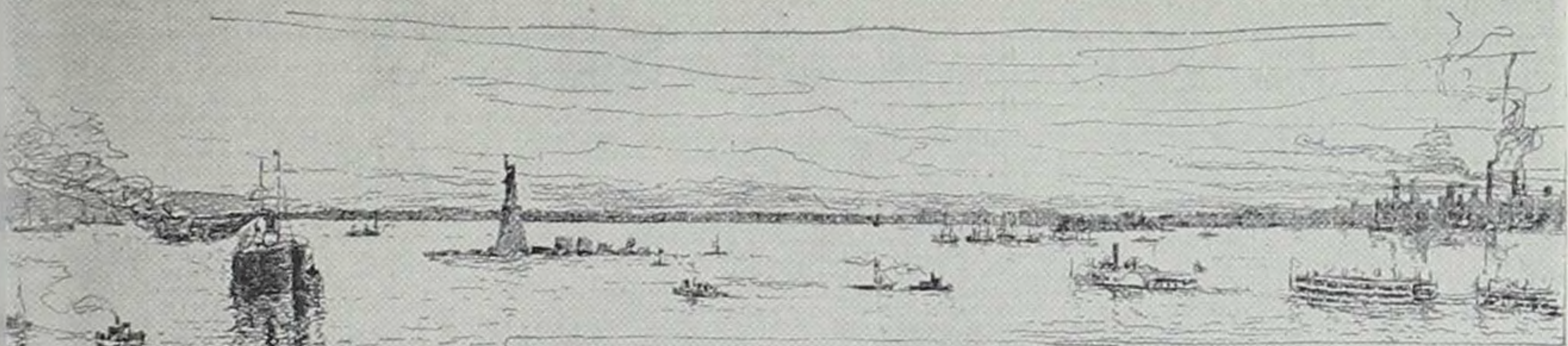
*A Happy (?) Family*

IN AND OUT OF CASTLE GARDEN

IN AND OUT OF CASTLE GARDEN

Nearly every one of the millions of foreigners who have sought a home on this continent through this port has had a personal experience — a personal experience not likely soon to be forgotten — of what is called Castle Garden. However little they may have seen or come to know of the great city, they have had no chance of escaping the old and peculiar-looking building in Battery Park. . . . The immigrants are lying about in heaps, as may be often

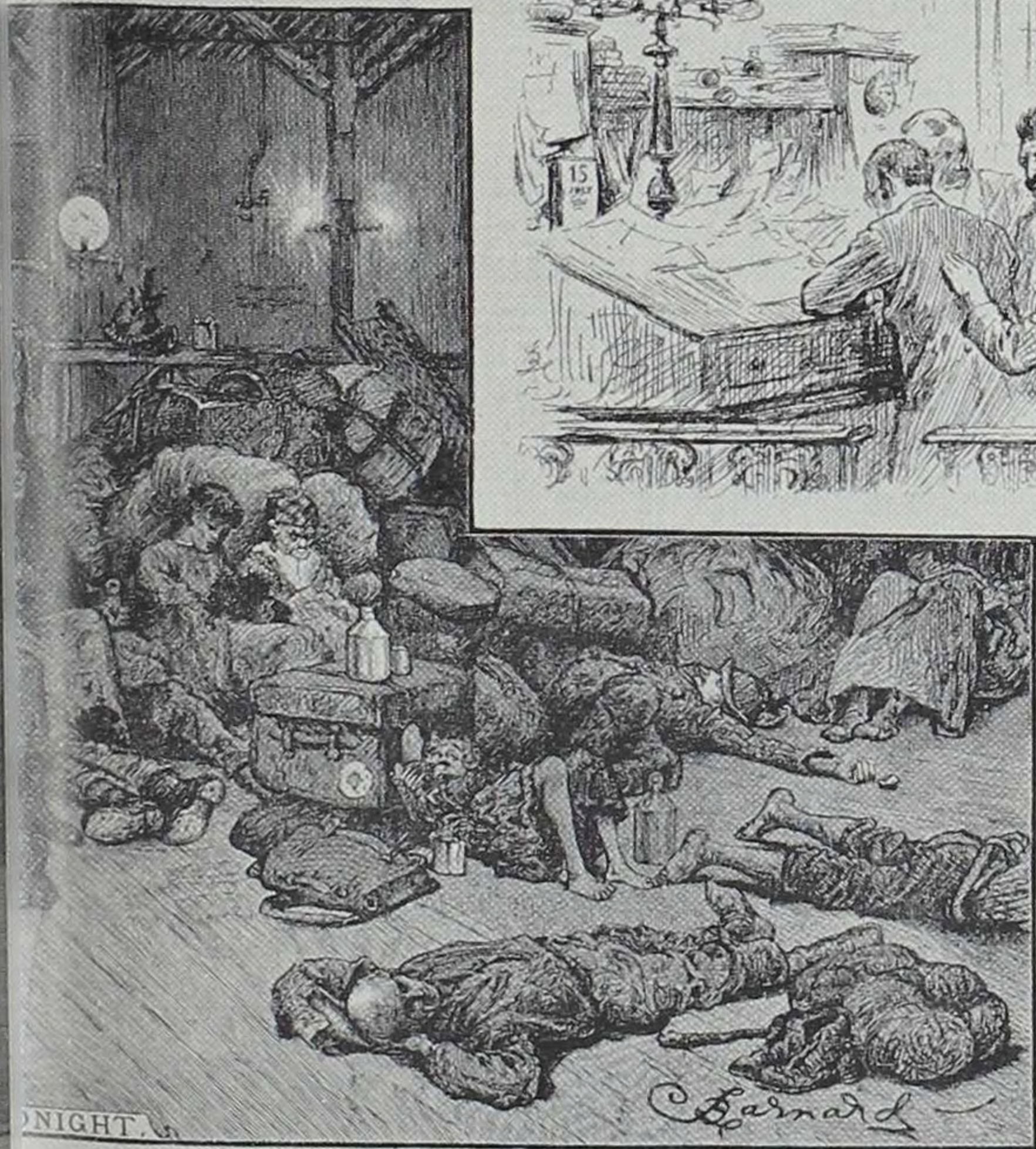




*ending their journey's end*



*The Armenian Contingent*



NIGHT

*Barnard*



*A mysterious functionary*



*In Battery Park*

DRAWN BY F. BARNARD.—[SEE PAGE 634.]

CASTLE GARDEN

Harper's Weekly, September 3, 1887

seen at night. In one place there is a knot of Armenian Jews, with busy Mr. GOLDBERG moving about among them. In the centre is the Exchange Bureau, where the immigrants get American money for their foreign notes or coin. . . . That the work done at Castle Garden is immense may be gathered from the fact that during 1886 the number of steerage passengers who landed at the port of New York was 284,885.







### IRISH IN IOWA, BY COUNTY - 1870

LYON	3 2	OSCEOLA	0	DICKINSON	5 21	EMMET	4 16	KOSSUTH	3 95	WINNEBAGO	5 2	WORTH	5 27	MITCHELL	4 255	HOWARD	1 372	WINNEBISH	3 731	ALLAMAKEE	2 1660				
SIoux	3 6	O'BRIEN	3 11	CLAY	5 11	PALO ALTO	1 152	HAMCOCK	6 8	CERRO GORDO	4 142	FLOYD	3 266	CHICKASAW	1 646	FAYETTE	2	CLAYTON	2						
PLYMOUTH	3 81	CHEROKEE	2 92	BUENA VISTA	4 43	POCAHONTAS	2 97	HUMBOLDT	3 88	WRIGHT	1 61	FRANKLIN	2 183	BUTLER	3 308	BREMER	4 237	BLACK HAWK	3	BUCHANAN	1 958	DELAWARE	2 778	DUBUQUE	2 4237
WOODBURY	1 401	IDA	2 5	SAC	4 18	CALHOUN	5 22	WEBSTER	2 747	HAMILTON	5 68	HARDIN	2 754	GRUNDY	3 95	TAMA	4	BENTON	2	LINN	2	JONES	1	JACKSON	2 1093
MONONA	4 66	CRAWFORD	3 81	CARROLL	3 28	GREENE	1 129	BOONE	4 363	STORY	4 139	MARSHALL	5 228	MAHASKA	4	KEOKUK	2	WASHINGTON	3	LOUISA	2	CLINTON	2 2695	SCOTT	2 2211
HARRISON	1 237	SHELBY	4 20	AUDUBON	3 9	GUTHRIE	1 113	DALLAS	1 234	POLK	1 1090	JASPER	3 331	POWESHIEK	1 421	IOWA	2 755	JOHNSON	3 1085	MUSCATINE	2	DES MOINES	278	LEE	2
POTTAWATTAMIE	3 669	CASS	4 107	ADAIR	4 48	MADISON	1 247	WARREN	1 232	MARION	3 126	MAHASKA	3 264	KEOKUK	2 185	WASHINGTON	3 289	LOUISA	2	DES MOINES	3	LEE	2 1931		
MILLS	3 157	MONTGOMERY	2 112	ADAMS	1 54	UNION	4 81	CLARKE	2 66	LUCAS	2 119	MONROE	1 696	WAPELLO	1 708	JEFFERSON	3 317	HENRY	2 418	DES MOINES	3	LEE	2 1931		
FREMONT	2 135	PAGE	1 159	TAYLOR	3 23	RINGGOLD	1 69	DECATUR	4 70	WAYNE	3 54	APPANOOSE	2 94	DAVIS	4 55	VAN BUREN	1 260	LEE	2 1931						

3 - RANK AMONG FOREIGN BORN GROUPS

23 - NUMBER OF IRISH

### IRISH IN IOWA, BY COUNTY - 1890

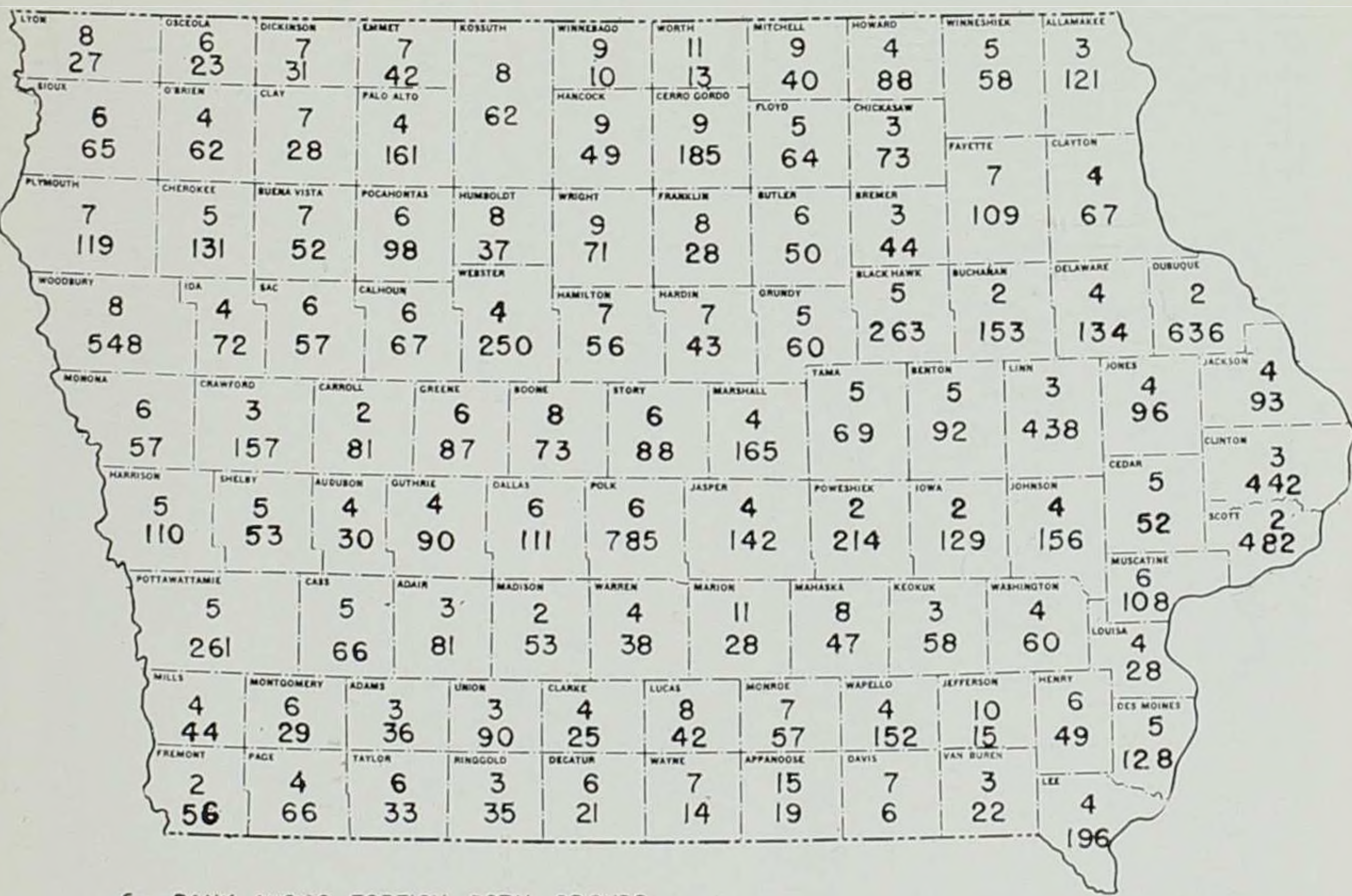
LYON	4 93	OSCEOLA	5 49	DICKINSON	5 42	EMMET	8 49	KOSSUTH	7	WINNEBAGO	7 20	WORTH	6 60	MITCHELL	4 172	HOWARD	2 384	WINNEBISH	4 470	ALLAMAKEE	3 1006				
SIoux	3 236	O'BRIEN	5 193	CLAY	8 89	PALO ALTO	1 440	7	119	HAMCOCK	5 91	CERRO GORDO	3 339	FLOYD	4 203	CHICKASAW	2 492	FAYETTE	4	CLAYTON	3				
PLYMOUTH	4 385	CHEROKEE	5 247	BUENA VISTA	5 160	POCAHONTAS	2 210	5	143	WRIGHT	5 170	FRANKLIN	5 199	BUTLER	2 255	BREMER	2 196	BLACK HAWK	3	BUCHANAN	2	DELAWARE	2	DUBUQUE	2
WOODBURY	4 1271	IDA	3 183	SAC	5 155	CALHOUN	3 220	4	700	HAMILTON	7 136	HARDIN	4 209	GRUNDY	4 153	TAMA	3	BENTON	2	LINN	3	JONES	2	JACKSON	2 587
MONONA	6 144	CRAWFORD	2 596	CARROLL	2 224	GREENE	1 462	4	347	STORY	4 207	MARSHALL	4 364	MAHASKA	3	KEOKUK	2	WASHINGTON	3	LOUISA	2	CLINTON	2 2000	SCOTT	2 1316
HARRISON	2 359	SHELBY	4 201	AUDUBON	3 142	GUTHRIE	2 245	2	309	POLK	3 1532	JASPER	3 401	POWESHIEK	2 497	IOWA	2 566	JOHNSON	3 705	MUSCATINE	2	DES MOINES	126	LEE	2
POTTAWATTAMIE	3 926	CASS	4 234	ADAIR	2 304	MADISON	1 230	2	173	MARION	4 114	MAHASKA	6 269	KEOKUK	3 310	WASHINGTON	3 239	LOUISA	3	DES MOINES	3	LEE	2 1931		
MILLS	4 116	MONTGOMERY	6 106	ADAMS	3 166	UNION	3 346	2	65	LUCAS	4 128	MONROE	1 516	WAPELLO	2 649	JEFFERSON	3 122	HENRY	3 271	DES MOINES	3	LEE	2 1931		
FREMONT	2 192	PAGE	3 239	TAYLOR	2 149	RINGGOLD	1 155	2	83	WAYNE	3 73	APPANOOSE	4 99	DAVIS	3 45	VAN BUREN	3 129	LEE	2 1931						

2 - RANK AMONG FOREIGN BORN GROUPS

83 - NUMBER OF IRISH



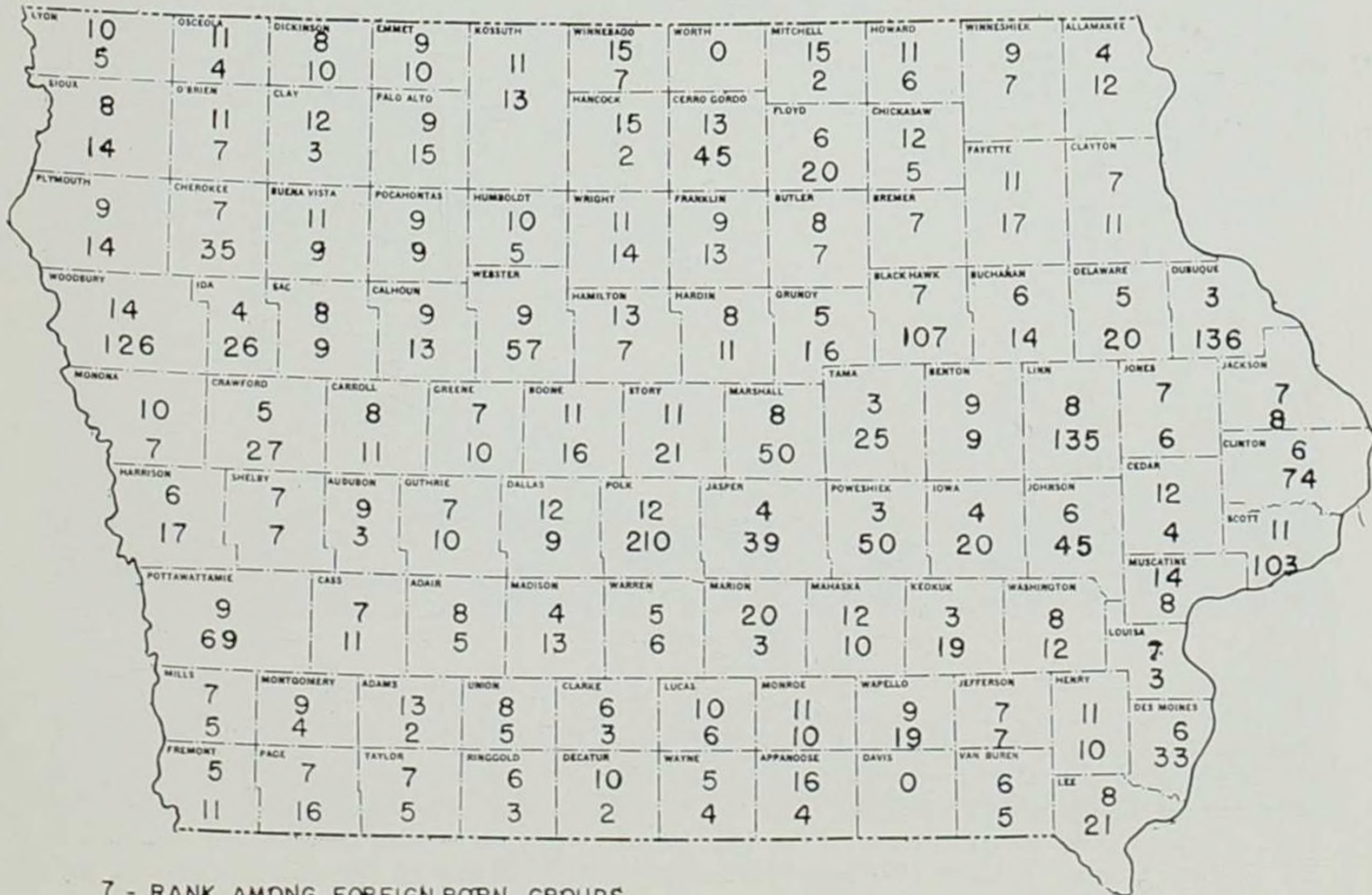
### IRISH IN IOWA, BY COUNTY - 1920



6 - RANK AMONG FOREIGN BORN GROUPS

33 - NUMBER OF IRISH

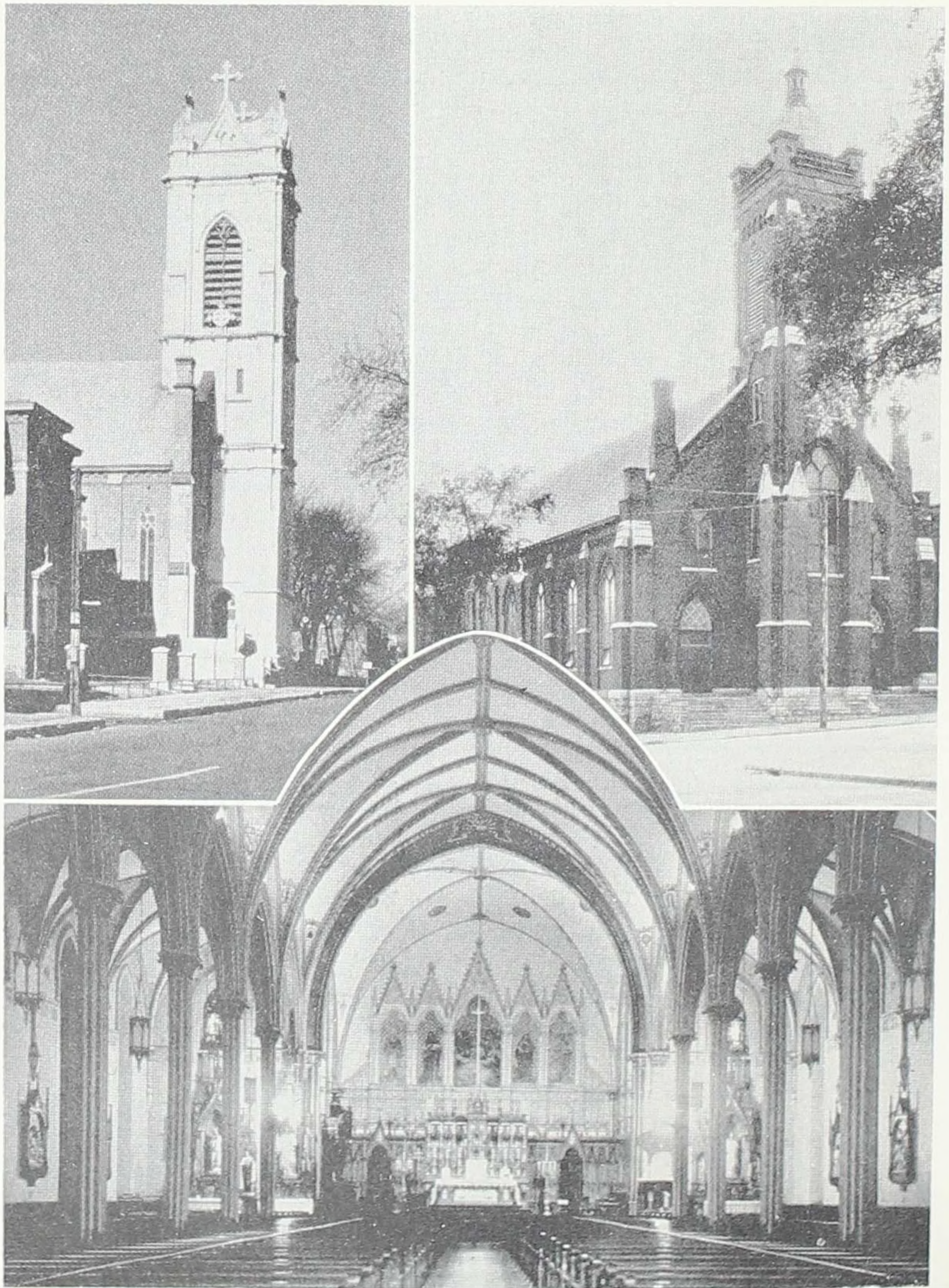
### IRISH IN IOWA, BY COUNTY - 1950



7 - RANK AMONG FOREIGN BORN GROUPS

16 - NUMBER OF IRISH

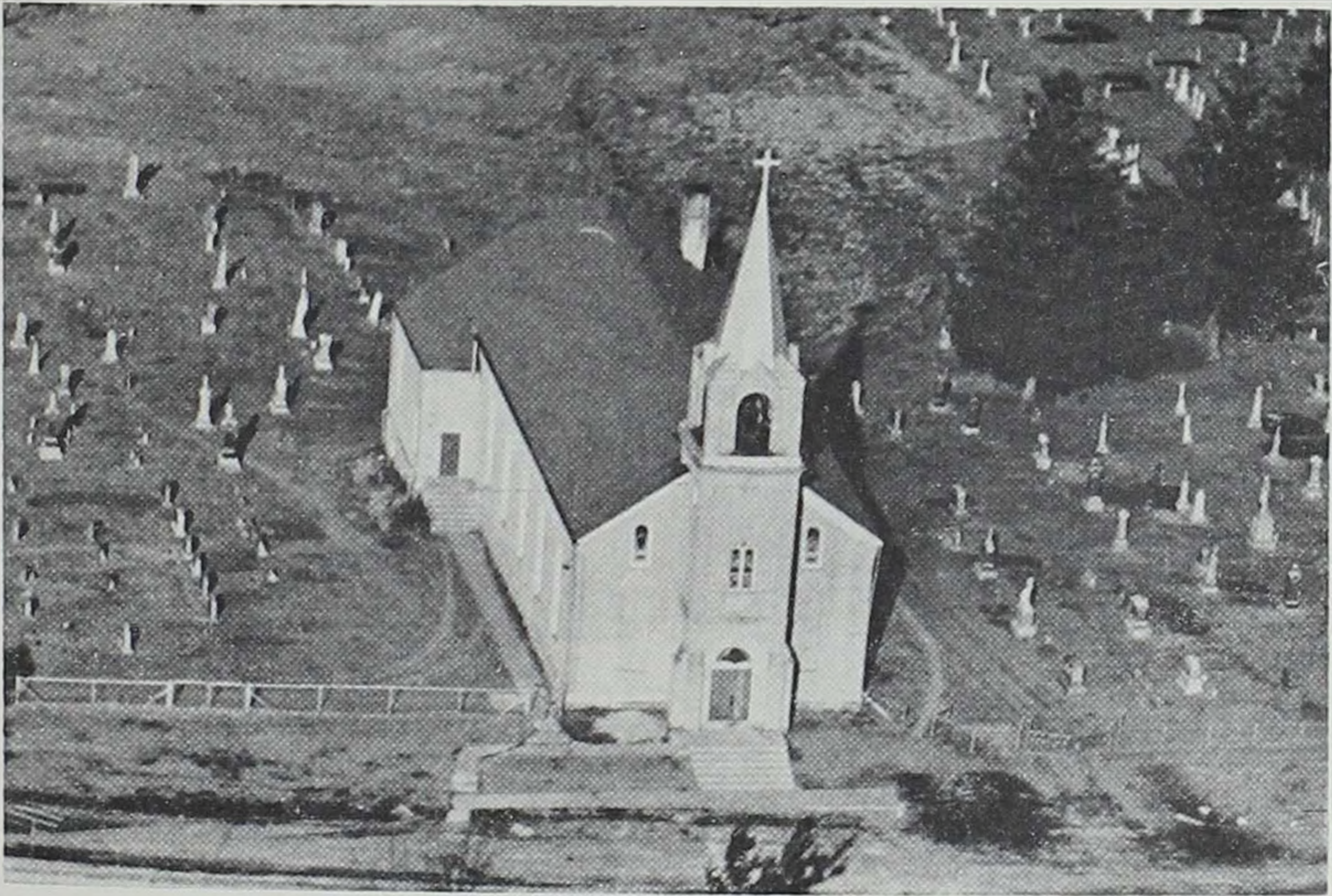




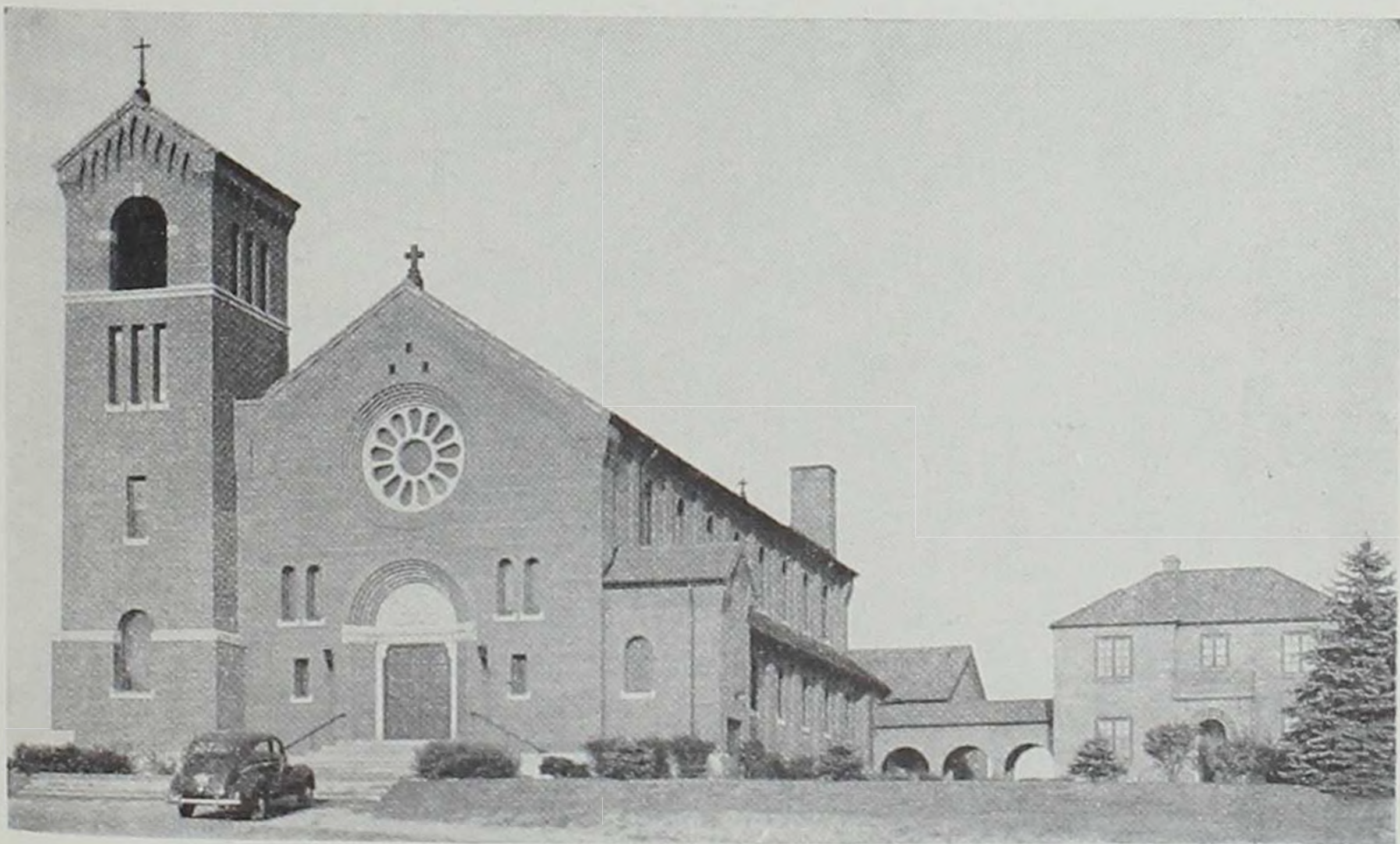
From M. M. Hoffmann's *Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque*.

TOP: left and bottom: St. Raphael's Cathedral (exterior and interior) in Dubuque, the "Mother parish of the great Northwest." Originally a small stone church built by Father Mazzuchelli, the present church partially completed in 1857 and dedicated in 1861. It is the seat of the Arch-Diocese of Dubuque. St. Patrick's (upper right) was originally a mission of St. Raphael's. The parish was organized in 1852, the first services held in St. Patrick's in 1853, and two years later the church dedicated by Bishop Loras. Bishop Hennessy presided at the laying of the cornerstone of the present brick edifice in April, 1877.



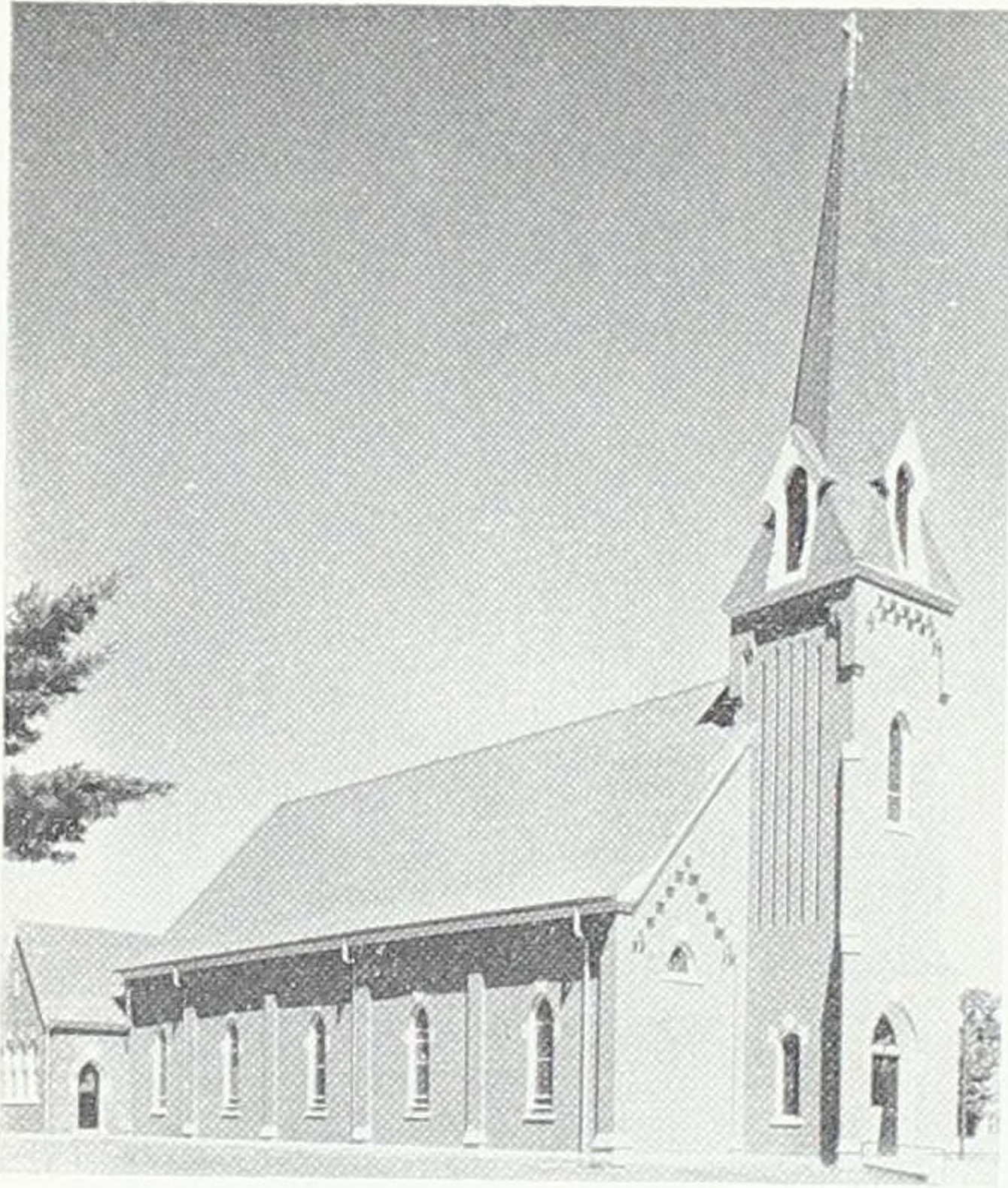


Courtesy Rev. Patrick Prior  
St. Michael's at Holbrook, Iowa.

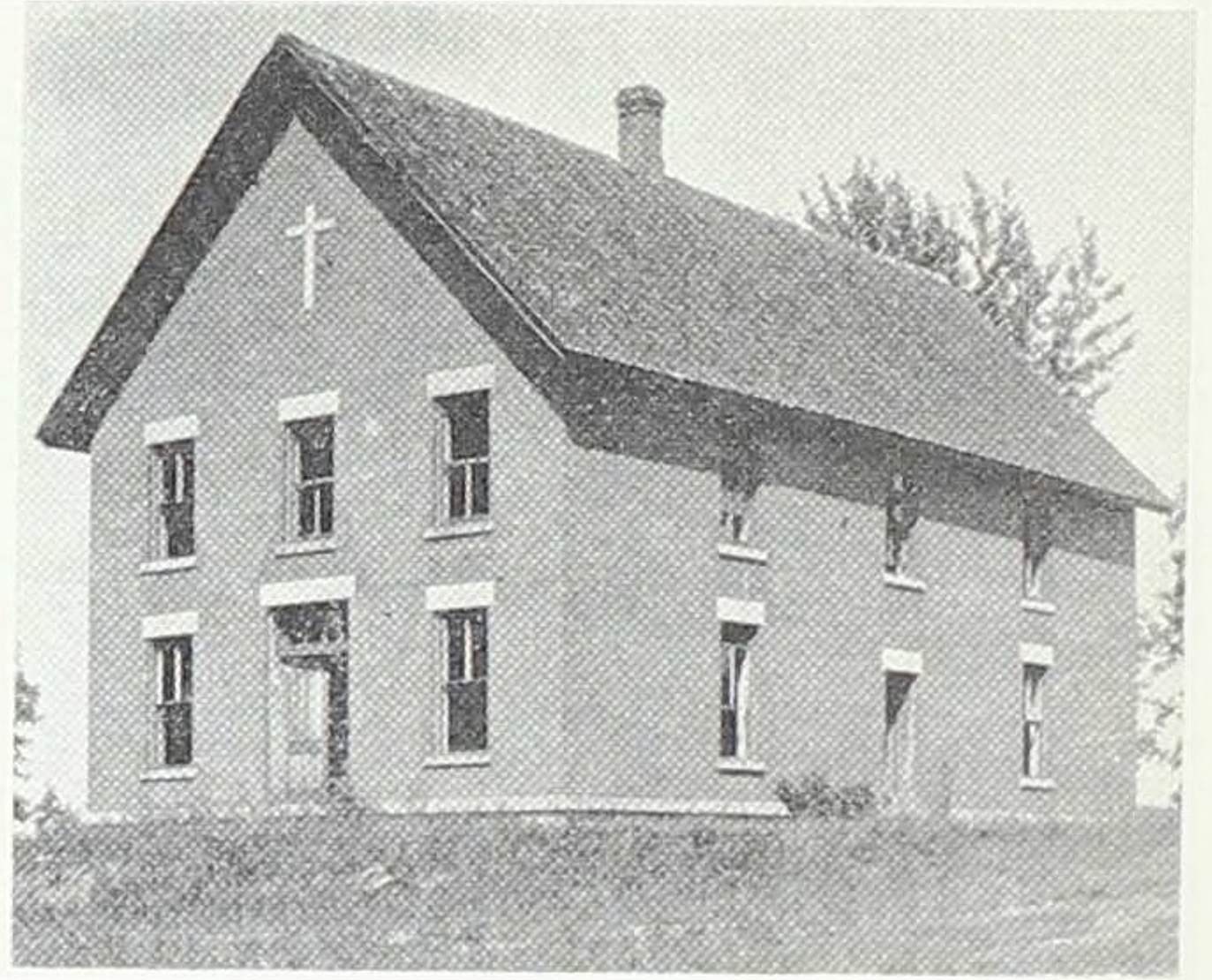


St. Bridget at Victor, Iowa.





St. Patrick's at Marengo.

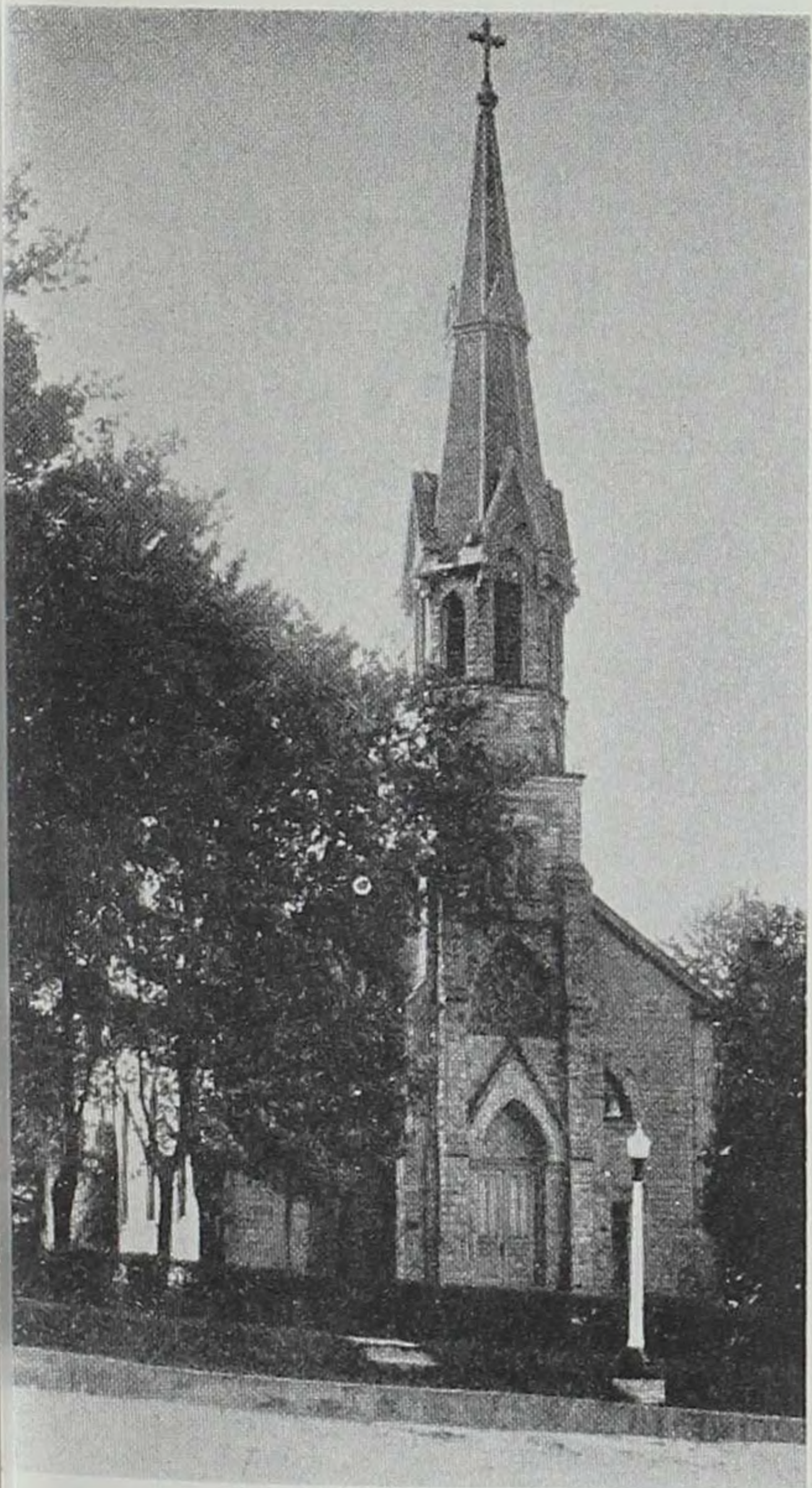


Courtesy Maurice Fay  
St. Patrick's at Anamosa.

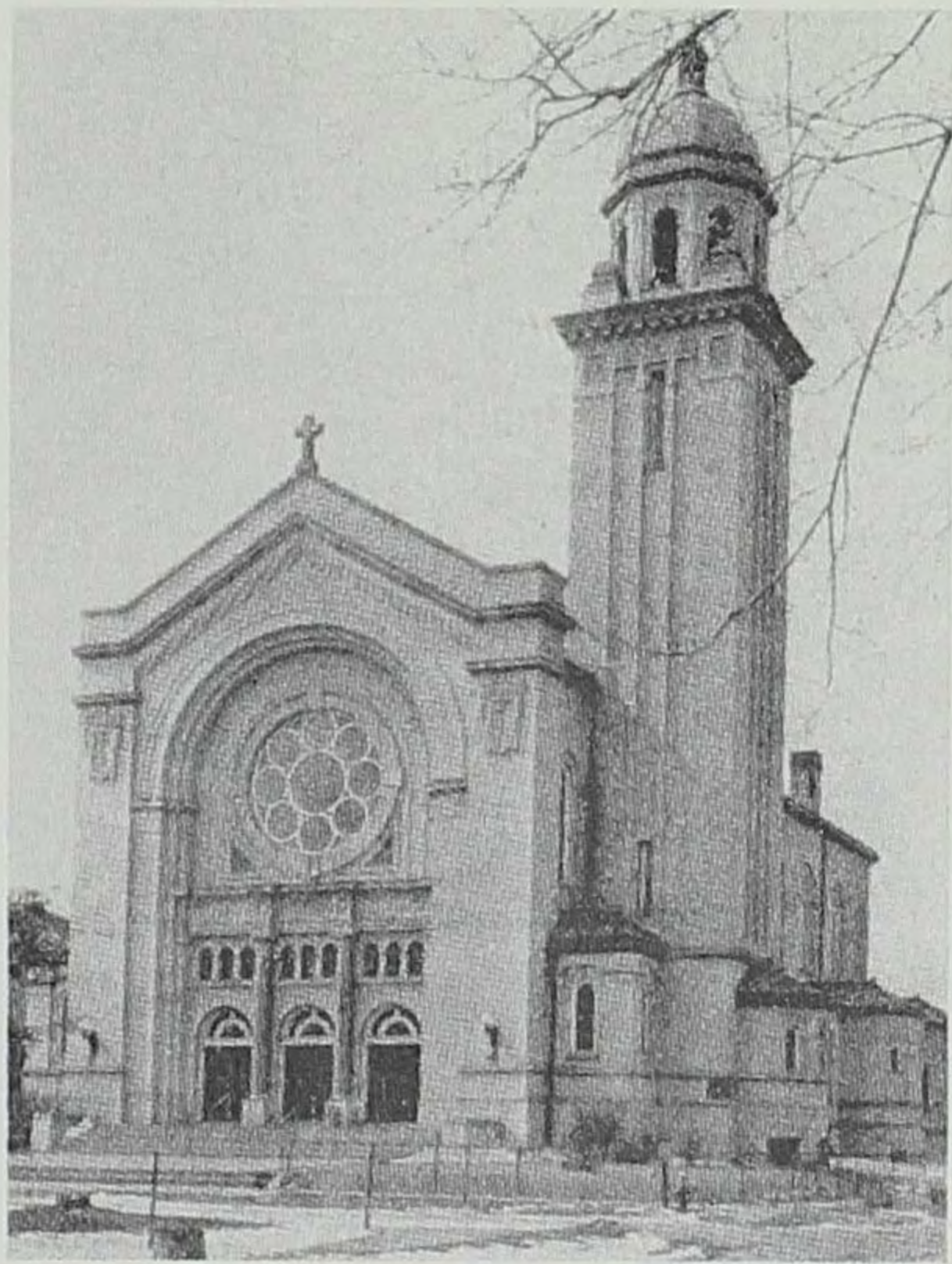


St. Patrick's at Cedar Rapids.

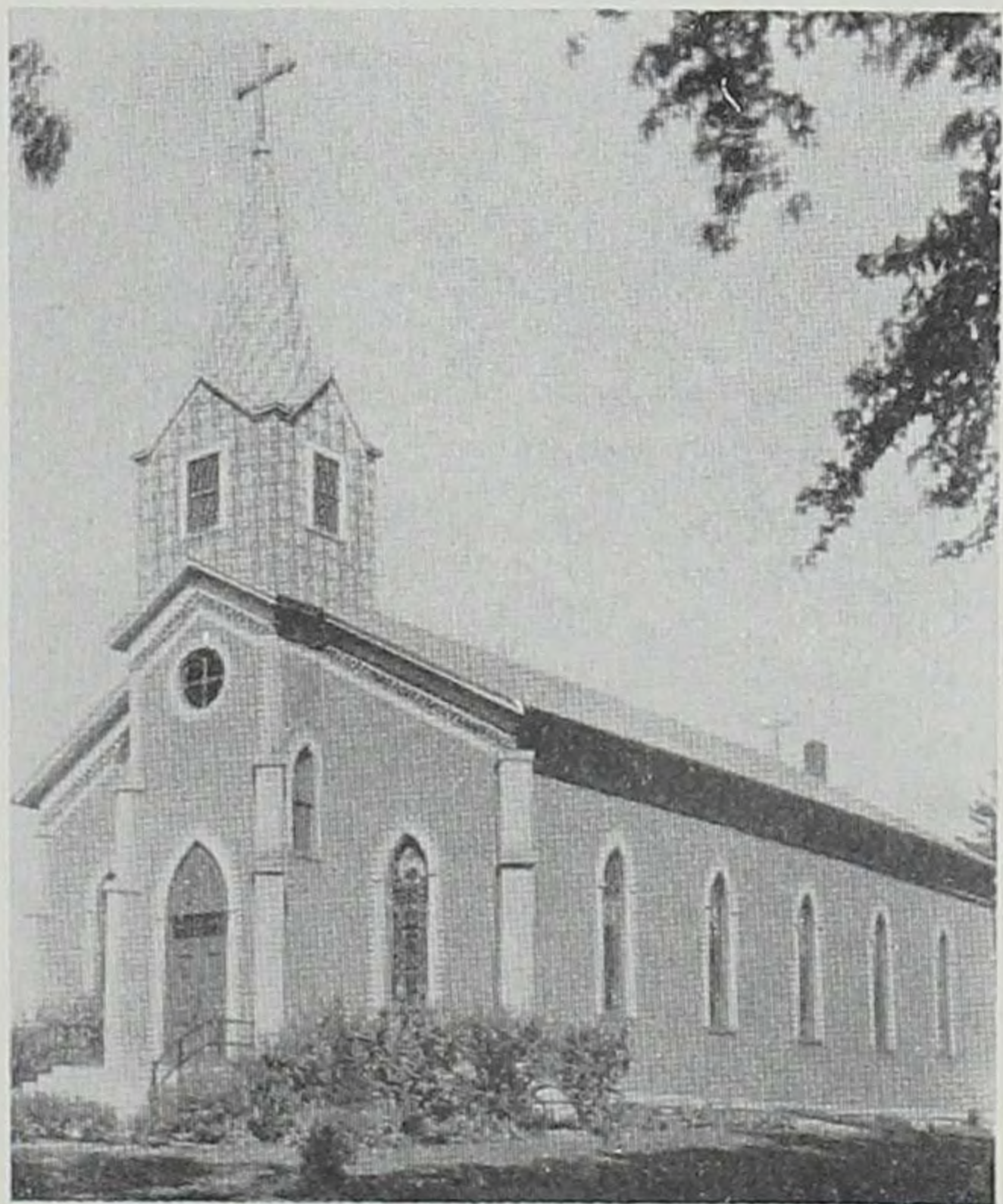




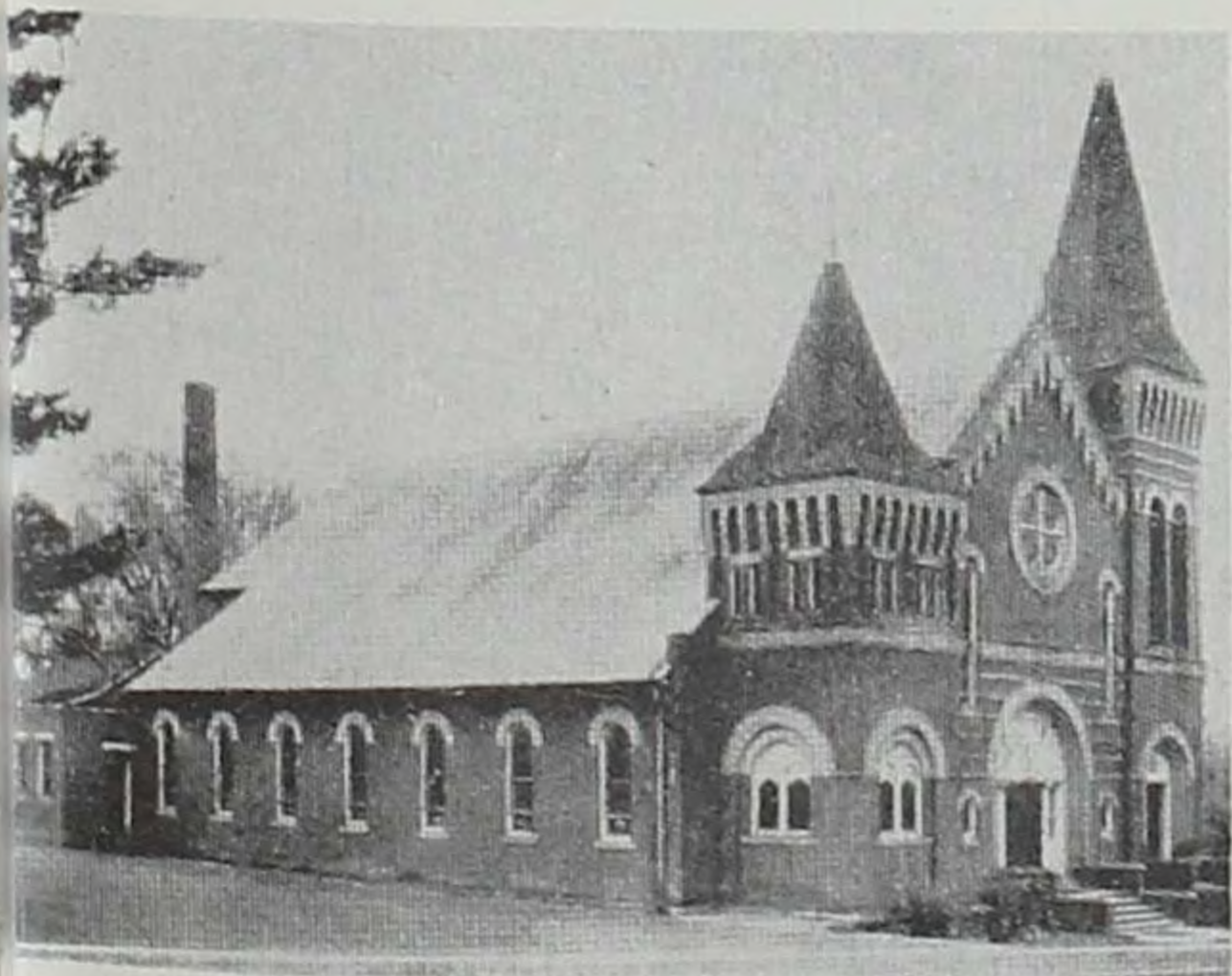
St. Patrick's at Waukon.



St. Patrick's at Garryowen.

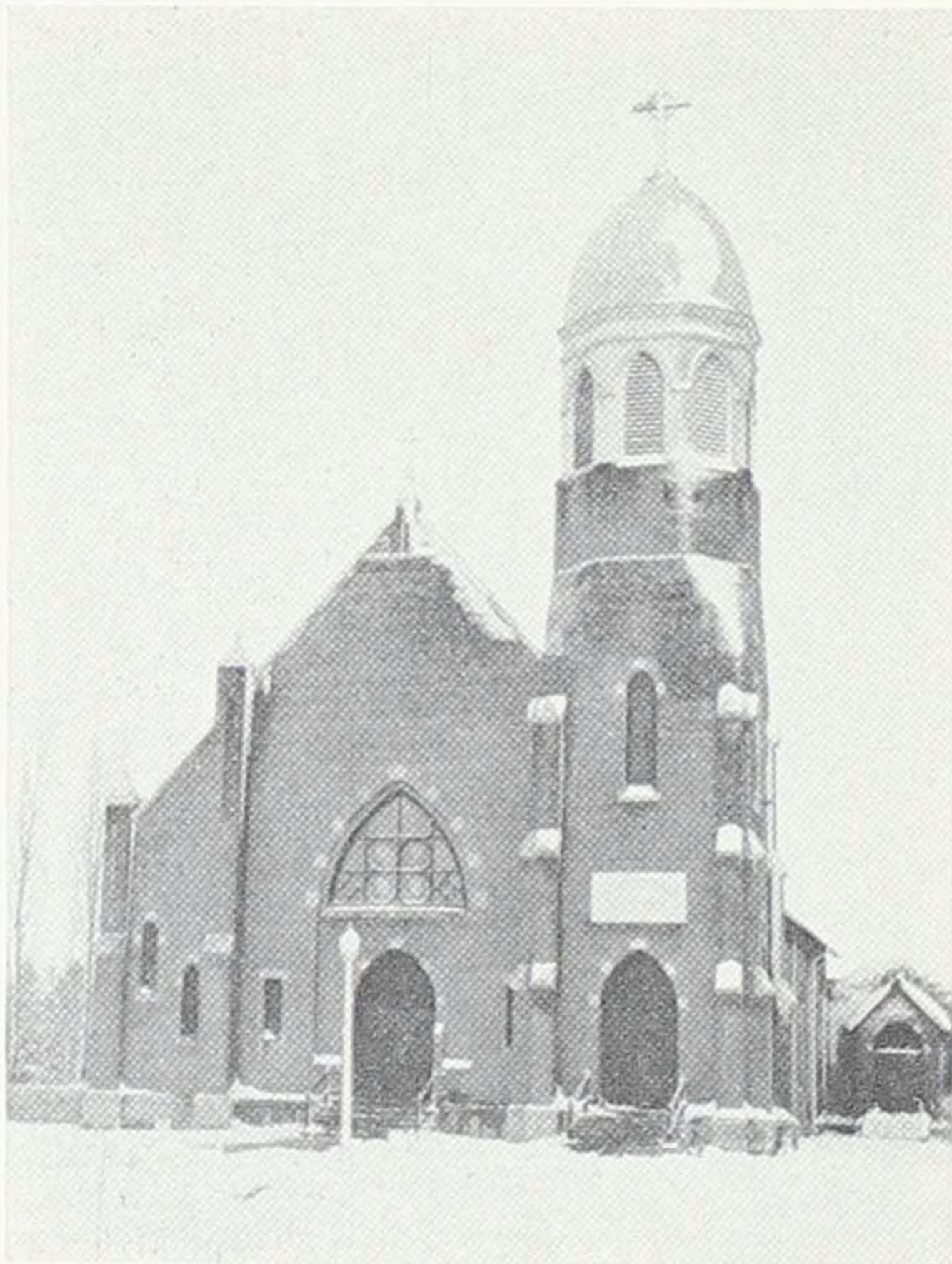


St. Patrick's at Monona.

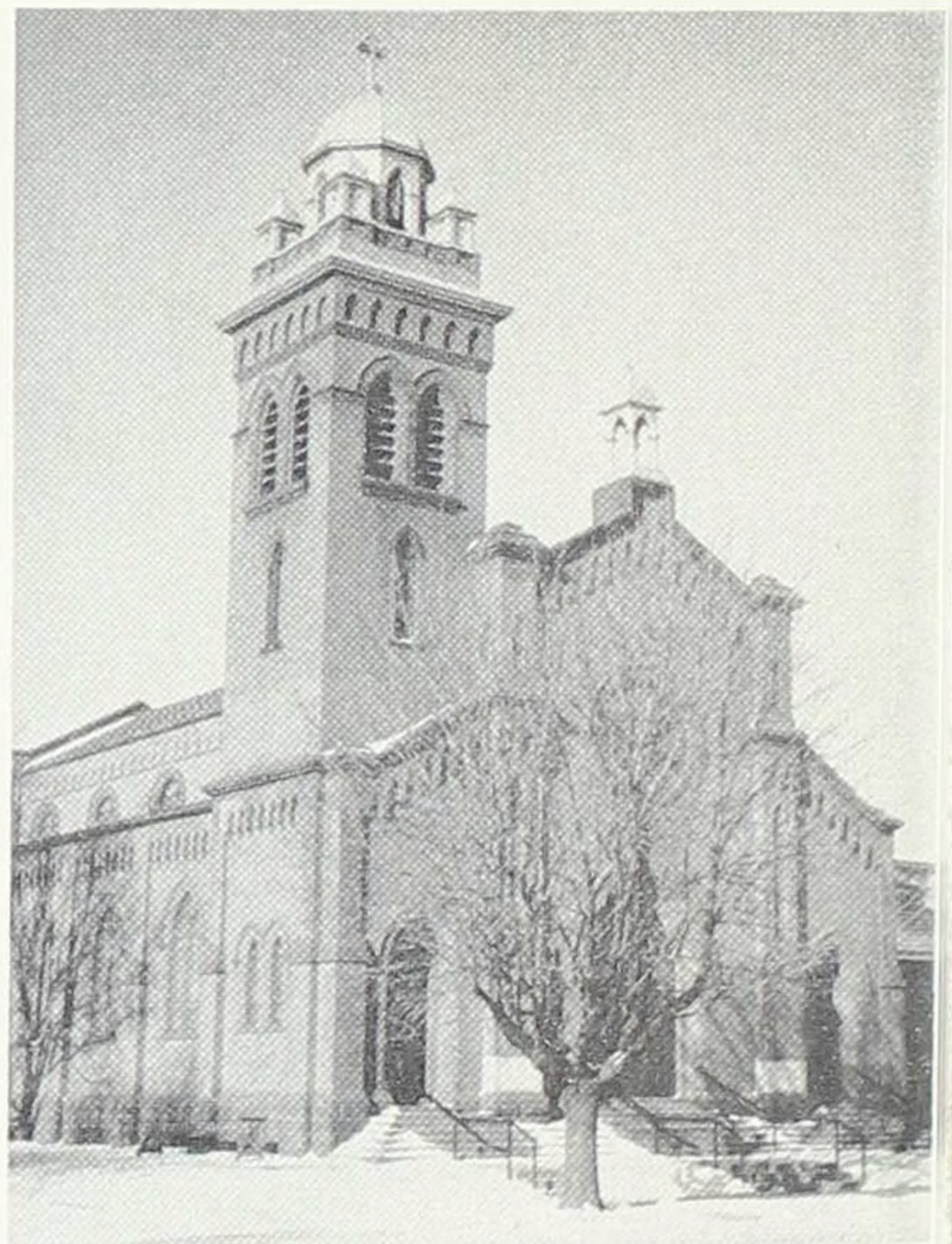


From M. M. Hoffmann's *Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque*.  
St. Patrick's at Tama.

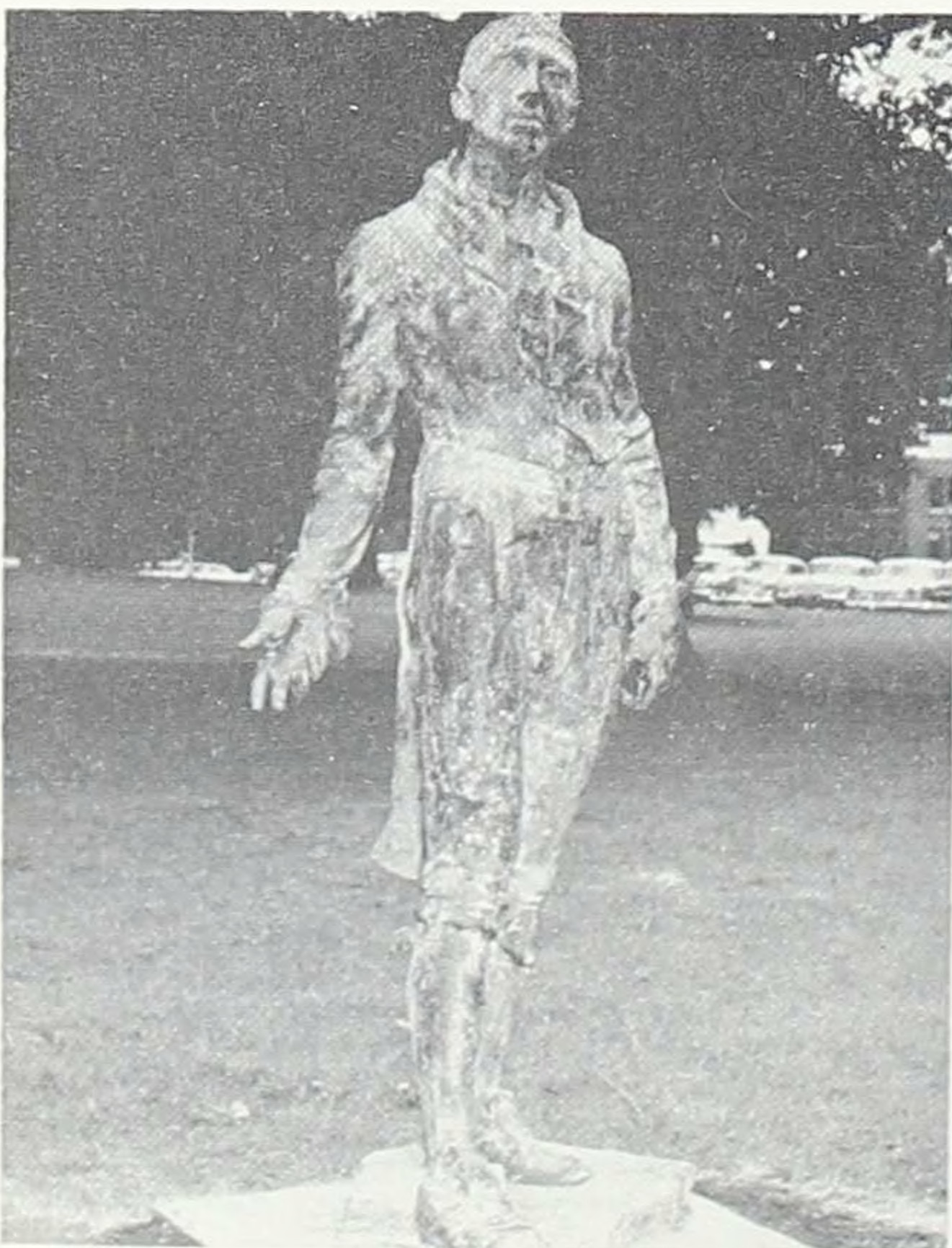




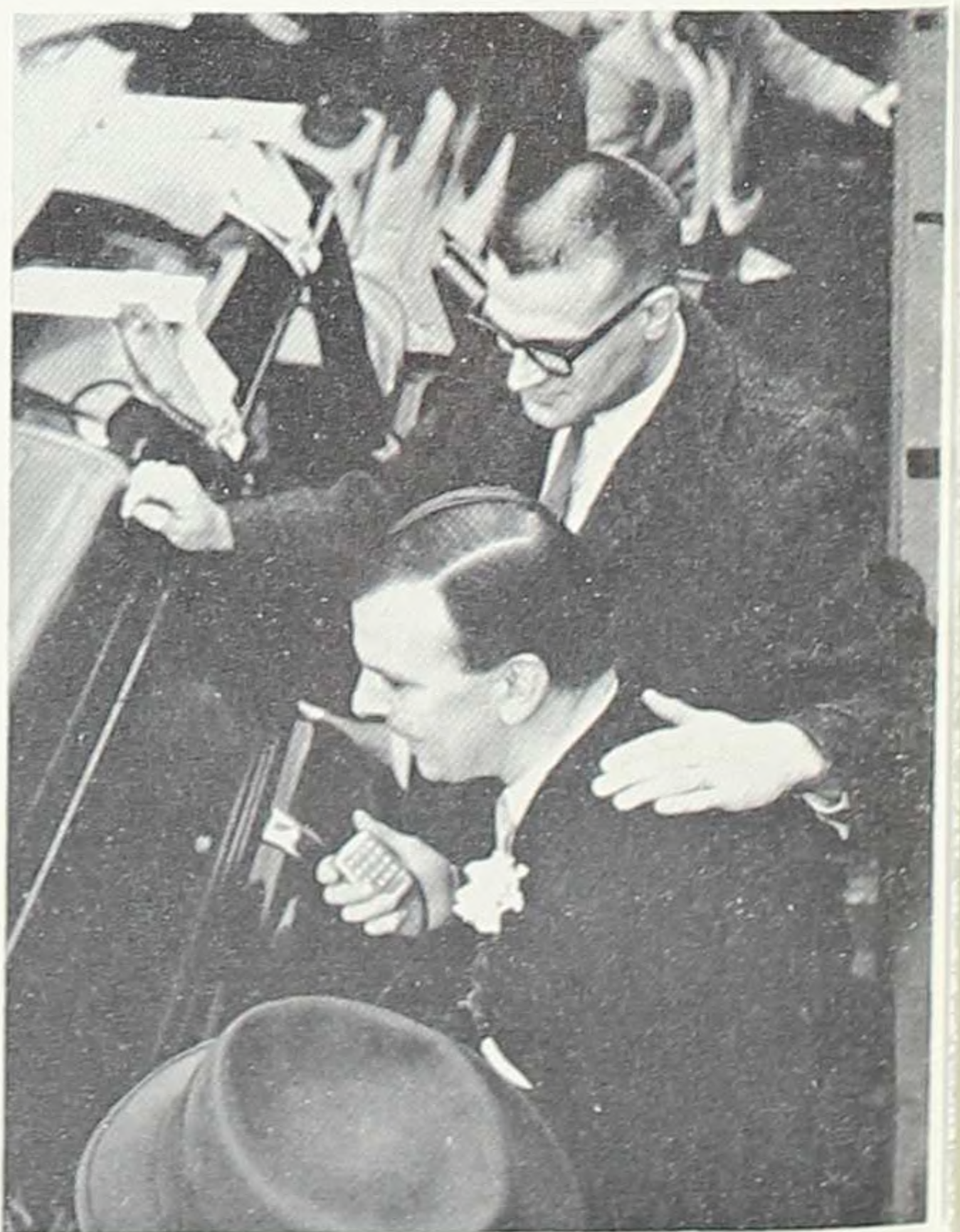
Assumption at Emmetsburg.  
Founded by Irish priest — 1871.



St. Thomas at Emmetsburg.  
First priest from Ireland — 1905.



Statue to Robert Emmet,  
Court House Square, Emmetsburg.



Noel Lemass, Member Irish Parliament, at Emmetsburg March 17, 1963.

Courtesy Nicholson Studios



## The Irish in Politics

### *American Politics*

Irishmen were lured into American politics early. The Irish peasant found it easy to follow the political boss and take an active role.

As early as 1840 the Whigs and Democrats were vying for the foreigners' vote in Iowa. The *Iowa Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser* wrote:

*Germans and Irishmen* of Iowa! will you, with evidence such as is here given of the desire of the Whigs to DEPRIVE YOU OF THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE, lend your assistance in elevating them to power? If you do, you will have yourselves alone to blame — upon your own heads will rest the consequences.

Colonel Richard M. Johnson, Vice President under Van Buren, was quoted as saying:

The adopted Irishman — a good man, wherever you find him. *Sons of the Emerald Isle!* Listen to what this . . . war worn veteran says to you, and remember that although purse proud aristocracy may assail you, while democracy continues in the ascendant your rights will suffer no curtailment.

In 1847 a letter writer from Agency City thought the *Iowa Capital Reporter* (Iowa City) was up to dirty work, slandering the Irish Catho-



lics by saying they were deserting the United States army in the war with Mexico. He warned against action. The Irish Catholics "are a hornets' nest."

By 1853 even the Democrats in eastern Iowa thought there were too many Irish on their tickets. That year the Whigs nominated J. P. Farley for Mayor of Dubuque while the Democrats nominated B. J. O'Halloran. Many split their tickets, resulting in a sweeping defeat for the Democrats.

The newspapers of different political affiliations were repeatedly trying to sway the Irish from one side or the other. The *Democratic Banner* of Davenport printed a letter from "A Foreigner" in May, 1854. He quoted the *Davenport Gazette* as saying, "This city contains all kinds of people and from all nations of the human race, and some that are scarcely human, among whom are some of the wild red-mouthed Irish, with hair on their teeth, that are a pest to society." The correspondent asked if the "suffering sons of Erin after having been trampled upon" in Ireland were to be met by this type of "sympathy" in America.

That some of them are poor and miserable, of coarse appearance, and perhaps still coarser manners, no one denies, but shall they be taunted with their poverty and misery because forsooth their *dress* is not quite so *refined* and the *hand* not quite as *soft* as that of Mr. Alfred Sanders [editor of the *Gazette*] and his immaculate correspondent?

In Garryowen the Catholic Irish, it was said,



refused to permit any but "whole-hog democrats" to settle there. It was also claimed that the only one who could read and write was the postmaster. It was alleged that he determined who should be voted for on election day and thus frequently helped to elect Democratic candidates.

In 1855 A. R. Colton was running against Hiram Price for judge of the 8th judicial district. Knowing the Irish hostility to the Know Nothings, an opponent of Colton went to Garryowen and told them Colton was a Know Nothing. The Irish decided that "divil a vote for Colton" would be cast. Colton's protests did no good; the Irish did not vote for judge at all, and Price was elected.

Political rallies were frequently humorous events. At a rally in 1858 in the Irish Settlement in Madison County, B. F. Roberts and H. J. B. Cummings, prominent Republicans, were the speakers. The rally was held under a large black walnut tree on the farm of John Holton. As Cummings was speaking on the political issues of the day, some wag climbed the low hanging branches of the tree and beckoned for others. Soon all were hidden among the branches and Cummings had to finish his speech to a few women.

The Des Moines *Daily State Register* in 1867 was attempting to win Irish to the Republican party. In an editorial, it commented, "How an Irishman, whose whole life is an impulsive throb of enthusiasm and radicalism, can chain himself up to



the slow car of a conservative party [Democrats] is surely a mystery."

In 1868 new legislation regarding registration of voters was being considered. The *Register* felt that a primary declaration of intention to become citizens did not answer for final and complete naturalization. "It has been intimated," the editor asserted, "that the Democrats expect to make a gain in the 5th District, by the Irish laborers that may be employed on the railroad." The editor agreed this was all right if the Irish were regularly naturalized and long-time citizens of Iowa. Otherwise, the proof should be clear beyond doubt, "in all cases of new names and new faces of day laborers who claim naturalization and residence."

During the presidential campaign the *Register* alleged that the Davenport *Democrat*, the Burlington *Argus* and other newspapers are "frantically endeavoring to prejudice the foreign element of the voting class in their regions against Colfax by falsely charging him with having been a Know Nothing," which was proved false a long time since. The editor asked why they didn't say something about Clagett being a leader of the Know Nothings. "The German and Irish voters of the first District would like to know something about that."

The campaign was marked with vigorous attempts to win Irish votes. The *Register* thought Irishmen would do well to remember the speech



made in 1866 by Frank P. Blair, Democratic candidate for Vice President.

At the time that many Irishmen were leaving the United States for Ireland, Frank happened to be on a little bender, when he made the following speech: "Good-by, Finnegans. You go out with whole hides; we don't care how you come back. May you have a safe journey out; and a long one back — so long that you never get back!" And this is the man whom the Democracy presents for the suffrages of Irishmen! We imagine they won't take him down in very large doses!

On October 17 the *Register* again quoted Blair's speech. A letter of Schuyler Colfax, Republican candidate for Vice President, was also quoted. He had sent \$20 to the Fenian cause since he regarded "hopefully every well-directed and patriotic endeavor throughout the world for nationality" and rejoiced "that so many loyal Irishmen had enrolled themselves in the Army of the Union, to save their adopted country from anarchy and destruction."

A few years later the *Register* quoted the *Irish World* in a further attempt to persuade the Irish to become Republicans. The Republican party "has treated the negroes as men, and the Democratic party has treated the Irish like niggers."

In the election of 1892 the tariff was the issue used by Republicans to appeal for Irish votes in Iowa. Republican newspapers quoted English papers which stated that the McKinley tariff was ruining English industries.



The Irish were urged to vote against the Democratic party which stood for "English free trade" and "prosperity for England." The London *Times* was quoted as saying, "one Irishman in the United States wearing English broadcloth and voting free trade is worth more to England than fifty Irishmen at home."

In 1931 Iowa was faced with redistricting for Congressional elections. Otha D. Wearin commented at Cedar Falls that the Democratic party strength might suffer from mixing Dubuque County Irish Catholics with German Protestants in Scott and Clinton counties. C. F. Clark, representing Linn County in the Iowa Senate, opposed any bill which would place his home area in the same district as Dubuque, Scott, Clinton and Jackson counties. "The proposed second district is as wet as the Mississippi River. To win election to Congress in it, a man would have to speak four languages, English, German, Bohemian and Irish."

#### *British-Irish Politics*

Iowa newspapers frequently took the side of Ireland in Anglo-Irish conflicts. The *Iowa State Gazette* of Burlington reported Irish news extensively in 1848. The editor wrote:

Our prayers, our hopes, our wishes and aspirations are with that gallant nation so long the victim of the merciless tyranny of England. That she may be free is the universal prayer of the people of this continent.



Although the number of Irish in Iowa had diminished during the Twentieth Century, interest in Ireland did not decrease. In February, 1919, the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Polk County was associated with the Federation of Friends of Irish Freedom. In a petition signed by John P. O'Malley, M. T. Scanlon and others, the United States was asked to intercede with Great Britain for the freedom and independence of Ireland.

Their plea was based first on the United States being the champion of true democracy; second, all nations are entitled to the rights of self-determination; third, President Wilson had stated no country should be governed without their consent; fourth, Ireland had suffered much because of their love for freedom; fifth, returning American soldiers had waged war for the same principle; and finally, the United States "has always been . . . on friendly terms with Ireland."

#### *The Fenians*

The Fenians were organized in the 1860's to destroy English rule in Ireland by force of arms and to establish an Irish republic. Following the Civil War, Irish started Fenian movements in many Iowa localities. In April, 1866, a Fenian meeting was held in Des Moines where "Ireland is pretty largely represented" and where the movement "has many ardent and working friends."

The *Iowa State Register* was very pro-Irish and anti-British at this time.



The British Lion has a lively and extensive tail, but there is an excellent prospect of having it pulled out by the roots before the Fenian excitement shall have dropped dead.

A few days later it was announced that J. F. Barrett and Dr. C. C. McGovern were to speak on "Fenians and the Freedom of Ireland." "Go and hear what the champions of Irish liberty have to say." Barrett and McGovern, the *Register* records, struck Old John Bull several times between the eyes. . . . We are inclined to think . . . that the Fenians have no great measure of affection for England: — We can't blame them much; for it is impossible to tell just now what particular benefaction, except starvation and misgovernment, have been conferred by J.B. on the Emerald Isle.

The Fenians in Des Moines were described as "active, working men whose interest in Irish independence is no mawkish, sentimental affair!" They were so enthusiastic that many felt the organization would last until it gave the English "the almightiest scare, or flogging which it has received since the days of Washington and Patrick Henry!" When conflict broke out in Ireland, newspapers urged: "Fenians, go in!"

We prefer the Irish flag to the British Lion. — We'll go for Limerick before we shall go for perfidious Albion! Our voice is for war, for Tipperary, and for Irish Independence! If Brittannia rules the waves, the Fenians are in fair way to rule the Canadas. Success to 'em!

The Fenian attempt to invade Canada led to other editorials:



The Fenians are undoubtedly a sort of judgment seat sent by Heaven to punish the read-coats [sic] for their hypocrisy and rascality during our late Civil War, and we are disposed to accept their dispensation of Providence with the most devout resignation. We hope Gen. Grant and the State Executives on this side of the line will just keep hands off, and let the young gentlemen with the shillalahs slosh around on Canadian soil to their hearts' content.

The movement spread throughout Iowa from 1866 to 1869. A Republican meeting at Norwalk in 1866 urged release of all Fenians, declaring:

We sympathize with the oppressed of every Nation or People who are struggling to be Free, and that we consider it the peculiar duty of Americans to aid, by all lawful means, the Irish, in their patriotic efforts to wrest their native land . . . from the grasp of a perfidious, hereditary, and insatiable foe.

Dr. Bell, a Fenian from Dublin, spoke at Muscatine a few weeks later. Davenport also had "a tremendous meeting" about the same time. Large Fenian demonstrations were held in Dubuque on July 4, 1866. The next year Fenians from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota held their convention in Dubuque — July 2 to 4. Social events were not overlooked. The Des Moines Fenians staged a Grand Fenian Ball on August 1, 1867.

The Sarsfield Circle of Fenians in Dubuque, of which John O'Neill was commander and John P. Quigley secretary, held at least four annual balls from 1867 to 1870. The third grand ball of 1869 was a great success. Music was furnished by a



ten piece band and a "sumptuous repast" was prepared. The price of admission was \$2.50 per couple. Receipts totaled \$575. The same year the Fenians, the German Rifles and German Turnverein, participated in Decoration Day ceremonies.

Delegates of the Fenian Brotherhood met in Dubuque again in 1868. General John O'Neill, President of the Brotherhood and Professor Brophy of Washington, D. C., were the speakers.

With such a leader [O'Neill] that wishes for independent nationality on the beautiful Isle where sleep his forefathers, who will longer hesitate to do his duty? An organizer . . . will soon visit your localities. Be prepared to labor with him in the glorious work and . . . the shout of a triumphant and victorious people will gladden the hearts of the republican world, long, long ere that world may hope for such a result.

The peak of Fenian activity in Iowa was reached by 1868 when there were about fifty circles. The Chicago *Irish Republic*, eloquent spokesman for Fenianism, had a circulation of 5,000 in Iowa. Some newspapers were not sympathetic to the movement. The *Albia Union* considered the movement humbug. On the other hand, W. S. Burke of the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* went to Canada to see the Fenian invasion firsthand.

By 1869 the movement in Iowa had waned, although it was concluded that: "Certain it is that the Irish heart was never so full of hope that Ireland is to be free as it is at the present time."



## Life Among the Irish

### *Churches and Schools*

Churches were important in the life of the early Irish in Iowa. Patrick Quigley's log house in Dubuque served as the early headquarters for priests traveling through the area in the 1830's. In 1833 masses were offered daily for a week in the home of a Mr. Brophy in Dubuque. The same year James Fanning, James McCabe, Patrick O'Mara, Thomas Fitzpatrick, and N. Gregoire were named as a committee to collect funds, choose a site and take care of all business relative to building a church.

Reverend Terence Donaghue, a native of Tyrone County, landed with five members of the Society of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin at Dubuque in May, 1843. Soon many more arrived. In June, 1845, a new site was selected at St. Joseph's Prairie, eight miles from Dubuque, and an academy was opened. From 1843 to 1865 the Sisters of Charity were largely Irish.

In 1849 Bishop Loras visited Ireland to apply for a colony of Cistercian Trappists for his diocese in eastern Iowa. In his annual report he wrote:

We have been fortunate enough to secure from Ireland a community of Trappists which numbers 25 members, and



which will soon count 100. They have opened a school and they will bring upon our mission the most abundant blessings from Heaven by their prayer and angelic life.

By September of the next year New Melleray, named after Mt. Melleray in Ireland, was well started. A two story, large frame building was erected. The monastery owned 1,560 acres, 160 of it timber and about two hundred acres fenced and in cultivation. They expected to have three hundred acres under cultivation the next year. Education, religion and morality were taught in the boys' school.

The Trappists ate no flesh, fish, butter or eggs. Meals were simple, often consisting of cornmeal pudding or "stir-about," molasses, bread and coffee. When they arose at 2 a.m.,

The plains and prairie of Iowa, whose nocturnal stillness was broken only by the song-notes of the whippewill or the howl of the wolf, now resound with the matin hymns, Kyrielisons, Glorias, Credos, Hosannas, Te Deums and Allaluias, from the lips and hearts of those pious souls more like angels than mortal men.

#### *Visiting Speakers*

Lecturers frequently came to Iowa to speak on behalf of the Irish and Ireland. One of the first was Thomas F. Meagher, who was later the commander of the famous 69th Regiment from New York during the Civil War. He spoke in Dubuque during June, 1857, on "Royalty and Republicanism" and on the life of Daniel O'Connell.



During 1869 Mrs. Rossa, wife of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, one of the Fenian leaders, came to Dubuque to give her readings. She was warmly welcomed and "made to feel that here are a class of people who can sympathize with her in the noble efforts she is making for the redemption of her native land."

On October 30, 1878, Michael Davitt, Irish nationalist, appeared at Globe Hall, Dubuque. After being introduced by Alderman O'Neill, Davitt appealed to all Americans to be sympathetic and give active aid to the Irish. "His remarks had a good effect and will win sympathy for the land all Irishmen love and all true Americans would love to see free," reported the *Dubuque Daily Herald*. Late the next year Wendell Phillips lectured to a large Dubuque audience on Daniel O'Connell.

In 1879 Charles Parnell was traveling in the United States, speaking on behalf of Ireland. On New Year's Eve a group of Irish and their sympathizers met in Des Moines. They formed a temporary organization which, on January 3, 1880, became the Irish Relief Association. They made plans to raise funds by staging the production, "Robert Emmet." On January 15 a committee composed of N. S. McDonnell, John Hughes and J. S. McCormick, was empowered to go to Chicago and make every effort to secure Parnell as a speaker in Des Moines.

Arrangements were made for Parnell and John



Dillon to speak in Dubuque. They were met at McGregor by a special committee, J. K. Graves, F. T. Walker, Fred O'Donnell and G. B. Busch. Hayden's Battery fired a salute at Eagle Point when their train appeared. In Dubuque they were received with great ceremony and escorted to the Julian House. A packed room welcomed them that night at the opera house. Parnell's address was "especially pleasing." Receipts amounted to \$743.10, with a net of \$637.50.

Meanwhile, other cities were making plans to raise money for one or both funds — the Irish Land League and the suffering poor fund. In the course of a few weeks Sioux City raised a total of \$1,014, Council Bluffs, \$700, Cedar Rapids, \$1,100, Charles City, nearly \$200 and Dubuque, \$3,700.

In December, 1881, the Honorable T. P. O'Connor, Irish envoy, spoke to another capacity crowd in the Dubuque opera house.

#### *Amusements and Celebrations*

The Irish were always looking for amusement and participating in celebrations. At the Fourth of July celebration held in 1834, Nicholas Carroll, an Irishman, was allegedly the first to fly the United States flag in Iowa. He paid \$10 for the flag which was made by a slave under the supervision of Eliphalet Price.

Charles Corkery opened the Shakespeare Coffee House in Dubuque in 1837. It became famous



for its convivial meetings and parties. He kept a file of newspapers from all parts of the country and various liquors for which his guests had a special desire.

St. Patrick's Day was frequently celebrated in Iowa cities. As early as 1838 it was observed at the Jefferson Hotel in Dubuque. In 1859 Keokuk celebrated at the St. Charles Hotel with President McCune presiding. Appropriate sentiments were expressed by Governor Law, General Van Antwerp, T. W. Cloggett and others. It was a "most successful and interesting party."

The Irish were at special events, too. When the cornerstone of Iowa's new capitol was laid in November, 1871, the United Sons of Erin was one of only two societies who participated in the parade that day. When Burlington celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 1, 1883, the Ancient Order of Hibernians took part in a big parade.

The Irish frequently engaged in athletics. A baseball club, the Red Stockings, was organized in Dubuque in 1878. It was one of the best clubs in the West, and even better in 1879. O'Rourke was the pitcher. Irish occupied most of the other positions on the team. On the roster we find Burns, Brady, Comiskey, Byrne, Sullivan, Cooney and Phalen.

#### *Crimes and Disturbances*

The Irish were sometimes involved in crimes and disturbances. Patrick O'Connor was prob-



ably the first. He was born in Cork in 1797 and came to the United States in 1826. Soon he arrived at Galena and started mining. In 1828 he fractured his leg which had to be amputated. The Galena citizens subscribed liberal sums for his support, although he was a known brawler and had a quarrelsome disposition.

Later he tried to receive further benefits from public charity by setting fire to his cabin. After being exposed by John Brophy, a respectable Galena merchant, O'Connor left Galena and came to the Dubuque mines in the fall of 1833.

He entered into a mining partnership with George O'Keaf, also Irish. O'Keaf found the door to their cabin locked one day and O'Connor would not open it. When O'Keaf forced the door, O'Connor shot and killed him. On May 20, 1834, the first trial for murder was held at Dubuque. Among the jurors were three Irish. A unanimous death sentence was agreed to by the jury.

There was no objection to the decision until Reverend Fitzmaurice, the Catholic priest of Galena, denounced it as illegal. He sought to alienate the feelings of the Irish people from support of public justice. A few days before the time for execution there was a rumor that two hundred Irish from Mineral Point were on the way to rescue O'Connor. However, he was executed June 20, 1834, without incident.

Disturbances involving the Irish occurred in



Iowa at an early date. Sundays in Dubuque were usually days of strife in the 1830's. Main Street was generally a field of combat between the Catholic Irish and the Orangemen.

The first district court in Fremont County was held by Judge McKay in 1850. James Sloan, an Irishman, presented his professional credentials and certificate of citizenship. He was permitted to take his place at the bar as an attorney.

Sloan became the next district judge and soon began to make arbitrary rulings. Before long he had made himself exceedingly unpopular with the citizens and the Bar. At one time A. M. Brown, a lawyer, was overruled on some points of law he had made. Brown referred Sloan to the Code. Sloan replied, "Go to hell with your *cud* Mr. Brown. I carry the *cud* in my head." It was decided that such lack of judicial dignity and courtesy entitled the court to the rite of "baptism." Only prompt interference by Stephen Cromwell, deputy sheriff, prevented Sloan from getting a ducking. Before long Sloan resigned.

On December 31, 1857, some Germans were holding a ball at the Western Brewery Hall in Dubuque when several Irish appeared. They began to make themselves "pretty free" with the dance and fights began. During the fights Thomas Gairnor was killed and his brother Philip mortally wounded. Two other Irish were injured by glass bottles or other sharp instruments.



One editor commented when several Germans were arrested for murder:

The Irish are notoriously fond of a little excitement even though it may promise a broken head or two, or some other equally unpleasant result. The Gainors and their noisy companions had no business at the ball, and if we were a jurymen we would be slow to convict any man who was repelling an attack upon his castle. The assumption on the part of a mob "to break up" what they cannot participate in, to come prowling around your house with tin horns and bells, . . . is practised too much in our country, and the sooner it is stopped . . . the better it will be for decent people and for blackguards also.

Grove City was the scene of a lynching in Cass County. In 1868 Michael Kelly, a rough character who kept a saloon, shot and killed Thomas Curran, an industrious Irishman, apparently without cause. Kelly was found three days later in a cornfield in Bear Grove Township. He was bound over to a grand jury following a midnight hearing. Less than one-half hour after he was left in the custody of two guards at the hotel, a dozen masked men took Kelly by force and hanged him to a nearby tree.

In Davenport, on October 14, 1871, Dr. George F. Lyon was fatally stabbed by Dennis Delaney, an Irishman employed in the railroad shops. It seems that Delaney's dog had been poisoned. Delaney charged Lyon with doing it. On October 11 it happened to another dog. On the 14th, when the fire alarm sounded, Dr. Lyon went out on his



porch to see where the fire was. Delaney came by and accused him of killing his dog. He told Lyon to bury it within five minutes. Lyon denied the crime, and Delaney stabbed him.

Newspapers, then and now, were inclined to emphasize such deeds of violence while ignoring the many constructive and worthwhile contributions of the vast body of Irishmen in Iowa. On farm and in city, in every walk of life, the sturdy sons of Erin provided the brains and native ingenuity as well as the brawn and sinews that have made them true "Builders of the Hawkeye State."

#### *Irish Labor*

Many of the Irish coming to Iowa were stone masons, railroad workers and others who added to the labor force. Among the contractors for this type of work was James McNamara in Keokuk. He got contracts for cutting through the streets in the old city of Keokuk and later built the yards for the Wabash Railway. The dike, which is the Illinois approach to Keokuk, and the Hamilton bridge were also constructed by him.

Lawrence Guggerty formed a company in Monroe County with Luke O'Brien in 1857. They contracted to construct sixty miles of railroad bed in the vicinity of Ottumwa. Morris Moriarty first worked on railroad construction and later engaged in mercantile pursuits at Agency and then Ottumwa.

In 1866 considerable progress had been made in



building the Des Moines Valley Railroad, but not rapidly enough to please all. The Des Moines *Register* urged its early completion: "The last intermediate station has been reached! Put out your engineer corps! — Call Ireland to the rescue! Shovel and pick-ax, do your duty! Sixteen miles from Des Moines!"

The next year Irish laborers were working along the west bank of the Coon River. They built shanties and were preparing for the extension of the roadbed of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad.

#### *Miscellaneous*

The first child baptized after Iowa was opened for settlement was at Dubuque on July 10, 1833. Henry, son of Patrick and Mary Sullivan Monaghan, was baptized by Father Charles Felix Quickenborne.

At a monthly meeting of the Catholic Temperance Society of Dubuque in March, 1840, over three hundred, including many ladies, attended. Nineteen took the pledge. The next year it was reported that there was a complete temperance reformation in Dubuque. It was effected by zealous Catholic clergy "among its much-abused Irish citizens in whose hands the glass has given place to implements of industry." A few years later contributions were taken up in Iowa for a fund to support Father Mathew's temperance movement.

To many Irishmen, American citizenship was a



prized possession. On June 1, 1841, the first naturalization papers were issued in Johnson County. They were granted to fourteen Irish — James Wicks, John Mullin, Hugh Deen, Harmon Luken, Francis Kerr, Patrick Smith, Jeremiah Driskel, Michael Keff, William Croty, Andrew McWilliams, John Hurley, John Conway, James Roach and John Conboy.

Soon after the outbreak of the Civil War an attempt was made to raise a separate Irish Regiment at Burlington. The reason given was to allow the Irish to have a chaplain of their own faith.

The next year an attempt was made to establish a regiment to serve in General Michael Corcoran's Brigade. John O'Neill, J. J. Lambert and James O'Grady were commissioned to raise a company for it in Dubuque. When the Irish regiment was first talked of, Dennis Mahoney was willing to assist. When it was decided that George M. O'Brien should be Colonel of the regiment, Mahoney's ardor cooled noticeably. At the same time John Sexton and Patrick McGavock of Independence were engaged in getting up a company for this regiment.

Iowans were aware of Irish destitution brought on by the famine. Newspapers in 1847 reprinted a letter from the Mayor of Cork to President Polk regarding the need for relief. The next year, continued poor crops caused one editor to write that "the people of the United States will, of course,



again be called upon for assistance." An editorial entitled "Poor Ireland," which appeared in the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* in June, 1849, gave a report on the latest death and destitution in Ireland. "Shame on England, with all its wealth, to permit such desolation. Let America again lend a helping hand to starving Ireland. We have enough and to spare."

Opposition to Irishmen was evident in many ways. In 1866 the Des Moines *Iowa State Register* had an article on the names of Iowa's counties. The writer concluded that the worst named county, "not even excepting Jones," was Mitchell County. He continued:

"It was named after the braggart Irishman, John Mitchell, who after being kindly and even warmly received in this country, turned around and did what he could to fan the flames of sedition in the South. . . . If we lived in Mitchell county, we wouldn't rest till the disgrace was wiped out and the county named after a decent man."



## Builders of the Hawkeye State

Not all Irish who came to Iowa remained in relative obscurity. Many gained local prominence. Goodly numbers won important positions and became known throughout the state and nation. As lawyers and politicians, as educators, doctors, and clergymen, as professional athletes, successful farmers, and captains of industry, the Irish of Iowa forged to the forefront. The following are but a few who became noted in one way or another.

Robert Fleming was born in Tyrone County in 1806. He came to the United States in 1831 and located in Davenport seven years later.

Fleming brought a large amount of flour with him with the intention of becoming a baker in Davenport. He made only one batch of bread and decided to follow some other business. Flour was a scarce article at that time, and the large amount he had left was in great demand. He refused to sell more than a limited amount to any one family. When someone asked for flour, Fleming asked how many were in the family. He then sold only a certain number of pounds for each individual. When he finished selling his flour, he bought a piece of land in Davenport Township. He farmed a few years and then went to Wapello County.



Alexander Reed was also born in Tyrone County. He came to America with his brother Thomas in 1826 when he was twenty-two. Reed landed in New York, went on to Philadelphia and then to Virginia. He ended up in Milton, North Carolina, where he became a plantation overseer for three or four years. He worked in the gold mines for about a year and also ran a distillery. Reed came to Jo Daviess County, Illinois, and then to the Dubuque lead mines in 1833. After a few months in the mines, he settled at his home in Bellevue. He was the earliest settler in Jackson County. When he came, there was nothing but Indians and deer. The first fall and winter he killed seventy-five deer.

John Tooley was born in County Kildare on October 15, 1847. At the age of two, his parents, Peter and Ann Tooley, brought him to America. After fifteen years in or near New York City and in Columbia County, Wisconsin, the family moved to Chickasaw County. His father bought eighty acres of land at \$3.00 per acre. John taught school in Stapleton Township in 1867 for \$30.00. He continued to teach the winter term for the next ten years. In 1884 he started in the grain and livestock business at Lawler. Tooley was elected county treasurer in 1887, and in 1897 President McKinley appointed him postmaster.

James Porter was born May 15, 1861, in a thatched roof cottage near the seashore on the Island of Inch, County Derry. He emigrated with



a large party in 1866. His mother, Rebecca Creswell Porter, was treasurer of the group. While they were at Castle Garden, the port of entry in New York, all their money, which amounted to about \$800 in gold, was either stolen or lost. They finally got to Philadelphia where they remained for three years. The family heard through a friend of the advantages of Iowa. In December, 1869, they migrated to Waterloo. James' father worked on a farm at \$32 and board for three per month. Within two years he was able to buy a small farm.

James Porter, junior, gathered corn at seventy-five cents a day to be able to go to Tilford Academy. He taught school and then went to Vinton Academy and the Keokuk Business College. In 1882 he went to Sutherland, O'Brien County, to work in the lumber yard. Porter bought out the owner within a year. In 1891 he went to Reinbeck and organized the Reinbeck State Bank. The same year he started the Bank of Ocheyedan. Before long, he owned a line of lumber yards in northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota. He also had several thousand acres of Iowa and Minnesota land.

Thomas Connolly was born in Ireland March 2, 1837, and came to Jackson County in 1842. His father died when he was nine. His first money was earned by hoeing corn at twenty-five cents a day. At the age of 16 he went to Dubuque to learn the wagon and carriage building trade. Before he was 18 he was the foreman of the largest establishment



of this kind in the state. In 1858 he went into business for himself, but was burned out after two years. Almost immediately he rebuilt his plant.

The name of Connolly on a carriage "came to be a guarantee of the highest work and finest quality of workmanship." Connolly was also president of the Bank and Insurance Building Company of Dubuque and the Dubuque Fire and Marine Insurance Company.

William John Haddock was an early alumnus of the State University of Iowa. He was born near Belfast on February 28, 1835. He graduated from the Normal Department of the University in 1861 and was admitted to the practice of law the next year. In 1872 he was appointed Circuit Judge of the 8th Judicial District of Iowa. The same year he was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to a committee to investigate charges of fraud against Indian agents of the Pawnee Tribe. In 1864 he was chosen Secretary of the Board of Regents of the University.

J. M. Mulroney was born in Ireland on November 11, 1832. He came to Williamsburg, New York, when he was thirteen. He was a student and employe in a blacksmith shop while there. Then he went to Connecticut to work at farming, railroading and in the woods. In 1849 he migrated to Mineral Point, Wisconsin. For years he operated a flatboat on the Mississippi, selling cedar posts and pickets. The gold rush attracted him in



1851. He mined for gold and ran a mercantile business in California until 1857 when he returned to Iowa and settled in Palo Alto County.

During the first election in 1858, Mulroney was elected county treasurer and recorder. Later he served as justice of the peace and was named the first postmaster at Soda Bar in Palo Alto County on July 22, 1865. That same year John Mulroney traded the cattle ranch he had operated for eight years for a mercantile business in Fort Dodge. There he became interested in building the Minnesota and St. Louis Railroad and in the construction of the Mason City and Fort Dodge Railroad. He contracted to do some of the work on the latter line.

Another Irishman in Fort Dodge was Dr. William Lloyd Nicholson, who was born in Tipperary County in 1832. He attended the University of Glasgow before coming to America in 1852. He came to Iowa in 1856 with Rev. John Vehey's colony, after stops in Quebec and Lewiston, New York. In the early days he made part of his living with a fishing rod and gun. His expertness with the latter was demonstrated one afternoon along the Des Moines River when he shot 128 prairie chickens. During the Civil War Dr. Nicholson was in the 32nd Iowa Regiment. He rose in rank from 1st Lt. to Regimental Surgeon and Lt. Colonel.

Until his death in 1890, Dr. Nicholson was sur-



geon for all railroads entering Fort Dodge. He was also the examining physician for the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association of Iowa. He contributed many articles to the sports magazine, *American Field*, as well as newspapers and other periodicals. Nicholson also had considerable ability as a poet.

Samuel McNutt was born in Londonderry in 1825. He came to New Castle, Delaware, as a child. He was a graduate of Delaware College and taught at New Castle before moving to Milwaukee where he was admitted to the bar.

In 1854 McNutt came to Muscatine where he taught school and helped issue the *Voice of Iowa*, which claimed to be the first Iowa educational publication. Two years later McNutt became editor of the *Muscatine Enquirer*; later that year he became associate editor of the *Dubuque Herald*, a position he held for three years. Then, in 1861, he became editor of the *Dubuque Daily Union*. He served as state representative for six years and as state senator for four years. He was a candidate for state treasurer in 1872 but was defeated by the railroad interests. He was appointed United States Consul to Maracaibo in 1890. Later he was judge of the municipal court of Muscatine.

Dennis A. Mahoney was born in Ireland in 1821. When ten years old he came to Philadelphia where he read law. In 1843 he moved to Dubuque and continued his law studies with Davis



and Crawford. During 1844 and 1845 he taught at the cathedral in Dubuque. Mahoney opened an academy at Garryowen in 1845. He was also postmaster and justice of the peace. Two years later he was admitted to the bar and could appear before the Supreme Court in Iowa City.

In 1848 Dennis Mahoney was elected as a representative to the Iowa state legislature from the district composed of Jackson and Jones counties. He was named chairman of the House Committee on Schools where he helped to draft the bill which became the Public School Law of Iowa.

Mahoney's work as a state legislator, as treasurer and later sheriff of Dubuque County, and as an articulate Democratic editor who opposed Lincoln and the Civil War, are well-known chapters in Iowa history. After serving five years as editor of the *St. Louis Times*, he returned to the *Daily Telegraph* at Dubuque where he died in 1879.

Thomas Cavanagh was a native of Galway who came with his father to Iowa in 1849. The Cavanaghs owned extensive land holdings in Ireland, the money from which they invested largely in Iowa lands. Thomas Cavanagh owned 1,500 acres in one body in Dallas County and extensive holdings in Greene, Boone, Carroll, Sac, Calhoun, Story, Dubuque and Polk counties. He laid out the town of New Ireland which the General Assembly renamed Redfield. His headquarters were in Redfield until he removed to Des Moines where



he was engaged as an attorney, real estate broker, and immigrant agent. His popularity led to his election as Mayor of Des Moines in 1862. One contemporary described him as "a fair type of the successful business men of the West."

Luke Shay, a prominent farmer and livestock buyer in Ringgold County, was born in Ireland in 1824. One month after his marriage to Julia Whelan, he sailed from Liverpool and landed in New York on May 10, 1848. After brief sojourns in Clarke and Union counties, he settled in Ringgold County where, after giving 200-acre farms to each of his children, he still had a 700-acre well-cultivated farm. His shipments of cattle and hogs amounted to 150 car-loads annually in the 1880's. His children inherited his industrious qualities and a grandson, Luke Hart, became Supreme Knight, or National head, of the Knights of Columbus.

John Brennan, who was born in Roscommon County in 1845, came to America in 1865, friendless and penniless. While working four years as a laborer, he studied law at night in Omaha. However, he became too deaf to plead cases before a jury. In 1869 he became a reporter for the *Sioux City Daily Times*. Brennan was an effective speaker, "especially when dealing with England's treatment of Ireland." He served as a campaign orator with Blaine in 1884. Later he became associated with Patrick Egan and John P. Finnerty in Irish meetings throughout the United States.



Brennan wrote a pamphlet, "The Irish-American Citizen, His Rights and Duties in American Politics," in 1866. He claimed that the Democrats asked the Irish to battle for "personal liberty" which means "liberty of the saloon." "This saloon institution is the crowning curse of our race in this country," he wrote. He thought no respectable Irishman should be engaged in the liquor traffic.

In his later years he gave much of his time to *The Northwestern Catholic*, published at Sioux City. Brennan died in Sioux City in 1900.

Henry O'Connor was born in Dublin in 1820 and died at the Soldiers' Home in Marshalltown in 1900. He received his early education at Tullow by private instruction from the monks. He came to the United States when twenty. He learned the tailor's trade in New York City. Then he moved to Cincinnati where he studied law and was admitted to the bar.

O'Connor came to Muscatine in 1849 where he was an anti-slavery Whig and later Republican. Soon he became a very popular orator. In 1858 he was elected District Attorney. O'Connor enlisted as a private in Co. A, First Iowa Infantry. He was in the Battle of Wilson's Creek. Upon returning home, receptions were given for the regiment in many towns. "Private O'Connor" had the responsibility of replying in each case. Before long Governor Kirkwood appointed him Major of the 35th Iowa Infantry Regiment.



Henry O'Connor, who was appointed Attorney General of Iowa in 1867, was constantly carrying the flag of Republicanism in the Midwest. During the presidential campaign of 1868 he spoke at Peoria in behalf of the Republican ticket. "The little Irishman covered himself with glory, and won universal praise."

On July 5, 1869, the National Irish Republican Convention met in Chicago. Des Moines newspapers noted that O'Connor was to be there and would take "a distinguished part in the deliberations." He became a member of the National Executive Committee although Michael Scanlon of New York defeated him as chairman by two votes.

O'Connor was equal to any situation. During a political rally in Clinton one man became offensive in questions he directed at O'Connor. Finally he started to assault O'Connor. Others started to interfere, but O'Connor said, "Do not stop him; let him come on. I think I have shot better men than he is."

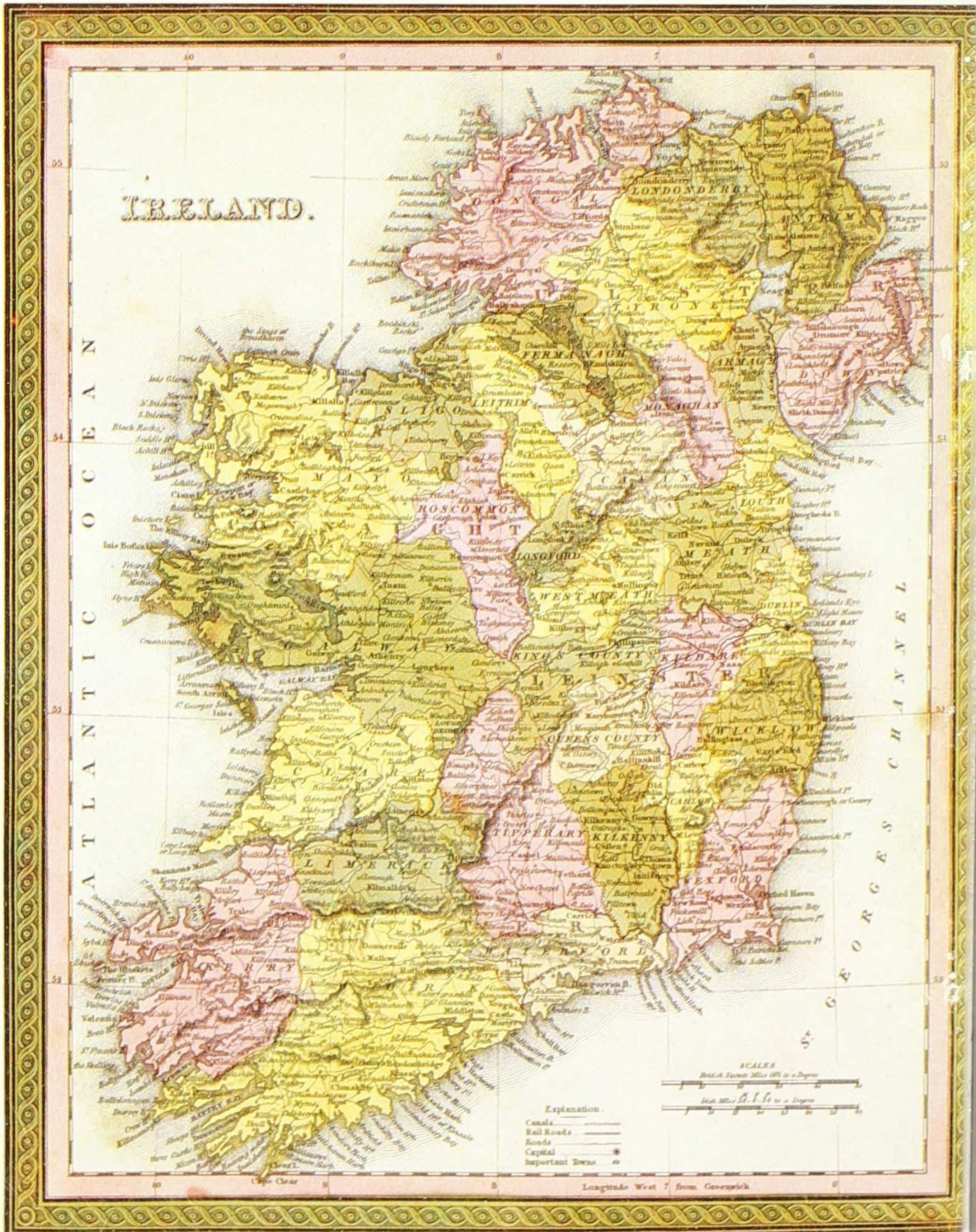
In 1872 he ran for the nomination as Governor on the Republican ticket, but he was unsuccessful. That same year President Grant appointed him Solicitor of the United States Department of State. O'Connor has been described as "a typical Irishman, impulsive, genial, courteous, warm-hearted, a man of many friends, with few or no enemies, a brave, self-sacrificing soldier in the nation's time of need, a lawyer of ability and learning."



PERCENTAGE OF IOWA'S POPULATION BORN  
IN IRELAND, 1870 - 1950

<i>County</i>	<i>1870</i>	<i>1890</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>1870</i>	<i>1890</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1950</i>
Adair	1.3%	2.0%	0.6%	0.04%	Jefferson	2.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.04%
Adams	1.2	0.3	0.3	0.02	Johnson	5.8	3.1	0.6	0.09
Allamakee	14.1	5.6	0.8	0.04	Jones	6.3	3.1	0.5	0.03
Appanoose	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.02	Keokuk	1.0	1.3	0.3	0.11
Audubon	0.8	1.1	0.2	0.03	Kossuth	3.4	0.8	0.3	0.05
Benton	2.5	1.6	0.4	0.04	Lee	6.8	2.6	0.5	0.05
Black Hawk	3.4	2.2	0.5	0.1	Linn	2.6	1.9	0.6	0.13
Boone	3.1	1.5	0.2	0.05	Louisa	2.4	1.1	0.2	0.03
Bremer	2.4	1.3	0.3	0.04	Lucas	1.2	0.9	0.3	0.05
Buchanan	6.7	3.7	0.8	0.06	Lyon	1.7	1.2	0.2	0.05
Buena Vista	3.7	1.2	0.3	0.04	Madison	1.9	1.5	0.4	0.09
Butler	3.6	1.6	0.3	0.04	Mahaska	1.2	0.9	0.2	0.04
Calhoun	1.6	1.7	0.4	0.08	Marion	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.01
Carroll	1.3	1.2	0.4	0.05	Marshall	1.5	1.4	0.5	0.17
Cass	2.3	1.2	0.3	0.06	Mills	2.0	0.8	0.3	0.04
Cedar	3.8	1.7	0.3	0.02	Mitchell	3.6	1.3	0.3	0.01
Cerro Gordo	3.7	2.3	0.5	0.09	Monona	2.1	0.9	0.3	0.06
Cherokee	5.8	1.6	0.7	0.18	Monroe	6.0	3.8	0.6	0.09
Chickasaw	8.0	3.3	0.4	0.03	Montgomery	2.1	0.7	0.2	0.03
Clarke	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.03	Muscatine	5.2	2.1	0.4	0.03
Clay	0.8	0.9	0.2	0.02	O'Brien	1.7	1.5	0.3	0.04
Clayton	7.0	2.3	0.3	0.05	Osceola	0	0.9	0.2	0.04
Clinton	10.9	4.9	1.0	0.15	Page	1.7	1.1	0.3	0.07
Crawford	4.1	3.2	0.8	0.14	Palo Alto	15.4	4.7	1.0	0.10
Dallas	2.1	1.5	0.4	0.03	Plymouth	5.2	1.9	0.5	0.06
Davis	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.0	Pocahontas	10.2	2.2	0.6	0.06
Decatur	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.02	Polk	4.5	2.3	0.5	0.09
Delaware	5.4	2.9	0.7	0.11	Pottawattamie	5.1	1.9	0.4	0.09
Des Moines	4.8	1.9	0.3	0.08	Poweshiek	3.0	2.7	1.1	0.25
Dickinson	1.8	0.9	0.3	0.08	Ringgold	1.3	1.1	0.3	0.03
Dubuque	16.7	5.2	1.1	0.19	Sac	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.04
Emmet	1.6	1.1	0.3	0.07	Scott	9.2	3.0	0.7	0.10
Fayette	3.9	1.6	0.4	0.06	Shelby	0.9	1.1	0.3	0.04
Floyd	2.9	1.3	0.3	0.09	Sioux	1.5	1.3	0.3	0.06
Franklin	4.8	1.6	0.2	0.08	Story	1.5	1.1	0.3	0.05
Fremont	1.3	1.1	0.4	0.09	Tama	2.0	1.3	0.3	0.11
Greene	3.1	2.9	0.5	0.06	Taylor	0.3	0.9	0.2	0.04
Grundy	2.1	1.2	0.4	0.12	Union	1.5	2.4	0.5	0.03
Guthrie	1.7	1.4	0.5	0.06	Van Buren	1.6	0.8	0.2	0.05
Hamilton	1.4	0.9	0.3	0.04	Wapello	3.5	2.1	0.4	0.04
Hancock	0.9	1.2	0.3	0.02	Warren	1.3	0.9	0.2	0.03
Hardin	6.4	1.1	0.2	0.05	Washington	1.7	1.3	0.3	0.06
Harrison	2.9	1.7	0.5	0.08	Wayne	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.04
Henry	2.1	1.4	0.3	0.05	Webster	10.0	3.2	0.7	0.13
Howard	7.7	3.4	0.6	0.05	Winnebago	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.01
Humboldt	4.2	1.5	0.3	0.04	Winneshiek	5.3	2.1	0.2	0.03
Ida	2.4	1.7	0.6	0.24	Woodbury	8.6	2.3	0.6	0.12
Iowa	5.9	3.1	0.7	0.13	Worth	1.5	0.7	0.1	0
Jackson	6.1	2.6	0.5	0.04	Wright	2.9	1.4	0.4	0.07
Jasper	1.1	1.6	0.5	0.12					





The above map is from S. Augustus Mitchell's *A New Universal Atlas Containing Maps of the Various Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republics of the World*. Philadelphia, S. Augustus Mitchell, 1848. This map must have been seen by thousands of immigrants who arrived America in 1848 and in the years immediately preceding the Civil War.