

Possessed of a Restless Spirit

A Young Girl's Memories of the Southern Iowa Frontier

by Brian P. Birch

Textbooks of frontier history suggest that there were two main phases of pioneer settlement in the midwestern states. A first brief period when footloose frontiersmen entered newly-opened areas, but moved quickly on when settlement increased and land values rose, was followed by a second, longer period when settlers arrived to put down roots, improve their holdings, and establish communities. Whereas Americans made up the bulk of the frontiersmen, the second wave included numbers of foreign-born persons attracted by the bountiful cheap land and the opportunity to grow with the rural society around them.

Detailed firsthand evidence confirming that these early settlement processes applied as much in Iowa as elsewhere in the Midwest is sparse, however, especially for foreign groups like the English. They formed the third most numerous group in the state around the middle of the last century but because the barrier of language did not force them to stick together in colonies they dispersed widely across the state, leaving behind few written records and little evidence of their former existence on the landscape. While the growth in their numbers at mid-century would suggest they mainly contributed to the phase of settlement which came when the frontier had passed on, it seems that, unlike other foreign groups, they did not always put down very strong roots in Iowa. Not only was this the case with the young English aristocrats who bought land in and around Plymouth County in northwest Iowa in the

1870s and quickly moved out when their crops failed and their funds were exhausted. A much smaller working-class group from Yorkshire had settled in Clinton County in southeast Iowa in 1850 but they had soon moved out again, tired of the hard labor, as did many other individual Englishmen and their families about whom we know far less.

But it was not just the hard work, the harsh winters, the crop failures, and the loneliness which caused many of the English to leave a state which had been promoted in England as "a land flowing with milk and honey." Many English immigrants became wanderers by virtue of the jobs they chose to pursue in the farming regions of Iowa. The reminiscences of Hannah Hawke's early life in southern Iowa at mid-century are of interest because they tell of the frequent shifts which her parents made across the state as they combined farming with her father's preaching activities. But these frequent moves across Iowa — six in about twelve years — were in part the outcome of what Hannah called her father's "restless spirit." Indeed, in 1859, when Hannah was fourteen years old, the whole family left Iowa for good to spend the rest of their lives in Australia.

Yet the Hawke memoir shows that despite this restlessness the family made many good friends wherever they settled in Iowa and Hannah clearly enjoyed a happy childhood there. Hannah was born in Van Buren County on January 20, 1845, to Robert and Charlotte Hawke who had emigrated from Cornwall, in the southwest of England, in 1832 shortly after their wedding. Unlike most of the many poorer

Cornish who were then emigrating from the mining districts to Wisconsin and other parts of the Midwest, the Hawkes were from two middle-class families of landholders and merchants. But like their compatriots who were leaving for America at the time, the Hawkes took with them their strong Methodist beliefs which later led Robert Hawke to his preaching activities.

In the thirteen years before Hannah was born, her parents had lived first in New York, then on a farm in Pennsylvania about which Hannah later wrote, "the land was so heavily timbered, and so expensive to clear, he [Hannah's father] sold the property, and moved to Michigan, where he bought another property." Their first two children had by then been born so that Hannah's father settled for some years in Michigan, "but a restless spirit seemed to take possession of him, and hearing from friends great accounts of the beautiful prairie lands, and other advantages of the state of Iowa, he again sold his property and moved westward."

On reaching Iowa, the Hawkes purchased a farm in Fairfield Township, Van Buren County, where Hannah's father started Methodist church services and her mother taught her own and her neighbors' children, until all four of her children and many of the others were swept away in an outbreak of diphtheria. Hannah was born shortly thereafter, and as she was a strong and lively child, her parents decided, perhaps unwisely, to move further west in Iowa.

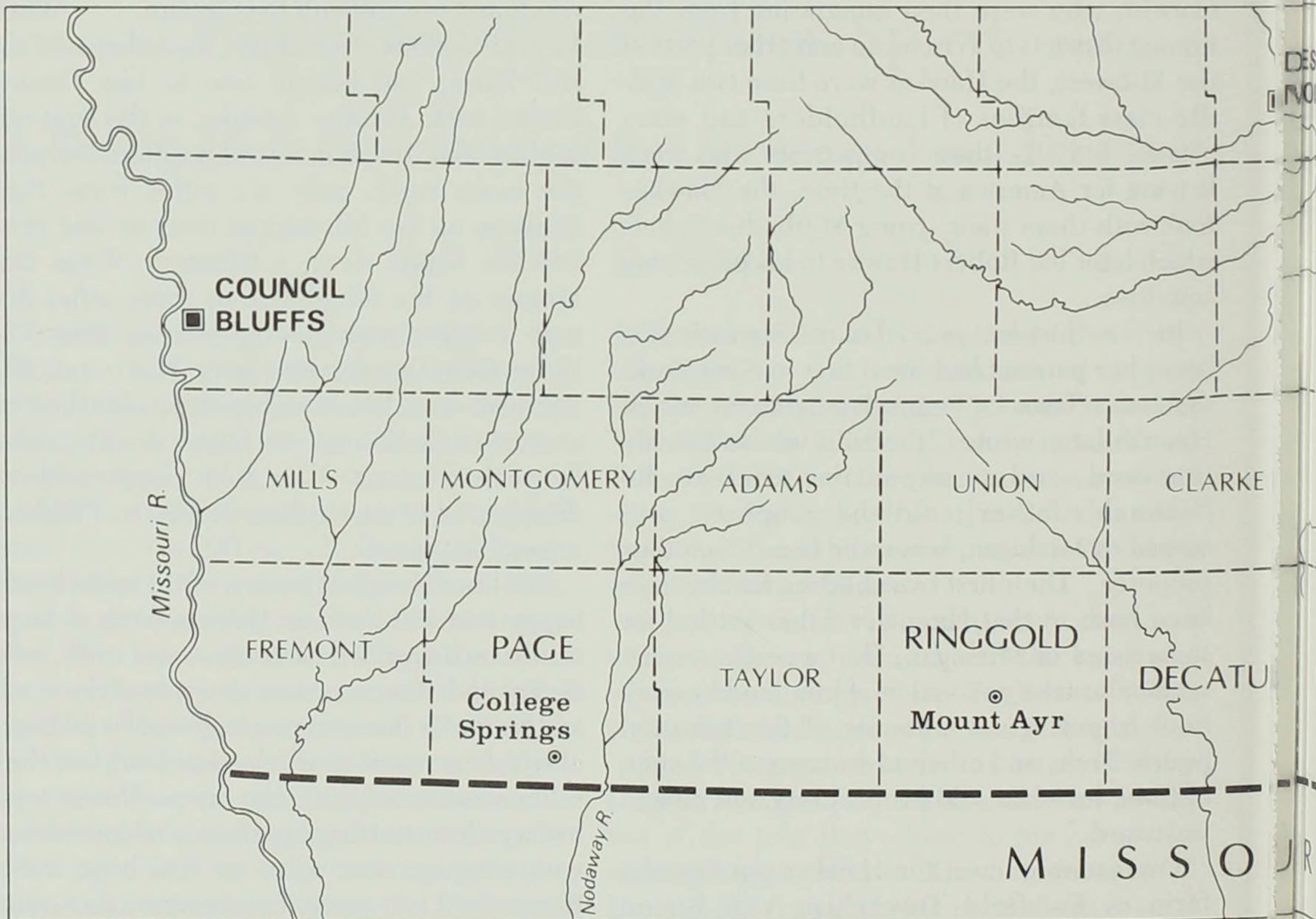
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When I was nearly two years of age, my parents received a good offer for their farm, which had improved so well, and which had become very valuable, and in an evil hour, sold and bought another. . . . My father soon found he had made a mistake. The place was called The Hill Farm, was exposed to westerly

winds and was difficult to cultivate. . . . When I was about four years of age, my father sold the Hill Farm, and bought one in Lee County further east. Another mistake, as the land was cold and flat. It was in a good position, being on the main road, only six miles from Fort Madison on the Mississippi river on one side, and the Skunk river, a tributary of the Des Moines on the other, two or three miles distant. I well remember the journey from Van Buren County to our new farm. Heavy rain fell; the roads were heavy and muddy, and when we arrived at the house, we found it surrounded by pools of water. I am told I expressed my disapproval to my mother, saying: — "This is a miserable place"

But time is a great healer, and I spent many happy hours at the Lee County farm. A large scrub consisting of dwarf oaks, hazel trees, wild cherry and others, was on one side of the road, and far into it there were numbers of wild hogs, of which we were in wholesome fear, but they seldom came out into the open. However, I had a rather startling experience in connection with a savage sow. After we had been living there about two years, I was sent on an errand to Mr Larisons and was returning carrying in a little can what I had been sent for. There had been heavy rain, which left great pools of water in the lane, which had become frozen solid. I was cautiously walking along, when to my terror, out rushed that savage animal. I started to run, but ice being so slippery, I fell, striking the back of my head with such force, that I became unconscious. Fortunately for me a neighbor was coming along. When he saw the animal after me he ran, and with a heavy club drove her away. He picked me up and carried me home, but I was some time before I recovered from the fall and the fright. . . .

My brother, John Pearce, was born here, as also my sister, Sarah Elizabeth. My sister, Phebe Esther, Pearce and I had many happy hours, playing together under the trees and in a fine large barn, accompanied by our dog,

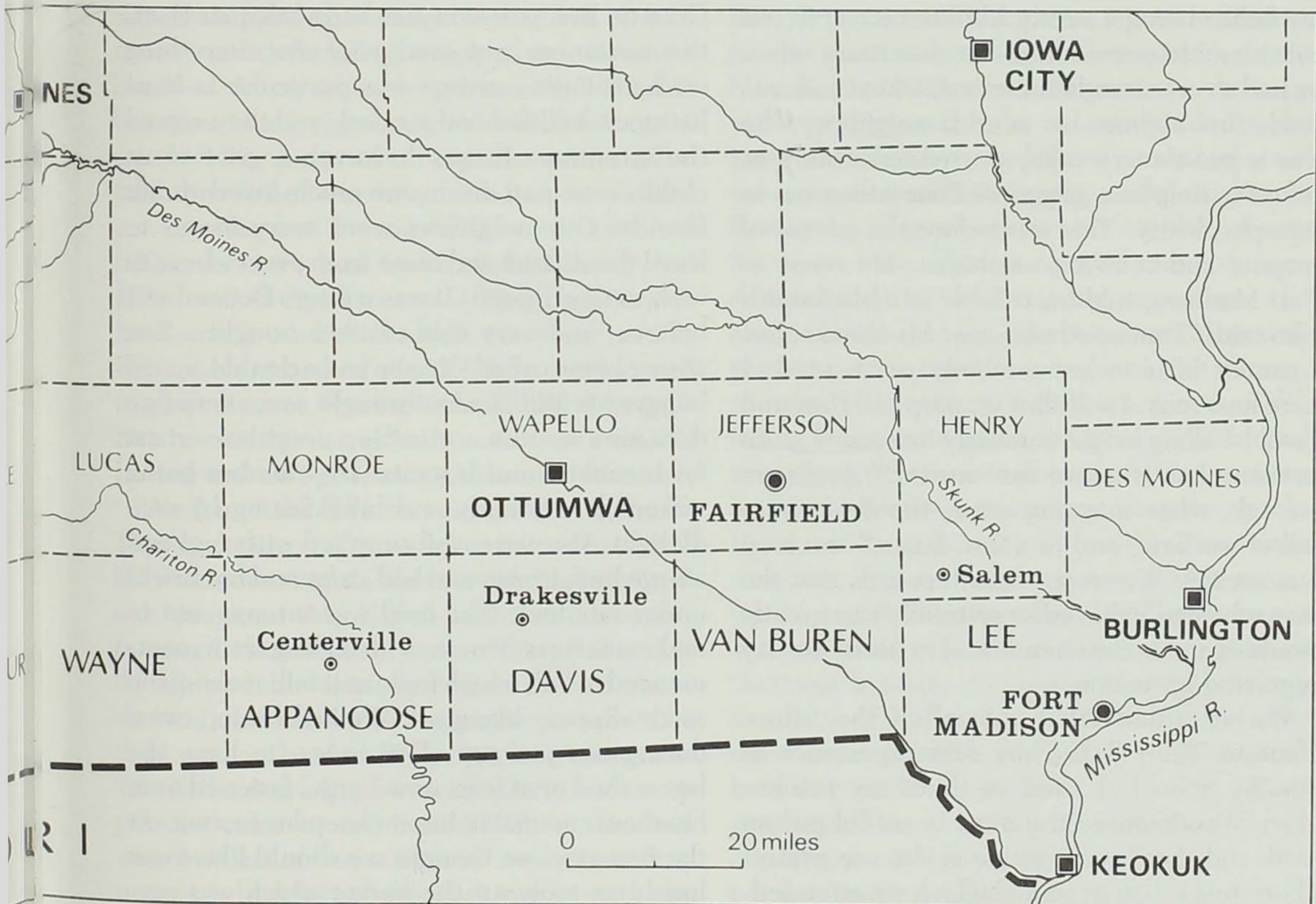


Dash, a most intelligent and affectionate animal. He would go everywhere with our little brother. One evening the little fellow [John Pearce] was playing too near a pond and slipped in. Dash had evidently endeavored to drag the child out and failing in this he rushed inside to my mother, who seeing him covered with green slime, knew there was something wrong. The dog ran before her to the pond where the dear little chap was struggling, and got him out before he was quite gone. . . .

A few miles from our house lived a family by the name of Williamson. They came from Virginia; had a very nice house, and what was a very great charm to us children, a beautiful orchard, which bore abundantly all sorts of fruit in its season. Very fine apples which they used to store in cellars, and those they had no

room for there, were placed in heaps. A thick layer of straw was first placed on them and then covered two feet, sometimes more, deep with earth, to prevent them being frozen in the winter. We frequently visited them and they always enjoyed spending a day with us. . . . Though Mr Williamson came from a slave state, he was a staunch Abolitionist and assisted many a poor fugitive slave to Canada and freedom. He had a brother in Virginia to whom he was much attached, though they had very different ideas, and I believe this one owned slaves.

Whilst we were living at the Lee County farm our brother, John Pearce, died — another great trial for my parents. Father had hoped that he would be the staff of his declining years, but it was not to be. A striking circumstance of



(map courtesy the author)

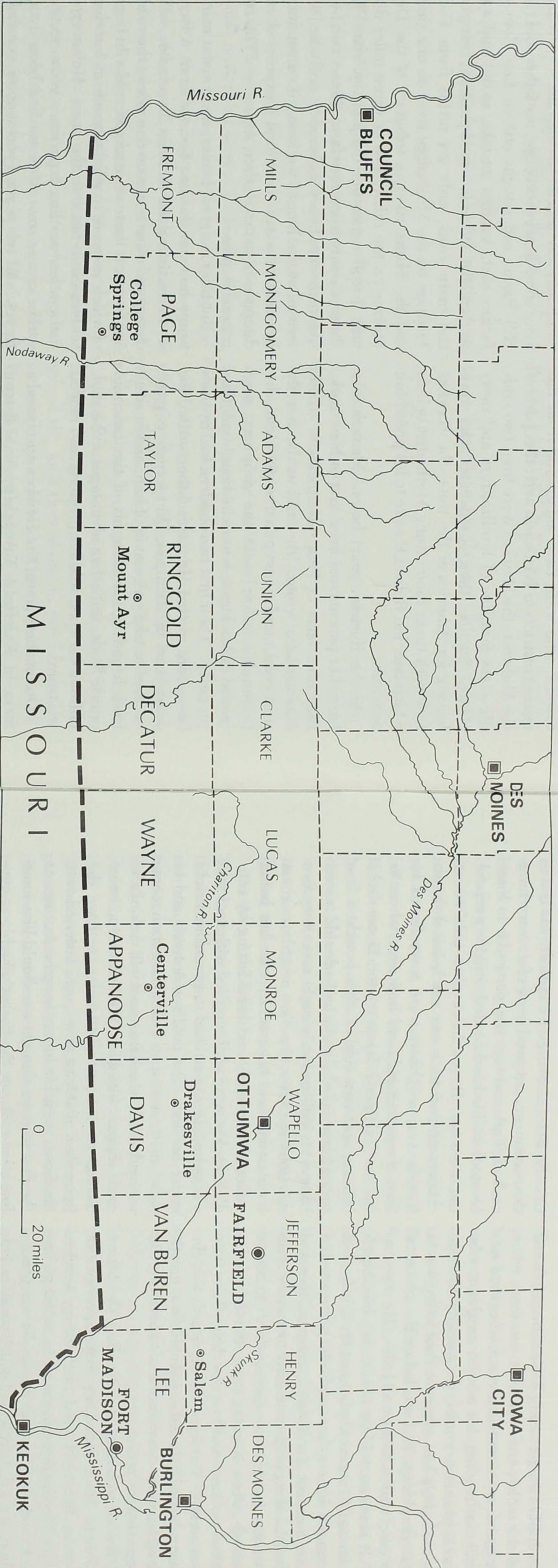
the fidelity and affection of dumb animals was brought into notice at this time. The dog, Dash, who was always the little boy's companion, would not leave the door of his room, and after his death, when his cradle was taken outside, he lay beside it giving piteous howls. After the funeral, he disappeared and we never saw him again.

Father occasionally took the whole family to a "Camp Meeting," where some thousands of people, young and middle aged, gathered for protracted services. Ministers and laymen from different counties met; tents were erected for the accommodation of those who lived at a distance. The position chosen was usually in the woods where the trees grew tall and straight. The echo of hundreds of voices among the treetops was entrancing, and I am told the

sermons were eloquent, but I being young at that time, they did not appeal to me. . . .

Another time we visited a friend of my parents at Salem, a Quaker settlement. All without exception in the town were anti-slavery folk and had bought and freed colored folk. One old man, the children called Uncle Peter, was a slave, and made an attempt for freedom, swam the river and gained the bank, when he was shot in the leg and bloodhounds tore the skin and flesh dreadfully. I saw the scars. After some time he was bought by a kind Quaker and his freedom given him, but he never saw his wife and two children again. He was old at that time, his hair being quite white. He had a beautiful voice and would sing to us children.

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my father being a strong Abolitionist, suffered considerable persecution. At one time, when he had a very abundant harvest, wheat and oats ready for reaping, his nearest neighbor, who was a pro-slavery man, persuaded others to refuse to help him garner it. Poor father was in sore perplexity. This was before the advent of reaping and mowing machines. He went to Fort Madison, told his trouble to a blacksmith who said, "I am no Abolitionist Mr Hawke, but I cannot bear to see anybody persecuted. I have four sons. I will shut up shop and they and I will be along bright and early tomorrow, with as many hands as we can muster." And sure enough, when morning came, the fields were full of workers, and in a few days all the crop was secure. We were told afterwards that the man who had behaved so spitefully was greatly troubled in his conscience and to his dying day regretted his action.

We attended what we called the Stone Church. There I had my first experience of Sunday School. I used to think my teacher Mary Woodmansee the most beautiful girl on earth and she was as lovable as she was pretty. There was a district school which we attended. The teacher used to board round, each family accommodating the teacher one month or six weeks. What has left the pleasantest impression on our minds, however, was the games we had in summer, the lovely flowers and beautiful trees; elm, oak, hickory and others. In winter there was the being brought to school on sleds, snowballing at recess, as well as skating and sliding on the frozen creek. I remember some of the names of boys who attended, some of whom lost their lives afterwards in the Civil War; Lewis and Herbert Wilson, three Woodmansees, David Underwood, Josiah and Oscar Deeds, Jasper and Fred Spencer and many others. . . .

After residing at this place for some years, my father again sold, and for twelve months took duty as Presiding Elder in Davis

County. Before leaving we had a sale. Mr Hart, the auctioneer, got good prices for everything we had. Father always was particular to have his stock well fed and tended, and they repaid the attention. It was however a grief to us children to part from our much loved dumb friends. Our neighbors were sorry for us to leave the district and came from everywhere to wish us God Speed. It was winter, December I believe, and very cold. Father bought a fine strong horse called Charlie and a double seated buggy. Mr Williamson brought some very fine delicious apples and other neighbors roast fowl, cookies and biscuits. I remember being wakened very early and breakfasting by candlelight. We were well supplied with rugs and a large buffalo skin and had straw and hot bricks under our feet. The cold was intense and to make matters worse a drizzling rain commenced to fall, which froze as it fell, making the roads slippery like glass. We had to stop twice during our journey of 40 miles, to have the horse shod or at least new "cogs" fastened onto his shoes, to enable him to keep his footing. At the first stop we thought we should like some lunch, so took out the basket which was covered by rugs, but found all frozen hard. Fortunately we obtained some hot coffee and lunch at a boarding house which greatly refreshed and warmed us. Our noble horse did splendidly and we reached our destination before it was very dark. . . .

As soon as we had procured a house we went to live in it, near our friends, the Elliotts, my father taking up his duties in the various circuits. My sister and I went to a school in Drakesville, kept by a Mr McGrue. It was held in a large upstairs room. I think we learned more mischief than anything else here. After we had been there some months, and when father was away on one of his long trips, I contracted scarlet fever and was delirious. My mother and Lizzie Elliott doctored me according to the "cold water method." I have a distinct remembrance of my sensations when

being wrapped in a sheet wrung out of cold water, and then being wrapped in numerous blankets. I forget how long I was kept like this but after being vigorously rubbed, I felt quite comfortable and made a rapid recovery. The next time father was away from home my sister got measles but I escaped. Heavy rains had fallen, bridges had been washed away and father was obliged to travel long distances to head creeks and rivers and was three weeks behind his expected return. Poor mother was in great distress, fearing he had been drowned, but he returned suddenly and unexpectedly having had no opportunity to communicate.

We found the Elliotts very good neighbors. They had a nice home with every convenience. If I remember rightly there were four sons and one daughter. Mr Elliott had a toolhouse, a turning lathe and many other things of which he allowed his sons free use. Two of them showed quite remarkable genius; as inventors they made a bean-thrasher worked by steam. The boiler was a huge iron tea kettle and many persons came to see it work. They thrashed nine bushels of beans with it. And numerous, pretty and useful articles they made, with the aid of a turning lathe. I was given a prettily turned doll's bedstead, and my sister a cradle, and mother a wooden candlestick. We were told they afterwards became quite famous for some of their inventions.

After residing in Davis County for some time, we went to Appanoose County, where father bought a beautiful prairie farm. Connected with it was 40 acres of woods and 360 acres of prairie. The timber was very good, oak, ash, hickory, elm, butternut and walnut trees. Our house was situated on a hill overlooking this and when autumn tints appeared the picture was enchanting. There was also a mile or so of prairie near, and in the front a stretch of land, at that time uncultivated, a distance of three miles. In spring and summer waving grass and flowers covered the expanse;

flox, or as we called them sweet williams, prairie roses and rattlesnake's master, a pretty blue flower which exuded a gummy substance and was supposed to be an antidote for snake bite. Scattered here and there were thickets of the wild plum and crab apple, as also thickets of hazelnut bushes where we got supplies of nuts for winter use. The memory of some of those delightful spring and summer mornings, the scent of flowers and the murmur of prairie chickens who used to perch on the fences, remained like a beautiful dream. Game of different kinds were plentiful; deer, which used to make their way into the cornfields in winter and caused some havoc, by pulling the shocks about, eating and wasting the cobs. They were very shy, and if anyone appeared with a gun, would be off like the wind. Wild geese were seen in hundreds, about November, making their way to warmer regions, hundreds of them in a flock. They used to fly day and night, and often in the middle of the night, we used to hear their melancholy "honk, honk." Quail and prairie chickens, as we called them, were in abundance. People used to make traps, and catch as many as 20 or 30 at once.

This county, though so beautiful, was very high and cold and exposed to north and westerly winds. Sometimes snow fell and covered the fences, and the ground froze over two feet. It was impossible to make fences as in warmer districts, so they constructed what was called "staked and rider" fences, which answered the purpose till the hedges were grown. All kinds of fruit and vegetables grew well, and wild fruits could be had for the picking in the season. Many a nice enjoyable picnic we have had, when we and some of our neighbors, would take a waggon, plenty of baskets and buckets, and gather as many of the delicious red and yellow plums as we desired. . . . I never saw finer melons, water and rock, or as we called them mushmelons, tomatoes, corn, pumpkins, squashes, and every kind of fruit and vegetables than was produced in this district.

My sister and I often felt in great fear when we heard the prairie wolves howling around, but they were too shy to come very near the house even in the night. I remember we had a very fine litter of young pigs taken. . . . A friend of my parents, Rev. Mr Jimmerson, was once coming to our home when he lost his way on the prairies in the snow and was followed by 20 or 30 wolves who grew so bold, they jumped at his horse's neck and snapped at his legs. He shouted and hallooed and, after a while, coming to a thicket of wild plum and cherry trees, he managed to climb up one. He sent his horse away as fast as he could go thinking he would reach some habitation, and clung to the tree, shouting and singing. The wolves instead of following the horse, crouched round the tree, now and then springing up. When morning dawned they slunk away, and he was able to move from his perilous position. When quite light he found he was only a mile or two from our home and arrived there suffering greatly from cold and exposure . . . it was some time before he recovered. . . . It was easy for people to lose themselves at these times when the country was covered with a mantle of white and no landmarks visible. . . . A compass was a very necessary possession.

During the winter, even though the cold was severe, people, particularly the young ones, found plenty of amusement. There were sleigh rides in the moonlight, bells ringing merrily, spelling bees, singing evenings, husking bees, apple parings, nut shellings, and many other innocent amusements. The religious services were conducted in a large hall or school room until a suitable place of worship had been erected. There were many earnest Christians in the district, and although in this "far away out west" part we were debarred from much that the older and more cultivated districts enjoyed, we were not without pleasure and advantages.

Though crops were so luxuriant, a pest appeared in the shape of thousands and mil-

lions of little insects called "chiny-bugs." They attacked the wheat when the grain was in the milk, crawled up the stalks and sucked the nourishment out. Fields, looking green and luxuriant in the morning, by night appeared yellow and fit for little. After they had finished the wheat they attacked the corn, and though they caused some damage, it was not so serious. Then another pest attacked the potatoes, so the agriculturist had much to contend against. Having no son to assist him, it was doubly hard on my father. People used to plough several furrows around their fields, and then draw heavy logs through them which killed millions and somewhat checked them.

After being at this place a few years, and experiencing some success and happy days as well as disappointment and misfortune, another change was coming. One bitterly cold day in winter, a neighbor, Mr Reynolds, came to our house and told father that a steam mill property was for sale. It was a saw and grist mill and had machinery for making furniture. A fine large house in connection with the property made it seem a desirable place, and its being near Mr Reynolds he thought he and my father could work it to advantage, and it would be easier and more profitable than farming for both. So, after talking the matter over, they decided to buy it between them. They had to employ engineers and other hands. We soon found a purchaser for our beautiful farm and left it to reside near the mill. Things prospered for awhile, but then several opposition mills were started not far away. Then there were breakages to the machinery and many drawbacks.

During our stay there, however, we young people had a rather enjoyable time. A Mr and Mrs Stafford came from the east to take charge of the school; they introduced a great many accomplishments and amusements, which were new to us and added greatly to our interest and pleasure. They introduced a debating club for the boys, and every quarter had an

entertainment of some kind. One time they arranged an amateur theatrical, "William Tell," which was very creditable considering the disabilities we labored under. Then there were recitations, songs, etc. It was during this winter that I learned crochet work, which was new in the west. We were very sorry when Mr and Mrs Stafford's term was finished and they went back to their home in the east.

In the spring my father had an offer for his share in the mill and decided to sell, though at some loss. Part payment was a few hundred acres of land on the Chariton river; rich, and having in connection with the agricultural land, some magnificent timber. A nice new four room cottage had also been erected, though it was not finished. But before my father decided on the transaction, he had taken up 320 acres of land in Page County, and to secure possession, we were supposed to live on it for a short time and make certain improvements. Page County was more than 100 miles from Appanoose, so we stored our furniture at Chariton in care of a friend who promised to look after it, and made arrangement for our trip further west.

My father purchased a commodious waggon with a cover which could be rolled up in sections and was waterproof. He also bought two fine, handsome oxen, as being the most suitable. . . . They were very tractable, the driver sitting in the vehicle and guiding them by words, seldom using the whip. They were spotted animals and their horns were ornamented with brass knobs. . . . The waggon contained our beds, clothes, provisions and all necessities. It was a beautiful spring morning when we started on our journey. I shall ever remember the feeling of exhilaration which possessed all of us. . . . The cattle were fine walkers, the day comfortably cool, and we made good headway.

About noon we entered Wayne County. Here we outspanned, where there was an

abundance of fresh grass and a creek and a spring of clear water. There were a few scattered trees also for shade. We children hastily collected sticks, and our kettle was soon boiling. Our mother had brought out some of the good things, ham, bread, butter and jam etc., spread on a cloth under a tree. After our father had given God thanks, we had a most enjoyable meal. When we had finished, dishes were washed and packed away. We children ran about picking flowers and the colored fungi which clung to dead limbs. When the oxen had their fill and a little rest, we proceeded on our journey. I believe we travelled 25 miles that day. When evening came we prepared for the night. After having our supper, our provisions and utensils were slung under the waggon, bells were placed on the necks of the oxen, and after they had satisfied themselves with grass and water, laid down to rest. We had a lantern slung inside the waggon, our beds were arranged, and after we had sung a hymn and father had read a chapter from the Bible and prayed for our protection during the night, we retired and slept soundly till morning. After breakfast we again started our journey, passing several villages and farms. The people were most hospitable and kind, and invited us to stay with them, and when we declined, often made us presents of fruit and vegetables.

The next county we passed through was called Decatur. It was of an undulating nature with plenty of grass and clear sparkling creeks, and scattered areas of woodlands; timber was scarce. A number of homesteads were being formed, and at some distance, were villages with the usual stores, houses and livery stables. As the railroad had not reached within some hundreds of miles, the stage coach and waggons were the only means of transit. Nothing of note transpired during our journey through this county. The weather was favorable, and roads fairly good. After getting into Ringgold County the road became more hilly. About mid-day we came to a village called Mount Ayr,

so named on account of its elevated position I suppose. It had the usual number of houses, chiefly weatherboard, built on blocks which were situated on either side of the so-called streets. We noticed this particularly on account of what transpired before our return journey. . . . I think we spent one Sunday on the road near the Nodaway river. Some trees and bushes and flowers, with fresh green grass grew on either side and presented an ideal spot for our camp. As it was the Sabbath we did not travel. . . .

Early on Monday we commenced our journey again, crossing the river at a newly built bridge, and before night had reached our destination in Page County. We were all much delighted with the appearance of the district; beautiful and extensive rolling prairies with creeks and clumps of hazel and other shrubs interspersed, but large timber was scarce. When we reached Amity, or College Springs, we were the guests of some old friends of our parents from Illinois who had lately settled there. After staying in the town for a few days we went to a Mr Bullocks and his family who spent two weeks with us in Appanoose when they were journeying west. . . . They were Cornish, and naturally they and my parents had much in common. We were very hospitably entertained, and after remaining a week or two, we said goodbye with mutual regret. After a short stay in Amity we bade our friends farewell and prepared for our return journey.

Unfortunately, the weather which had been so favorable on our outward trip changed. Heavy rain fell; roads were boggy, creeks and rivers were overflowing and we were obliged to camp for days in considerable discomfort. Though our waggon was waterproof it was difficult to make good fires. To make matters worse, we went short of bread, and could not get across the Nodaway river to get a supply. My father managed to get a little from a farm house, but it was sour, heavy, and almost uneatable. We had some pork and beans our

mother boiled, and which we purposed having for our breakfast, but some mice sampled it, and in doing so fell into the pot and could not get out, so we were disappointed in our expectations of a meal from that quarter. After waiting some days for the water to recede, we were told of a place where the river might be forded. My sister and I managed to cross on the broken bridge. . . . A man assisted father in getting the vehicle across. The oxen pulled splendidly, and although the water came into the waggon and they were nearly over their backs in it and mud, managed to struggle up the bank on the other side. We were greatly terrified, but after a rest and a good meal which some kind settler supplied us with, we became cheerful and proceeded on our journey.

Although things were not as pleasant as on our outward trip, we met with no fresh disaster or anything worthy of note till reaching Ringgold County where we encamped in a nicely sheltered ravine. There were no trees, but plenty of good grass for the cattle. After we had taken our evening meal and prepared for the night, my father took the precaution of driving stakes to prevent the waggon from rolling. We noticed most peculiarly-shaped clouds appearing, some the shape of a funnel, others seemed to be boiling. Soon a tempestuous wind arose. It was very fortunate we were camped in a sheltered hollow or we should have been blown away. We felt very uneasy and the cattle, feeling that there was something unusual in force, crowded around the waggon. The gale lasted for over an hour when it gradually subsided, and about 10 o'clock we were able to get to sleep. We were only about half a mile from the village of Mount Ayr but when we reached that place, a scene of desolation presented itself. Houses were unroofed, some blown down and the contents scattered for miles. One small frame house which was built on blocks was taken up bodily and lifted across the street. . . . A small girl got caught up in the debris, and was carried away some distance on

the prairie; she was not found until morning, not much worse for the experience, though heavy rain had fallen during the night. Her escape sounded almost miraculous. We picked up tin ware and other articles four miles from the town.

A few days after our return, father went out to the Chariton to see how things were, and to prepare for our removal. It was distant about 15 miles. He did not return till the next day. We saw at once from his manner and expression that something was amiss . . . the nice new cottage we had expected to occupy had been completely destroyed by fire; when father arrived, only the chimneys were standing. A man had gone into it without leave, and his wife had gone out leaving a fire. The wind which was very high that day, blew the door open and the place was soon in ashes. Some thought the man should have been prosecuted, but he was poor and there would not have been much satisfaction in sending him to prison. There was an old log cabin on the place, which it was decided we should occupy till a new home could be built, so we moved into it.

This move proved to have a great effect on the lives of all of us. How often it happens that a single circumstance changes the current. Our cabin presented anything but a comfortable appearance, but the surroundings were beautiful. It was fine weather which was fortunate . . . [and] we thought we would make the best of it. We young folk passed the time very pleasantly. For a few weeks several kinds of wild fruits were plentiful, gooseberries, raspberries, dewberries, wild plums, and myriads of beautiful flowers. But troubles were before us. . . . At the beginning of August heavy rain came on, flooding the river bottoms. As the vegetation was so rank, the decaying matter caused nearly everyone in the district to be attacked by malaria.

I remember full well the day, 28th August, 1858, when I experienced the first ague

chill. . . . After this we all contracted it, and so ill were we that at times we were unable to give each other a drink of water when we were parched with thirst during the fever which succeeded the chills. Father escaped more lightly than any of us, and managed to prepare a little food. . . . A neighbor's daughter, Mary J. Moon, used to come to us when she could leave her invalids, bring a dish of jelly or a luxury of some kind, and her brother, George, brought a bucket of cool fresh water every night from their spring. We had all taken a dislike to the water in our well. I have often thought with gratitude of their goodness. It was no light task to carry a pail of water for nearly half a mile. Often during the night we could hear the screaming of the panthers and catamounts in the woods nearby, which in our weak state made night hideous.

One Sunday, after we had been ill some weeks, two of our old friends, Irving and Lizzie Stanton drove over to see us, and were very distressed to find us in such a plight . . . [and] said we must be got away from there as soon as possible. Their brother's new cottage was vacant. . . . The next day two or three waggons arrived, and we, with our belongings, were transported to the nice comfortable home near our old friends. Nothing could exceed the kindness of the neighbors; each seemed to vie with the other in doing something for our comfort. Some sent wood, some vegetables, some fruit. It was some months before we got rid of the ague, though we took great quantities of quinine and port wine, vile stuff, every two or three hours. The winter was intensely cold, one of the severest I can remember.

It was during this time that father received a letter from Uncle George urging us to sell out and go to New South Wales as soon as possible. . . . After due consideration it was decided that we should do so, though the thought of parting from our dear American friends was a great wrench. For weeks the cold

in November and December was severe. The whole district was covered with snow, with fences hidden in many places. Spilled water froze before it reached the ground, and meat which had been hung up froze, so that an axe had to be used to joint it. Near Christmas the weather became somewhat milder, and numerous parties and pleasant evenings were planned by our friends for us young folk in particular. On moonlight nights the sleigh rides were very enjoyable, and being well wrapped up in buffalo robes with hot bricks and straw to place our feet on, we did not feel the cold. I well remember New Year's Day 1859. We had a surprise party. Many friends came, bringing presents of every description, some intended for our long journey. After leaving the cottage we went to spend a week at Squire Armstrong's and from there to Mr Luther Holbrook's where we were most hospitably entertained. They had a large new house and were the wealthiest people in the district. . . . We remained with them till early in February, going from place to place to bid our friends farewell.

On the 13th February we returned to Squire Armstrong's, and he took us in their wagonette to Centreville. . . . The railway had not reached that far west at that time. We said goodbye to our dear friends there, and the next morning took a carriage for our drive of 40 or 50 miles to Fairfield. By this time the February thaw had set in, and our progress was very slow owing to the state of the roads. After crossing the Des Moines river they were less boggy. One thing which has remained in my memory is the sight of drove after drove of hogs which were being sent to Chicago, and the peculiar, almost melancholy cry the drovers made to urge them along. After them came large wagonettes carrying frozen carcasses. At one time we were hindered in our progress, as we could not pass. I forget where we took the train, or how

long we were in reaching the Mississippi, but there was no bridge at that time, so passengers were taken over on a ferry with a dining hall where we had refreshments, which we had ample time to enjoy, before we reached the other side. I had never seen anything so grand as the railway station appeared to me, where we boarded the express for New York. . . . Nor shall I forget my sensation when we came in sight of Lake Michigan; it was so much more extensive than I had imagined, like an inland sea. Father remarked that when he travelled over that state some twenty years before there were only a few shanties and cabins on the site of Chicago.

* * *

From New York, the Hawkes sailed for England. There they spent a few weeks before leaving for New South Wales where Hannah was to write her reminiscences over fifty years later. In Australia she married John Glasson, a member of another Cornish family. She died in Sydney in 1927 at the age of eighty-two. □

Note on Sources

Several secondary sources provided useful information about pioneer settlement in the Midwest, and about the experiences of British settlers especially. These included: Allen G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); Grant Foreman, "English Emigrants in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 44 (October 1946):385-420; Marcus L. Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942); John B. Newhall, *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846* (Burlington: W.D. Skillman, 1846; reprint ed., Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1957); William V. Pooley, *The Settlement of Illinois from 1830-1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Bulletin, History Series, volume 1, 1908); and Jacob Van der Zee, *The British in Iowa* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1922).

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