

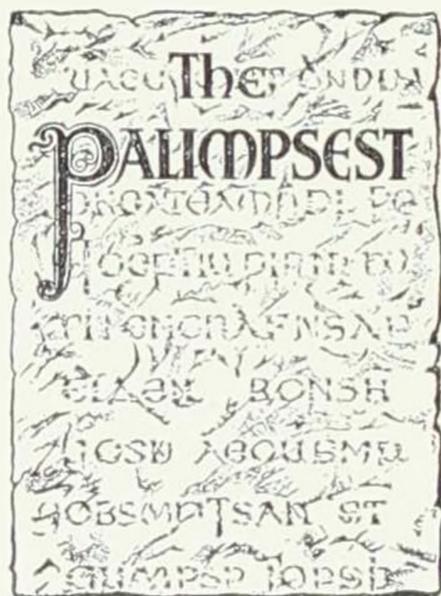
The
PALIMPSEST



HAULING WATER TO THIRSTY CATTLE DURING DROUGHT

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The Meaning of Palimpsest

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

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the 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.

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Cover

Front — Cattle on the Herb Spencer farm near Adel wait for a watering tank to be filled from a tank truck operated by Charles Macklin (right). Photo courtesy of Des Moines Register and Tribune.

Back — top: Airview of Floyd River flood in southeastern Sioux City. Photo courtesy of Des Moines Register and Tribune.

bottom: Fourth of July storm played havoc in Iowa City. Photo courtesy of Cedar Rapids Gazette.

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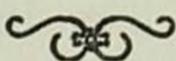
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The Weather

Iowa weather in 1953 was marked by a withering drought, destructive floods, and damaging windstorms. The drought was unexpected, for there had been a severe dry spell in 1952 — and two droughts in a row seldom occurred. Torrential early summer rains indicated the difficulty would be not a lack of rain, but too much of it. Then came the drought and the sound of rain on the roof became almost a memory to Iowans until late November rains finally deluged the state. The length of this drought exceeded those of 1934 and 1936, but fortunately it came after the growing season was well advanced.

Only the counties bordering Missouri and the "Roman Nose" on the East missed the worst effects of the drought. Fremont, Davis, Clinton, and several other counties went only 21 or 22 days without rain. Elsewhere, it seemed that Nature had abandoned the device after a blinding rain and windstorm had dampened thousands of Fourth of July celebrants. Lucas and Polk coun-

ties suffered through 136 days without recording any rainfall. Historians searched records to learn that even the 133-day dry spell of 1936 had been exceeded.

As a result, park and game officials warned visitors against careless fires in the tinderbox recreational areas, farmers hauled water to their stock, and some cities had to curtail water usage, as streams and rivers that had been nearly out of their banks eight months earlier were reduced to a trickle. Rain became a major topic of conversation and even prayer, as in pioneer days.

Fortunately, the prolonged dry spell did permit farmers to harvest their corn crops about a week earlier than usual in many areas. The average moisture content of the crop, which was the lowest on record in November, enabled farmers to proceed ahead of schedule in their picking and cribbing operations.

By late October the weather column was front-page news. Perhaps to console their white friends, Tama Indians predicted that a warm winter was ahead, basing their forecast on the significant omen that the squirrels had soft hides and thin fur that fall. Finally, the skies darkened on November 19, and by nightfall Council Bluffs had received 1.28 inches as the welcome moisture touched every part of the state except the southeastern tip. Not until early December, however, did the drought definitely end. In a few scattered lo-

calities the dry period had lasted 156 days, making the drought the longest in Iowa on record.

The drought came slowly and Iowans became conditioned to it. In contrast, they were not prepared for the tragic flash floods that struck along the Floyd, Big Sioux, and Little Sioux rivers early in June. Cherokee, Spencer, and Sioux City were hardest hit by the swirling waters that left a death toll of fifteen and property damage of \$33,000,000. Mervin W. Feddersen, Red Cross disaster chairman at Sioux City, said the flood was the "worst disaster" ever to hit Sioux City. Temporary shelter camps were set up for hundreds of homeless families. Governor William S. Beardsley asked President Eisenhower for Federal Aid, and twelve counties along the swollen river banks were declared disaster areas, bringing government assistance to the stricken families. Blame for the deaths and damage along the Floyd was attributed by the president of the Iowa Izaak Walton League to "the stupidity of man" for failing to "properly handle" the Floyd watershed.

Winds clocked at over 100 miles per hour also struck Iowa, months after the spring "tornado season" had done its usual damage to farm buildings, trees, and utility lines. Miraculously, there were no fatalities although the hurricane-like winds swooped down while Fourth of July celebrations were in progress. Extensive tree and power-line damage was done at Waterloo, Cedar

Falls, Iowa City, and in parts of Linn County. The next day the most severe hailstorm of the year swept over parts of Lyon and Kossuth counties, causing crop and building damage estimated at \$4,000,000.

Let us turn now to the bright side of the 1953 weather ledger. Although the oat crop was the smallest since the 1934 drought, good weather at planting time gave corn and soybean crops favorable prospects from the start. Yields were lower because of the dry weather, but the high quality of the crops somewhat offset the lower yield. The winter had been comparatively mild in most of Iowa, with a snowfall average of 24.7 inches for the year, almost four inches below normal. Several spring-like days in January and February caused oldtimers to predict a long winter and "snow in June," but this forewarning proved groundless. By June 18, the thermometer appeared to be recording August temperatures, and Onawa and Sioux City each registered 105°.

Weather Bureau Chief C. E. Lamoureux of Des Moines declared 1953 was "warm and dry" on the whole. Corn cribs were bulging and farmers were pleased with the lowest corn moisture content in many years. All in all, the bright side of the 1953 weather ledger outbalanced the dark side.

ROBERT RUTLAND

The Political Scene

Although 1953 was an off-year for political elections at the state and national level, it was nevertheless a year in which political events and personalities were constantly claiming the attention of Iowans. Thus, thousands of Hawkeyes attended the inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower on January 20. The change of administrations in Washington brought several political plums to loyal Iowa Republicans who had waited twenty years for a GOP presidential victory.

Prominent Iowans appointed to Federal posts in 1953 included Craig R. Sheaffer, Fort Madison industrialist, who became Assistant Secretary of Commerce; Franklin G. Floete of Des Moines, named Assistant Secretary of Defense; and Mrs. Hiram Houghton of Red Oak, who was appointed Deputy Administrator of the Mutual Security Agency. When Justice H. J. Mantz resigned from the Iowa Supreme Court, Governor William S. Beardsley named Attorney General Robert L. Larson to succeed Mantz, and then appointed Leo Hoegh of Chariton as Attorney General.

The 55th General Assembly met during the early months of 1953. Completely dominated by

Republicans, who had a 46 to 4 majority in the Senate, and 105 to 3 majority in the House, the lawmakers heard a warning from United States Senator Karl Mundt, a South Dakota Republican, when he visited their joint session. Mundt told the legislators there were inherent dangers in a lack of opposition which could lead to factionalism within the party itself. Former screen star Mary Pickford also paid the General Assembly a visit on a defense bond sales program.

The work of the General Assembly covered a wide area. A new and sounder public employees' retirement system was created, superseding the one adopted in 1945. The office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction was made an appointive instead of an elective one and a State Board of Public Instruction established to supervise secondary school programs. The controversial subject of legislative reapportionment was thoroughly debated by the House for the first time in forty years and some action, at least, was taken by the Assembly to meet the issue.

The most publicized legislative action, however, and the one which Associated Press news editors rated the top Iowa news story of 1953 was that regarding oleomargarine. After several stormy sessions the House passed a bill authorizing the sale of yellow margarine. Prior to Senate action the Young Republicans' executive committee met and adopted a resolution favoring the bill. An opposi-

tion leader termed this a "gratuitous insult" to Iowa dairy farmers, but in a final vote the measure was approved. A partial compromise was secured with the insertion of a clause providing for the printing of the word "oleo" on each section of the butter substitute. On July 4 Iowans could purchase yellow margarine in their home town.

Other political news had a national flavor. Shortly after Ezra Taft Benson became Secretary of Agriculture he began a reorganization of his department, went on record against price supports for livestock, and hinted that he favored lower parity payments on many products. Hearings on farm price supports were held in the Midwest during the summer, and when Congress met in the fall it was obvious that parity payments would be lower under Benson's long-range program. Jake More, chairman of the Iowa Democratic Central Committee, charged that Benson's new program was developed on Wall Street. The Iowa Young Republican Farm Council rushed to Benson's defense, commending him for his reorganizational efforts and long-range plans.

Jasper County was again a test-tube for the pollsters. The county's 56-year-old perfect record on political trends (having chosen the winner in every presidential election since 1896) was the basis for a 1953 survey. The findings indicated that Jasper County "liked Ike" even better than in 1952, the President's increase from 58 to 65 per

cent in the preference poll being attributed to the truce in Korea.

The 1954 elections were months away when the inevitable off-year speculation began, with accompanying preliminary jostling for position, and actual announcing of intentions. There were guesses as to Governor Beardsley's future plans, but the Governor himself was silent. Senator Guy M. Gillette, the lone Democrat in the Iowa Congressional delegation, parried questions as to his plans for 1954 but said he would delay his decision on trying for another term until the new year.

Representative Thomas Martin of Iowa City was not so reticent. He made what was regarded as an unusually early announcement that he would seek the Republican nomination for Gillette's seat. This brought State Representative Fred Schwengel of Davenport, a Republican, into the field seeking Martin's post as Congressman from the First District. Incumbent Lieutenant Governor Leo Elthon of Fertile announced that he would be a candidate for the same office in 1954, and former Lieutenant Governor William H. Nicholas of Mason City, recovering from an automobile mishap, declared that he would again seek the gubernatorial nomination of the Republicans. Nicholas was unsuccessful in 1952.

Several Iowa cities held municipal elections in 1953, with most of the contests producing little more than local interest. Democrats pointed to

the results in Davenport, however, as a portrayal of things to come. In the race for mayor Walter Beuse, former Scott County sheriff and acting postmaster until a few weeks before the voting, defeated Republican Clemens A. Werner by a sizeable majority. The setback ended the Republican's city hall tenure in Davenport of twenty year's standing. Another interesting contest was the mayoralty race at Norway where Frank Volz defeated Abe Lincoln by five votes.

Crawfordsville remained firm in its contention that the Republican party was born there almost a century ago, and not at Ripon, Wisconsin. As plans for the centennial celebration went forward, however, Ripon took the lead and had the cooperation of the National Republican Committee. Crawfordsville residents thought they had been slighted, but not sufficiently to cause them to apostatize into Democratic ranks.

There were other and more important issues confronting Iowans. In addition to arguing pro and con on the Eisenhower program, Iowans found plenty to debate on such vital state issues as good roads, reduced taxes, 25% state support of our common schools, increased tuition in state schools, educational television, and liquor-by-the-drink. The year 1954 promised to be filled with a score of hot political issues.

ROBERT RUTLAND

Agriculture and Industry

On October 11, 1953, Iowans saw a map of the United States in their newspapers which depicted a bulging Hawkeye State, virtually equal in size to California and Texas. This map was proportioned not along geographic lines but rather on total farm production. Based on the 1950 census figures, California was first, Iowa came second, and Texas third — all closely grouped together.

Graphic devices to stress the importance of agriculture in Iowa were hardly necessary. Corn was and still is king. Indeed, Iowa income is closely tied to the marketability of what a Cedar Rapids newsman called "the most useful, versatile and valuable member of the vegetable kingdom ever granted to mankind by an all-wise Providence."

The 1953 corn crop was not in a class with the all-time record of 697,792,000 bushels picked in 1952. Despite a seven-bushel loss per acre because of the drought the 1953 corn crop of almost 600,000,000 bushels was of a high quality. The price of corn was off from the 1952 figure, but pork prices averaged \$21.50 per hundredweight so Iowa farmers had a cushion for their income drop.

The decline in farm prices in 1953 was estimated at \$75,000,000 below 1952 receipts. Cattle

men appeared hardest hit, but nearly all farmers felt the loss to some degree. Farm land values accordingly ebbed lower, averaging \$198 per acre, or \$14 per acre less than the 1951 record. Faced with the prospect of a smaller income, many farmers did not buy machinery and equipment which would have been purchased in better circumstances. One result of this decline in farm income, therefore, was a perceptible recession in the farm equipment industry. Unemployment was generally confined to these industries and did not become widespread.

Aware of their power at the polls, Iowa farmers candidly expressed their views on national issues in 1953. Fifty-eight per cent of those polled by *Wallace's Farmer* favored some type of social security for farmers, a considerable rise over the 1952 poll. The Iowa Farm Bureau moved away from a cautious low price support stand and voted unanimously to urge a medium, flexible government price support program for storable farm commodities.

Foreign trade came close to home in 1953. Several Iowa grocers imported New Zealand beef, selling it for twenty-nine cents a pound. This type of international trade did not appeal to Delton Davis, Fertile locker plant owner, who sold more than 30,000 pounds of Iowa beef at twenty-nine cents a pound after he became "fed up reading about 29-cent New Zealand beef." Beef prices

were off in 1953, however, and some farmers switched from cattle to other livestock.

Iowa farmers did well at livestock shows. Karl Hoffman and his son, Jack, of Ida Grove, won grand and reserve grand championship ribbons at the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago with their carlot of fat Hereford and Aberdeen-Angus cattle. It was Karl Hoffman's seventh grand championship at the Chicago show. Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Mitchell of Reinbeck exhibited Cloverton Craggs 4th, which was judged the grand champion of female milking Shorthorns at the International Dairy Show in Chicago. A week earlier the cow had won the same prize at the Waterloo Dairy Cattle Congress. Miss Polly Superior, grand champion Shetland mare at the Iowa State Fair, was sold by Leslie Oliver of Williamsburg at auction for \$1,275. Jimmy Maxted, high school senior from Ottumwa, won eleven awards in hog judging at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, including junior champion and reserve junior champion for his Berkshire hogs.

Shirley Johnson of Elk Horn, Willa V. Northy of Milford, Clifford G. Fett of Argyle, and Robert L. Walker of Kellerton visited the nation's capital as Iowa's leading 4-H club members. There they saw President Eisenhower and heard their work lauded by Vice-President Richard Nixon. The Future Farmers of America observed their twenty-fifth anniversary in scores of Iowa communities.

Statisticians reported an estimated 42,502,000 chickens in Iowa, a 2 per cent increase over 1952. Improved feed-price ratios and higher egg prices apparently encouraged farmers to raise more chickens.

There were signs the Iowa industrial boom of 1950 through 1952 was at an end. Retail sales were leveling off, declining several hundred million dollars from the 1952 peak. Department store sales were recorded at about the 1951-52 pace. New car sales spurted tremendously, boosted by sales campaigns late in the year when 1954 models were shown. Life insurance sales were far ahead of the 1952 figures. Construction was proceeding at the same rate as in 1951, which was satisfactory to most contractors. But industrial employment was on the downgrade in the last three months of 1953, and it was easier to find a job in retail stores or offices than in factories.

Manufacturing plants were turning out more goods than ever before in 1953. The Iowa Development Commission estimated the value of their products at \$3,700,000,000, double the 1948 figure. Food processing (including meat packing), farm machinery, and printing and publishing were the leading industries.

Labor relations in Iowa industry were better in 1953 than in most other postwar years. The labor situation was doubtless disturbing to farm equipment plants when layoffs began during the fall,

ending a long period of expansion and full employment. But elsewhere there were increasing signs of greater employment and better working conditions.

Good fortune smiled on many workers. At Cedar Rapids, the Collins Radio Company announced that it paid 191 employees \$2,985 in bonuses for their suggestions on production improvement. The W. A. Sheaffer Pen Company at Fort Madison announced profit-sharing payments to workers that brought the firm's 19-year-old policy of sharing earnings to a total of \$11,700,000. Seventy employees of the Monroe Company of Colfax received letters on Friday, March 13, which had a \$100 check attached. The letter urged workers "to take this 100 bucks and spend it for something you would not ordinarily feel you could afford." The Pella Rolscreen Company distributed profit-sharing checks totaling almost \$175,000 to over 500 employees, making 1953 the seventh year such bonuses have been awarded. The total manufacturing payroll in Iowa for 1953 was \$586,475,000, paid to an average of 167,850 factory employees.

Research for industry was making strides. The Collins Radio Research Laboratory was partially completed in November, adding needed space for projects in the expanding electronics field. During 1953 the Cedar Rapids firm had 38 inventions patented, demonstrating the value of research.

Significant changes in industrial personnel and ownership also occurred in 1953. W. W. McCallum was elected president of John Morrell & Company of Ottumwa to succeed Geo. M. Foster. At Fairfield the Dexter Company, "builders of better washing machines for more than half a century," was sold to the Philco Corporation, but the plant was scheduled to remain in Fairfield.

A fine corn crop and relatively steady employment caused internal revenue officials to forecast Iowans would probably pay more Federal taxes than at any time in history. The bedrock of the Iowa economy — agriculture — was buttressed by years of high prices and thousands of sizeable savings accounts. A broader base for our economy was being achieved through a continued expansion of diversified industries in Iowa. The total value of Iowa property was estimated at well over \$14,000,000,000. Wealthy, expanding Iowa had added richly to her storehouse of goods in 1953.

ROBERT RUTLAND

Religion and Education

Eastern visitors to Iowa often remark that the stately elms over our city streets, the little white churches that dot the countryside, and the numerous denominational colleges encountered throughout the Hawkeye State remind them of New England. The comparison does not end there for Iowa, like many other Midwestern states, is an intellectual offshoot of New England. Thus, in 1953, Iowans gave millions of dollars and a considerable portion of their time to the improvement of denominational schools and colleges. In other words, Iowans are western enough to appreciate the "self-made man," and Yankee enough to honor him if he supports higher education and the church.

Continued signs of religious institutional progress in 1953 were the construction of numerous church buildings and the many churches celebrating their centennial anniversaries. St. Ambrose College at Davenport dedicated its handsome new Christ the King Chapel. At Eldridge, in Scott County, a United Lutheran church had 392 baptized members in March — when five months earlier there had been no church at all.

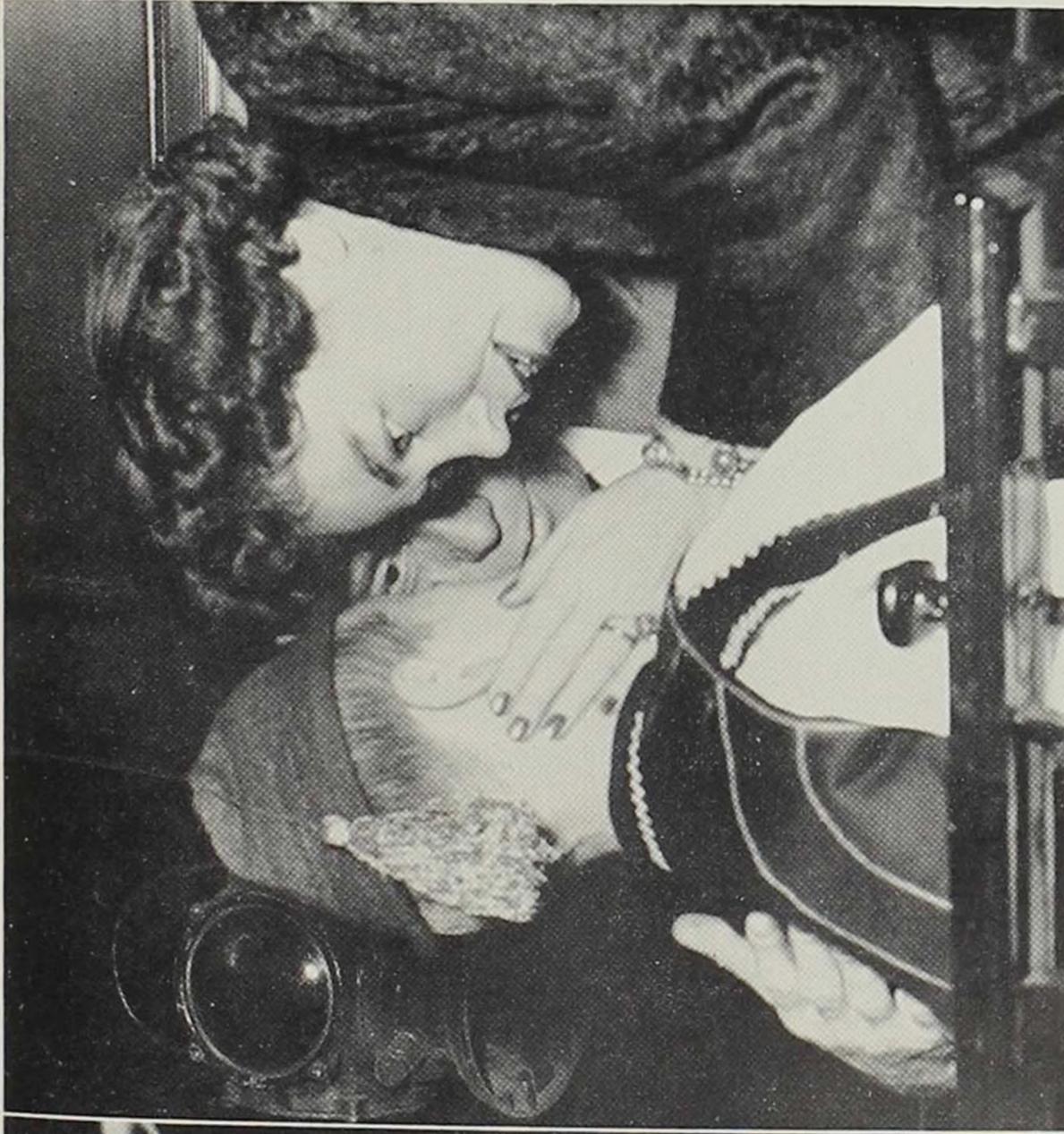
With so much controversy in the lay world, the



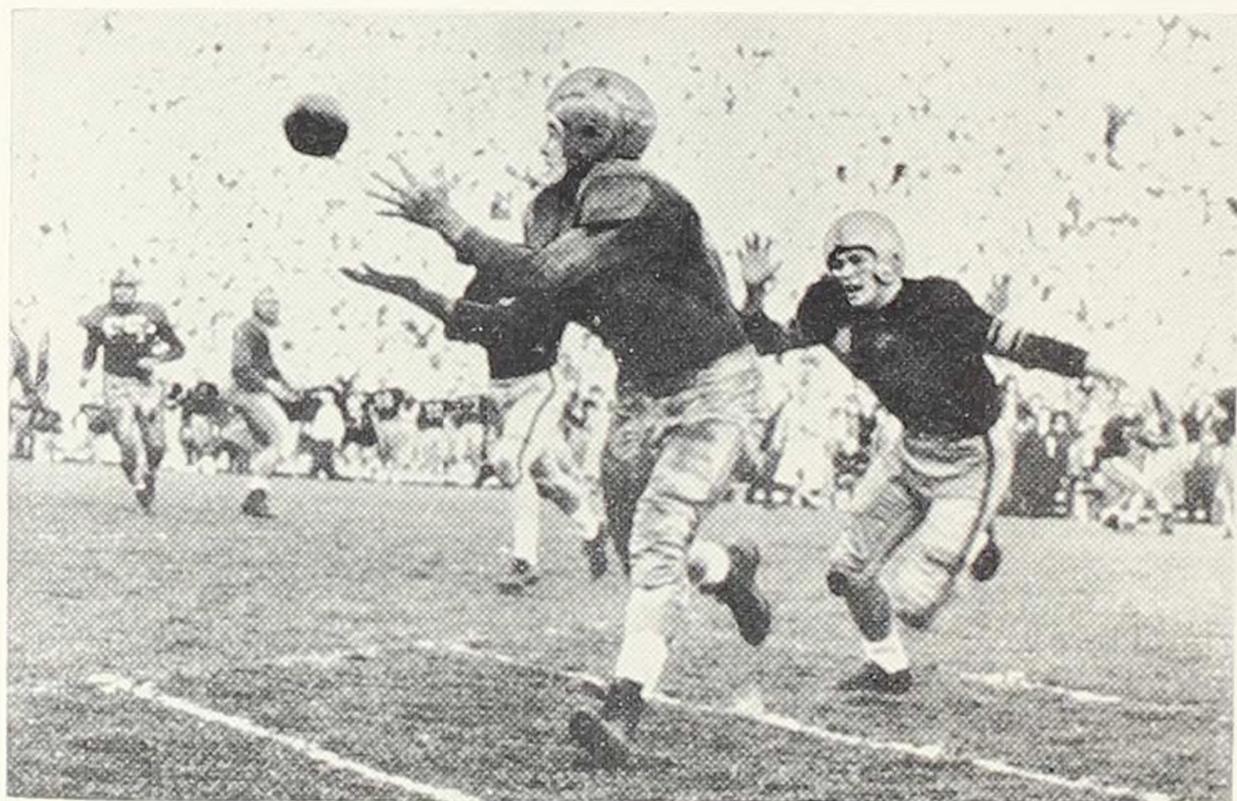
Courtesy U. S. Army

Left — COL. IRENE O. GALLOWAY, Director of WAC

Right — Greek Queen Comforts Weeping Lad at Cedar Rapids



Courtesy Cedar Rapids Gazette



Courtesy Des Moines *Register and Tribune*

Iowa 14, Notre Dame 14
Thrilling End to Most Controversial Game of Year



Courtesy Des Moines *Register and Tribune*

Road Block Near Keokuk
Officers Search for Untaxed Cigarettes from Missouri



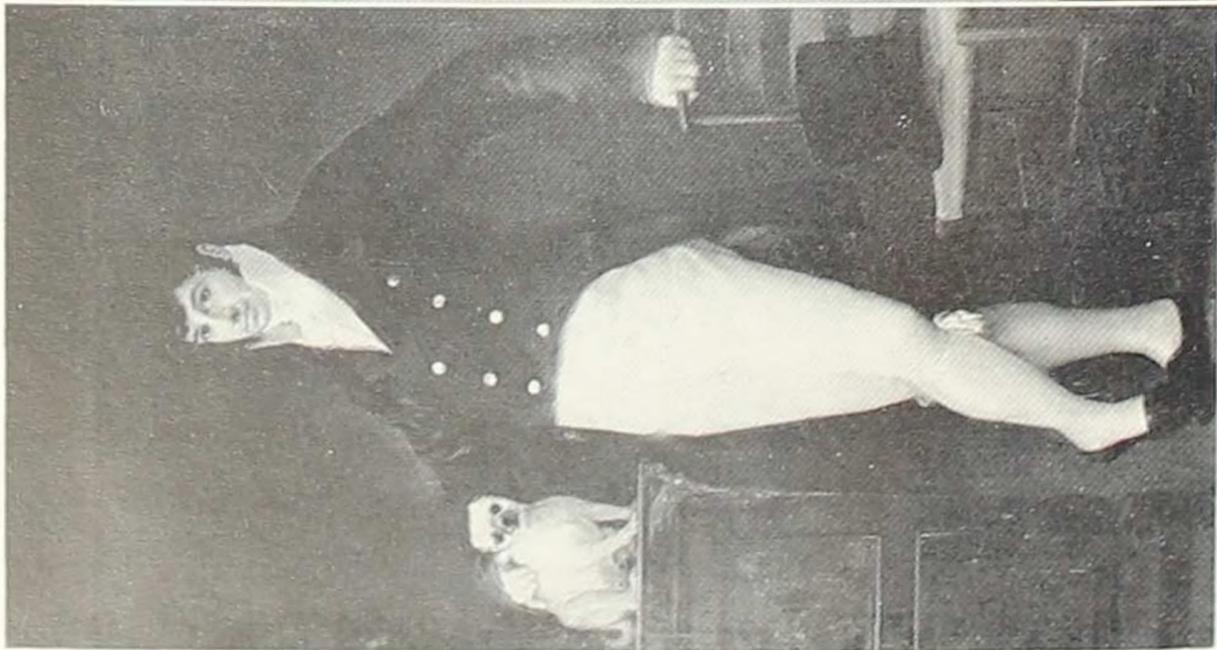
Courtesy Cedar Rapids Gazette

Cornell Centennial Dinner
Featuring American Town Meeting of the Air



Courtesy Cedar Rapids Gazette

Pioneer Spirit Exemplified at Williamsburg
Lutherans Donate Labor to Build School



Courtesy Des Moines Art Center



Courtesy Des Moines Register and Tribune

Left — DON MANUEL DE LA PRADA -- Goya Masterpiece Cost \$130,000

Right — Kirkwood School Pupils at Des Moines Practice for A-Bomb Raids

churches inevitably find their affairs entwined with secular activities. A Des Moines church board reversed an earlier stand and permitted Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt to speak in their auditorium. Reports of disaffection among the Amish groups near Oelwein seemed confirmed when several young runaways were sought by their elders. At Des Moines two bearded Amish youths were sentenced to Federal prison terms for refusing induction into the army. While draft board officials decided that Mennonite youths could not be placed in a special conscription category, over one hundred Mennonites near Kalona volunteered to help friends after a damaging storm hit the area. "We decided it was our Christian duty to help some of these storm victims," a Mennonite spokesman said. "We feel such actions are an expression of our faith."

The question of whether television was a blessing or a curse was decided in the negative when the National Layman's Spiritual Life Retreat was held at Des Moines. The delegates were told television was a "one-eyed monster" used to help the audience escape from reality. Ministers were urged, however, to use it to spread their message and keep it from becoming a "destructive, subversive kind of thing."

Subversive influences interested the North Iowa Conference of Methodist churches, too, as a California Congressman named Bishop G. Bromley

Oxnam as a man "who served God on Sunday, and the Communist front the balance of the week." The Iowa Methodists urged Congressional investigating committees to pursue a prudent course or risk a violation of the Bill of Rights.

After years of legal wrangling over the definition of what constitutes a Christian the Iowa Supreme Court held that the \$70,000 estate of a Waterloo physician (who died in 1939) should be distributed to churches and religious institutions. As in past years, Iowa churchmen gave food from the nation's granary to help combat hunger the world over. Among such organized efforts was the all-Lutheran food appeal, which 600 Iowa congregations supported by shipping basic commodities to needy persons in Western Germany.

Late in the summer of 1953 Attorney General Leo Hoegh held that a proposed released-time religious education program in Dubuque was constitutional. Thereupon Superintendent Max Clarke of Dubuque announced that cooperation with religious education advocates would be made only after careful study and in view of the basic American school philosophy that "the spiritual, social, civic, economic and vocational competencies are as important as academic literacy." The Seventh-Day Adventists, in their statewide convention at Nevada, heard an opposing view. Paul Whitlow of Des Moines, director of the Adventists' parochial education in Iowa, declared that

teaching religion in the public schools was "a violation of religious freedom" but admitted it was needed to bring our educational system into "spiritual balance."

At the state Baptist convention at Grinnell, laymen were urged to support both the church and church-operated colleges. O. R. Patrick of Jefferson, the convention president, told delegates that "Christianity stands or falls not by what it was in primitive vision, but by what it is today in actual fact."

At Williamsburg, the congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church built a new \$100,000 parochial school, mostly with volunteer labor. The building actually cost church members half that amount, and it represented zeal as well as hard work, for it went up in six months.

Meanwhile, public school enrollment reached an all-time high of well over half a million pupils, and the Department of Public Instruction warned that Iowa could expect at least 564,000 youngsters by 1960. Consolidation and new school construction progressed, but the teacher shortage remained critical. "We need more young people in the teaching profession," Superintendent of Public Instruction Jessie Parker cautioned. One reason why they were not going into teaching, she declared, was that half of Iowa's 4,290 rural teachers received less than \$2,300 a year. This helped explain why only 1,353 teachers were produced

in 1953 for 2,400 new elementary teaching jobs.

Disturbed by the apathy of high school graduates toward teaching, most Iowa colleges held a "Prospective Teacher Day" in November to encourage youth to seek a career in public school teaching. In June about 33,000 eighth graders entered high schools, but 60,000 children were ready for kindergarten or grade school. By 1958, it was expected 125,000 more pupils would be in the lower grades than in 1953. Despite such bright teaching prospects only 2,233 signed up for fall classes at Iowa State Teachers College, a gain of one pupil over 1952. Meanwhile, the draft, job opportunities, and other reasons kept many high school graduates away from Iowa colleges.

During 1953 former State Senator A. L. Doud was hired by the legislative interim committee to survey the tuition costs of private and public colleges and universities. President Virgil Hancher of the State University told Iowa college presidents he believed public and private colleges needed to work together. President Tom E. Shearer of Parsons College agreed that the goal of all Iowa colleges was "to provide the best possible quality of higher education for the young men and women of Iowa."

The year 1953 had its usual number of honorary degrees, new college presidents, and fundraising drives. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson received an honorary doctor's degree at

Iowa State College. The Rev. Gaylord M. Couchman was inaugurated as president of the University of Dubuque and Nathan M. Pusey, a native of Council Bluffs, was chosen as president of Harvard University. Coe College set a \$101,000 goal for its 1953-1954 Growth Fund campaign.

Colleges had their difficulties in 1953, too. The Chemistry building at the State University was extensively damaged and four persons were injured by a fire, but five hundred students escaped unharmed. A series of anonymous letters at the State Teachers College brought an investigation of five teachers by the State Board of Education, who quickly exonerated the faculty members. At Iowa State, jubilant undergraduates demanded a holiday after an upset homecoming football victory. Frustrated in their goal, the students blocked highways until dispersed by tear-gas.

Cornell College celebrated its centennial year with a series of impressive ceremonies and special days, climaxed by an anniversary pageant in June. Research scientists at the University of Iowa reported in December that tests with deep frozen male sperm cells in insemination experiments had succeeded, and the first child so conceived would be born early in 1954. The Danforth Memorial Chapel at the State University was dedicated by donor William H. Danforth of St. Louis in 1953.

The trend toward safe-and-sane parties following high school banquets and proms continued

during 1953. The all-night party at Creston included a chartered train trip with dancing, entertainment, and refreshments served on the railroad cars. Cherokee had movies, dancing, and a country club breakfast following the high school prom. These programs were the answer of various communities to the statistics which revealed that between May 1 and June 10 of each year since 1946, fifty teen-agers had died on state highways.

Iowa libraries also shared the news in 1953. Fairfield's library celebrated its 100th anniversary by dedicating a historical room. The town of Guttenberg secured for permanent display a facsimile set of the original Guttenberg Bible from Mainz, Germany. The cornerstone for the million-dollar Masonic Library in Cedar Rapids was laid on October 3. And as a sign of the times the Des Moines Public Library installed a coin-operated typewriter, which gave thirty minutes service for a dime.

The end of the fighting in the Korean war made a significant impact on religion and education. Peace was an answer to thousands of prayers. Peace also meant the return of thousands of young men whose educations had been interrupted by military service. College officials predicted confidently that 1,500 Iowans who were Korean veterans would help boost enrollments in 1953. Subsequent events proved this estimate a bit high, but all agreed it was good to have the boys back home.

ROBERT RUTLAND

The Web of Life

During 1953 Iowans, like other normal Americans, manifested a deep interest in a variety of things — the international scene, state and national politics, the price of farm products, the high cost of living, the huge public debt, the massacre on our highways, and juvenile delinquency — to mention a few. They were also interested in what was happening to their friends and neighbors round about them.

Culturally, Iowa attracted national attention in literature when one of her sons, Richard Bissell of Dubuque, wrote a best-seller with the intriguing title, *7½ Cents*. A convict serving a life sentence in the state penitentiary was the author of an autobiography, *In For Life*, which drew praise from New York reviewers. Sioux City, Fort Dodge, Cedar Rapids, and other Iowa cities opened television stations that brought entertainment and education to thousands of Iowa homes previously beyond the range of the magic electronic waves. The Des Moines Art Center acquired the Goya portrait of Don Manuel Garcia de la Prada at a cost of \$130,000.

Personalities made much of the news in Iowa during 1953. Ernest Lindquist, a paroled convict

whose case attracted national publicity, received a full pardon and thus escaped deportation to his native Sweden as a convicted alien. In July, Libuse Cloud, wife of a Sioux City resident, escaped from her native Czechoslovakia and rejoined her husband after a Communist-enforced four-year separation. Mrs. Donald K. Brown of Adel learned in December that her family in Czechoslovakia had made a similar break from behind the iron curtain, following her own example set in 1949. Both Mrs. Cloud and Mrs. Brown had married when their Iowa husbands were stationed overseas.

One Iowan who remained behind the Communist wall was the famous Swea City jet-ace — Captain Harold E. Fischer, Jr. Captain Fischer, reported missing in action shortly before the Korean truce began, was not returned with other American prisoners. The Chinese Reds claimed that he had been captured north of the Yalu River and held his case was not included in the armistice terms.

Meanwhile, the lives of scores of Iowans had been brightened by the return of prisoners. The first Iowan released was Corporal Richard O. Morrison of Burlington, and thereafter they came in a steady stream until mid-August. Their Communist captors reported that at least nineteen Iowans had died in confinement.

Transportation provided its share of significant

events in 1953. The new \$325,000 towboat, *Sioux City*, was put in service on the Missouri. Another span across the same river was opened near Crescent, the Mormon Pioneer Memorial Bridge, which crosses to the outskirts of Omaha. An ammunition truck collided with another semi-trailer vehicle near Malvern causing an explosion in its cargo of 105-millimeter shells that sent up blasts for more than two hours. The 1953 highway fatality toll stood at 618 lives, 56 more than in 1952. A record of seventeen lives were lost on the weekend of July 10-12. Only a few days earlier the governor had accepted a plaque from the National Safety Council which honored Iowa as the safest Midwest state.

Inevitably, 1953 produced news oddities. A Davenport family watched its television set, unaware that the upper floor of their house was ablaze until neighbors called the fire department. In Washington County a lady sued a circus after being clawed by a lion in the menagerie. Mrs. Elizabeth Hope of Fairfield learned that her brother, who was considered a man of little means, had left her an estate of \$250,000. Farmer Art Debban of Floyd paid \$100 to the city fire department even though the fire he thought he saw in his barn turned out to be the flickering of fireflies.

After Iowa Retail Grocers complained to him about the use of trading stamp plans, Attorney General Leo Hoegh ruled that the stamps were in

violation of a 1909 "gift enterprise" law. The trading stamp firms fought back, and the courts ruled in their favor. Senator Guy Gillette claimed high coffee was "rigged" by an international market but admitted that there were so many habitual coffee-drinkers in America that one really effective method of lowering prices — the boycott — was impossible.

Native-born and visiting celebrities left their imprint on the 1953 chronicle. Queen Frederika of Greece had to console a Cedar Rapids youngster when the excitement at her reception there proved too much for him. Admiral Arthur W. Radford, a native of Grinnell, was named chairman of the joint chiefs of staff by President Eisenhower. Lieutenant Colonel Irene O. Galloway, born and reared in Carroll County, became director of the Women's Army Corps — making her the top commander of the WAC. Major William W. Thomas of Marion was chosen by President Eisenhower as his personal pilot for the Presidential airplane, the "Columbine." Dr. George Gallup, the public opinion expert, came back to Jefferson for a homecoming celebration.

Men who wrote the news also made it in 1953. Wallace E. Sherlock, retired from the *Fairfield Daily Ledger* after 56 years as an editor. A. L. Frisbie of the *Grinnell Herald-Register*, Lee P. Loomis of the *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, John Vanderwicken of the *Grundy Center Register*,

and Don J. Reid of the Iowa Press Association received "Master Editor-Publisher" awards for their services to Iowa journalism. The oldest weekly newspaper in Iowa, the *Tipton Advertiser*, completed a century of service on November 11.

Coinciding with the medical report from New York that smoking could cause lung cancer was the revelation that Iowans bought more than 100,000,000 packs of cigarettes in 1953. Tax officials were concerned over whether Iowa smokers were bringing cigarettes into Iowa from states with less or no tax on them. A road block was set up south of Keokuk early in June, dozens of incoming cars were halted, and officers searched the automobiles for untaxed cigarettes. Seven arrests resulted from this action, bringing fines and reprimands to residents of Davenport, Fort Madison, Keokuk, and Burlington.

Iowa was blessed with relief from the tragic polio epidemic which had struck hard in the Sioux City area in 1952. Late in September, when the danger period had passed, only 421 cases had been reported compared with 2,237 at the same time in 1952. Heart disease, cancer, and cerebral hemorrhage remained the chief killers in Iowa, according to the state division of vital statistics.

Dr. Frank R. Peterson, of Cedar Rapids, former head of surgery at the University of Iowa, told his colleagues that public education was reducing the danger of cancer. An influenza epidemic struck

Iowa during the winter months. The epidemic was attributed to a virus, but the number of victims in Iowa did not compare with those in nearby Illinois and in the Southwest.

Doctor shortages still plagued some Iowa communities. The only doctor living in Adel moved away, so citizens took matters into their own hands and renovated an office, painted and modernized it, and offered it rent-free to any doctor who would come to their community. Conscious of their good fortune, residents of Deep River honored Dr. L. Frank Cain and his wife, Dr. Mattie M. Cain, at a community banquet in recognition of their fifty years of practice.

In their poll of Iowa's top news stories for 1953, Associated Press editors chose three crime items. These concerned an eighteen-year-old Marine from Valley Stream, New York, who was arrested in Dubuque after leaving a trail of five murders between New York and Illinois; a double slaying near Iowa City that was not completely solved; and the acquittal of a New Mexico rancher charged with murdering an Iowa farmer.

Attorney General Hoegh ordered a strict enforcement of the liquor laws that led to indictments in several communities for beer-buying teenagers. A fourteen-year-old Des Moines youngster showed officers how he had broken into a bank without setting off the burglar alarm system, although he failed to open the bank safe "like

they did in the movies." Juvenile thieves also stole 27 pounds of lemon drops and 400 candy suckers from a Davenport candy warehouse.

Some concern was expressed during 1953 regarding a drop of 5 per cent in the state's population. Official sources said about 500 persons moved out of Iowa each week, many to California. "It is hard to swallow," commented the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, "but the census bureau's facts show that native Iowans living in California number approximately one-tenth of the number of persons [now] living in Iowa." The *Gazette* suggested a serious study of the problem, "Why we aren't keeping our Iowans in Iowa?" An Iowan in California had one answer. At the annual Iowa picnic held in southern California, Dean L. Dale Coffman of the UCLA law school told an estimated 75,000 former Iowans that they had moved to California because of their "essential restlessness of spirit."

Some of this restless energy was expended in outdoor sports. The first legal deer hunting season in 75 years brought out thousands in pursuit of the estimated 13,000 animals in forty-five counties. Herb Klontz, Jr. of Cedar Rapids won the Iowa Amateur golf title, and Mrs. Fred Nydle of Ottumwa became Women's Golf Champion.

In collegiate sports the 14-14 tie in the Notre Dame-Iowa football game at South Bend was notable. The previously unbeaten Irish scored

both touchdowns after their players allegedly feigned injuries to stop the clock and permit time for the scoring plays. Despite heated national debate Iowa Athletic Director Paul Brechler said "there has been no Iowa complaint," and Coach Forest Evashevski was offered a new ten-year contract at Iowa a few weeks later. In a nationwide poll, sports writers voted the incident the top sports oddity of 1953.

The first case under the recently enacted Iowa sports bribery law came up late in December when a Des Moines businessman was accused of attempting to "fix" an Iowa State-Drake basketball game.

The State Conservation Commission reported that the pheasant's deadliest enemy was no longer the hunter's shotgun, but rather the modern power mowers which were destroying hens nesting in hayfields. The Iowa prairie chicken, or pinnated grouse, had become almost extinct even though the last legal hunting season was held in 1917. State trappers caught over a half million fur-bearing animals during the previous year, with muskrats furnishing most of the pelts.

Civil defense, a problem of magnitude only lately created by the development of atomic and hydrogen bombs, was claiming the hours and dollars of Iowans in 1953. Kirkwood was the first Des Moines school to perfect its civil defense drills with various methods used for "flash at-

tacks," "atomic bomb attacks," and "attacks with (and without) warning."

"Operation Snowdrift" was conducted by the Air Defense Command in January to test efficiency of Iowa's ground observation posts. A scheduled 24-hour vigil was called off after eleven hours, and Captain John Bedar of the Air Defense Filter Center in Des Moines said the exercise was "fairly successful."

Fort Des Moines, the old army post near the capital, was tossed back into the Federal lap after the state decided it was not worth owning. The 3.5 mile Tama & Toledo Railroad, shortest in the state, was abandoned after more than fifty years of service. And some Tama Indians joined in a suit against the Federal government, claiming that land taken from them over a century ago was paid for in a niggardly fashion.

The vanishing coal mining industry gave fresh evidence of the hardships it imposes on men in 1953. Five miners died because of an explosion in a mine near Lovilia. Two of the victims had been trapped in the mine as shot firers, while three other miners died when they entered the shaft to investigate the blast and were overcome by deadly carbon monoxide fumes. Gases in an abandoned mine near Centerville also took the lives of three boys playing in the shaft.

Death took its annual toll of men and women who had contributed richly to the commonwealth.

The deceased included Dr. Harlan Updegraff, former president of Cornell College; Phil Hoffman, Oskaloosa editor and publisher; Bertha M. H. Shambaugh, authority on the Amana colonies; Dr. Nathaniel G. Alcock, widely-known urologist at the State University medical college; Wallace M. Short, former mayor of Sioux City and a founder of the Iowa Farmer-Labor party; Dr. Frank Cole, former secretary and vice-president of Cornell College; George A. Wilson, former governor and United States Senator; John B. Brown, recognized Aberdeen-Angus authority; Eugene A. Gilmore, president-emeritus of the State University; and Seth W. Richardson, former assistant United States attorney general and chief counsel for the Pearl Harbor investigating committee. Former state legislators who died in 1953 included Nelson J. Lee, Earl W. Vincent, Harry M. Greene, John S. Heffner, Stephen R. Emerson, Joseph H. Anderson, and Edward McMurray Smith.

As Iowans worked out their destiny in 1953 there was no set trend or pattern in their lives. Like other Americans, they looked forward to a better life for themselves and their children. If that search for better living entailed some anxiety and fear regarding wars and nuclear weapons, Iowans knew also that 1953 had been dotted with both tragedies and triumphs. Fortunately, the year would be remembered mostly for its triumphs.

ROBERT RUTLAND

IOWA'S VITAL STATISTICS

Education

	1943	1952	1953
Public school enrollment.....	459,741	494,542	510,933
College-university enrollment	22,640	29,132	30,882

Prices of Farm Products

Corn (bu.) .....	.92	\$ 1.56	\$ 1.37
Oats (bu.) .....	.63	.84	.74
Wheat (bu.)	1.29	2.14	1.98
Soybeans (bu.)	1.67	2.79	2.59
Hay (ton)	12.90	17.19	18.60
Hogs (cwt.)	13.80	17.92	21.50
Cattle (cwt.)	13.50	27.50	19.40
Sheep (cwt.)	6.50	8.91	5.60
Eggs (doz.) .....	.34	.33	.40
Chickens (lb.) .....	.22	.19	.21
Farm land per acre.....	119.00	209.00	198.00
Total farm income.....\$	1,589,149,000	\$ 2,328,845,000	\$ 2,253,190,000

Farm Production

Corn (bu.)	640,740,000	697,792,000	581,145,000*
Oats (bu.)	184,012,000	216,370,000	154,648,000
Soybeans (bu.)	39,332,000	37,587,000	34,336,000
Wheat (bu.)	2,994,000	3,579,000	2,626,000
Hay (ton)	5,152,000	6,843,000	6,474,000
Hogs	14,642,566	11,465,000	17,664,000
Cattle	2,653,782	6,113,000	3,053,000
Dairy Cattle	1,445,000	1,145,000	1,074,000
Eggs	3,996,000,000	4,692,000,000	4,349,000,000

Personal Property

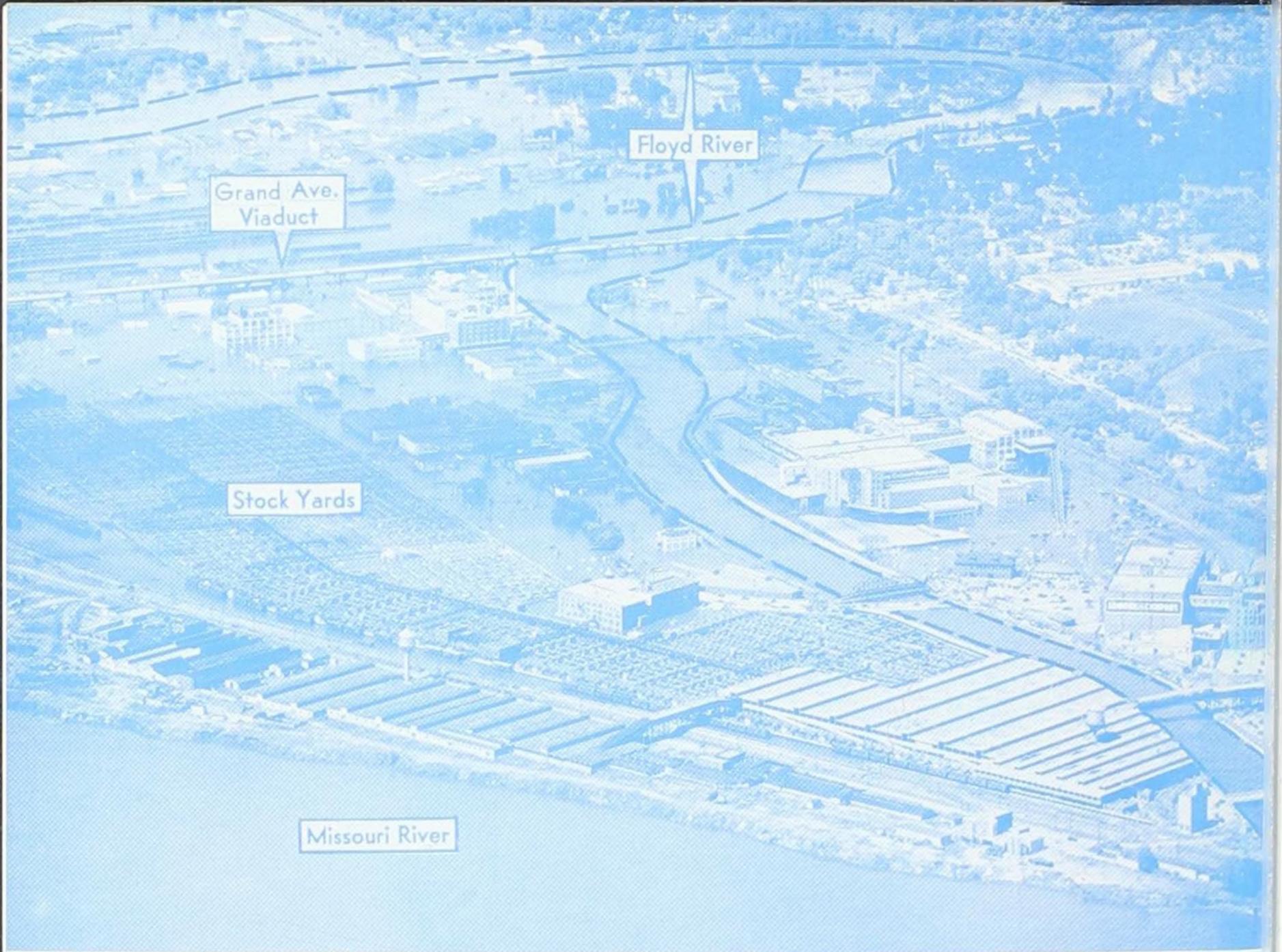
New passenger cars.....	—	71,637	100,756
Home owners	383,730	500,500	513,768

Finance

U. S. Public Debt.....	\$136,696,090,330	\$259,105,178,785	\$266,071,061,639
Per capita debt.....	\$ 999.83	\$ 1,649.98	\$ 1,666.17
Value of consumer's dollar (1935-39 average = \$1) ..	.91	.52	.53
Iowa owned life insurance..	\$ 2,100,313,951	\$ 3,987,326,200	\$ 4,294,027,915
Retail sales†	\$ 1,125,393,100	\$ 3,022,470,832	\$ 2,979,571,600

*Farm production and income figures based on United States Department of Agriculture estimate of May, 1954.

†Based on sales and use tax receipts.



Grand Ave.
Viaduct

Floyd River

Stock Yards

Missouri River

