

The Palimpsest

VOLUME 55

NUMBER 4

JULY / AUGUST 1974



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L. Edward Purcell, Editor

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Cover: "A finer grazing country could scarcely be found than this part of Idaho," wrote Henry Wallace from southeastern Idaho during an 1885 visit by Iowa newspaper editors. Story on p. 98.



The Meaning of the 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.

"IDAHO-IOWA"

by

Peter T. Harstad

and

Michael D. Gibson

Introduction

An explanation of why anyone would wish to pursue this subject may be in order. Initially, the motivation stemmed from family and personal history. During the Civil War, my maternal great-grandfather settled in central Iowa. The family is still there on the same farm near Story City. My father's forebears pushed farther north, just over the Minnesota line. After attending Luther College at Decorah and graduating from a mid-western seminary, my paternal grandfather moved along with the Dakota frontier, skipped over Montana and the Idaho panhandle, and settled down in the state of Washington. Father too became a minister and, because of complicated reorientations, came to serve a parish of like-minded souls near Story City. Here my parents met and were wed.

After a mid-western upbringing and education, with boyhood summers spent on the Iowa farm, I headed west to teach history in Idaho. Happily for me, my wife came along. She is a native of Albert Lea, Minnesota, barely over the Iowa line, but named after the army officer and frontier promoter who gave Iowa its name.

I remember vividly that August day in 1963 when we approached Idaho from West Yellowstone and, just over the border, read these words painted on the blistering blacktop: "HELP KEEP IDAHO GREEN." There was no Corn Belt greenery in sight. It would take several years to read the subtle hues in the Idaho landscape and to realize that the slogan was to be taken

seriously. But only those irrigated and groomed row crops reminded one of Iowa. My new neighbor in Pocatello, who regarded Denver as an eastern city, would simply not accept the fact that in parts of Iowa there are six feet or more of fertile black topsoil.

After a decade of conditioning in the Gem State I followed my father's cue and moved to Iowa. How rectangular the farms; how lush the vegetation. Plant one seed of corn in the glacial soil and get back a thousand without irrigation.

Back in Iowa I began to detect the frequent confusion that exists in some minds concerning the Hawkeye and Gem states. To a considerable degree the confusion springs from the similarity of the two names. For example, a west coast book dealer sent a catalog to me at my Idaho address. With a hasty scrawl the post office returned it to the sender with the information that I now lived in Iowa City, Iowa. The bookman sent out the catalog again, this time with my correct street address in Iowa City, but the name of the town "Idaho City, Idaho." The postman in Idaho City apparently decoded the zip and sent the parcel off to Iowa City where it finally reached me.

An illustration of confusion from the opposite coast comes from the pen of Laurence Lafore, the historian-novelist at The University of Iowa. In an interesting article about Iowa in the October 1971 issue of Harper's Lafore tells about an eastern hostess who has just been informed that her guest has moved to Iowa. "My dear," the hostess retorts, "I think you ought to know in Boston we pronounce it Idaho." Many variations of this story circulate, some of them involving Ohio, Iowa, or Idaho. For example, a native of northwestern Iowa recognized the following provincial assurance while he attended Harvard early in this century. One of his friends informed a distinguished Boston lady that he was from Iowa. She replied, "We pronounce it Ohio here in Boston." Perhaps the ultimate in this vein appeared on some shirts made especially for some good-natured University of Iowa students in the

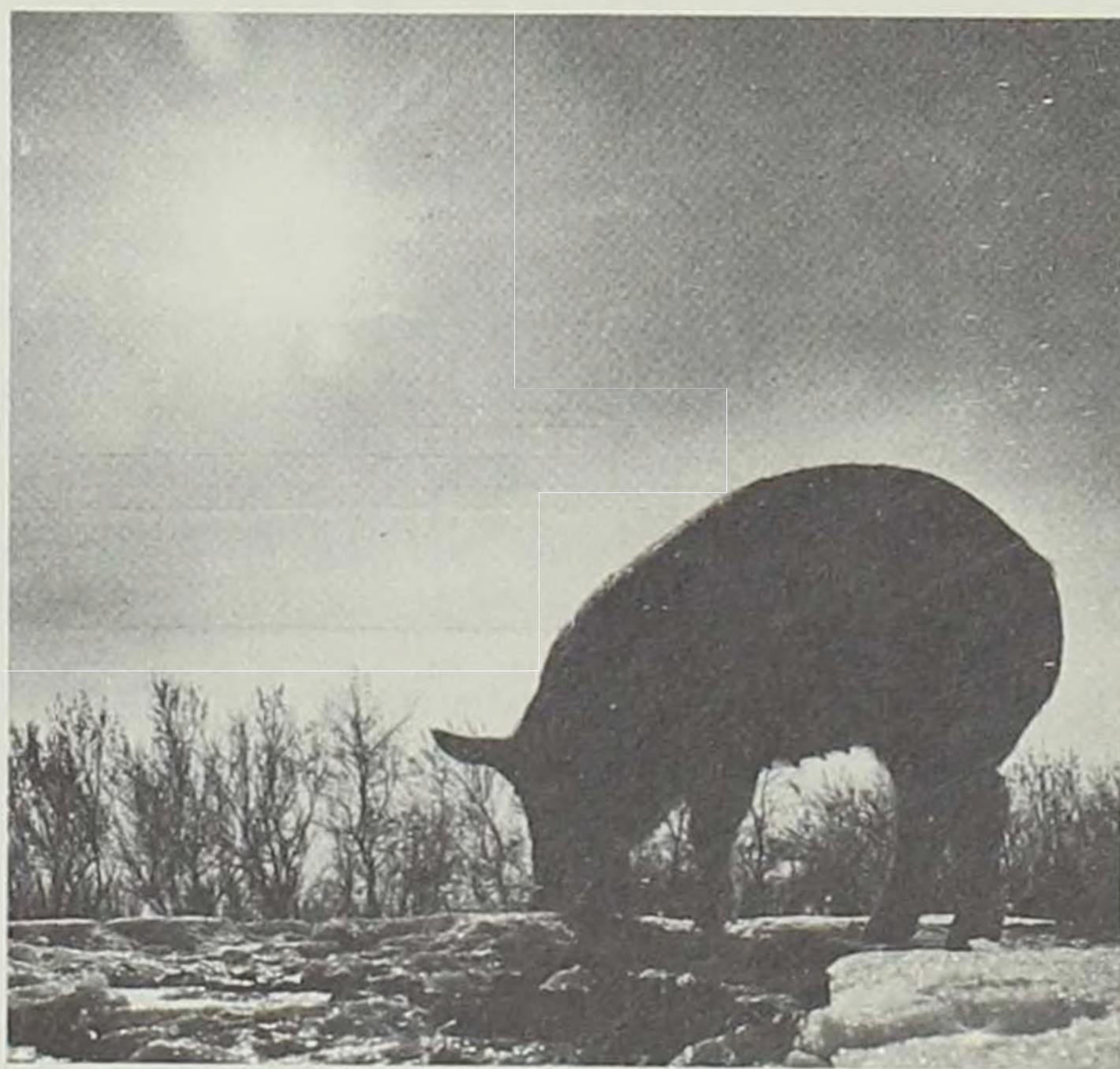


Looking west from the summit of Mt. Borah, Idaho's highest point.

spring of 1974. The bold lettering reads: "University of Iowa—Idaho City, Ohio."

Sometimes the confusion takes on more serious implications as when *Newsweek* reported August 14, 1972 on the "lower-magnitude stars" who refused to be considered for the Democratic nomination for the Vice-Presidency. Included were Senators "Nelson of Wisconsin, Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut, Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota and Frank Church of Iowa. . . ."

No good geographical reason exists for the confusion of the Hawkeye and Gem states except perhaps in the minds of the most sheltered and smug residents of the coastal regions. A thousand miles separates the two states. The high point in Idaho is emphatic 12,662 foot Mount Borah. Late one October I stood on this summit and saw the Grand Tetons of western Wyoming 150 miles distant. The high point in Iowa is so undramatic that it was found only



The view from Merrill Sterler's hog lot, Iowa's highest elevation, somewhat less dramatic than Mt. Borah. (courtesy of the Des Moines Register)

this year. It is located on Merrill Sterler's hog lot—1,669.85 feet above sea level in northwestern Iowa. According to Des Moines Register reporter Otto Knauth, Sterler's hogs have a view unmatched anywhere in Iowa. "On a clear day, they can easily see Sibley, four miles to the southwest. . . ."

Iowa's land is so rich that only 0.6 percent of it remains in federal ownership; 63.9 percent of Idaho is federally owned, much of it mountainous. In Iowa there is usually ample rain for row crops; irrigation is necessary for intensive farming in most of Idaho.

Progressing beyond personal involvement with both Iowa and Idaho and frequent confusion stemming from the similarity of names, what strands of the history of these two areas intertwine? Seldom has anyone defied the forces of American nationalism and written about the relationship of one state to another. Yet such relationships exist. This article is an attempt to examine some of the ties that bind Iowa and Idaho.

P.T.H.

In midafternoon of June 12, 1885, a train halted at the Bullion Street crossing in Ketchum, a mining town in Idaho Territory. Iowans by the score disembarked. A mountain breeze wafted unfamiliar hints of pine, sage, and sulfur. How different from the smells back home. A local arrangements committee transported the visitors to nearby sites. They viewed the Queen of the Hills Mine, took in the mountain scenery, and bathed in a warm sulfur spring.

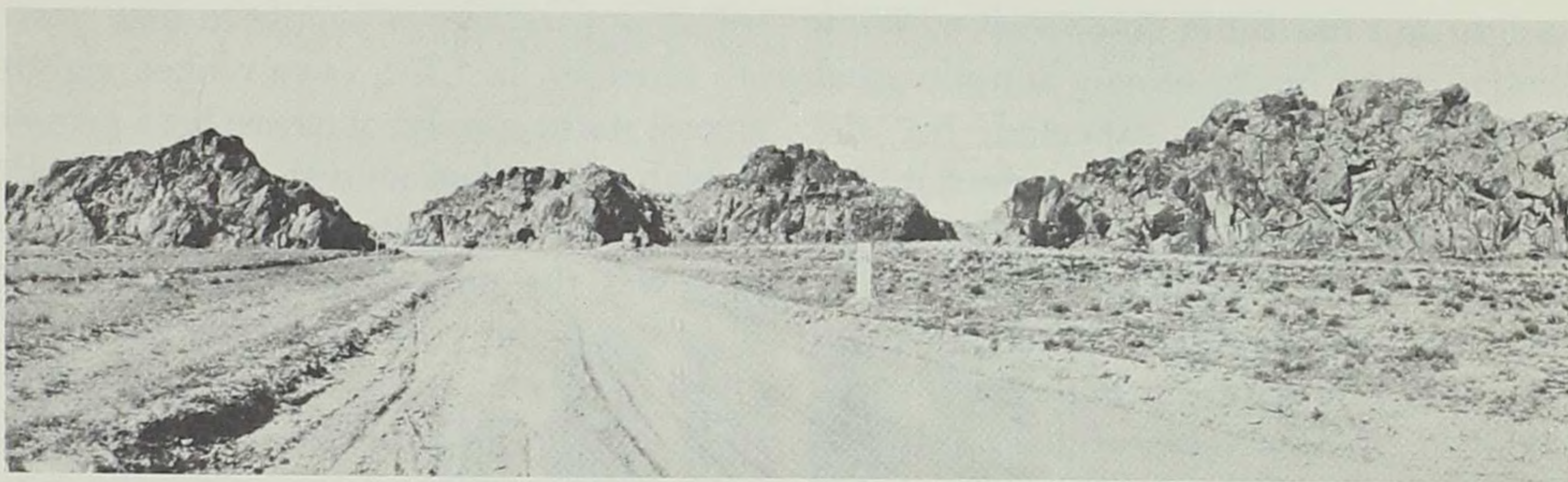
That evening, band music summoned both visitors and locals to the courthouse at nearby Hailey. If any of the Hawkeyes passed T. E. Picotte's establishment on their way to the festivities they would have known his occupation by the sound of the machinery and the smell of printer's ink. The Iowans were newspaper editors, or

members of editors' families. Picotte was editor of the bombastic *Wood River Times*. As the evening progressed, speeches alternated with music, recitations, dancing, and hearty expressions of good will. At one point S. B. Kingsbury of Hailey and editor Lafe Young of the *Atlantic, Iowa Daily Telegraph* offered a joint toast: "Idaho-Iowa."

When the toast was offered, any of the Iowa editors with a historical turn of mind might have conjured up visions of the past. The 1885 visitors were not the first to travel the westward route from Iowa to the Intermountain region.

The Lewis and Clark journals record the first known journey of Caucasians between the two areas. The explorers encountered serious difficulties of contrasting nature in the areas destined to become Iowa and Idaho. The only fatality of the expedition occurred at what is now Sioux City where Sergeant Charles Floyd died of what was probably appendicitis, but the trek across Idaho, between the headwaters of the Missouri and those of the Columbia, proved to be the most rugged and exhausting part of the trip.

Four decades later (after the Oregon Trail had wended its way across the continent with frayed ends in Iowa and main strands through southern Idaho) there began a steady flow of people westward. Recently, the United States government commissioned a study of the construction and use of the Lander Cutoff of the Oregon Trail through the Caribou National Forest of southern Idaho. Twelve diaries, written by people who used this route between the years 1859 and 1865, came to light. Six of the twelve diarists were Iowans. One of them (Charles J. Cummings of Brooklyn,



Massacre Rocks, Idaho (an early twentieth century view), scene of the death of A. J. Hunter of Iowa City in 1862. (courtesy of the Idaho Historical Society)

Iowa) found familiar vegetation only after he passed through Idaho and reached Klamath Lake, Oregon. He recorded in his diary: "hooked some green corn."

The best known episode related to the Oregon Trail in Idaho involves Iowans. During the summer of 1862, the Andrew J. Hunter party from Iowa City was traveling unsuspectingly through some rocky country about 20 miles below American Falls on the Snake River on their way to the Salmon River Mines. A letter published in the *Iowa City State Democratic Press* of October 18, 1862 described what happened. Suddenly, some "twelve or fourteen Indians" came out of a ravine and "commenced the attack with bows and arrows, riding along side and shooting at the two men in the wagon, one of whom was wounded in three places. . . . The Indians then began to circle round us, yelling and discharging their guns at random into our midst." Some of the attackers then scrambled up into the sage brush; "we had no indication of their whereabouts until we heard the sharp crack of a rifle, and the death-dealing missile came whizzing the air, striking Hunter in the neck." Meanwhile, other Indians "rode like demons, turning their horses here and there, now

sitting erect in their saddles, now throwing themselves flat along their horses' backs, or completely hiding themselves behind the bodies of their ponies." After the struggle was over, Hunter was laid to rest near the banks of the Snake River, and A. J. Cassady of his party nursed serious wounds. There are other aspects to the story, but since 1862, the site has been known as Massacre Rocks.

A disaster of another sort, which occurred between Iowa and Nebraska on the Missouri River in 1865, reveals much about life on the mining frontier of eastern Idaho and western Montana. Early that year the Montana and Idaho Transportation Line prepared for the maiden voyage up the Missouri of the Steamboat *Bertrand*. Laden in Saint Louis, the vessel was destined for Fort Benton, Montana Territory. On April 1, the *Bertrand* struck a snag and sank about 25 miles upstream from Council Bluffs. The passengers and crew reached safety, but the boat and cargo went to the bottom where most of it stayed until excavated in 1968. In a book entitled *The Steamboat Bertrand* (Washington, 1974), Jerome E. Petsche describes in fascinating detail the well-preserved cargo originally intended for Virginia City, Deer

Lodge, and the Bitter Root Valley. Work clothes, basic foods, mining supplies, and bourbon were to be expected, but the quantities of luxuries shed new light on life on the Continental Divide during the last year of the Civil War. Petsche's careful work with this time capsule revealed such items as cases of imported French brandied cherries in graceful aqua-colored bottles with necks terminating in slightly rolled collars. The bottles and hundreds of other items are now on display at DeSoto Bend of the Missouri River, rather than mingled with the tailings of the defunct mines of Idaho and Montana.

Beginning in 1870, the United States census gauged the flow of Iowans to Idaho. One meaningful measure is the position of Iowa in the list of states con-

tributing native born people to that western territory. In 1870, Iowa ranked eighth among states supplying native born people to Idaho. It ranked seventh in 1880, fourth in 1890, third in 1900, and second in 1910. This was the only decade to date when Iowa stood above its neighboring state of Missouri. During the past century, the only state consistently credited with more native born people than Iowa among the resident population of Idaho has been Utah. The census data suggests that Iowa was a wellspring for Idaho, just as Ohio was, decades earlier, for Iowa.

The search for reasons for the strong showing of Hawkeyes in the Gem state leads us back to 1885 and the Iowa newspaper editors.

During this era, the Iowa Press Association sponsored informative summertime tours for its members, their families, and a few invited dignitaries. In 1885, two such excursions were scheduled to accommodate the Iowa newsmen. Early that year Grover Cleveland was inaugurated President of the United States. For a quarter of a century there had not been a Democratic president. The Democratic editors of Iowa could not resist a visit to the nation's capital. A party of 175 left for Washington, D.C. during the first week of June.

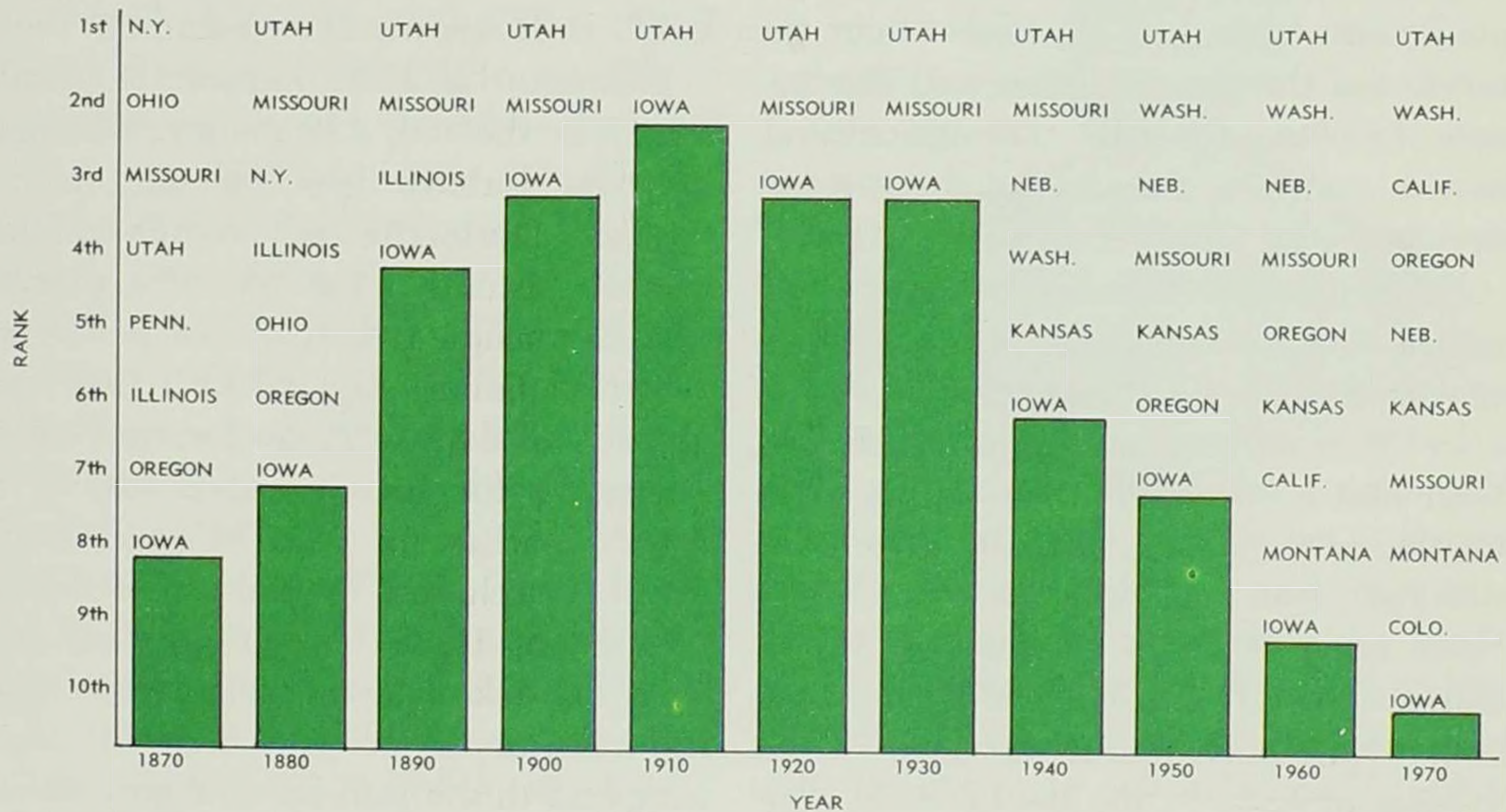
The president of the Iowa Press Association, Albert W. Swalm of Oskaloosa, felt that the editors who did not wish to make this trip deserved another alternative. He therefore arranged and personally led a trip to the Pacific Northwest. "Do not fail to go! It will be the Great Excursion of the Decade," he invited.

"Al W. Swalm, is recognized as one of the oldest newspapermen in the state of Iowa," the *Creston Daily Gazette* of June



Albert Swalm, the "Chief."

Rank of Iowa Among Top Ten States Contributing Native-Born People to Idaho
As Show in United States Census Data, 1870-1970
(Idaho Excluded)



For example, in 1910 the number of native-born Iowans living in Idaho ranked second only to the number of native-born Utahans living in Idaho. The 1960 census is the first to record more natives of Montana living in Idaho than natives of Iowa, etc.

18 informed its readers. "He is a man of peculiar appearance and impresses you at first sight as being a brainy fellow, and the longer you know him the stronger the first impression will become." The aspect of Swalm's appearance which often drew comment was that he looked strikingly like an American Indian—an appearance which he cultivated and which enters into the story later. "Choctah Swalm" or "Chief" were sobriquets for the popular president of the Iowa Press Association. The Republican journalists of Iowa responded heartily to Swalm's invitation. Two hundred and five people signed up for the trip including such respected editors as Henry Wallace of the *Iowa Homestead* and C. F. Clarkson of the *Iowa State Reg-*

ister, "the nestor of Iowa journalism." Governor Buren R. Sherman came along as a guest, as did Railroad Commissioner Lorenzo S. Coffin.

When Lewis and Clark headed west early in the century, they used the water courses; the cross-country immigrants followed the overland trails; the Iowa editors traveled the rails. Governmental regulation of the railroads was a hot issue in Iowa and national politics in the 1880s, and Iowa had been a testing ground for the so-called "Granger Laws." The Union Pacific Railroad was mindful of the advantages to be gained from good treatment of influential people. At this time the agricultural frontier was fast drawing to a close in Iowa. Children and grandchildren of the Iowa

pioneers looked westward for homesteads. What could be better for the railroad than to gain the goodwill of Iowa editors and politicians, spread good words about the services of the Union Pacific, and disseminate knowledge about the agricultural, tourist, and other potential of the vast undeveloped regions served by the company?

From the standpoint of Union Pacific management, timing was crucial. In 1881, construction began on the eastern end of a Union Pacific subsidiary from Granger, Wyoming across southern Idaho to Huntington, Oregon. By October 1884, construction was complete on the Oregon Short Line, as this company was called, and a spur with its terminus at Ketchum connected the newly opened Wood River mining district to the main line at Shoshone. Thus Swalm and the Union Pacific officials arranged a trip which would have

been impossible the previous summer. Business was needed for 600 miles of shining new rails through the sparsely populated, little known Intermountain West.

Company officials baited the Iowans well. They offered a day coach, a baggage car, five of their best Pullman sleeping cars, and the services of two high company officials for the entire trip at a prorated cost of less than twenty dollars per person. In his inimitable way, Editor T. E. Picotte of the *Wood River Times* ferreted out the financial details—facts unreported in the Iowa press. In his June 13 issue, Picotte noted that the bill for the use of the cars was about half the normal rate, “but as all these excursionists will write and publish a full account of the trip this will amply compensate the railway company for the low rate paid for transportation.” The editors took the bait, fulfilled Picotte’s prophecy, and in so doing disseminated a great quantity of information about Idaho throughout their home state.

Under the heading “Editorial Exodus,” the Mt. Pleasant *Free Press* reported that the Democratic editors headed east and the Republican editors west: “This would seem to leave Iowa politics to run itself.”

On the morning of June 9, 1885, the west-bound editors met at the Union Pacific Transfer Hotel in Council Bluffs, and in a short time were ticketed for the excursion of 18 days in the “wonderland of America.” Liberated from his post beside the paste pot, the editor of the Traer *Star Clipper* was ready “to be born in triumph on a chip around the wilds of the Lewis and Clark’s addition to the United States.” The editors represented 53 of Iowa’s 99 counties. Mr. and Mrs. S. N. Williams of the *Normal Monthly* were already 300

Note on Sources

The authors thank Bert W. Marley, Waller B. Wigginton (both of Idaho State University), Merle Wells, and Judith Austin (both of the Idaho Historical Society) for insights and materials concerning the Gem State. We are grateful to our colleagues at the State Historical Society of Iowa for numerous, helpful suggestions.

In addition to sources mentioned in the text, this article is based upon the accounts of the 1885 Iowa Press Association excursion appearing in all of the newspapers listed on pp. 124-5 which are presently in the possession of the newly-created Iowa State Historical Department both in Des Moines and Iowa City. The section on the governors stems from a conversation with George Mills in August 1972. Much of the article is based on standard secondary sources in Iowa and Idaho history.

Other specific sources are: Peter T. Harstad, “Lander Trail Report” (Pocatello, 1966); Robert G. Athearn, *Union Pacific Country* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971); Richard J. Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971); Ralph W. Hidy, *et. al.*, *Timber and Men: The Weyerhaeuser Story* (New York: Macmillan, 1963); Charles J. V. Murphy, “Jack Simplot and His Private Conglomerate,” *Fortune*, 78, 2 (August 1968); an article about Simplot in the *Boise Idaho Statesman* (November 24, 1972); and correspondence with Robert E. Smylie, Don Samuelson, Himena V. Hoffman, and others.

miles away from their home in Dubuque, while others hailed from such places as Clear Lake, Columbus Junction, LeMars, Ida Grove, Clarinda, and many others. Representing 125 newspapers, the editors came from large and small towns, urban centers and rural hamlets, but they all shared one common trait—boasting of the spiciest, best-edited paper in the state!

While waiting for the train to depart, the characters around the station provided amusement. A confidence man asks a newspaperman if he is going far. “No, just been invited out to Hailey, Idaho, to a dance. May go on to the shore.”

“Think you will have a pleasant time at this season?” asks the confidence man.

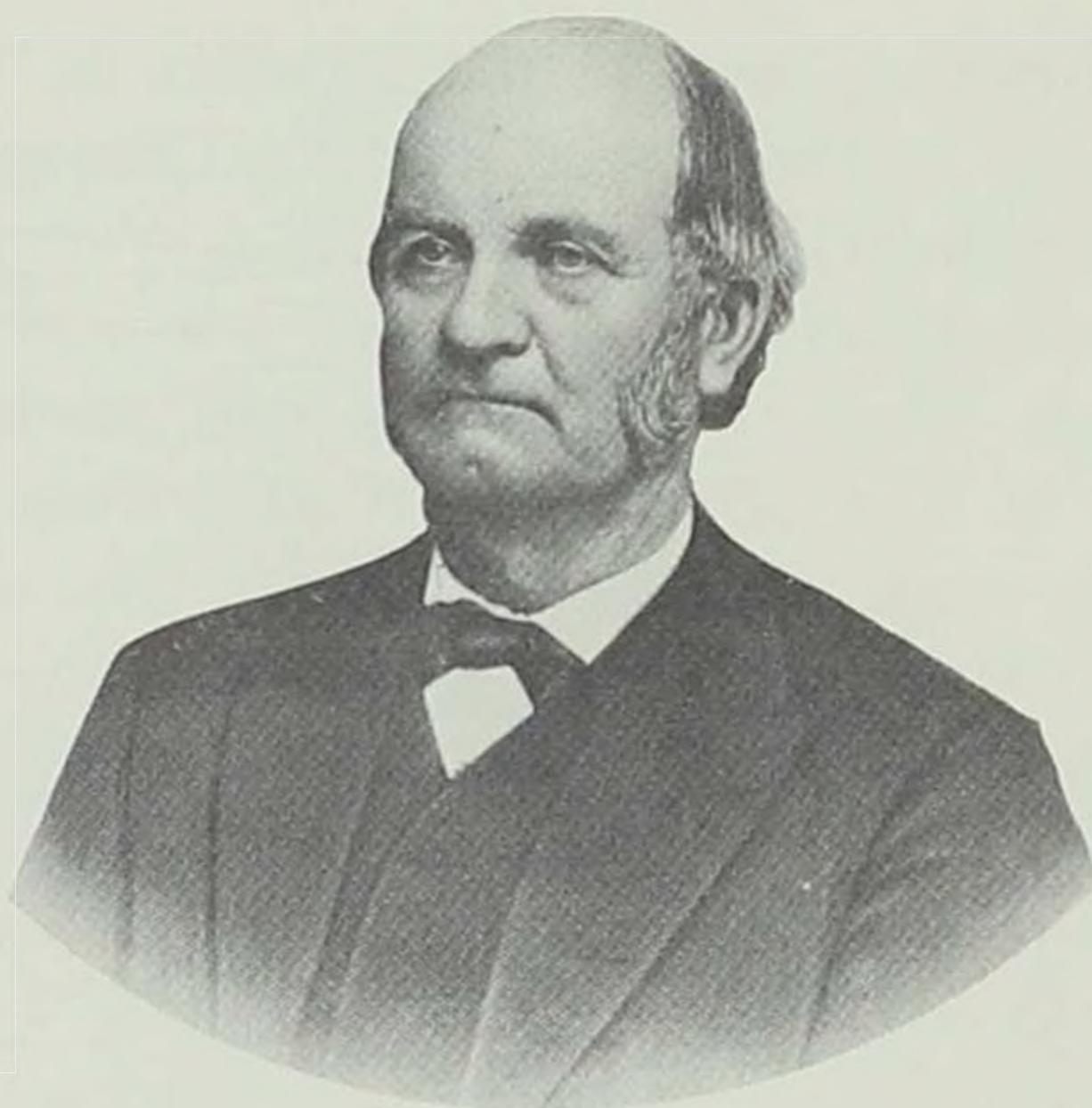
“Yes,” replies the editor.

The panhandler also asks the newspaperman if he thinks he ‘will locate while out west.’

“Yes, intend to buy the territory,” replies the editor. “Only lack \$5.00 of having enough to pay for it. Can’t you let me have that much until we get to Umatilla where I have an uncle that has the contract of cheating Indians and sending them on the warpath?”

The confidence man ‘drops off like a tick that is full of blood and is seen no more.’”

“All aboard!” mingled with the sound of the clock striking noon. The drive wheels began to move; soon the Council Bluffs depot passed out of sight. The Iowans “filled five Pullman sleepers with their bodies, one baggage car with their lunch baskets, and one day coach with their tobacco smoke. The women, however did not smoke, their powder was not of the kind to smoke when it went off.” As the train moved quickly through Nebraska, one at-



Coker F. Clarkson

tentive editor learned that “corn matures 200 miles west of Omaha, and small grains do well 50 to 75 miles still further out.” As the train rolled toward the arid west, Henry Wallace debated with other farm editors whether the changing land was best suited for raising grass or grain. At Grand Island the discussion changed to the fine quality of food provided by the Union Pacific.

As nightfall approached, W. I. Endicott of the *Star Clipper* turned his attention to his fellow passengers, particularly the “old lady who takes her medicine out of a drinking cup” and the man with the unusual “water flask” who makes “a wry face and doesn’t pass it around.” In 1884, the prohibitionists within the Republican Party had forced a stringent dry law through the Iowa legislature. Thus, Endicott chided the two wayward Hawkeyes. On other scores he had no qualms, for the crowd was good natured and there were “just enough ladies along to make it respectable and not prevent touching up the faded colors of the West with red.”

Morning brought the travelers to "the navel of the cattle world" — Cheyenne. After breakfast, the Governor of Wyoming Territory took the Iowans on a tour of the town. They were elated to meet the family of A. H. Swan, the "Cattle King" of Wyoming, (formerly from Mt. Pleasant) and Mrs. William Hale, widow of the recently deceased Territorial Governor (both former Iowans). But the nostalgia was shattered when the delegation was shown a telegraph pole in front of a jail "upon which a man had been hung." One editor was sure that when the cowboys come to town "the place is pretty rough." After seeing a genuine cowboy in action one of the editors commented that if he had his choice "between training a bronco pony to the saddle or breaking a ten day's cyclone to drive into a single harness" he would gladly tackle the cyclone.

At Cheyenne, Mr. Endicott of Traer proved that he knew his Mark Twain. He reported that he posed one final question to a Wyoming native: "How do you like this country?"

'Pretty well,' replied the cowboy, 'All we lack is water and good society.'

'Those are the principal faults with hell,' remarked Mr. Endicott, as he left without further comment.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon and the train rolled onward. Night fell near Laramie. "We woke up amid the eroded clay buttes and utter desolation of the Green River valley, where no bird flew or sang and no grass blade sprang," recalled one editor, and "all the inhabitants ought to be atheists, since the country was made by devils at play or malice. . . ." Another newspaperman declared that the land through Wyoming "west of Laramie

is worth upon an average of 6¢ per acre," and he would not like to invest in "more than one acre at this price." Mr. Schooley of the *Indianola Advocate-Tribune* summed it up this way: "This, to one fresh from the sterile hills of New England would probably appear of 'remarkable fertility and beauty'; but to one who has lived a score of years in the very garden-spot of Iowa, its attractions are decidedly second-class."

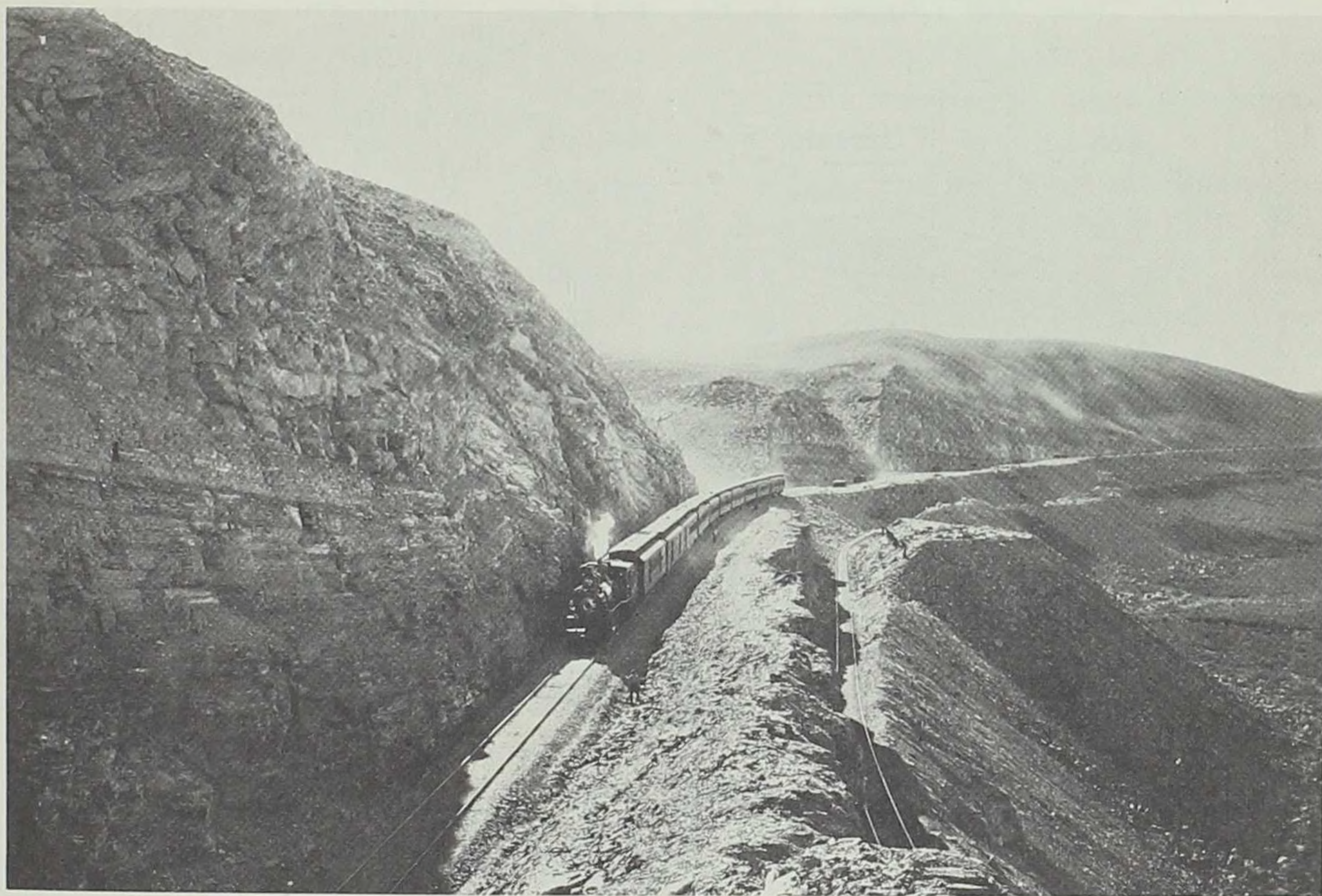
What the landscape lacked, the Union Pacific dining hall made up for. At Green River the excursionists ate "meats, rich, tender, juicy; fruits in superb quality, and other good things in abundance."

Old mingled with new as the editor of the *Guthrie* spotted wagon ruts hugging the railroad line. Near South Pass he was surprised to see a "westward mover with his covered wagon working his slow progress within a stone's cast of our hurrying train."

At Granger, the train switched from the main Union Pacific track to the Oregon Short Line. Here the president of the Idaho Press Association came aboard in preparation for entry into the Gem state.

At Montpelier, just over the Idaho line, the Iowa journalists first encountered Mormons. Since the mid-1850s, the Republican Party had taken a strong anti-Mormon position in its national platforms. No doubt many of the editors were familiar with the party platform adopted in Chicago in 1884 which asserted that:

it is the duty of Congress to enact such laws as shall promptly and effectually suppress the system of polygamy within our Territories and divorce the political from the ecclesiastical power of the so-called Mormon Church; and that the laws so enacted should be rigidly enforced by the



The rail line cut near Green River, Wyoming. (courtesy of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum Collection)

civil authorities, if possible, and by the military, if need be.

Four decades earlier, Mormons crossed Iowa and wintered near Council Bluffs on their way to Utah. Later, other Mormons pushed hand carts across the state on their way to Zion. Now the editors had a chance to talk to Mormons on the rim of the Great Basin. Could they be objective in their reports back home?

Henry Wallace's only regret was that "the curse of Mormonism should rest on so fair a land," but noted that "a finer grazing country could scarcely be found than this part of Idaho." Al Swalm interviewed one of the inhabitants of Montpelier, a predominantly Mormon town of 1,500. The Mormon informant was "a coarse, brutal looking fellow, but able to

hold his own." The man claimed to have two wives which he treated impartially "—sends one out to wash this week, t'other the next, and gives them half they can make." He was sure that "if we'd hold the train long enough he could get two more wives." Swalm later recalled the fellow as a "queer genius, a trifle tipsy, but chock full of a rather coarse humor" which tickled the editors no end.

The editor of the *Monticello Express* evaluated these inhabitants differently. He described a "number of lazy looking Mormons hanging around the depot," people who "hold the balance of political power in the territory and generally hook on with the Democrats—a case of elective affinity."

The most bitter attack on the practice of polygamy came from the pen of Endi-

cott of the *Traer Star Clipper*. He described one Mormon spokesman as "a fat complected man, apparently fifty years old, who pled guilty of having three wives and was the oldest and smallest, he said, of fifty-two children in his father's family." The Edmunds Act of 1882 facilitated indictment and conviction for polygamy. Apparently this is what Endicott had in mind when he explained that recent prosecutions interfered with "the love affairs of the Mormons, and now the polygamists are closing out their second hand wives at a discount. A fair article of woman can be had for a mere song, while those which are out of style or shelf-worn are offered in job lots of six bits a cluster."

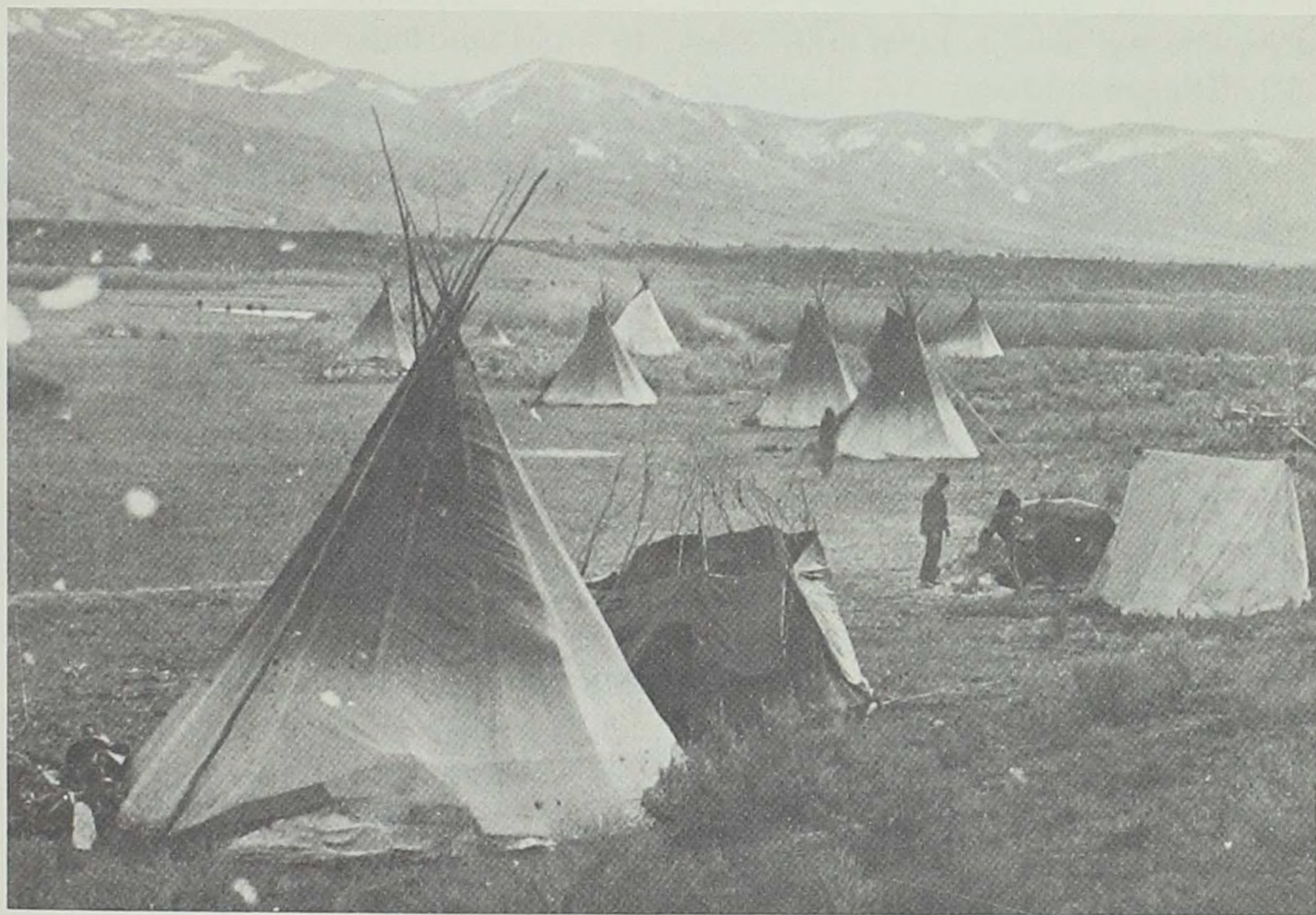
Vicious as the editors were, they did not fail to recognize what the Mormon people

had done to transform portions of southeastern Idaho into productivity. The *Washington County Press* reported: "Mormons disdain mining and ranching, sticking to agriculture; they tap the mountain streams and train them in irrigating ditches through sage brush tracts, and lo! the desert blossoms as the rose." Thus the Mormons were good to reclaim a waste country even if they "harm society."

The train moved on to Soda Springs where the travelers stopped for 30 minutes to taste the naturally carbonated spring waters. They predicted that "a few years will see a great sanitarium, with crowds of invalid visitors located at this point." All but one of these springs now bubble beneath a man-made reservoir, but 35 miles down the track at Lava Hot Springs



The rail station in Pocatello, Idaho in 1885. (courtesy of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum Collection)



Shoshone-Bannock Indian camp at Pocatello. (courtesy of Clifford H. Peake)

a sanitarium was built which exists to this day.

When the visitors reached the Portneuf River Valley, they saw beds of lava rock and were astonished to see buildings being made from this "hard and black" material. "The scenery along the Portneuf River is very fine with beautiful cascades and waterfalls on the one side and enchanting mountains, frequently plentifully powdered with snow, and long dark canyons on the other." One editor was so elated at the beauty that he remarked, "The trip along the Port-Neuf valley would pay one for the trip, if he saw nothing else. . . ." All had difficulty describing a canyon in the mountains; "the dwellers on the prairie must see with their own eyes before they

can have an adequate conception of their grandeur."

Near the junction of the Oregon Short Line and Utah & Northern, the editors found a small town of 200 people. Pocatello, named after a local Indian, was one of the few places on the entire journey where the Iowans encountered a significant concentration of Native Americans. Pocatello was a supper stop so there was opportunity for observation. The Iowans' impressions may astound a later generation. H. A. Burrell of the *Washington County Press* recalled his encounter with Mr. and Mrs. Lo of the Bannock tribe with their papooses, dogs, and other pets. The editor found "wigwams and huts . . . in the dirt and cactus; nasty wretches; a

squaw splitting wood awkwardly; a rather pretty white girl, with babe in arms, sired by a half-breed husband, ugly and stout” Burrell was not in the mood for supper after seeing Bannocks select cactus or the eggs of the red ant as choice morsels.

“Choctah” Swalm was introduced to a “degraded Indian” as the “Big Injun” of the party. The man looked at Swalm a moment, shrugged his shoulders and “contemptuously grunted: ‘Ugh—liar, he only half breed.’” This was greeted with “yells of laughter and a big collection was taken up for the Indian.” Soon, “a hag passed along the train with a papoose on her back charging ‘two bittee’ to look at the brat” Thus the humor and good will of an earlier moment withered into disgust.

As the train left Pocatello one editor wrote that the place would “grow in importance if the Fort Hall Indian Reservation on which it stands, was thrown open to settlement. . . . The reservation is fertile and beautiful . . . ,” he reported to the land-hungry people back home, “but it is entirely too good for a horde of lazy Indians and will no doubt be taken from its half savage owners in a few years. . . .”

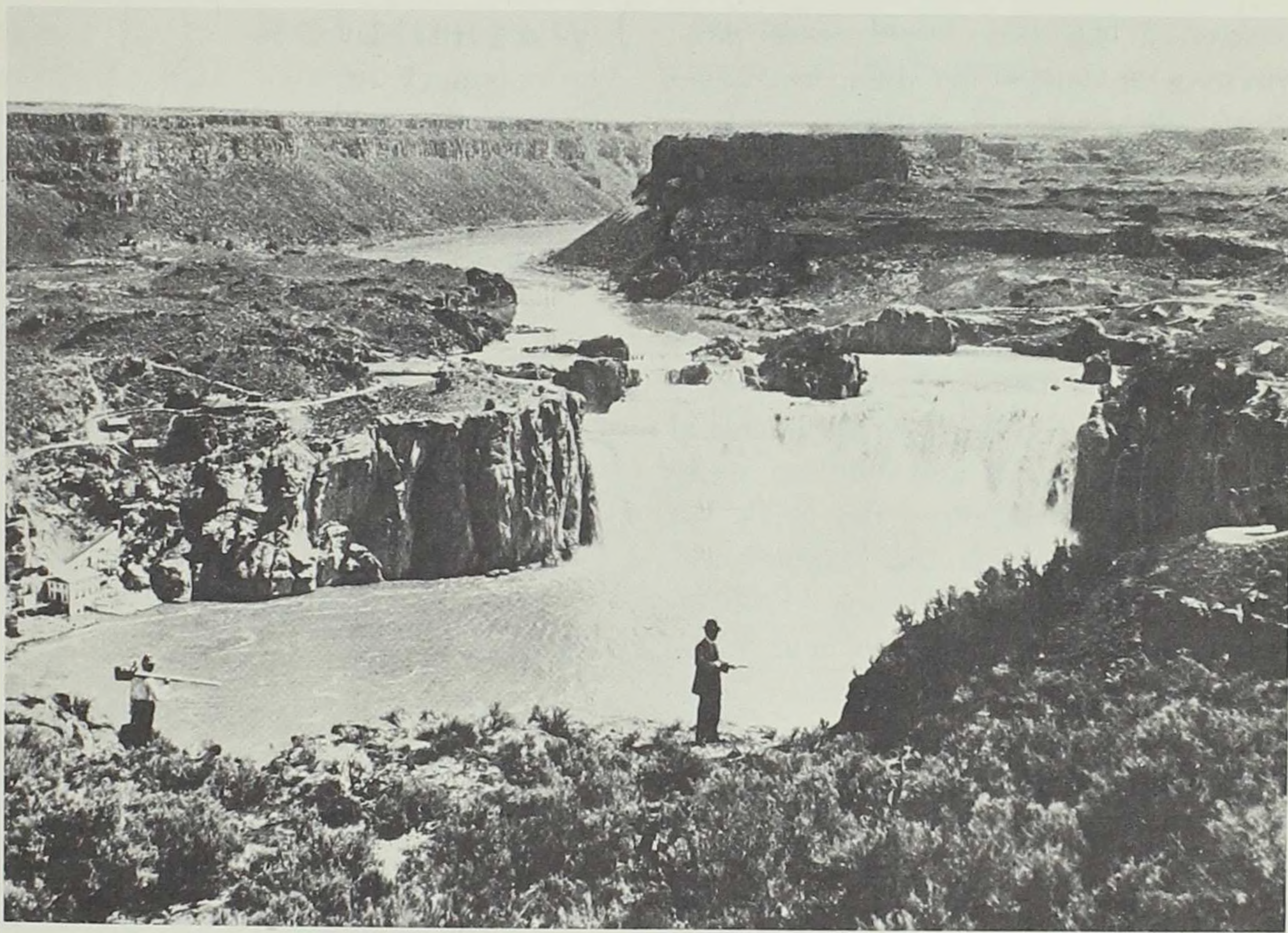
They reached American Falls at dusk, a point 1,115 miles from Council Bluffs. Here the train stopped long enough for a look at the water of the Snake River tumbling over the falls.

At midnight, the train coasted to a halt at Shoshone, and the passengers slept in stillness. The citizens of the new town roused their guests at 7:30 in the morning with a noisy band, cheers, and ovations. Charles Blodgett of the Des Moines *Daily Capital* stated that “General Grant on his return trip from around the world could not have had more attention paid him than

has our party.” The Iowans were escorted to Shoshone Falls which Henry Wallace compared favorably with Niagara Falls: “Niagara is magestic; Shoshone is beautiful. Niagara is mighty, Shoshone is fantastic . . . Shoshone is not more worthy of visit than Niagara, though far more pleasing and beautiful. Having beheld the one, you do not rest until you have seen the other.”

Resuming its journey, the locomotive chugged up valley, or as one editor put it, “rather to all appearance, down. For it is one of the strange things in these high altitudes, that in going toward a mountain you invariably seem to be going downhill, and it is only by seeing the water in the stream and irrigating ditches that the tenderfoot can be convinced that his eyesight deceives him.” Soon the train arrived at Ketchum—the heart of Idaho’s newest mining district and the end of the line. In general, the Iowans were not overly interested in mining operations for, as one of them put it, “the industry is not adapted to our community.” One journalist could not resist comment about the lead and silver “thrown around carelessly as brick around a drying yard, and quartz and galena . . . in great bins like corn in a Hawkeye elevator.” Most of the Iowans took a turn at bathing in Smith’s Sulphur Baths where the water issued forth from the ground at a temperature of 136°. But this was only “warm up” for other events of the day. (A half century later, after the rich ore was long exploited, the Union Pacific developed Sun Valley as a resort in this setting and named one of its prime ski runs “Warm Springs.”)

After a few hours of recreation, the editors returned to Hailey where the more



Shoshone Falls on the Snake River, Idaho. (courtesy of the Idaho Historical Society)

formal festivities were held. Here Henry Wallace of the *Iowa Homestead* received two keys on behalf of the Iowa delegation. The key to Hailey was sheet iron, two feet long; the other was brass, about 18 inches, on which was inscribed "Welkum, Ketchum, Hold'm." Hailey was a lively mining town in the mid-1880s, with gambling houses, tainted women, and dives. Revolvers were used on "slight provocation," according to the *Winterset Madonian*. Many Chinamen, a few Indians, and one or two Blacks could be seen on the streets. Late in the afternoon some of the party found more sulphur baths. A friendly rival noted that the Mt. Vernon delegation "indulged freely," but added teasingly, "in as much as we are under bonds

of secrecy, please don't ask us to betray their confidence. . . ." The editor of the Mt. Vernon *Hawk-Eye* also stood on top of a mountain and proclaimed that he "felt closer to heaven than he ever had in Mt. Vernon."

A half dozen editors fished for trout with Homer Pound, Register of the United States Land Office, as their guide and a container of lemonade for refreshment. *Washington County Press* readers learned from editor Burrell that "of all the beautiful things I've seen in this vale of tears . . . I vote a trout stream in the mountains, chief." What he had no way of knowing was that Pound's wife was home pregnant with a child who was destined to become a leading literary figure of this

century. When the "infant Gargantua" was born on October 30, 1885, the parents named him Ezra.

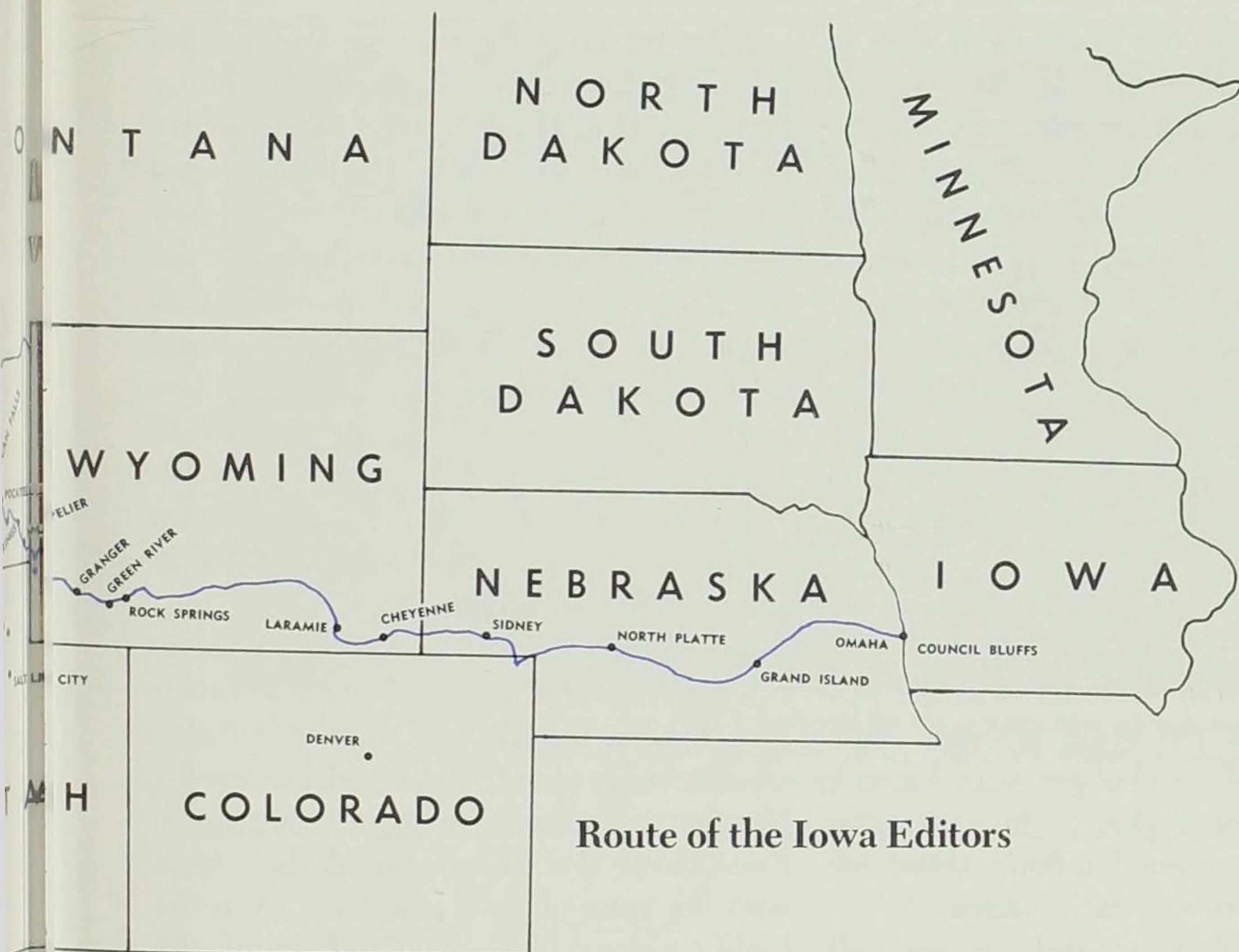
The citizens of this Wood River community provided a large feast for the excursionists, after which everyone retired to the Hailey courthouse. Ezra's uncle conducted the Hailey Silver Band which summoned the crowd. I. N. Sullivan, a former Iowan, presided over the events of the evening. Swalm and Wallace spoke for the Iowa delegation, the locals got their say, then came the "Idaho-Iowa" toast by Kingsbury and Young. If Governor Sherman and the editors held to the laws of their home state this was a "dry" toast for the Iowans. After, came an evening of general frolic and dancing. "I kept three squaws busy on the floor at once," boasted one editor. At 11:30 o'clock the train departed for Shoshone.

After the entertainment at Hailey and only four days out of Council Bluffs, the editors were understandably tired. Their train rejoined the main line at Shoshone, but the Iowans could barely respond to the brass band that serenaded them from the platform. It was probably just as well because the band had been organized only ten days earlier. In self-defense one energetic horn blower wore a placard reading: "Don't shoot boys; we are doing the best we can." And the bass drummer had a yellow dog tied to his leg. The sleepy Iowans first supposed this was a precautionary measure, but it was soon ascertained that the dog was part of the band. After the drummer had beaten the drum for awhile he proceeded to beat the dog. "Sort of played on his feeling as it were to the great improvement of the

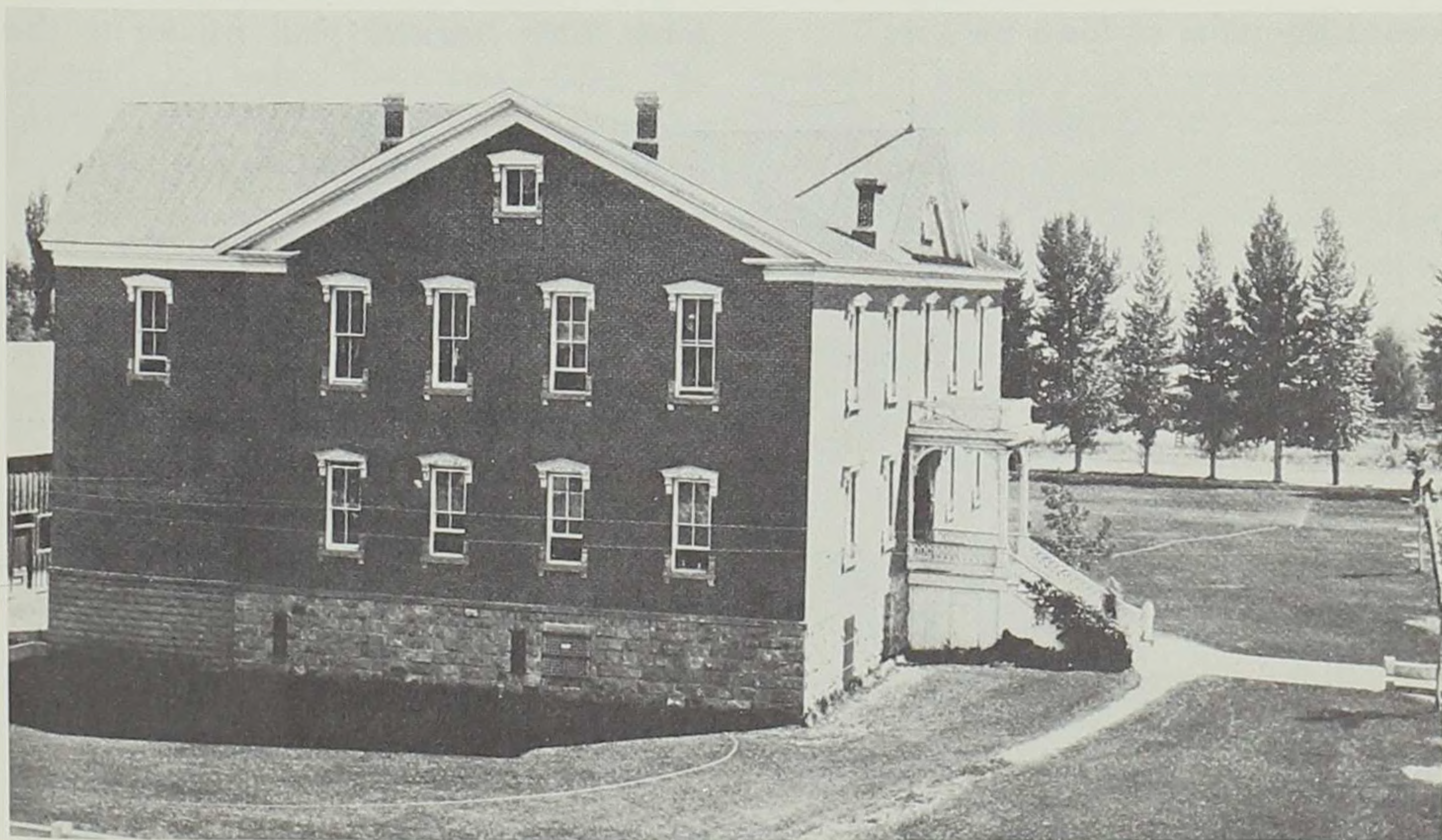


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The train moved through the night and reached Caldwell the next morning. Here the Hawkeyes were greeted by a delegation from Boise, the capital of the Territory. To avoid a steep grade, the Oregon Short Line engineers had not run the tracks into Boise. Therefore, not even the sleek Pullman "Boise City" which was part of the entourage could reach that town. During breakfast, the Iowans learned more



Route of the Iowa Editors

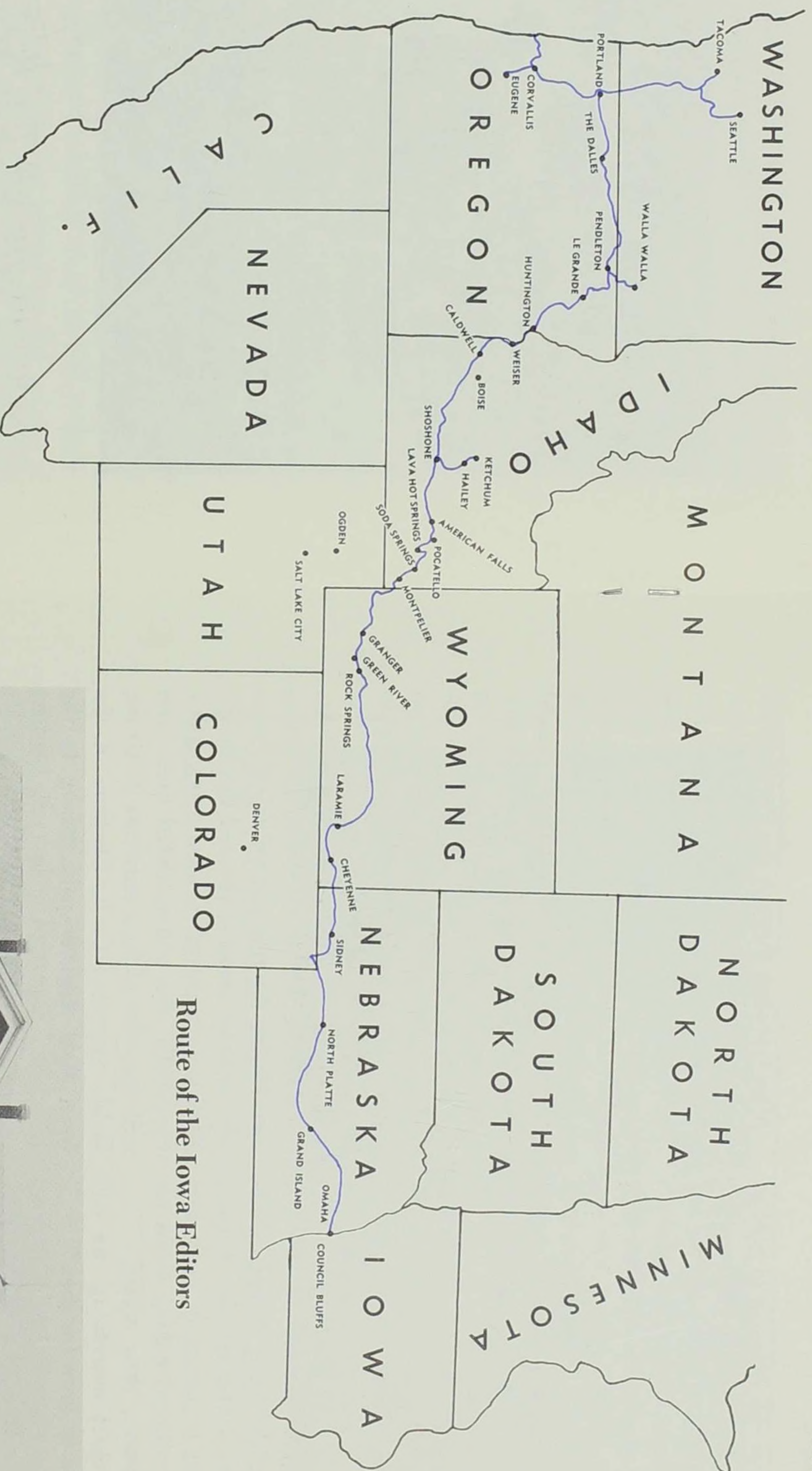


The courthouse at Hailey, Idaho, scene of the "Idaho-Iowa" toast. (courtesy of the Idaho State Historical Society)

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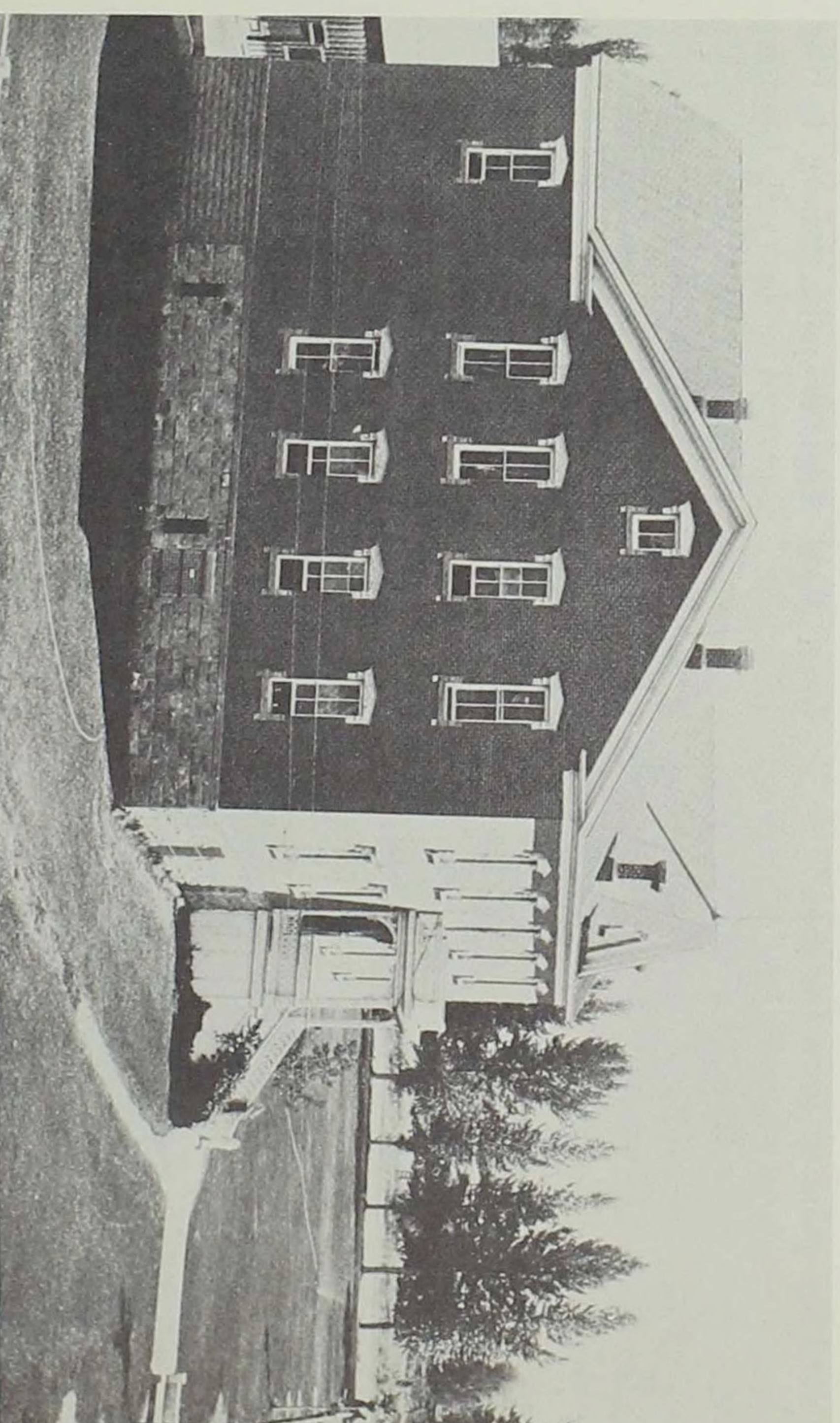
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The courthouse at Hailey, Idaho, scene of the "Idaho-Iowa" toast. (courtesy of the Idaho State Historical Society)

about Idaho from the Boiseans as well as the locals, including "an old Mexican soldier who helped kill off the Indians, and the first year or two lived on horse flesh." The man bragged that his 160-acre farm could raise 400 bushels of potatoes per acre! He also claimed to have caught a sturgeon in the Snake River which weighed 900 pounds. The editors felt compelled to "sit this down as a fish story."

Perhaps satiated by breakfast and hyperbole, a 250 pound Iowan cut in on a man extolling Idaho's charms, "My friend, I believe in your territory and your climate When I left Iowa last Tuesday . . . I had just left a dime museum, where I was on exhibition as the living skeleton. Now look at me; all those changes since I struck Idaho." Without a change in expression the Idahoan continued talking about his territory's greatness, then added, ". . . but we don't claim everything; we will award the palm to Iowa for liars."

After traveling through the Payette and Weiser valleys, the excursionists left Idaho and arrived in Huntington, Oregon where they traveled on the Oregon Railway and Navigation line to Portland. When they reached that city, they had been on the road for five days and had traveled 1,820 miles from Council Bluffs. They would go on to Tacoma, Seattle, south to Eugene and Corvallis, and then back to Walla Walla. Then they would again follow their Oregon Short Line and Union Pacific route back to Iowa, arriving in Council Bluffs on June 27, 1885.

On all accounts the excursion had been a genuine success, just as Swalm had promised. During the trip and for weeks thereafter, articles about Idaho and the Pacific Northwest appeared in Iowa newspapers. Frequently, the editors tinted their facts with the color of their emotions. Even the highly respected C. F. Clarkson of the *Iowa State Register* paid tribute to the



The Council Bluffs, Iowa rail station, the point of departure and return for the 1885 excursionists. (courtesy of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum collection)



The lush greenery of an Iowa corn field, produced by the conjunction of rich soil and natural rainfall, seems almost effortless when compared to the elaborate irrigation procedures necessary to sustain row crops in Idaho. (John Schultz photo)

railroad that linked Iowa and Idaho. "No matter what may, in the future, be the political question involving the regulation or management of the railroads," he wrote, "the editors of Iowa can have nothing but the kindest recollections of the care and treatment they received from the Union Pacific Railroad." Thus the energies of President Charles Francis Adams and his Union Pacific subordinates were well spent.

As might be expected, the editors told their subscribers a great deal about Idaho agriculture, a few samples of which have already been presented. Many commented that because of the high altitudes and cool nights, corn would not thrive in Idaho. Nevertheless, many positive things could be said about ranching, grain growing,

gardening, and various specialties. Charles Blodgett of the *Daily Capital* wrote glowingly about fruit production on the Idaho-Oregon border. "Apples, peaches, pears, nectarines, apricots, plums, prunes, grapes, and all the small fruits are produced in abundance, and of a quality your correspondent has never seen surpassed." C. K. Meyers of Denison was so thoroughly absorbed with John Gilman's dairy operation near Ketchum that Meyers nearly missed the train back to Hailey. The dairy products were excellent. Fifteen miles of irrigation ditch brought water to Gilman's fenced pasture for 50 dairy cows. Range cattle browsed the open slopes nearby.

Generally, the editors found good things to say about the quality of the farm animals they observed in Idaho. The account

by Charles Aldrich published in the *Webster City Freeman* is typical. "Horses, cattle, and sheep look fat and sleek, even in the barren and desolate looking sage brush and lava bed regions of Idaho," he asserted from his own observations. Then he repeated an Idahoan's theory that "the small amount of grass found there contains a far greater percent of the flesh-producing element than the native grasses in the states."

Early on their trip the Iowans detected inherent problems with western hogs. The basic problem was that the "snouts tended to grow toward the setting sun. . . . Their ears have made a desperate . . . effort to keep pace, and despite the long legs on which they are borne, have constantly lost in the race; the distance between snout and ears has been constantly increasing." Therefore, the farm editors rejected all known rules for hog judging and came up with the following: "The hog was to be suspended by the ears; if the rear end descended, showing the preponderance of weight to be back of the ears, it was to stand approved; but if snout descended the hog was to be discarded." Upon completion of the trip the men compared notes and found that upon mental application of their criteria, "only three hogs were found west of the Idaho line that would pass muster."

Few of the Iowa editors presented incisive information about the mysterious process of bringing water to the land. By 1885, irrigation in the parts of Idaho they visited had not progressed much beyond

the diversion of the smaller streams. The Iowans did not see a major empoundment or an elaborate canal system of the type the Mormons were then building in the Upper Snake River Valley. J. E. Eggert's generalizations about irrigation in the *Columbus Safeguard* are as informative as any on that subject:

In southern Idaho, irrigation is necessary to insure the ripening of crops. The process of irrigating has been reduced to scientific principles, and it is claimed by those who have tested it, that it gives better results, insures more regular crops, and with less worry, than where the rainfall is depended upon.

Editorial opinion ranged widely on the question of how land-hungry Iowans should react to the Idaho lands. The *Winterset Madisonian* concluded that "the Iowa farmer has a more rigorous climate, may have to work somewhat harder, but at the year's end he will have more to show for it." Then, Editor H. J. B. Cummings advised: "If on a good farm, in good health, he had better stay where he is." After seeing the productive country around Walla Walla, then traveling a second time across the Snake River Plain, W. H. Schooley of Indianola was over-whelmed by the thought of what this country, once irrigated, could do for the food supply of the world. "But the pioneers who shall reduce these plains to fertile and productive farms will have no picnic of it."

After 1885, Iowa farmers and others who were curious about Idaho, could talk to local people with at least a moderate reservoir of first hand information. The

excursion was very beneficial, and as the editor of the *Indianola Advocate-Tribune* said:

It is has given the people of Iowa and the people whom we visited a better knowledge of each other. It has awakened in them a lively interest in each other's welfare. It has enkindled or rekindled an enduring friendship. It has enlarged the patriotism of both, making us feel, as we never felt before, that we are one common people, inheritors of one common country, and it is the best and grandest country on the face of God's green earth.

With luck, an inquirer might receive more accurate information about soil fertility than that furnished by the editor of the Council Bluffs *Daily Nonpareil* who ponderously asserted: "It is well known that these sage brushes cannot grow except in rich soil, which when properly irrigated, produces rich crops of cereals, vegetables, fruits, etc." The editors were an important part of their communities, and what they knew about the West was bound to spread.

If an Iowa laborer contemplating a move sought the advice of one of the editors who went west, he would likely be told that it would be futile to compete with the cheap Chinese labor of Idaho. Business men with capital and pluck, on the other hand, might do quite well.

To what extent did the Iowa editors influence the stream of migrants from the Hawkeye to the Gem state? The issues are too complicated for easy generalization. It is safe to say that the mid-1880s was a good time for an infusion of information about Idaho into the conscious-

ness of Iowa editors and their readers. During the decades when tracts of irrigated farm land were coming on the market (and when the Union Pacific was offering cheap passenger and freight rates to settlers) Iowa moved steadily upward in the list of states supplying native born people to Idaho. The federal Carey Act of 1894 facilitated the opening of the vast Twin Falls and subsequent projects early in the present century. It is not accidental that Iowa peaked out in the aforementioned list in 1910 and descended as fewer and fewer acres of new farm land came on the market.

The members of the Iowa Press Association who went west were fond of telling their readers about the Iowans "whirled westward like cast leaves in the autumn; the wind seems to have lodged them in sheltered nooks everywhere." At Pocatello alone they met four former Iowans working for the railroad—William Cavanaugh and James Connors of Denison and Walt Close and Ed Forrester of Independence, "In numerous instances," wrote W. H. Schooley of Indianola, "the scenes were truly pathetic as friends of ten or twenty years ago met unannounced, and clasped each others' hands in genuine delight."

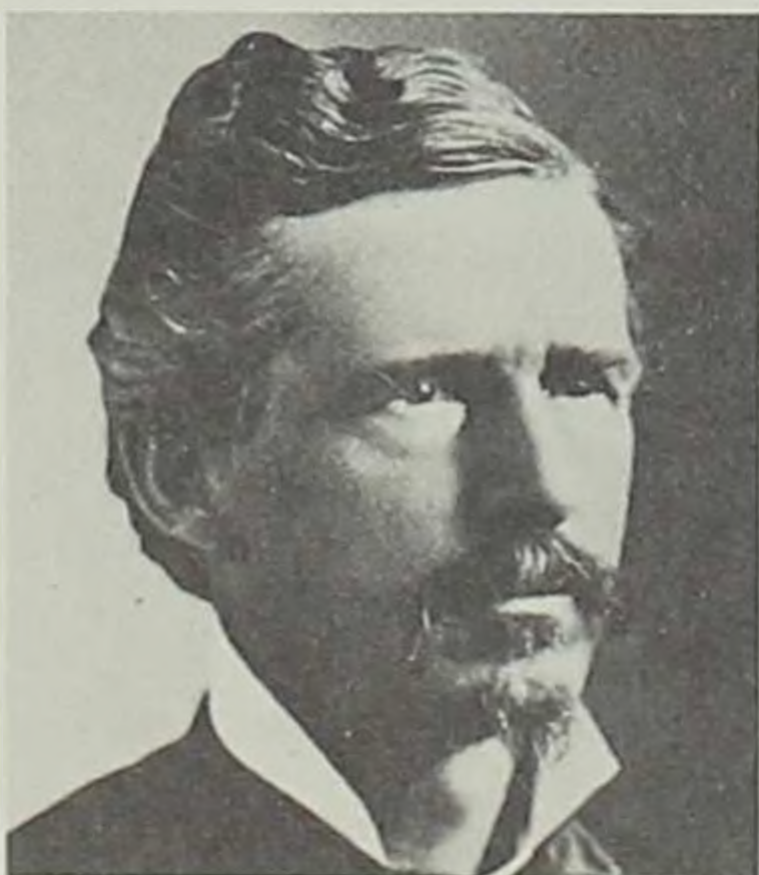
What none of the editors noted was the inordinate number of Iowans lodged in the governor's office of the Gem state. To date, a quarter of Idaho's governors have had some affiliation with Iowa. The list includes the first governor of Idaho Territory as well as two contemporaries.



1. *William H. Wallace* (Governor 1863-1864, Republican) cut his political teeth as Speaker of the House in the first session of the Iowa territorial legislature in 1838

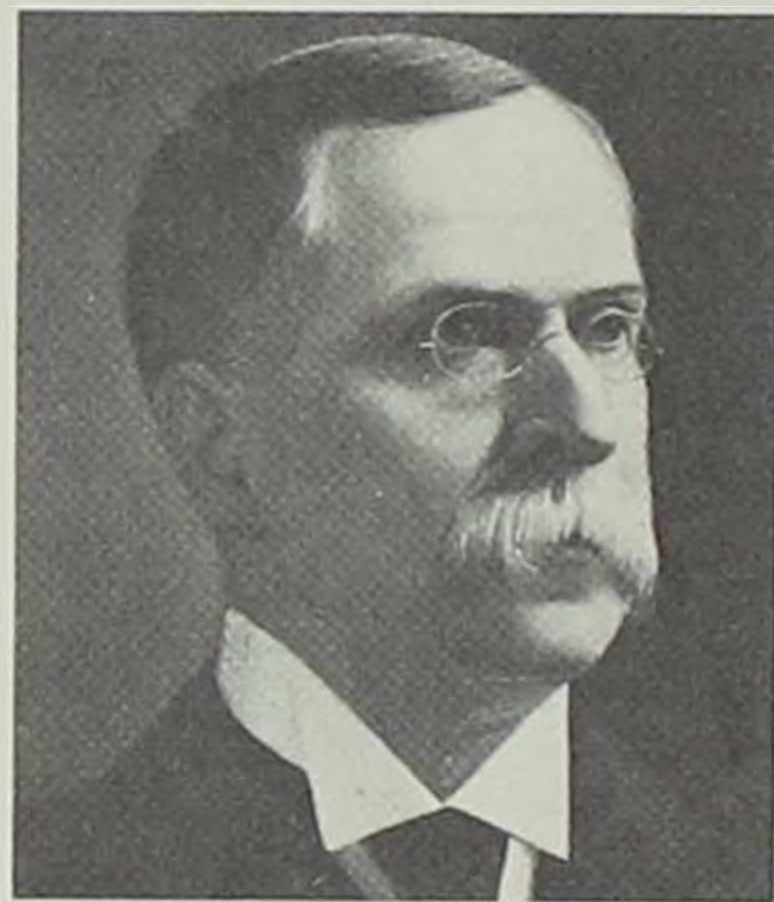
and as a member of the Council in 1842-43. He moved to Washington Territory in 1853, where he also served on the Council, then went off to Congress. Like Abraham Lincoln, who appointed him Governor of Idaho Territory, Wallace was an ardent Whig who made a well-timed switch to the Republican Party.

W. W. Wallace, son of the Governor, related his family's and perhaps an Iowa version of the naming of the Gem state. The Governor's wife had been in Iowa visiting with a married sister from Colorado. That sister had a daughter named Idaho, perhaps after the Colorado place name. In March 1863, a committee discussed the names Idaho and Lafayette for the new territory. Mrs. Wallace thought that "there was never quite as sweet and pretty a little creature in all the world" as her niece. According to her son, she successfully urged the committee to accept the name Idaho.



2. *Thomas M. Bowen* (Governor 1871, Republican) was in office for only two months. Born near Burlington, Iowa, he had a diverse political career both before and after his serv-

ice in Idaho. Bowen saw little potential in Idaho and told an acquaintance, Thomas Donaldson: "This place is a sucked lemon—squeezed dry!" He went to Arkansas saying: "One day-and-night poker session of the Arkansas legislature would clean out this entire territory."



3. *John N. Irwin* (Governor 1883, Republican) was also a native of southeastern Iowa. Born in Keokuk, he had both mayoral and legislative experience in Iowa before being

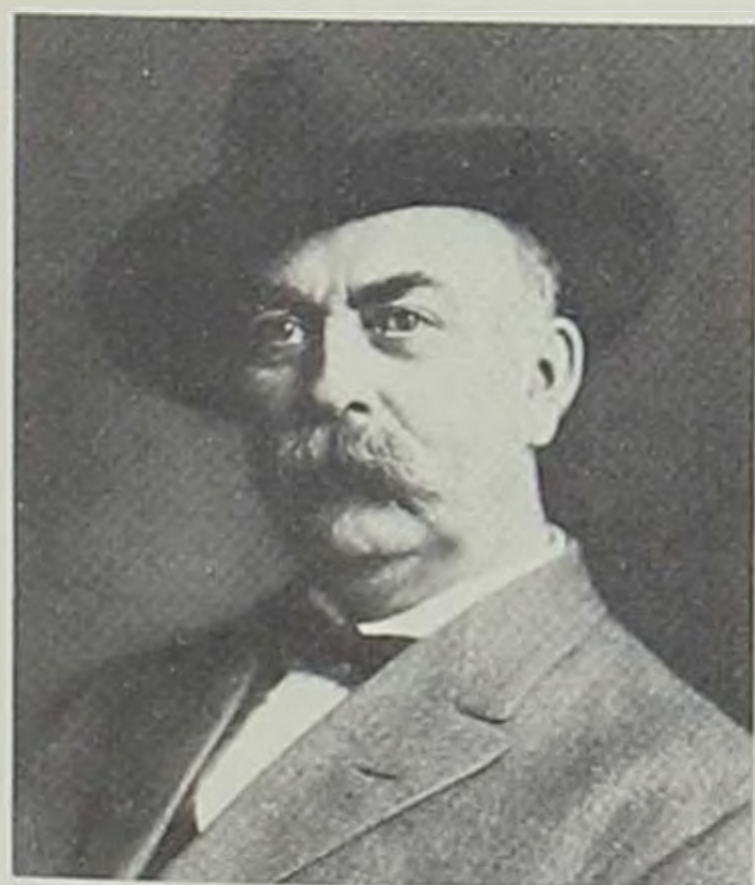
appointed Governor of Idaho Territory. He came west for an inspection, but returned to Iowa for one or more of the following reasons: health problems, business complications, or as one historian put it: "either . . . Idaho had no use for him or . . . he had no use for Idaho. . . ."

The appointment of these three governors was related to the strength of the Republican Party in Iowa and the nation during the Civil War, and post-war years. Senator William Boyd Allison was powerful within the Republican fold and could advance the careers of his Iowa friends. In the case of Irwin it took more than one try.



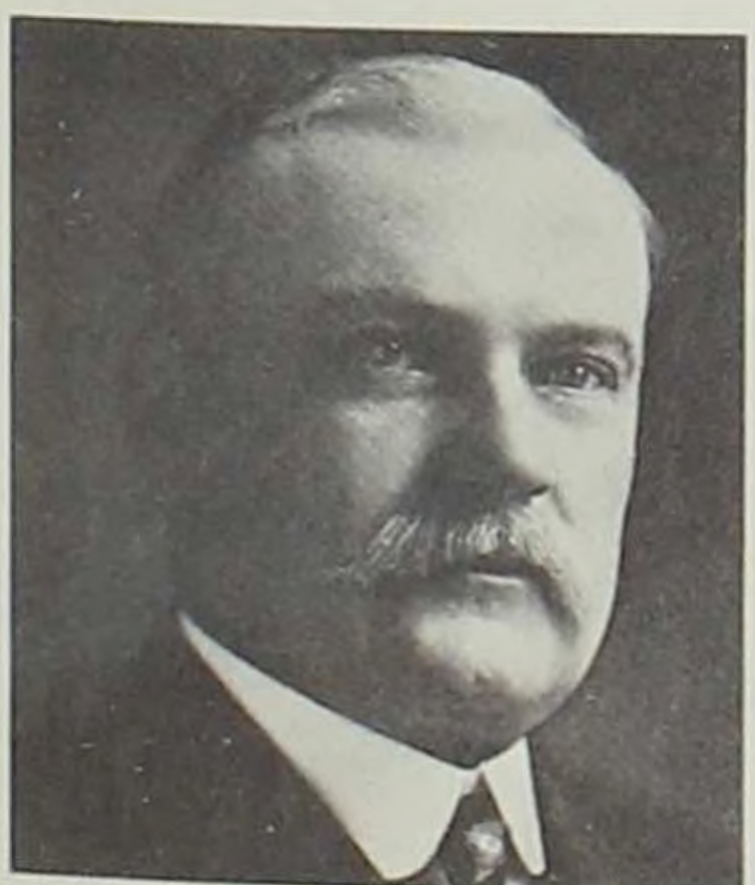
4. *Frank Steunenberg* (Governor 1897-1900, Democrat) also a native of Keokuk, came from an Iowa Dutch family. He was a successful Iowa journalist with both the Des

Moines *Register* and the Knoxville *Express* before he and his brother purchased the Caldwell *Tribune* in 1886. Neither of the Steunenberg brothers was along with the western excursion of the Iowa Press Association in 1885, but they came to Idaho a year later. Through the years Steunenberg kept up his Iowa contacts and at the time of his murder in 1905 his picture was still hanging in the composing room of the Knoxville newspaper.



5. *James H. Hawley* (Governor 1911-1912, Democrat) born in the Democratic town of Dubuque, Iowa, became the ninth Governor of Idaho. A clever lad, he came to

the Salmon River country of Idaho from California. While working one day in 1869, he reportedly found a rich deposit and "gathering some of the rocks into a flour sack, he took it to the creek, where he washed out the gold to the value of one thousand dollars!" Not forgetting his native state, he called this strike the Iowa Mine. During his administration, Hawley sent a train to the Midwest called the "Western Governors' Special" containing exhibits of Idaho.



6. *John M. Haines* (Governor 1913-1914, Republican) came from an Iowa Quaker family. Born in Jasper County in 1863, and educated at Penn College, H a i n e s



When Frank Steunenberg was Governor of Idaho, relations between labor and management in the mines strained beyond the breaking point and produced acts of violence. To restore peace at Coeur d'Alene, Governor Steunenberg called in federal troops. When Steunenberg was killed by a nitro-glycerine bomb attached to the gate of his Caldwell home December 30, 1905 (five years after he left office) union forces were suspected of the crime. The Knoxville (Iowa) Tribune of January 6, 1906 reported:

Former Knoxville Man of Prominence Slain in the Gateway of His Own Home at Caldwell, Idaho, at 6:40 Saturday Evening.—Probably the Result of an Old Grudge.

A crack Pinkerton detective was engaged to assist Idaho authorities with the investigation. Harry Orchard, a miner, confessed to the crime. State Prosecutors, James Hawley and William E. Borah, tried to establish that the Western Federation of Miners was party to the crime. The proceedings turned into a celebrated trial of the union movement with Clarence Darrow handling the defense.

moved westward from town to town until his roots took hold as a real estate man in Boise. Here he became active in city politics. He won the 1912 gubernatorial race as a Taft Republican but went down in the next campaign. Haines was the first of the Iowa affiliated governors to die a natural death in Idaho.



7. *David W. Davis* (Governor 1919-1922, Republican) was a native of Wales who spent his formative years in the coal mining districts of Iowa. At the age of 12 he went to work in the coal fields of Angus, three years later became clerk of a company store at Dawson, and at the age of 21 he became manager of the company store at Rippey. "His intense application to business matters caused the impairment of his health and lured by the splendid opportunities Idaho presented, Mr. Davis came West in 1904, and in a short time established a bank at American Falls. . . ." The standard modern history of Idaho contends that there was a strong move to have President Harding appoint Davis Secretary of the Interior because of his strong record as a reclamationist. Had Harding appointed him, "the Republicans could have been spared the calamity of the Teapot Dome scandal. . . ."



8. *Dr. Charles A. Robins* (Governor 1947-1950, Republican) was born in Defiance, Iowa in 1884. He began medical practice at St. Maries in 1919.



9. *Robert E. Smylie* (Governor 1955-1966, Republican) Idaho's popular three-term governor, is a native of Marcus, Iowa. He attended Cresco High School with a noted Hawkeye, Norman Borlaug. Shortly after Borlaug received the Nobel Prize, the Des Moines *Register* published an article calling attention to the successes of these two men and pictured them on the same football team. In acknowledging the clipping Smylie confessed: "It is good we could do something pretty well, because neither of us could play football worth a damn." Smylie has the distinction of being the only Iowa associated governor of the Gem state, whose father can be verified as once holding a membership in the State Historical Society of Iowa. This may not be entirely unrelated to the fact that Governor Smylie took a deep and personal interest in the modernization and professionalization of the Idaho State Historical Society years later.



10. *Don Samuelson* (Governor 1967-1970, Republican) called Davenport his home from 1936 to 1946 where he worked for the City Fire Department. After World War II, he moved to Idaho and started a sporting goods store at Sandpoint. In response to recent queries about confusion resulting from his Iowa and Idaho associations he replied: "Many times during my term as Governor after I had been introduced as

Governor of Idaho, I would be asked questions about places in Iowa and have been reintroduced a few times as the Governor of Iowa."

Perhaps it was inevitable that one man, John B. Neil (Governor 1880-1883, Republican) should fall victim in published sources to the confusion of the names Ohio and Iowa. Historian James Hawley suggests, perhaps unkindly, that neither state may want to claim this appointee of Rutherford B. Hayes. "If the possession of brains had been a crime, Neil, even if convicted, never would have served more than a jail sentence." Further study clears the Hawkeye state of any association with Neil, but even without him there is enough evidence to term Iowa a nursery for Idaho politicians at the gubernatorial level.

Has the flow of people and influence between Iowa and Idaho invariably been in a westerly direction? Not a scent of Idaho sage brush can be found in the backgrounds of Iowa's governors (unless picked up on brief visits such as Buren Sherman's in 1885). But a decided undertow in the westward flow of population is indicated in the census data. Idaho has never ranked high in the list of states supplying native born people to Iowa. However, 1920 was the peak year for both rank and number when there were 1,853 native Idahoans in Iowa. The same census enumerated 17,779 native Hawkeyes in the Gem State—the high to date.

Some aspects of the relationship between Iowa and Idaho have encouraged the shuttling of people back and forth between the two states. Since the 1870s at least, midwesterners began going to the Intermountain region for reasons of health. The light, dry mountain air was thought to benefit those suffering from respiratory problems and diseases, even tu-

berculosis. Moreover, the mineral springs and health spas of Idaho provided added inducement. The Sulphur Bath at Hailey was even a "sure pop for the itch." When the Iowa editors visited Hailey in 1885 they learned: "Nobody dies except doctors and they just evaporate."

John Briggs (son of Ansel Briggs, the first elected governor of Iowa) is a nineteenth-century example of one who moved back and forth for health reasons. Himena V. Hoffman, who had much more staying power, is a twentieth-century example. After receiving an M.A. degree from The University of Iowa in 1917, she taught history and coached at Fort Dodge. For the fall of 1923 she faced a choice of continuing at Fort Dodge or accepting a graduate fellowship in history at the University. Then illness struck. Her doctor advised her to neither study nor teach, but added, "if you must teach you must go to a higher altitude!" She mailed her credentials and altitude requirements to the Intermountain Teachers Agency and in a few days was offered positions at Kalispell, Montana and Pocatello, Idaho. "I decided on Pocatello and arrived there in September of 1923." She regained her health, taught for 30 years at Pocatello High School, retired, then returned to her family home at Leon, Iowa, where she presently lives in spritely good health.

Within the web of business arrangements that makes up the national economy numerous individual strands connect Iowa and Idaho. A modest thread is suggested by the invitation to Hailey residents to join the Odd Fellow's Protective and Benefit Association of Fort Madison, Iowa which appeared in the *Wood River Times* of January 29, 1886. On the other extreme are the business interests of the Mussers of Muscatine and Iowa City. When Governor Bowen characterized Idaho "a suck-

ed lemon—squeezed dry” in 1871, he was not looking at the timber stands of northern and central Idaho. Early in this century, R. D. Musser, Clifton R. Musser, and other members of that family teamed up with the Frederic Weyerhaeuser and other interests to incorporate the Potlatch Lumber Company in 1903. The timber of the Clearwater-Palouse-Potlatch area was of phenomenal quality. One white pine taken to the Potlatch mill in 1911 measured “six feet nine inches across the butt, and yielded nearly 29,000 feet of lumber.” The scope and complexity of the Musser interests are difficult to fathom, but constitute one of the best places to examine economic ties between Iowa and Idaho.

With the activities of Idaho industrialist J. R. (Jack) Simplot, we come full circle with the Iowa-Idaho theme. The Simplot family came to Dubuque while Iowa was still a territory. Jack’s father, an Iowa farmer, was advised to leave the state because of respiratory problems. In 1909 when Jack was an infant, the family went to the state of Washington, stayed briefly, then settled on newly opened land near Declo, Idaho. Jack as a young man went into the potato processing business. By the end of World War II, he was the largest single supplier of dried potatoes to the armed services. He became known as the Henry Ford of potatoes. When threatened with a shortage of phosphate for his potato crops, he went into all phases of phosphate fertilizer production from mining the ore to retail sales. His activities have now expanded in scope and magnitude to make him a millionaire many times



A sign advertising the J. R. Simplot Co. near Spencer, Iowa.

over. Fertilizer sales bring the Simplot name back to Iowa to bolster corn yields and help to reverse the trend of colonial exploitation of Idaho resources.

Idaho and Iowa share an earthy distinction; they are both associated with specific crops—potatoes and corn. But even before the association of Idaho with potatoes, and despite the thousand miles that separates them, extraordinary strands began to bind the heritage of the Hawkeye and Gem states. There was prophecy and emotion in the toast that night at Hailey. □



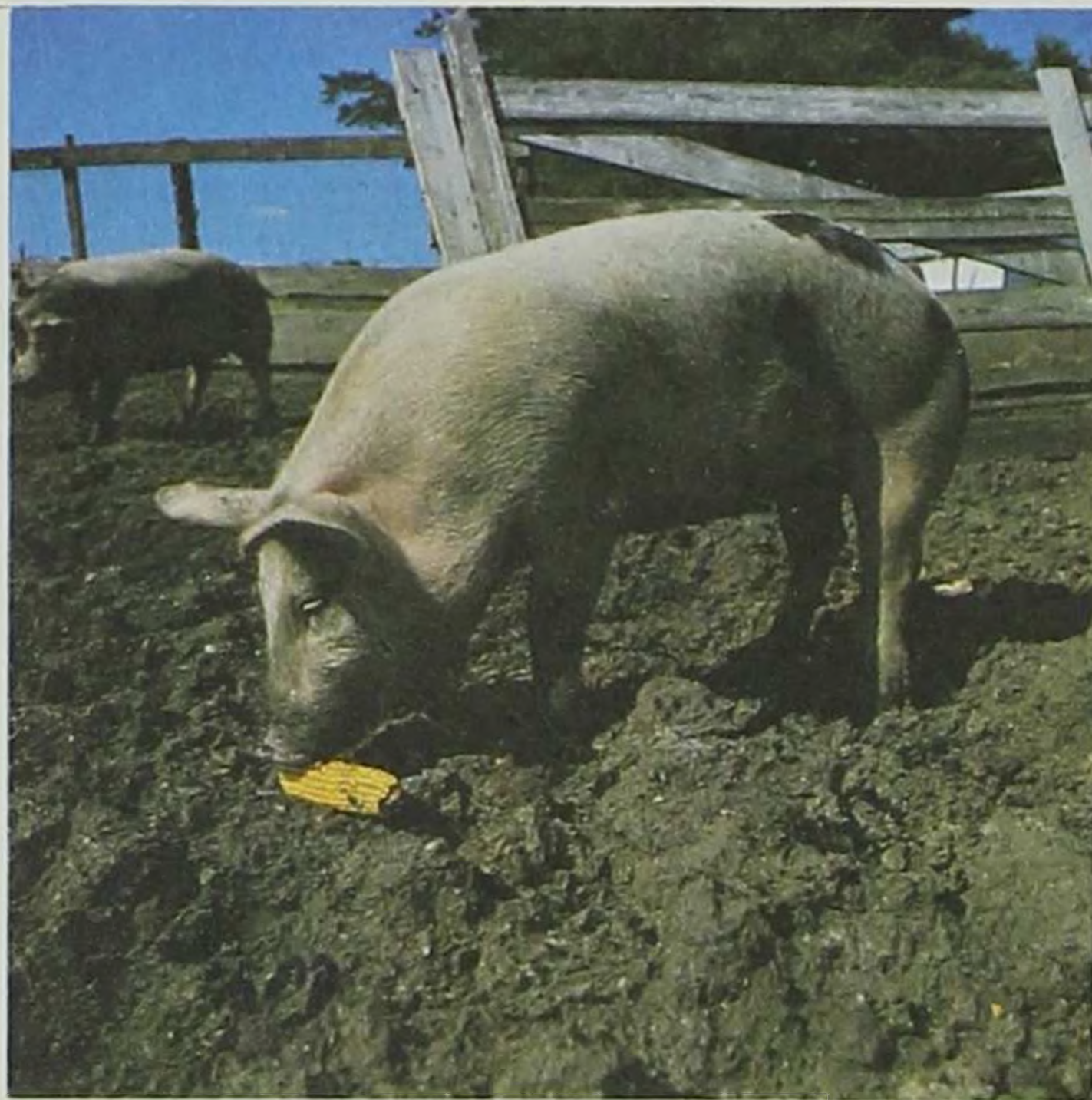
"Too much of the country is set up on edge, so to speak, too little is spread out so as to be available for agriculture," wrote W. H. Schooley of the Indianola Advocate Tribune.



"of all the beautiful things I've seen in this vale of tears . . . I'd vote a trout stream in the mountains, chief."

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WESTERN EXCURSION OF 1885(As listed in the *Daily Nonpareil*
of June 10, 1885)

Adams, C. G.	Montezuma Democrat	Jackson, Edmund	Belle Plaine Union
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Bauman, Mr. & Mrs. S. H.	Mt. Vernon Hawk-Eye	Ainsworth and Miss Laub	
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Crawford, Mrs. J. B.	Lisbon Sun	Naugie, L.	Morning Sun Herald
Crawford, R. W.	Manson Journal	Nevenesch, Mr. & Mrs. H.	Pella Blade
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Davis, Mr. & Mrs. R.	Anita Republican	Painter, Mr. & Mrs. Chas. S.	Des Moines Daily News
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Doxsee, J. W.	Monticello Express	Palmer, Mr. & Mrs. G. D.	Winterset News
Duncombe, W. E. & sister	Fort Dodge Daily Chronicle	Palmer, T. J.	What Cheer Patriot
Eggert, Mr. & Mrs. J. E.	Columbus Junction Safeguard	Parrott, Louis G.	Waterloo Reporter
Endicott, W. I.	Traer Star Clipper	Parrott, Mr. & Mrs. Matt	Waterloo Reporter
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Fancher, Mr. & Mrs. N.	Marion Register	Rees, W. H. W.	Creston Daily Gazette
Farbush, E. E.	Atlantic People's Advocate	Rhoads, J. M.	Jefferson Bee
Faulkes, Mr. & Mrs. F. W.	Cedar Rapids Daily Gazette	Roberts, G. E., & sister	Fort Dodge Messenger
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Frost, George E.	Clear Lake Record	Rockwell, Mr. & Mrs. G. B.	Rockwell Phonograph
Gilliland, A. S.	Grand Junction Head-Light	Rood, Mr. & Mrs. V. D.	Anita Times
Girton, Mr. & Mrs. J. F.	Des Moines Anzeiger	Schooley, Mr. & Mrs. W. H.	Indianola Advocate Tribune
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Gray, John	Avoca Delta	Sheffer, Mr. & Mrs. D.	Red Oak Express
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Hanna, Miss Belle	Mt. Vernon Cornelian	Shockley, G. W.	Oskaloosa Globe
Hazard, Louis	Greenfield Review	Simmons, Mr. & Mrs. F. A.	Cedar Rapids Real Estate Investor
Hoffman, Philip, and Miss Eva Wagoner	Oskaloosa Messenger	Slaughter, H. J.	Atlantic Democrat
Hunter, J. D., wife & daughter	Webster City Freeman	Smart, J. J.	Dakota Independent
Hurst, S. W.	Leon Democrat-Reporter	Smith, J. S.	Tipton Conservative
Hutchison, S.	Bedford Tribune	Snyder, Charles A.	Tipton Advertiser
		Snyder, Mr. & Mrs. E. A.	Cedar Falls Gazette
		Spencer, Wilson	Creston Monitor



(John Schultz photo)

When the members of the Iowa Press Association wrote disparaging words about western hogs (p. 116) they were calling attention in a humorous fashion to part of American agricultural history. Had a similar group of journalists from a more eastern state visited Iowa prairies during the middle part of the nineteenth century, they might have commented on the odd appearance of Iowa hogs. A. T. Hofer, editor of the *McGregor News*, in 1879 recalled the swine of a bygone Iowa era: "old settlers will recollect of that pioneer breed of hogs provided by nature with snouts no less than a yard long."

The first hogs raised by Iowa farmers were rangy, long-legged, long-snouted creatures, best suited to free feeding among corn fields or wooded areas. These swine were hardy enough to survive benign neglect by farmers and still be profitable with a minimum of finishing before market time. In the 1840s and 1850s large numbers of

such hogs were rounded up and moved to market in droves. The sight of several hundred porkers, galloping across the rolling prairie, must have been awesome.

Despite the advantages of such hogs—especially the lack of work involved in raising them—Iowa farmers soon began efforts to improve the cash return on their animals. Just as others in Ohio and Illinois had done before them, Iowans began to breed hogs selectively. New strains such as the Chester White and the Poland China were imported as breeding stock. By the 1870s, many counties had active hog breeding associations. The effort paid off rapidly, and the prairie hog was replaced by the short-faced, heavier, and more profitable modern pig.

When the Iowa editors visited Idaho in 1885 they observed swine production at a stage which had already disappeared from Iowa. The hog frontier had moved west.

COMMENTARY

An Iowa newspaper columnist a few years ago wrote that a newspaper article has "the half-life of a fried egg." However true this statement may be in the short run, it is definitely not so for historians. While not many people are interested in reading last week's paper, a news story of 80 years ago may be fascinating.

In fact, newspapers are one of the historian's most important sources. Newspapers usually provide the basic facts and show the context of historical events. First hand reports, such as diaries or memoirs, are generally accepted as more reliable and more significant; however, an historical book or article seldom is written without the aid of the journalists of the past.

As Peter Harstad and Michael Gibson point out in their article on the 1885 junket of Iowa's Republican editors, the local influence a paper exerted was considerable.

Living as we do in the 1970s, bombarded by images and information at a breathtaking rate, we may tend to discount the effectiveness of newspapers or magazines. However, in a pre-electronic age, the printed word often functioned in ways very similar to television in our time. The local paper brought news, gossip, and political propaganda from the town, county, and state levels. At the same time, local papers carried "boiler plates" or "patent sides" which were prepared in Chicago or eastern cities. These pre-printed forms—which reduced the burden on the local editor—carried national news, national fiction, and national advertising. Iowans read many of the same ads for the same pro-

ducts as did people in Minnesota, Nebraska, Colorado, and even (perhaps) Idaho.

No matter how isolated rural mid-western life may seem at a backward glance, it is clear that many forces tugged people away from purely local concerns.

Even the recent tendency to criticize the national media had a parallel in early Iowa. The editor of the Dubuque *Iowa News* complained in January 1838 about the role of the eastern literary establishment in forming opinion throughout the nation. He carefully drew a distinction between "useful" eastern literary publishers and the "cheap publications which sprang from the 'Franklin Place' and the 'Athenian Buildings,' Philadelphia."

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the opportunities for sharing in a national culture increased with the wide circulation of popular magazines and best-selling novels. Iowans and Idahoans read the same stories in *Harper's*, *Munsey's*, and *Leslie's* magazines. The *Des Moines Leader* devoted a full editorial to the fictional death of one of the popular literary heroes of the 1890s. Press trips such as the one described in 1885 and the reports which followed also played an important role in broadening the horizons of local people.

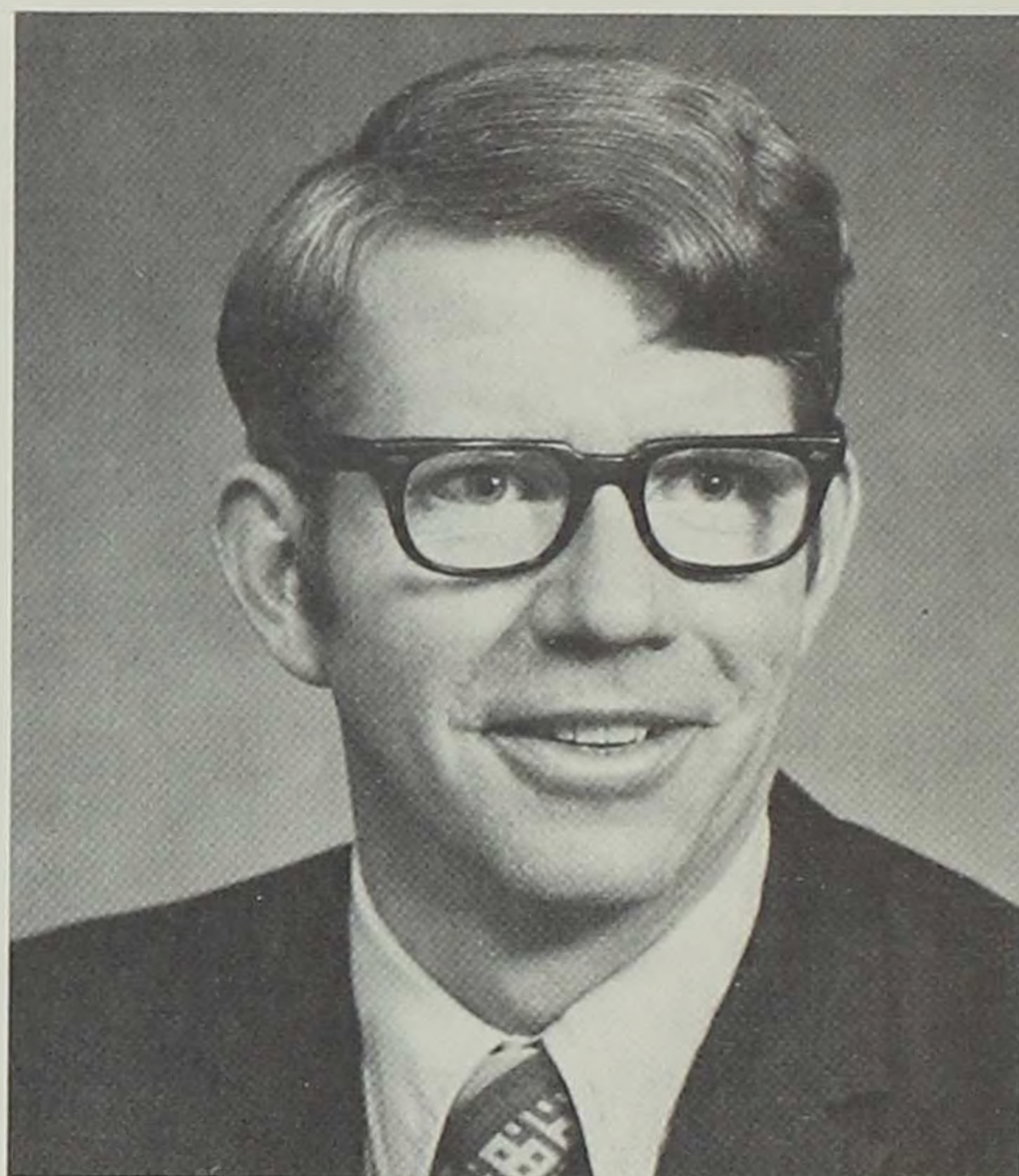
Newspapers are a fascinating study. Not only do they provide information, but they demonstrate the sinuous intertwining of localism and nationalism. □

L.E.P.

CONTRIBUTORS:

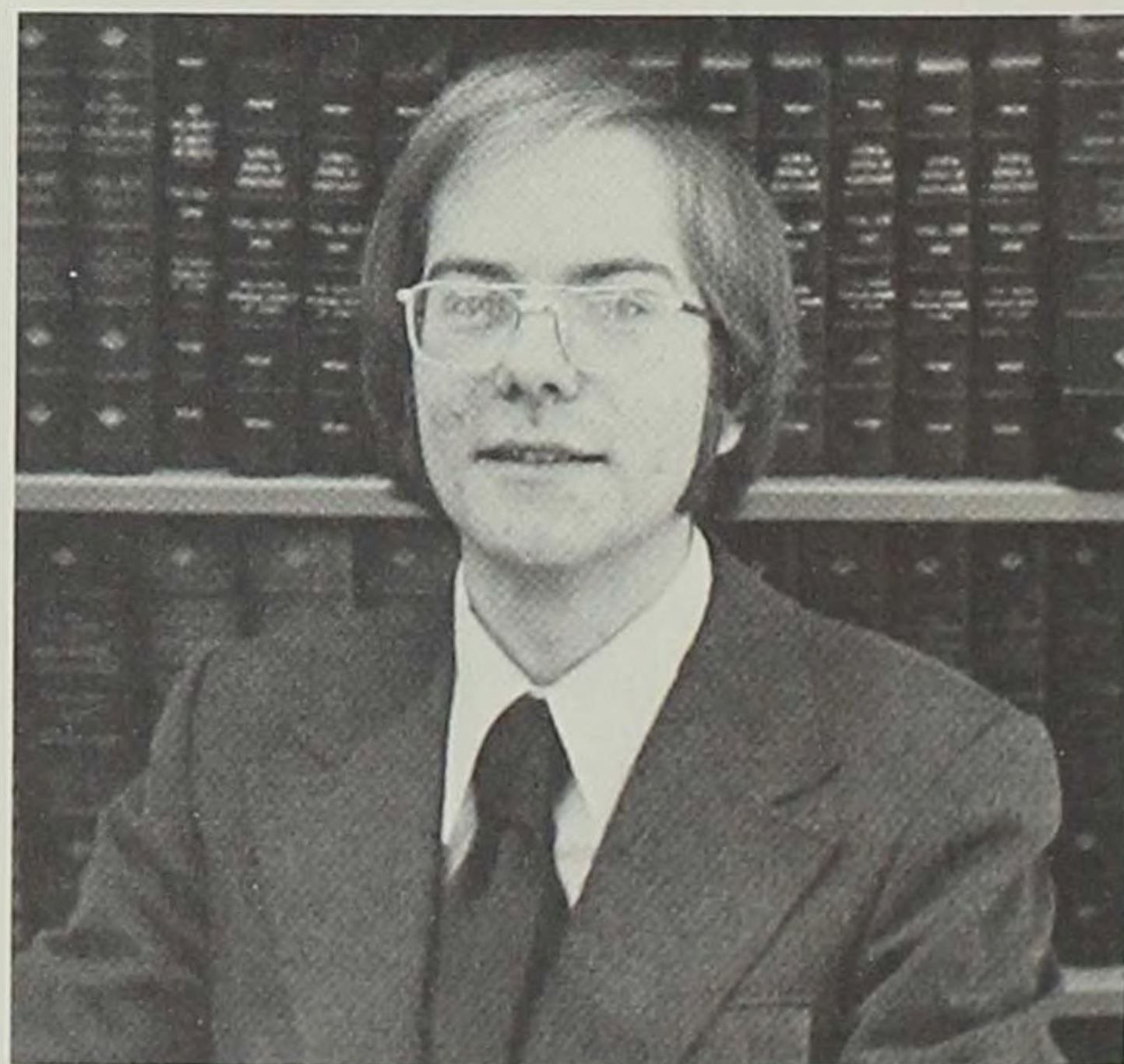
PETER T. HARSTAD has been Director of the State Historical Society of Iowa since August 1972.

He dedicates this article to the memory of John H. Merriam, colleague, hunting partner, and friend, who died in a hunting-boating accident in the fall of 1973. A 10,924-foot peak in the White Cloud Mountains of central Idaho has recently been named "Merriam Peak" to honor this ardent conservationist who kindled his interest in the out-of-doors along the banks of Buffalo Creek, between Ryan and Coggon, Iowa.



MICHAEL D. GIBSON is Administrative Assistant/Research Associate for the State Historical Society of Iowa. A native of Pocatello, Idaho, Mr. Gibson joined the staff in June 1973. He attended local schools in Pocatello, and in 1970 he received a B.A. degree in American history from Idaho State University. Before coming to Iowa, he served as a research assistant for the Department of History at Idaho State University, while doing graduate work. He recently completed a bibliography on the Western American novel which was published in the *Journal of Popular Culture* and simultaneously in book form.

With this background, it is clear why Mr. Gibson has a special interest in the topic of "Idaho - Iowa."



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The State Historical Society encourages submission of articles on the history of Iowa and the surrounding region which may be of interest to the general reading public. The originality and significance of an article, as well as the quality of an author's research and writing, will determine acceptance for publication. A brief biographical sketch should be submitted. All manuscripts must be double-spaced on at least medium weight paper. Ordinarily, the text of an article should not exceed twenty-five to thirty pages. As far as possible, citations should be worked into the body of the text. In this and other matters of form THE MLA STYLE SHEET is the standard guide. Black and white and colored illustrations are an integral part of THE PALIMPSEST. Any photographic illustrations should accompany the manuscript, preferably five-by-seven or eight-by-ten glossy prints, unmarked on either side. Inquiries and correspondence should be sent to: Editor, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

CARPENTER BIOGRAPHY FREE TO MEMBERS

Cyrus Clay Carpenter and Iowa Politics, 1854-1898 by Mildred Throne will be distributed free of charge to anyone who is a member of the Society on September 15, 1974. Persons joining the Society between September 15, 1974 and March 15, 1975 for a two-year membership (cost: \$10) will also receive a free biography. Non-members may purchase the book at \$8.00 per copy. Members may buy additional copies for \$6.40 (a 20 percent discount).



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