

The Web of Life

On February 26, 1855, the Dubuque Literary Institute met to hear Lucius H. Langworthy deliver his second lecture on the history of Dubuque. "Our prosperity seems to point to a glorious future," the pioneer declared. "Our progress has been steady, and the importance of our location is now settled beyond a question. . . . The fact, that eleven churches and a number of schools, besides literary and scientific societies, are sustained by our citizens, indicates we can already offer to immigrants the advantages of older cities, and that we have all the social and intellectual resources of the Atlantic States." Through "seminaries of learning" and "literary institutions," Langworthy concluded, Dubuque was destined to become the very "Athens of the West."

The Dubuque pioneers might look back with pride at their progress since they first entered the Black Hawk Purchase in 1833. Religious, educational, social, and cultural attainments had kept pace with the economic and political development. These, together with the homespun amusements and workaday activity, form the web of pioneer life.

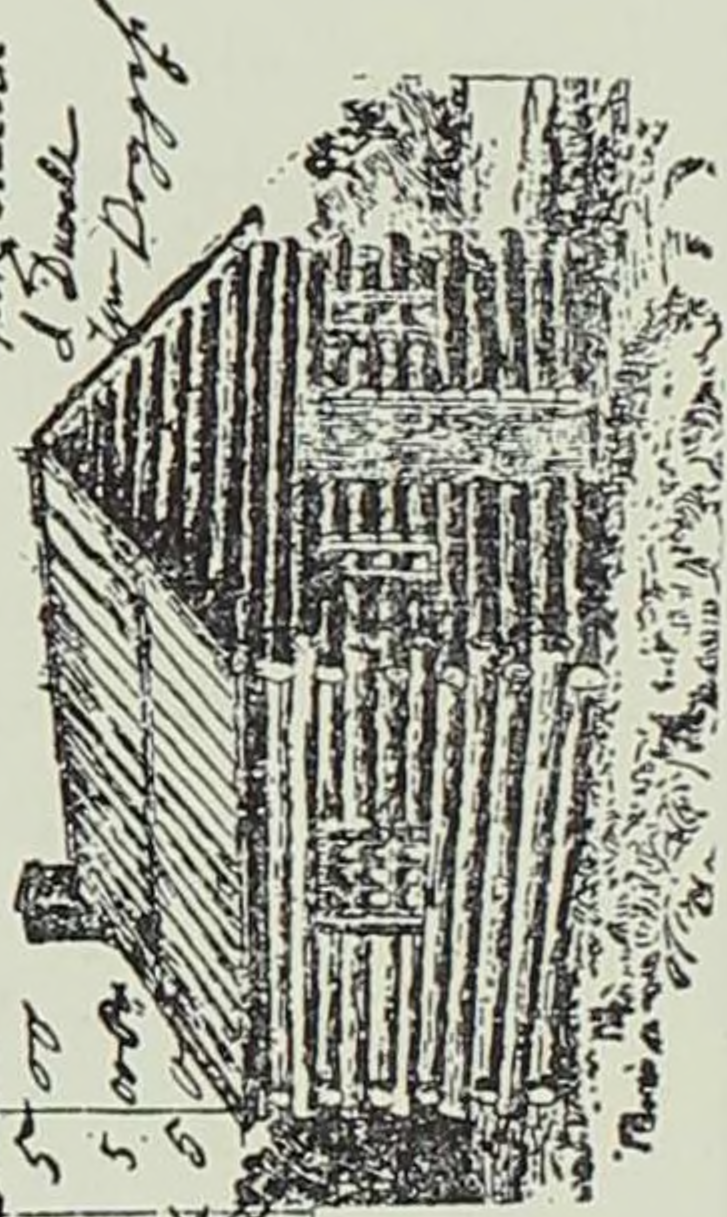
Religion was a powerful force in frontier Du-

66 Description for a Chapel for the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the town of Dubuque.
 Plan of the house. - it is built of heavy logs, 20 by 26 feet in the clear; one story, 10 feet high; board & upper floors; Shingled roof; Roofs with timbers and, one batten door; 4, 20 lights & one 10-light windows - each illuminated for completing in good plain style \$955.00. The above house is built for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church - but when not occupied by said Church, shall be open for Divine service by other Christian Denominations, and may be used for a common school, at the discretion of the trustees. Woodbury Mallett, John Johnson, Mrs. Kelley Marcus Atchison, and Orla Smith are the board of trustees, who are authorized to receive subscriptions and control the interest of said house, for the use above mentioned.

We, the undersigned agree to pay to the above trustees the several sums annexed to our names, for the building of said house.

| Subscribers Names | \$ | cts. | Subscribers Names | \$ | cts. |
|-------------------|----|------|-------------------|----|------|
| Harvey W. W. W. | 25 | 00 | George Smith | 5 | 00 |
| John Johnson | 10 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| Thomas Kelley | 10 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| Mad. Lott | 15 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| John Lott | 5 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| John Lott | 10 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| John Lott | 5 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |

FIRST CHURCH IN IOWA



| Subscribers Names | \$ | cts. | Subscribers Names | \$ | cts. |
|-------------------|----|------|-------------------|----|------|
| John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 | George Smith | 5 | 00 |
| John Johnson | 10 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| Thomas Kelley | 10 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| Mad. Lott | 15 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
| John Lott | 5 | 00 | John P. Cobb | 5 | 00 |
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DUBUQUE, 1834

buque. The Reverend Aratus Kent preached the first Protestant sermon in Ezekiel Lockwood's log cabin on Locust Street during the summer of 1833. In the following summer the Reverend Barton Randle and his Methodist flock built a one-story log church measuring twenty by twenty-six feet and costing \$255. Seven women and five men made up the membership of this, the first church in Iowa. Five preachers faithfully ministered to this congregation before a new and larger structure was erected in 1840. During this time the Methodist Church was used by various denominations, served as a courthouse and a schoolhouse, and housed the meeting to consider the incorporation of the town of Dubuque — in a word, functioned as a center of religion, education, and government.

Meanwhile, Father Charles Felix Van Quickenbourne conducted the first Roman Catholic service in the cabin of Mrs. Brophy during the summer of 1833. On August 15, 1835, the cornerstone of the first Catholic Church in Iowa was laid at Dubuque. Dedicated as Saint Raphael's Church by Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, the handsome stone edifice was destined to serve as the Cathedral for the Territory of Iowa when Bishop Mathias Loras arrived on April 19, 1839.

There were many other faiths represented at the Dubuque lead mines. On May 11, 1836, the *Dubuque Visitor* declared that another "Minister of the Gospel is needed among us — one who can

reason, preach, and sing; and *enforce the fourth Commandment.*" As if in answer to this plea the cornerstone of the first Presbyterian Church was laid with appropriate ceremonies on July 18, 1836. A Baptist congregation was organized in 1840, the Episcopalians formed their first church in 1843, and the Christian Church was established in the following year. Before the decade closed beginnings had been made by the African Baptist Church, the Unitarian Church, the Congregational Church, and the Dubuque County Bible Society.

The influence of the church was soon manifested. On September 30, 1837, a writer in the *Iowa News* expressed delight with "the order and decorum which prevails in every part of our community" after the town trustees adopted the ordinance relating to the observance of the Sabbath. Both Protestant and Catholic congregations were active in the temperance crusade. However, in addition to unbelievers there were some wayward brethren whose conduct was considered reprehensible. "I wish to notice a habit quite prevalent in this city," wrote one who signed his name "Christian" in the *Miners' Express* for February 23, 1848. "It is that of going to church for the purpose of taking a comfortable snooze during divine service. This miserable and sinful practice is quite fashionable and followed extensively by certain ladies and gentlemen, especially some who attend the Methodist and Congregational churches."

The Dubuque pioneers lost no time in establishing schools. The first schoolhouse in the Black Hawk Purchase was completed at Dubuque in December of 1833. Bald-headed George Cubbage was selected as the first schoolmaster for the thirty-five pupils who attended. Subsequently, Barrett Whittemore and Mrs. Caroline Dexter taught school at Dubuque. In 1836 Mrs. Louisa King opened a school for young ladies. On January 15, 1838, the Legislative Assembly passed an act authorizing a seminary of learning at Dubuque for the "instruction of young persons of both sexes in science and literature." Thomas S. Wilson, Lucius H. Langworthy, P. A. Lorimier, Joseph T. Fales, Benjamin Rupert, and Patrick Quigley were listed as incorporators. The first classical school in Iowa was established at Dubuque in 1839 by Thomas H. Benton, Jr.

More schools sprang up during the following decade. In the fall of 1841 the *Miners' Express* called attention to the English, classical, and mathematical school opened in the residence of Bishop Mathias Loras. A few months later C. F. Hardie started an "Evening School" in the basement of the Presbyterian Church. Professor Hardie, emphasizing particularly English, grammar, and arithmetic, charged four dollars tuition for a twelve-week term during which classes met four nights a week. Each pupil was required to "furnish his own light." In 1842 Miss Eberlee opened

a school for the instruction of children of both sexes. Miss Eberlee taught English, French, and German as well as needle and fancy work. These were all private schools, for Dubuque had not used the authority to establish free public schools. In 1844 a newly created school board agreed to pay the costs of educating eligible children in the private schools, but as late as 1849 there were no public school buildings in the city.

In those formative years the schools were not always of the best. On April 20, 1858, the Dubuque *Daily Times* recorded:

SCHOOL AT WEST DUBUQUE

The school at West Dubuque was obliged to be dismissed yesterday on account of the miserable condition of the House in which it has been kept. This house is the head quarters of an immense colony of vermin, which have multiplied to so great an extent as to fairly drive the Teacher and pupils out of the House. The school will be suspended for a few days until another house can be procured and arranged.

The dissemination of knowledge, however, was not restricted to the schools. On December 27, 1837, a number of Dubuque citizens met at the home of James L. Langworthy and formed a "Literary Association" upon the lyceum principle. Timely topics were discussed, the lyceum affording an excellent opportunity for the development of individual forensic talent. Thus, on December 1, 1847, the *Miners' Express* announced a meeting

"over Terry's Saloon" to discuss the question: "Resolved that the Wilmot Proviso is right and ought to be sustained by the American people."

Numerous lecturers appeared before Dubuque audiences, temperance and education being two popular themes. In September of 1838, Alonzo P. Phelps spoke on "Popular Education" in the Methodist Church. On November 3, 1843, the *Miners' Express* expressed delight with Professor Bonneville's very "convincing" lecture on mesmerism. The editor witnessed such experiments as "paralyzing different limbs, shutting the eyes, closing the mouth, putting the subject in a magnetic state." It was said of Professor Bonneville that he could "stop a woman's tongue by merely shaking his finger at her." Skeptics were urged to attend. The large Irish population undoubtedly enjoyed the lecture by Mr. Mooney, the "distinguished and very popular Irish vocalist and lecturer" who appeared in December of 1847. Mr. Spencer gave exhibitions of "Animal Magnetism," while Dr. Reynolds lectured on "Astronomy" over Terry's saloon. On May 3, 1848, the *Miners' Express* urged citizens to attend the "novel exhibition" by Mrs. Hayden, who was hailed as the "American Sybil" and the "first and only female magician in the world."

A welcome addition to the cultural life of Dubuque was supplied by Joseph T. Fales who conducted a singing school in the Methodist Church

on the evening of May 25, 1836. In November, 1838, Azor Richardson taught the science of sacred music in the Methodist Church. Mr. and Miss Scott advertised in 1843 that they would be pleased to instruct students on the "Piano Forte, and musical instruments generally." On December 1, 1847, the *Miners' Express* announced a concert by the Dubuque Philharmonic Society in the Congregational Church. The programme included anthems, solos, and choruses, together with the "Most popular Glees and Secular" melodies. "The members of the Society," the *Miners' Express* declared, "flatter themselves that their Concert will afford an unusually agreeable evening's entertainment." Bands and church choirs afforded a further outlet for the musically inclined.

An index of the reading tastes of the Dubuque pioneers is revealed by the books William Lawther offered for sale in his store in 1842. In addition to the *Encyclopaedia Americana*, *Walker's Dictionary*, and Comstock's *Mineralogy*, he advertised *Biographies of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence* and Chitty's works on *Pleadings* and on *Contracts*. Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*, Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pope's *Essay on Man*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Cobbett's *Advice to Young Men*, Butler's *Hudibras*, and Wirt's *Life of Patrick Henry* were other volumes on sale. Jane Porter's two classics, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*

"WAIT FOR THE WAGON!"
THE 40 HORSE WAGON!

It will make its grand entrance about 10 A. M. into Columbus City, Wednesday, July 21; Washington, Thursday, July 22; IOWA CITY, FRIDAY, July 23; Tipton Saturday, July 24; Muscatine, Monday, July 26.



(From their New Orleans Amphitheatre last winter, and Wood's Theatre, St. Louis, this Spring.)

COMPRISING THEIR

THREE CIRCUSES,

Consolidated into one monster concern; their
NORTH AMERICAN CIRCUS,
 So celebrated in New York and New England; their
FLOATING PALACE CIRCUS,

From their Palatial Aquatic Amphitheatre on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers; and their

RAILROAD CIRCUS,

Which excited such a sensation in the Middle States and Canada. All under the personal direction of Mr. O. J. ROGERS.

A Princely Retinue,

109 Persons! 113 Horses!

(Any other Circus would call it 500 persons and horses.)
 The largest traveling Show in the world! And the only Company that performs everything in the Bill.

Three Sets of Performers.

Embracing the elite of French, English, Spanish and American Riders, Acrobats, Gymnasts, Voltigeurs, Equilibrists, Callisthenists, &c., in friendly strife before the audience.

THREE SETS OF CLOWNS.

Jester, Grotesque and Comic Gymnast;

Three Sets of Ring Horses!

Pad, Entree, Dancing, Trick and War.

**Pantomimce every Afternoon,
 SPECTACLE EVERY EVENING.**

All under one tent, and all for only Fifty Cents; Children and Servants half price. About 10 A. M., at every place of exhibition,

The Ross Excelsior Brass Band.

Will be drawn in triumphal procession through the principal streets, in a Leviathan Chariot, by

40 Horses Driven by one Man!

The modern Jehu, MAJOR SMITH, compared with which all other big teams are but servile imitations in the number of the horses and the skill of the reinman.

The famous wire ascensionist, M'DLLE ANNA CHURCH, will

Trundle a Wheelbarrow to the Sky!

Up a half-inch wire, extended at dizzy height from the ground, outside the tent, to the top of the lofty centre pole, every noon, just before opening the doors of the circus, whenever the weather is favorable, and will take up with her on this single track Railroad, in her unique vehicle, any lady weighing not over 125 pounds.

MARK WHAT AN ARMY OF STARS.

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Little Kate Ormond, | Henry Magilton, |
| Mlle Anna Church, | Frank Barry, |
| Mad. F. Ormond, | Dilly Fay, |
| Mrs. A. Beckwith, | The Man Monkey, |
| Signor Jose D. Villeneuve, | George Dunbar, |
| mons. Segrois, | Harold Libby, |
| F. F. Litten, | The Motely Brothers, |
| C. J. Rogers, | R. Nathaniel, |
| George Archer, | O. Walters, |
| John Barry, | David Reed, |
| J. McFarland, | Master Charlie, |
| Billy Boyd, | Autie Beckwith, |
| Henry Enochs, | George Charles, |
| Geo. H. Wood, | Joe Cook, |
| William Moseley, | E. Deming, |

And those quadrupedal celebrities.

BUCEPHALUS, ARISTOOK, TELEGRAPH,
 PEGASUS, BIG THUNDER, WILDFIRE,

Altogether, the most extraordinary combination of Circus performers and performing horses ever consummated in Europe or America.

These three companies will positively not be separated at any time this season, under any pretext whatever. The floating Palace is laid up at Cairo for the summer; and the cars of the Railroad Circus are switched off at Cincinnati—expressly that the performers and horses of those two companies might be added to the North American Circus.

JOHN ANDERSON, Agent Floating Palace Circus.

LEPHAIM WHITE, Agent Railroad Circus.

P. WILCOX, Agent North American Circus.

J. A. DINGESS, Gen'l Agent.

On September 5, 1838, the American Arena Company, owned and operated by Miller, Yale, and Howes, brought their "traveling world of wonders" to Dubuque. From that day on, scarcely a year went by but what several such companies advertised their forthcoming appearance, always with a great fanfare and extravagant praise, such as recorded above.

and *Scottish Chiefs*, must have vied with the works of Shakespeare, Scott, and Byron for public favor. Among the school books listed were Smith's *Arithmetic*, Murry's *Grammar*, and a series of "Elementary Spellings Books and Eclectic Readers." Surely the most fastidious reader could have found something to suit his taste on William Lawther's well-stocked shelves.

The pioneers found time for fun and entertainment. In 1838 the Iowa Thespians organized, and Joseph Jefferson appeared the following year with his professional actors. Steamboat excursions were popular; dog and animal shows, tight rope walkers, sleight-of-hand artists, and colorful circus performers helped to enliven frontier life. Probably most of the men and boys indulged in fishing and hunting. Skating and sleighriding were popular winter sports. One might suppose that in those good old "horse and buggy days" there would be no need for care with the means of transportation then in vogue. But this was not entirely true. A by no means uncommon event was recorded in the *Dubuque Weekly Times* of December 20, 1860:

Sleigh Riding is pleasant enough when every thing goes right, but occasionally an incident will transpire, which interferes materially with the enjoyment of such recreation. For instance, Prof. Baylies was riding Saturday afternoon in company with a couple of ladies. Coming from Locust to Main Street on Seventh his sleigh struck a stone, just as he was turning down Main, and tipped over,

Baylies Commercial College

Corner of Main and Third Streets,
DUBUQUE, IOWA.

DIRECTORS.

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| HON. GEO. W. JONES, | GEN. WARNER LEWIS, |
| " WM. VANDEVER, | JAMES M. REDMOND, |
| " LINCOLN CLARK, | ASA HERR, M. D., |
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| H. A. WILTSE, | H. A. LITTLETON, |
| GEO. L. TORBERT, | A. BAYLIES. |

The Course of Instruction in this Institution is acknowledged on all hands to be the most extensive, thorough, practical and modern to be found, and every precaution is taken that for the acquisition of a business education, complete in all its particulars, it shall, as heretofore, have *positively* no equal.

The student will receive the most thorough instruction in, and become fully posted as to, the manner of conducting on scientific and correct principles, the books pertaining to all kinds of business, from the most simple transaction to the most intricate and complicated business, including Commission, Compound and Joint Stock Companies, Steamboating, Banking, Railroading, etc., etc., realizing and perfecting the accomplished Accountant. Also instructions from competent Masters in Penmanship, Commercial Calculations and Correspondence, detecting counterfeit notes, and much other important information. Daily Lectures given before the College on the Science of Accounts, Business Customs, and, during the season regular stated Lectures on Commercial Law, Banking and Finance, Commercial Ethics, Political Economy, etc.

For fuller and more complete information, see our new descriptive pamphlet circular, which will be furnished free to all applicants.

Sept. 25, '59.

A. BAYLIES.
dawly(868

Founded in Dubuque in 1858 by A. Baylies, the institution was incorporated in 1859 as Baylies Commercial College. As early as 1880 it claimed to be the "oldest school of the kind in Iowa." A cousin of the founder, C. Baylies, came to Dubuque in 1862 and took over the school following the death of Prof. A. Baylies in Boston on August 2, 1863. In 1964 Baylies Business College advertised with no little pride that it was "The Oldest Business School West of the Mississippi."

spilling the trio quite unharmed upon the ground. The horses, however, which were a pair of colts belonging to Hannum, took the matter in high dudgeon, and finding themselves without a driver, dashed down the street at a furious rate, colliding with two other teams, which also started off at full speed. General confusion ensued. Hannum's horses became detached from the sleigh at Woodworth's corner, and then ran around the square to the barn where they belong. The other two establishments went down the street below Second and are still going for aught we know.

At home or in church, in lyceum or at militia muster, at choir practice or fire drill, at the circus or less spectacular sideshows and carnivals, the Dubuque pioneers found both pleasure and profit prior to the Civil War.