The Palimpsest

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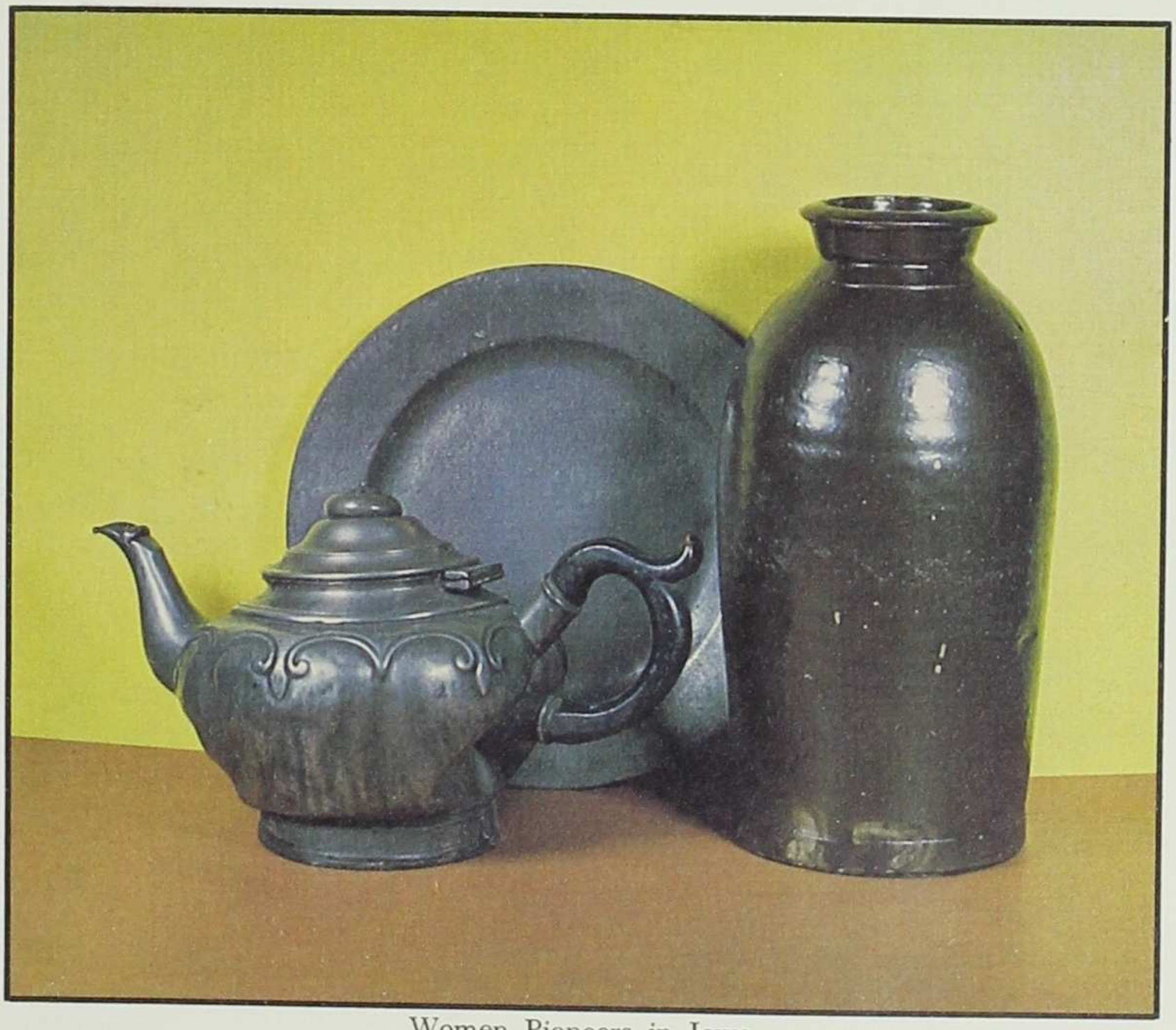

Women Pioneers in Iowa

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Peter T. Harstad, Director

L. Edward Purcell, Editor

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Cover: *A battered tea pot, a pewter plate, and a stone jug—mute evidence of the life of the pioneer woman in Iowa (courtesy of the University of Northern Iowa Museum). See p. 34.*

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.

Women Pioneers in Iowa

by Glenda Riley

In a 1922 address to the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, George F. Parker, an historian of the American West, boldly declared,

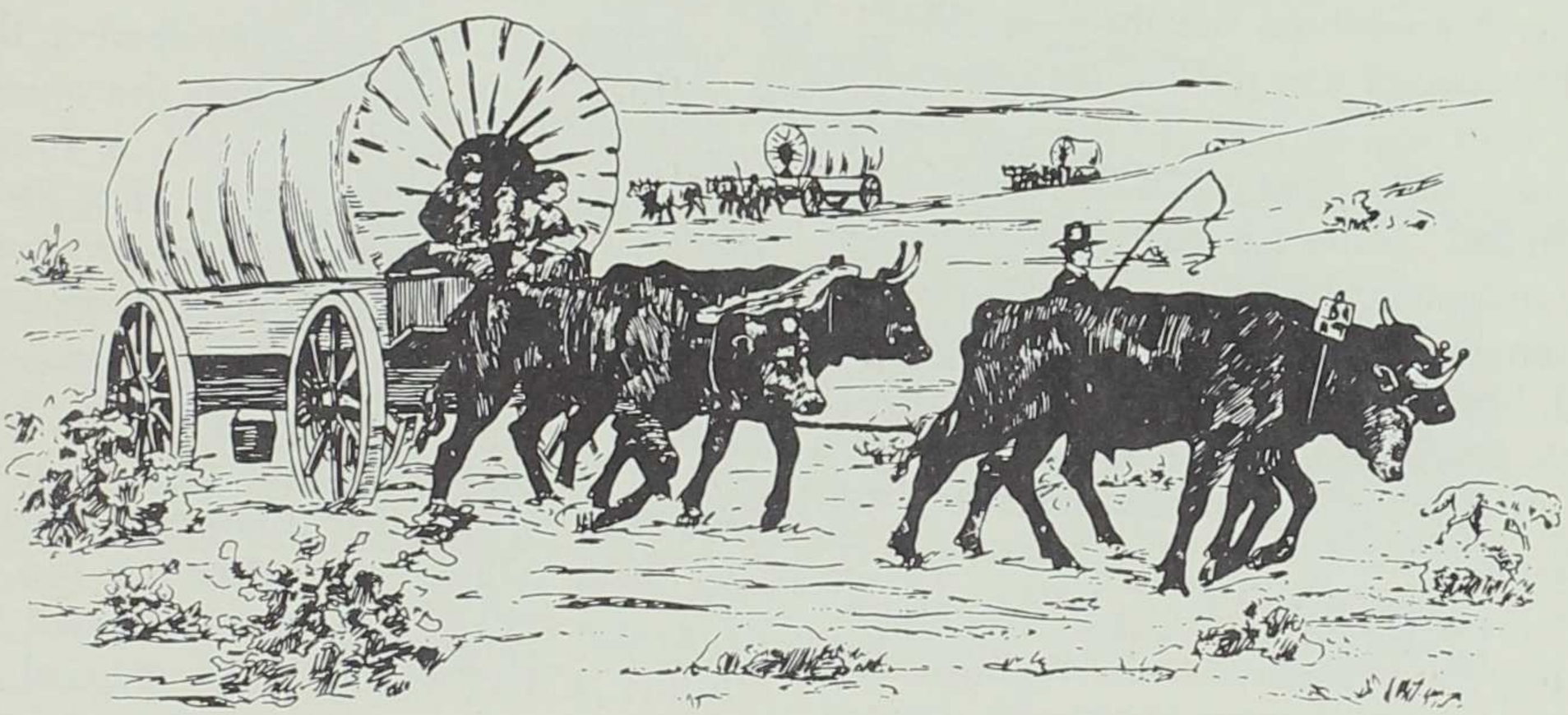
> I define the American Pioneer as the man who . . . crossed the mountains from the thin line of Atlantic settlement. . . . I mean the man who . . . swept on through passes . . . . This man steadily solidified his settlement. . . . To me, this man reflects the character of the most effective single human movement in history.

It is remarkable that no one—man nor woman—challenged this definition and asked where the American pioneer woman fit into the picture. It is even more remarkable that few historians since have asked many questions about the frontier women who crossed the mountains and swept through the passes along with the frontier men. Because pioneer women were largely "invisible," a student of American history might assume that their contributions were secondary and not worthy of intense study. All that their invisibility proves, however, is that they did not hold high public office, command troops, build railroads, act as vigilantes, or rob stages.

Most pioneer women worked quietly behind the scenes, or more specifically, within the confines of their own cabins or sod huts. Because they worked hard and long, often 14 to 16 hours a day, they did not have much leisure time to record their thoughts and activities in diaries or journals which would have insured them a place in the eyes of later historians. But pioneer women did leave millions of artifacts in the form of personal and household items which offer mute evidence of pioneer life, and some of the frontier women found time to write diaries, letters, and memoirs which are gradually being collected and transcribed.

Some of these source materials are now being recognized and explored in Iowa. The result is the emergence of a fascinating picture of the lives of Iowa's pioneer women.

The first white woman to settle in Iowa was probably Maria Stillwell, wife of Moses Stillwell, who came to the Half-Breed Tract near Keokuk in 1828. The following year Hannah Galland, wife of Dr. Isaac Galland, moved into the same area and shortly thereafter gave birth to a daughter who is remembered as the first white child to be born in Iowa. It was not until 1833, when the Black Hawk Purchase Treaty provided for the removal of the Sauks and Mesquakies from part of eastern Iowa, that the territory was opened for settlement, and it was the mid-1830s before migration began to reach significant levels. Since the "new purchase" in Iowa was composed mainly of farm land, it was attractive to family units, and women were therefore a major part of Iowa's population



Moving west into Iowa by wagon and oxen (from H. Bonebright-Closz, Reminiscences of Newcastle, Iowa 1848).

from the beginning of settlement. Women who moved to Iowa had many reasons for believing it was the best place to establish a new home: the hope of restored health in Iowa's favorable climate, the opportunity to recoup a financial disaster sustained by the family, or the promise of a more prosperous future on Iowa's inexpensive and available farm lands.

Iowa also appeared promising to unmarried women who found the ratio of women to men definitely in their favor. In 1838, the Territorial Census recorded that there were four men to every three women and during the following decades the imbalance increased. In 1855, the *Davenport Courier* noted that, "At Fort Des Moines, Iowa, there is a dreadful scarcity of women." According to the *Courier*, "It isn't much better in Davenport than at Fort Des Moines and we are sure it would be an act of humanity if scores of the young maidens who are pining away in the eastern villages for somebody to love would set their faces at once toward Iowa."

The advertising sections of the early newspapers attest to the fact that Eastern women were aware of the matrimonial possibilities existing in Iowa. In 1860, one Eastern woman placed this advertisement in the *Waterloo Courier:*

> A young lady . . . in Central New York, is desirous of opening a correspondence with some young man in the West with a view to a matrimonial engagement. . . . She is about 24 years of age, possesses a good moral character, is not what would be called handsome, has a good disposition, enjoys good health, is tolerably well-educated, and thoroughly versed in the mysteries of housekeeping. . . . None but young men of good

> moral character and strictly temperate habits need address.

The editor commented that this advertisement presented a "rare chance for a young man to obtain that useful and essential article of household furniture—a Wife."

This remark was not too far out of line in at least one respect: a wife *was* necessary on a farm frontier. In his widely-read *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846*, John B. Newhall unequivocably said, "Married persons are generally more comfortable, and succeed better, in a frontier country, than single men; for a wife and family . . . may always prove a source of pecuniary advantage."

So hundreds of women migrated into Iowa with their husbands, families, and friends in almost every imaginable type of conveyance. Some took stagecoaches, some took the rail "cars," others took steamboats, and many combined several ways of travel in their westward journey. But by far the greatest number came in Conestoga wagons pulled by oxen and capable of traveling 18 to 23 miles on a good day. Once on the trail the women continued their household tasks and the care of their families in the façe of severely limited resources. They camped out at night, cooked their food over open fires, and stopped to wash clothes when they happened upon a well or a stream.

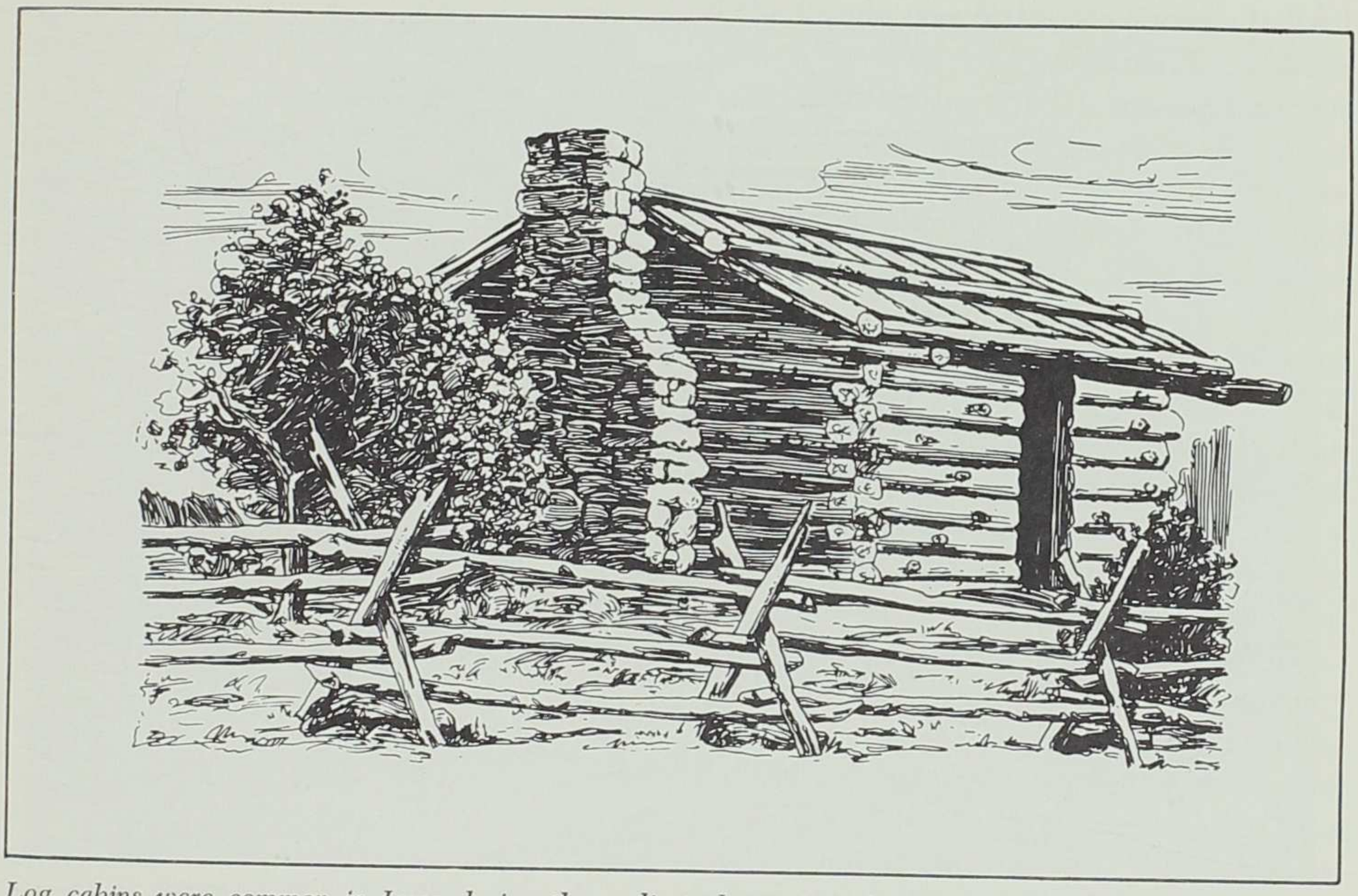
Some women worked diligently to create a homelike aura around their family's wagon. One woman's description of her "salt rising" bread method demonstrated both ingenuity and determination:

> When we camped I made rising and set it on the warm ground and it would be up about midnight. I'd get up and put it to sponge and in the morning the first thing I did was to mix the dough and put it in the oven and by the time we had breakfast it would be ready to bake; then we had nice coals and by the time I got things washed up . . . the bread would be done and we would go on our way rejoicing.

The presence of young children also contributed to a feeling of home in the trail camps. In 1846, one family camped on the way to Iowa with four children, the youngest of which was one year old. A young woman member of a similar traveling party in 1869 recalled that, "It was a great adventure. At night we camped out, cooking our meals by a camp fire." Not all pioneer women had such fond memories of their trek into Iowa, however, because many of them had to deal with illness, accidents, and death. Many years after her trip to Iowa, one former emigrant expressed an attitude which was probably typical of most of the women emigrants. "Then," she explained, "I never thought about its being hard. I was used to things being hard."

The determination and heroism of women were so common as to not seem particularly remarkable at the time. A case in point is the woman traveling with four small children to join her husband waiting in Iowa, who found herself stymied at the Mississippi River because the break-up of the winter ice made it impossible for teams to cross. Since she had no money for lodging until ferries could run, she distributed the luggage between the three oldest children, picked up the baby, and walked over

A frying pan designed for use over a campfire (from Closz).

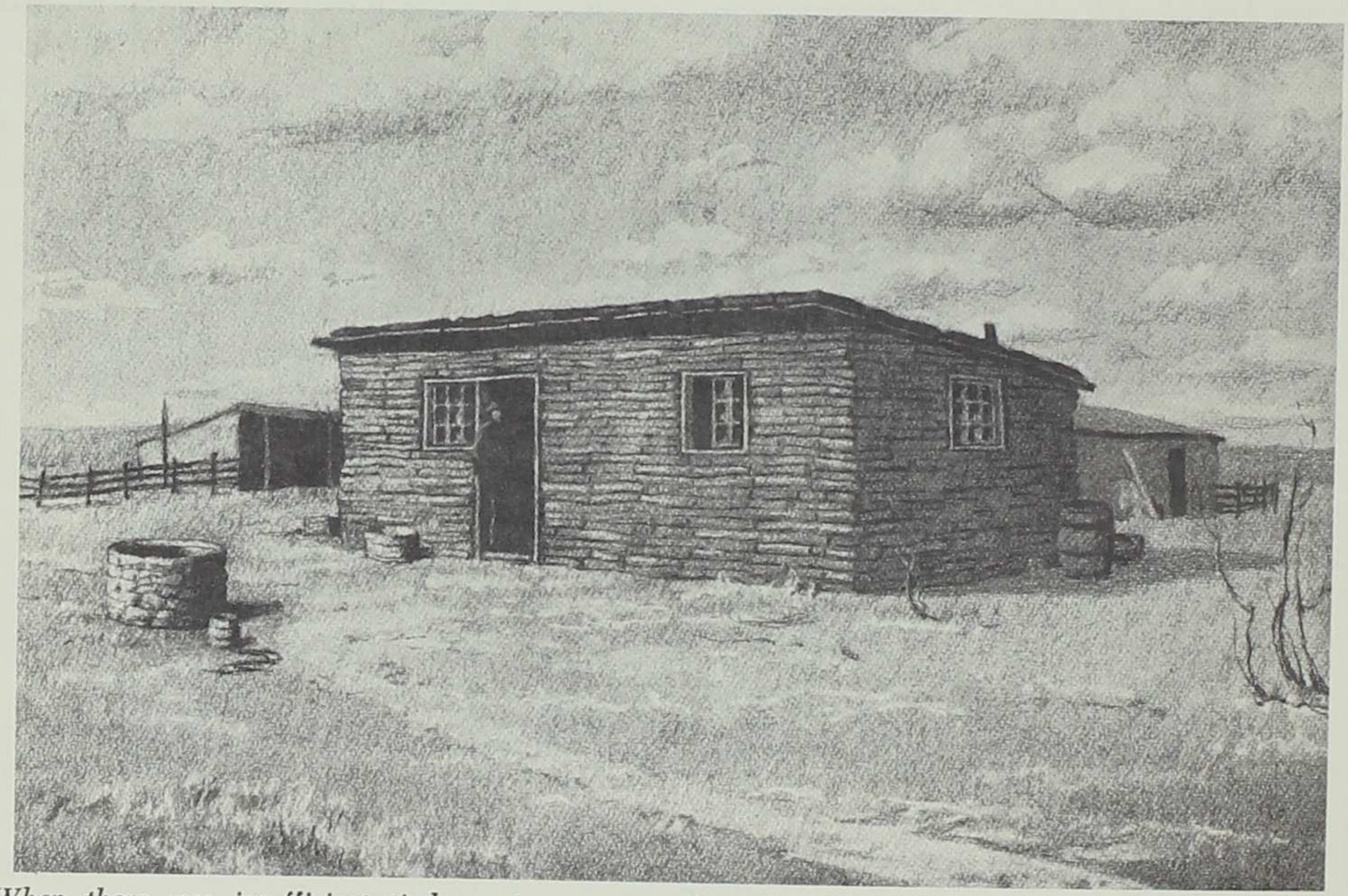


Log cabins were common in Iowa during the earliest days of settlement, despite the relative lack of timber. Many of these homes have survived until the present day, and many are preserved as relics of a bygone era (from Closz).

the groaning ice. In later years, one of her children recounted memories of the seemingly interminable distance across the Mississippi and the thundering sound of ice splitting beneath their feet. This was a dramatic, but probably not an unfitting introduction to a country that would place heavy demands on these first homemakers.

When they finally arrived in Iowa the pioneer women were not always pleased with what they found. One wrote that, "When we got to the new purchase, the land of milk and honey, we were disappointed and homesick, but we were there and had to make the best of it." Another voiced bitter complaints about hostile Indians, cold winters, wet springs, hot summers, mosquitoes, and "wild beasts." But just as the men tackled the necessary business of getting the land "broke" the women did what they could to devise homes for their families.

In Iowa, a pioneer home was generally either a rough-hewn log cabin in the timbered areas or a sod shanty in the prairie regions. For the most part, pioneer women's diaries do not present these early cabins and shanties in the same romantic vein that the modern media often does. One young woman, married in 1857, set up housekeeping in an abandoned corn crib which she made livable by covering the slats with blankets to keep the dirt and weather out. By 1861, her first child was born in what she regarded as a "real" home, a one-room log cabin. In 1869, when the family moved again, she and her chil-



When there was insufficient timber, pioneers turned to the earth itself for building material. Sod houses were not so common in Iowa as in other parts of the West, but there were many such dwellings in the more treeless parts of the state (drawing by Edith Bell).

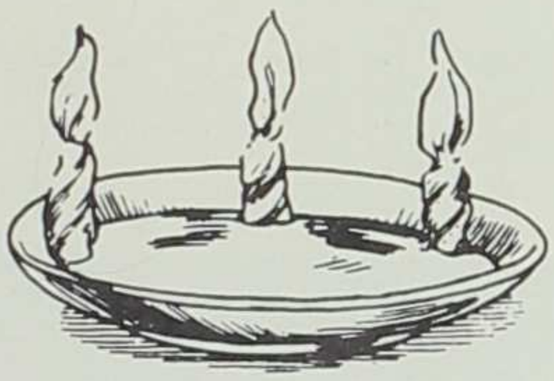
dren dug out the earthen cellar for the new cabin. Another woman remembered living in a shanty of poles covered with elm bark without a fireplace or a door. She discovered with dismay that the shanty did not keep out the wildlife, and her first task every morning was to kill two or three snakes which had invaded her home.

In addition to animal invasion, weather conditions posed a constant challenge to women trying to create comfortable homes for their families. One pioneer lamented the continual frost on the wall above the bed in her sod shanty, another remarked on the snow on the blankets and table which drifted through the cracks in the cabin during the night, and another described shoveling snow out of the inadequately-roofed loft to prevent water from dripping on the occupants of the room below. In 1856, Mary Kenyon wrote to her family in the East with tales about a winter so severe that floors became ice when mopped and tables froze during dishwashing. She added that, "Mr. Barnard froze his great toe one night when it happened to get out of bed when he was asleep."

Apparently their first homes on the prairies were a traumatic rather than a joyful experience for many women. Mary Elizabeth Lyon, recalling her family's arrival at their first cabin in 1854 wrote,

> The log cabin was utterly desolate, and it gave ample evidence of having been used as a stable, rather than a human dwelling place. Small wonder that my mother, remembering the pretty little house back in Ohio, sat down and wept.

No doubt many tears were shed, but also many energies were spent in solving the



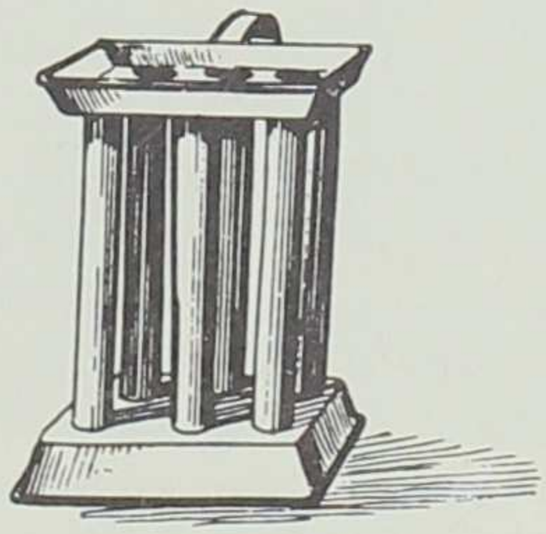
A saucer lamp (from Closz).

problems presented by a pioneer home which was typically one-room, 16 by 18 feet, with floors of packed dirt or rough-hewn puncheons. Women hung quilts and calico curtains to serve as room dividers, papered the walls with newspapers and magazine pictures or "painted" them with lime, wiped up the eternal dust and grime with wet paper or damp tea leaves, and swept or mopped the floors with discarded wash water. Yet despite the apparent difficulties of housekeeping under these conditions, the latchstring was always out for travelers in need of lodging. One pioneer woman claimed that her 16 by 18 foot cabin sheltered as many as 32 people on some nights while another boasted that her home could provide for as many people as there were puncheons in the floor for them to lie upon.

Many pioneer women were also justifiably proud of their ability to create household furnishings from the meager materials provided by a wilderness society. Bedding was kept fresh by periodically restuffing bed ticks with hay, prairie grass, or corn husks. Pioneer beds, made with springs of taut rope, ticking, a quilt pieced by hand on a large frame, and perhaps a top cover of animal fur, were warm—even though the ticks or lice they harbored were not always conducive to uninterrupted sleep.

Light was supplied by handmade candles, either tallow dips or molded candles, if the family was fortunate enough to own an iron mold. Since candle-making required so much labor, candles were often conserved while the family used a saucer lamp, literally a small saucer with grease and a twisted piece of rag in it, for their light. Sometimes even these basic lighting facilities were not feasible, and in at least one family the children later reminisced about the many years during which their mother did all of the family sewing by the light of the fireplace alone. Soap was also produced by hand, usually in the spring of the year with all the children sharing in the work. Lye was leached from ashes saved from the winter's fires and was combined with grease conserved from cooking and butchering. After the ingredients were boiled in a huge kettle over an open fire in the yard, squares of "soft soap" were formed, wrapped in hay, and stored in the cellar next to the candles for use during the coming year.

At least there were always plenty of hands to help with these unending household chores, since large families with as many as 18 children were not uncommon on the frontier. Because children were considered economic producers in a farm economy, it is not difficult to understand why so much of the labor was assigned to them. In Ellen Strang's girlhood diary, her



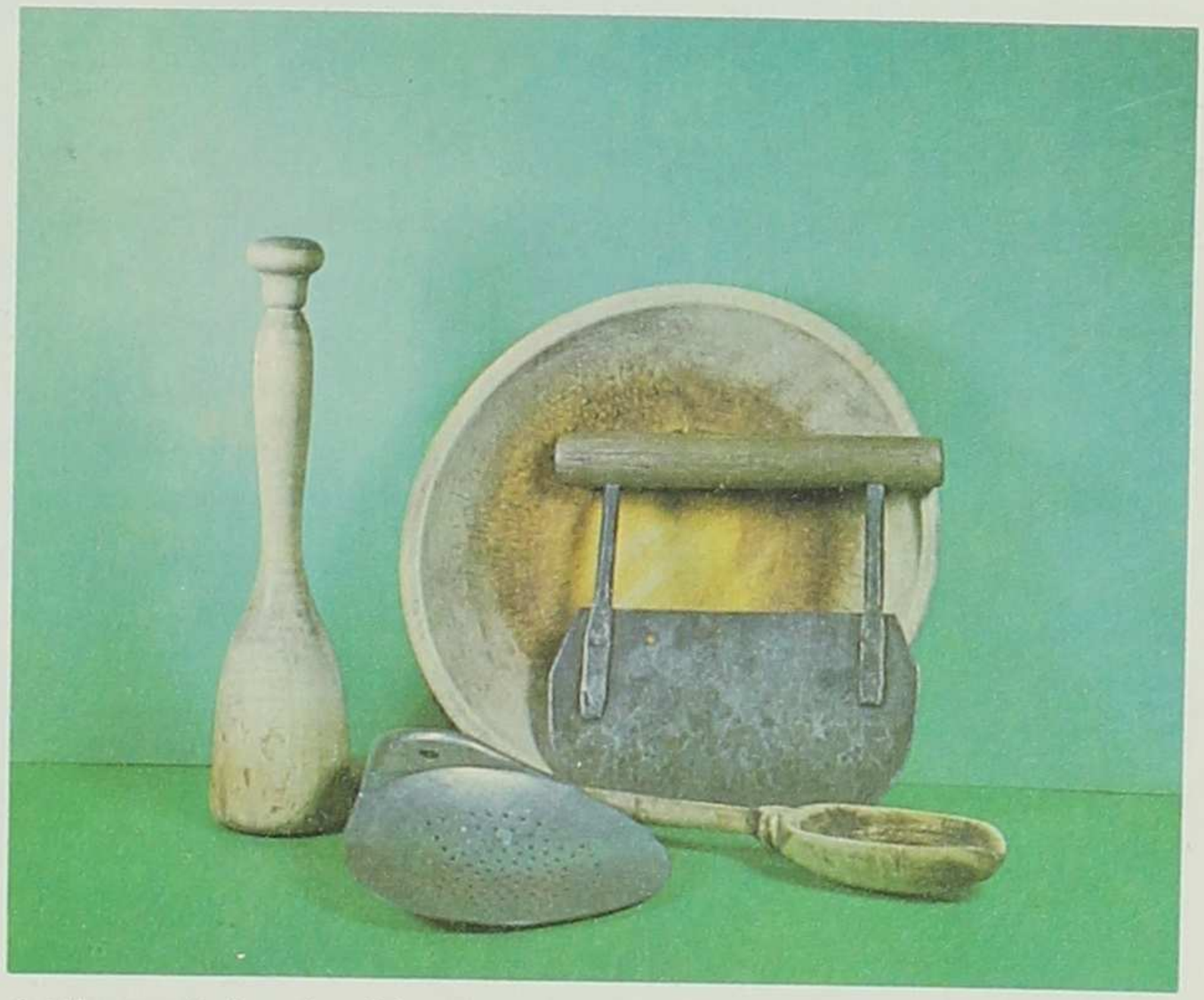
A candle mold (from Closz).

Dipping candles was a difficult and expensive task, but afforded frontier families with the best available form of illumination (from Benj. Butterworth, The Growth of Industrial Art).

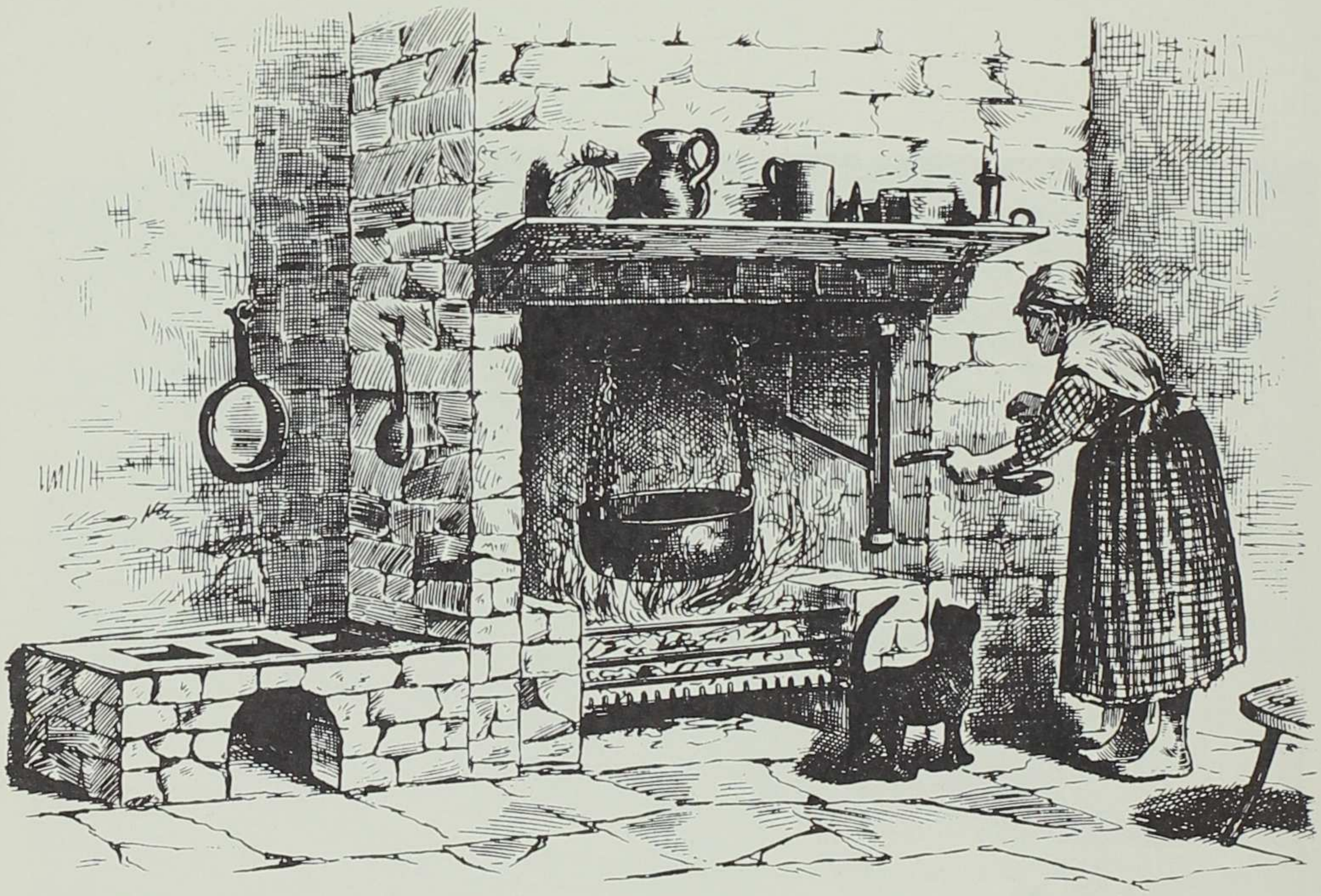
entries soon exhaust the reader with accounts of sewing, mopping, cleaning hog heads and feet, washing, ironing, dipping candles, papering bedroom partitions, and caring for sick children. George Duffield described a simple and efficient division of labor in his family during his childhood: his eldest sister Maria acted as the overseer of the younger girls in the family while his brother John, as the eldest boy in the family, served as the overseer of his younger brothers. In his opinion, the Marias and Johns of the frontier never got their due credit.

Despite help from the children, the heaviest duty—the cooking and processing of food—still fell to the mother of the family. In an era when people worked from dawn to dusk and consumed as many as 6000 calories a day due to the heavy labor required of them, food production had to be at the hub of all family activities. Because food was so important to family health and survival, a woman's worth was

A candle mold, candle stick, and candle lantern (University of Northern Iowa Museum).



Artifacts of frontier life—a potato masher, strainer, wooden spoon, chopper, and bowl—all used in typical pioneer homes in the never-ending preparation of food (University of Northern Iowa Museum).



Even though this view shows a fancier fireplace than those found in most pioneer homes, the cooking technique is the same (from Butterworth).

judged by her skill as a cook. Since cookbooks were rudimentary, recipes were passed along by word-of-mouth and based on quantities of a pinch and a handful; with such directions it was not easy to gain a local reputation as a good cook.

Primitive cooking facilities certainly did not ease matters any for pioneer cooks. Women usually cooked in an open fireplace with one basic utensil—an iron kettle on a swinging crane. They also became skillful with a covered iron bake-pan buried in the hot coals, used to roast chicken, fry venison, broil squirrel, and even to bake corn-dodger cakes. Most noteworthy of all was the ability to bake bread in an open fireplace. A johnny-cake board was spread with corn dough, propped up to face the fire, and turned until the bread was nicely browned.

The proficiency of these early cooks was demonstrated by a young bride who was called upon to prepare a Christmas dinner for 12 people. Her menu, or "bill of fare" as she called it, would tax the dexterity of a modern cook equipped with modern appliances:

> For bread, nice light rolls; cake, doughnuts; for pie, pumpkin; preserves, crab apples and wild plums; sauce, dried apples; meat first round: roast spare ribs with sausage and mashed potatoes and plain gravy; second round: chicken stewed with the best of gravy; chicken stuffed and roasted in the Dutch oven by the fire.

She was pleased when she gained a local reputation as a good cook because she

realized that "good cooking makes good friends." Another example of an adept cook was Sarah Nossaman who, with one other woman, cooked over an open fireplace for 45 men working on the construction of a mill. Her wages of 75¢ per week seemed generous to her and most welcome since the money allowed her to buy the first "store-bought" clothes she had ever owned.

Eventually cook-stoves of various designs made their way into Iowa. But in a prairie region wood for fuel was difficult to find, so a cook-stove was developed which efficiently burned twisted hay, slough grass, or prairie grass. It is ironic that this stove created yet another job for the women and children of the family who had to spend long hours in the preparation of fuel by collecting and twisting the hay or grass.

Although the actual cooking of food consumed many hours, the never-ending processing of foodstuffs was even more taxing. Churning butter, drying fruit, digging "taters," pulling beans, and transforming Iowa corn into bread, pone, mush, and hominy were just a few of the hundreds of processing chores performed in each household. Since sugar was very expensive by pioneer standards, the women and children were constantly on the lookout for a bee tree which they might rob of its highly-prized honey. Another task was to "strip cane" and boil it down into molasses. This was considered such vital work that many fam-

Soapmaking (from Butterworth).

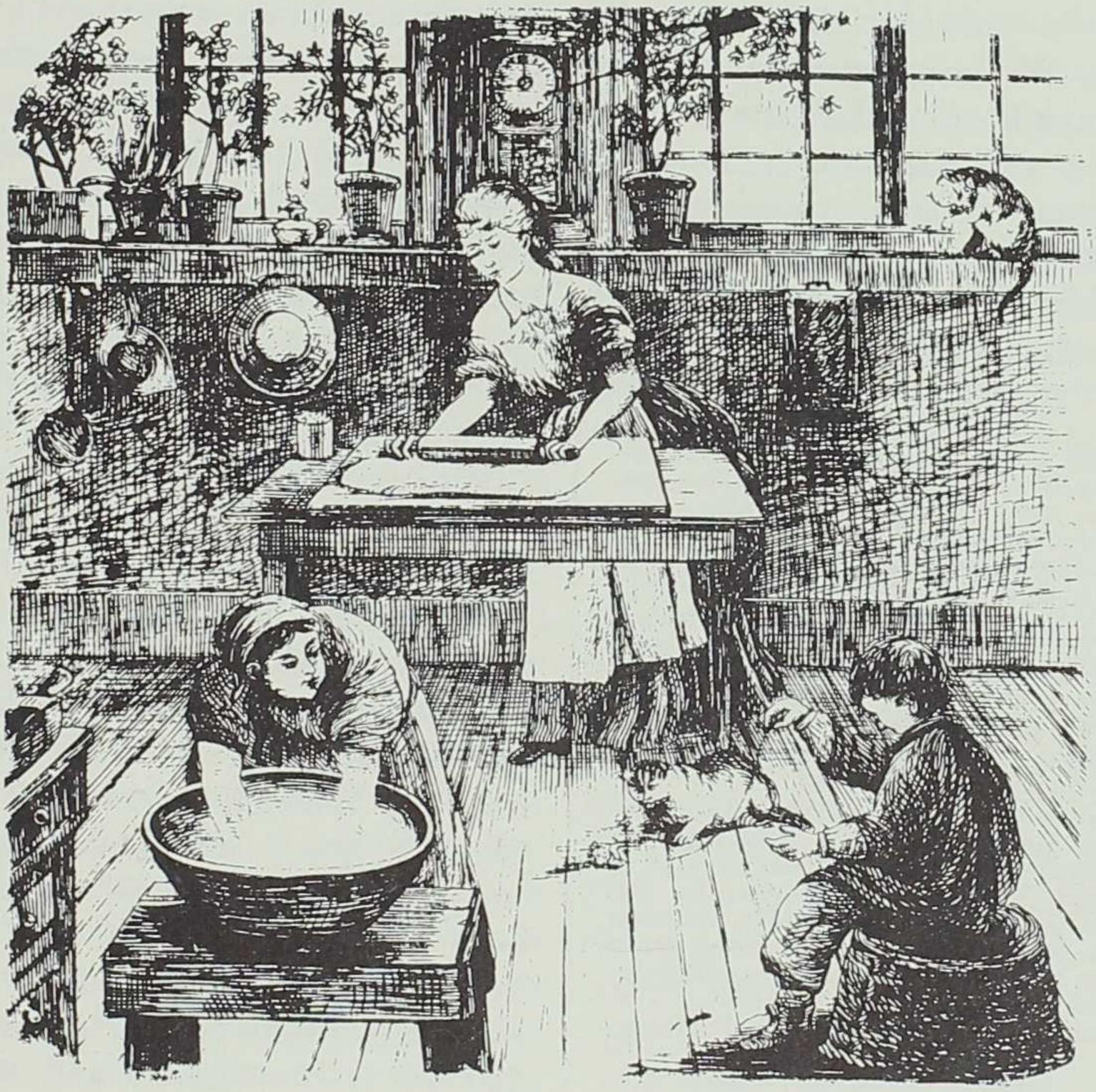
ilies kept their children home from the first weeks of school as enforced laborers, perhaps an understandable practice when molasses was selling for 40¢ to 85¢ a gallon during the decade preceding the Civil War.

Skill in the processing of herbs was almost as essential as skill in the processing of food. Since medical practitioners were not plentiful on the frontier, women often served as apothecaries, doctors, nurses, and morticians—all arts requiring competence in the use of herbs. The herbs were gathered in wooded areas (at the risk of meeting with a rattlesnake) or grown in kitchen gardens, dried, and then brewed into medicinal teas, tonics, or prepared as poultices. Herbs, especially asafetida, were tied in small bags around children's necks as preventive medicine. And herbs were employed in the unhappy, but necessary, duty of laying out the dead.

The importance of herb knowledge is shown in the early receipt (recipe) books which usually included as many recipes for herb medicines as they did for food. This is not to say that the pioneers did not use other types of medicines when they could be obtained. Quinine was a treatment used by some pioneers for almost any medical problem, while whisky, as one frontier woman stated, "was the chief reliance for snake bites—and for a great many other things." When doctors were available they were often prevailed upon to ride many miles to treat the ill. Clara Dodge wrote to tell her husband Augustus in 1841 about her treatment for fever by the doctor who "on arriving bled me and then gave me Calomel and other medicines."

Ellen Strang's diary gives an unusually good picture of medical care in the 1860s in Iowa. In the treatment of her baby sister for "chills and fever" she used quinine measured out on the point of a pen knife, Jamaica Ginger tea to create a "sweat," whisky rubbed on the baby's limbs, mustard water to soak her hands and feet, and sulphur bound on the joints of her hands and feet. Similarly, Mary Kenyon treated her husband's cold with doses of morphine as well as "put the physic and hoar hound tea to him nice and kept him on water porridge the next day." Of course, these home remedies were augmented by patent medicines; during the Civil War era, for example, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup at 25¢ per vial was a widespread remedy for the treatment of toothache.

In between the unflagging demands placed upon her by child-care, the production of household goods, the cooking and processing of food, the preparation of medicines, and the care of the sick, the pioneer woman made time to manufacture most or all of the clothing worn by her family. In the early years, commercially-produced yard goods were not available, so the long process of clothing production literally had to begin with the sheep. In the spring of 1839, one frontier woman was thinking ahead to clothing for the coming year when she said, "now the wool must be taken from the sheep's back, washed and picked and sent to the carding machine and made into rolls, then spun, colored and wove ready for the next winter." To prepare



the wool for the machine she invited in 12 "nice old ladies" to help her pick and sort "25 fleeces" in one day's time. When the wool "came home" from the machine, she started spinning her stocking yarn. "Can spin two skeins a day," she wrote, "and in the evening will double and twist it while George reads the history of the U.S."

Some of this tedious labor was alleviated when gingham and calico were marketed during the 1840s and 1850s. Sewing machines further lightened the tremendous task of clothing a family. In 1856, the first Singer sewing machine in Decorah drew in neighbors from miles around just to view this curiosity. And in the 1860s, Alice Money, a young girl who did all the sewing for her family—including muslin undergarments with ruffles and tucks, dresses with ruffles, tucks, and bias bindings, and shirts and suits—treadled hundreds of miles on an early model of a Wheeler and Wilson sewing machine.

Most Iowa frontier women were determined not to let themselves become dowdy by Eastern ideals so they diligently followed the fashions of the day. Hoop skirts became standard equipment for all wom-

en, even little girls, by the 1850s and 1860s. Agnes Wilson commented that "to be seen without hoops endangered a woman's standing and she was liable to be called eccentric." This was apparently a very serious issue for more than one woman suffered singed dresses when her hoops carried her skirts into an open fireplace.

Hoops could be embarrassing as well as dangerous. A young country school teacher caught her hoops on a post while going over a stile and hung from the fence trapped in her own fashionable gear. When her beau tried to come to her rescue he caught his foot in the offending hoop and he too became entrapped. It was left to their friends to untangle them, much to everyone's discomfort.

Pioneer women continued to slavishly adopt fashionable fads such as the bustle, whalebone corsets, and heavily adorned dresses and bonnets in spite of the difficulty of adapting them to farm life. When the hoop skirt became unmanageable, women developed a weighted cord to hold it down. When the skirts and hoops became too heavy, women developed a skirt supporter consisting of straps crossing over their shoulders to hold them up. When the farm women could not afford elaborate outfits (which often consumed 100 yards of material and weighed as much as 15 pounds), they fashioned their calicos to emulate the fashion plates as nearly as possible.

Although many jokes were made at the expense of women's fashions, they were perhaps an attempt on the part of frontier women to maintain a semblance of civilization in a country that had stripped away all other luxuries. Some women recognized the problems that such clothing created. An Iowa woman, Amelia Bloomer, advocated and wore an outfit which combined a mid-calf length skirt with pantaloon-type trousers under it. The Bloomer outfit, as it was called after Amelia, was

Note on Sources

Diaries, letters, and reminiscences of pioneer women in Iowa provided most of the information presented in this article. Many of these source materials are readily available in *Annals of Iowa, Iowa Journal of History and Politics,* and *The Palimpsest.* Some of the most useful are Lida L. Greene (ed.), "Diary of a Young Girl," *Annals of Iowa,* 36 (Fall 1962), 437-459; Alice Money Lawrence, "A Pioneer School Teacher in Central Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics,* 33 (October 1935), 376-395; and Sarah Welch Nossaman, "Pioneering at Bonaparte and Near Pella," *Annals of Iowa,* 13 (October 1922), 441-453.

In addition, there are some women's source materials in The University of Iowa Libraries Special Collections in Iowa City, the Division of the Historical Museum and Archives in Des Moines, and the Division of the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City. The author would like to thank the librarians of all three collections for their cooperation and patience. Joyce Giaquinta, Manuscript Librarian at the State Historical Society, was particularly helpful, especially in creating a separate catalog of women's documents.

Secondary works on Iowa's pioneer women are sparse. Ruth A. Gallaher, *Legal and Political Status of Women in Iowa, 1838-1918* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1918) and Louise R. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women: The Emergence of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in Iowa* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969) are useful regarding the political aspects of women's lives in Iowa. More general accounts of frontier women include the sentimentalized versions found in Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old Wild West* (New York: Bantam Pathfind Edition, 1974); William W. Fowler, *Woman on the American Frontier* (New York: Source Books Press, 1970 reprint of 1879 edition); and Helena Huntington Smith, "Pioneers in Petticoats," *American Heritage,* 10 (February 1959), 36-39, 101-103. Two recent and more realistic studies are Johnny Farragher and Christine Stansell, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842-1867," *Feminist Studies,* 2 (1975), 150-166, and T. A. Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," *Montana the Magazine of Western History,* 24 (Summer 1974), 2-11.

unacceptable to most people, both men and women, because it was generally considered a disgrace for women to be seen wearing pants.

So instead of reform, more fashionable refinements were added as time went on. In 1871, an Iowa woman wrote that, "Hoops and great bustles are all the rage . . . . Almost every girl wears curls or frizzes. One day I was walking behind a very gay young lady when her curls fell off among her feet."

At the same time they were engaged in frivolous pursuits to relieve what was probably otherwise a rather drab life, Iowa women were also expressing interest in serious concerns, particularly in the improvement of their own educations. According to one young woman, to become a teacher was the highest ambition of an Iowa pioneer girl because it was a way to escape the drudgery of farm life. Women were never excluded from the teaching profession by law in Iowa as they were in some other states, so many women were successful in achieving their goal. Even before the Civil War over 50 percent of Iowa's teachers were women, an unusually high percentage for the time. Undoubtedly, a prosperous future on rich Iowa land was more appealing to most men than a teacher's unsteady periods of employment and small salary. Moreover, there probably was enough egalitarian frontier spirit prevailing in Iowa to allow women some mobility.

Certainly the financial rewards of teaching could not have had very great appeal to women since the usual pay was $2 a week and being "boarded 'round" with the pupils' families. Agnes Briggs had the misfortune to be boarded in a two-room cabin with a family living in each room. She boarded with the front-room family and after many unpalatable meals and overcrowded conditions she returned to her own family's home although it meant a walk of five miles to reach her school. In 1868, Alice Money received $30 per month, relatively high pay for the time. Although barely 20 years old, she handled a school reputed to be rough because of all the "big boys" enrolled. When the biggest boy made an indecent remark to her she shoved him out of his desk into the aisle and spanked him with his own geography book. For the rest of the term, this 5′1″, 100 pound woman faced no further disruptions in discipline, nor did her admiring students ever allow her to perform another school chore.

Clearly, teaching school was by no means an easy life even though it compared favorably to life on a frontier homestead. In 1867, one young teacher made a revealing entry in her diary:

> Got up at quarter past four made the beds, picked up the clothes to wash, switched out and combed my hair. After breakfast worked at sundries. Got to school in good season scholars all there before 9 o'clock.

The pioneer teacher's curriculum was varied, uneven and at times even chaotic. Pupils brought whatever school books their families owned and the teacher proceeded to plan instruction on the basis of the books offered to her that term. Additional

Fashion plates (here and below) from the popular magazine Godey's Lady's Book *in the 1840s and 1850s. Such pictures fired the style consciousness of frontier women.*

confusion was introduced by the division of the school year into two separate sessions, summer and winter, quite often with a new teacher and a new group of students in any given school each term.

In most schools the equipment was rudimentary—long benches served as seats and a slanting shelf attached to the wall took the place of desks. It was only the fortunate teacher who had a blackboard, a globe, or a map to work with. Yet, as Matilda Peiztke Paul said of her school experience in the 1860s, although there were definite limitations, "we all learned a little and had lots of fun."

Despite being primitive by modern standards, these frontier schools must have stimulated and motivated many women because they reached out for improved educational opportunities wherever they existed. When colleges and seminaries were opened, women were willing to endure hardships for the privilege of attend-

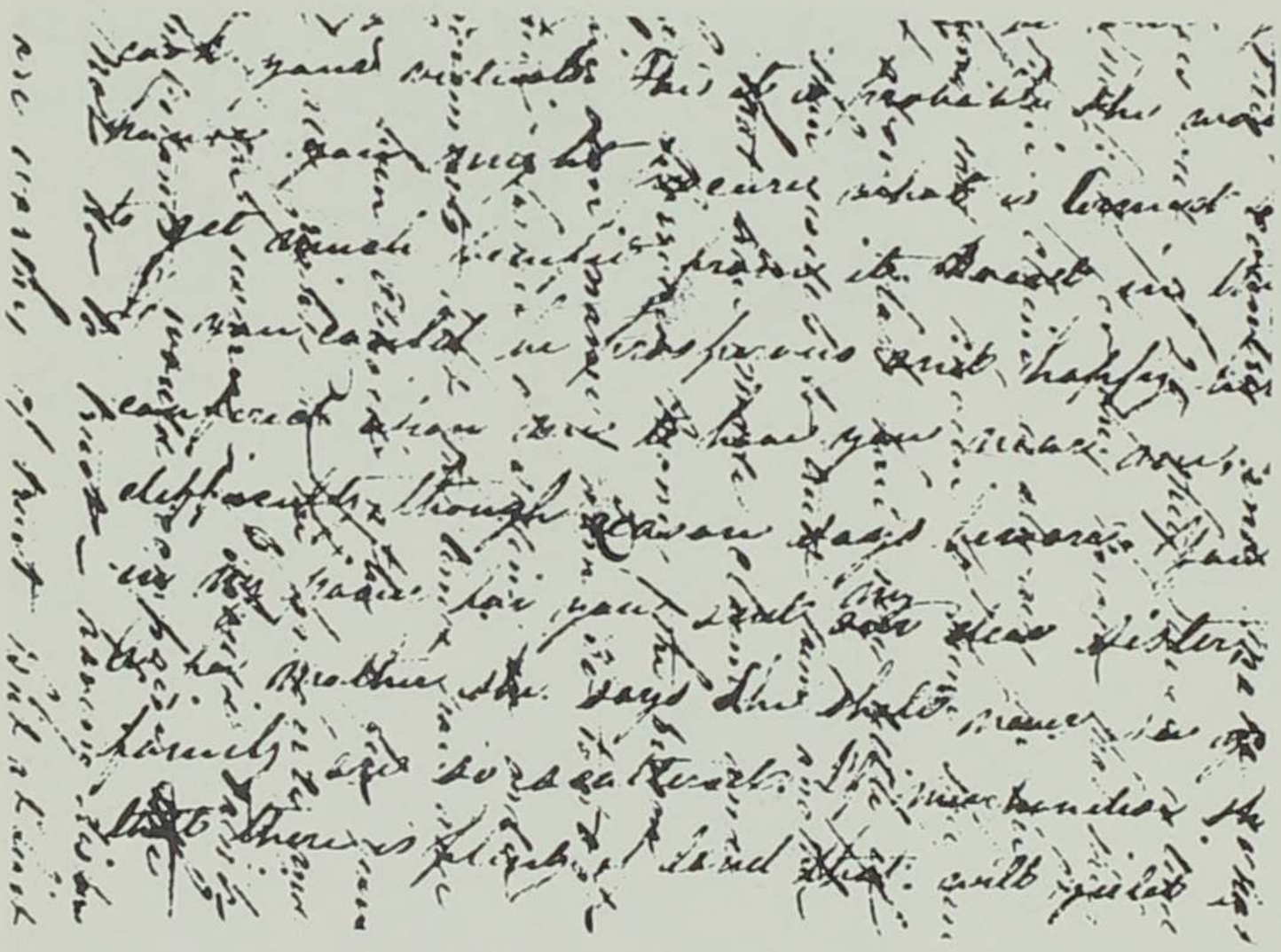
ing even one term. A group of six young women traveled 40 miles in a lumber wagon to attend the winter term at Grinnell College (Iowa College), and one woman worked as a shepherd to earn tuition to Albion Seminary. When the first state university was founded in Iowa, the charter did not specifically bar women as students, but when several women enrolled they met short-lived resistance from the Trustees. In 1864, the Iowa General Assembly declared that the University would be coeducational, thus formalizing into law a long-standing custom in Iowa schools.

Even with the opportunities extended to women in frontier Iowa, many were lonely for their old homes and neighbors "back East." May Ramsay always carried childhood memories of her grandmother "who would curl up in her rocking chair and cry." More often than not, isolation was a commonplace of daily life. Regarding the 1850s, one woman bitterly commented that, "There were no large cities, no colleges, no railroads, no banks, no daily papers, no telegrams, no daily mails, very little money, and most of that of doubtful value." Another flatly stated that if a person liked seclusion "this is the place."

The solitude was relieved in part by letters from the East. In 1856, a lonely Iowa woman wrote her mother that "a letter from the East is of much importance to we poor exiles out here." In 1857, she begged her mother to write as often as possible because her letters were like "bread and 'lasses" to a hungry child. And in an 1860 epistle she not only confided to her mother that her husband carried a family letter with him all the time, but even speculated that when he got time to himself he read the letter and cried.

Pioneer families exerted themselves to keep up their end of the correspondence, but writing letters was difficult at best. Time had to be stolen from activities more crucial to survival, pens were inadequate, ink often had to be made at home, and paper was extremely expensive. Every space on a sheet of letter paper was utilized, sometimes by writing around the margins and sometimes by superimposing lines written vertically over lines already written horizontally, producing a peculiar "cross-writing" effect.

A completed letter was folded to form its own envelope in order to avoid any further weight or waste of paper. Once addressed, a letter might have to wait several days for someone to go the way of the nearest post office. When it could be arranged, trips were made to the post office just to see if any letters from the East had arrived, but since postage was paid on the receiver's end a pioneer family had to pay



A sample of a cross-written letter by Jane Robinson and her husband James of Iowa City. The message was to one of Jane's relatives in the East.

hard-to-come-by cash before they could take their letter home. In more than one instance, a woman spent several days selling butter and eggs to her neighbors so that she might redeem the precious letter waiting for her in the post office.

There were also occasional social events which eased the loneliness of frontier life. Like the pioneers who settled America's first frontier from Plymouth to Charleston, Iowans found that it was practical to combine work with fun whenever possible. Sewing bees, chopping parties, log-raisings, and especially harvesting and threshing days all created an opportunity to dispatch with a necessary piece of work while visiting with neighbors and indulging in bountiful meals.

The church supplied its share of diversion as well. Services provided an opportunity to interact with friends and neighbors, as did church socials and charity fairs. Weddings were followed by a bran dance (the feet of the dancers released oil from kernels of bran into the unseasoned wood floor of the couple's new home) or by an informal and sometimes raucous shivaree (charivari). Sometimes camp meetings drew people from many miles around. In 1839, a family attended what they believed to be the first camp meeting west of the Mississippi, where they witnessed "twenty clear conversions . . . had a rest and have got strengthened both soul and body."

The local school served as another social center for pioneer families. Spelling bees involving students from two or more schools were matters of fierce competition and intense local pride. Often literary societies met in the schoolhouse, and frequently neighborhood dances were held there to the music of the town's fiddle player.

In addition, holidays were always a cause to set work aside for a day in favor of social activities. Christmas entailed large quantities and varieties of food, special treats such as candy or apples, and homemade or inexpensive "store-bought" presents. For many years Matilda Peiztke Paul treasured a Christmas present given

to her as a young girl—"a little tin pail about the size of a ½ pint cup . . . painted green, with the word Girl on it in yellow."

Not long after Christmas, frontier people began to anticipate the excitement and plan the celebrations of the Fourth of July. Towns took turns sponsoring the holiday events so it was not unusual to travel five or ten miles to participate in the festivities. Speakers, singers, horse-races, contests of strength, lemonade stands, and even a few firecrackers contributed to the spirit of the day. The only entertainment that could match the Fourth in thrills were the traveling circuses which reached Iowa in the late 1850s. With their tents, side shows, and exotic animals such as elephants, camels, bears, and monkeys, they were irresistible to children and adults alike.

Still, for the majority of pioneer women, social affairs were relatively infrequent, and seclusion had to be lived with and endured. Loneliness and fear became even more acute when the husband was gone from the home—sometimes for days at a time—to hunt, to trade furs, to buy supplies, to file a deed at the county seat, to serve in politics, to fight in a war, or for any one of innumerable other reasons. Clara Dodge felt so bereft and abandoned by her husband's repeated departures that she spent hours crying or days in bed. Another woman recalled being terrified when her husband was away hunting because she was left with only an ax and a dog for protection.

Fear of Indian uprisings, whether justified or not, intensified the pioneer woman's sense of isolation and apprehension. Stories abounded regarding women who had been carried off only to be later rejected by white society when they escaped their captors. The unfortunate incident of the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857 received widespread publicity, especially from Abbie Gardner Sharp who at 14 witnessed all the cruel details of the attack upon her family as well as upon her neighbors and friends. In the early 1860s, the citizens of one small town became so panicked at the rumor of an attack that all women and children were sent away in a wagon train (although not one hostile Indian was ever sighted). Another town feared attack when several hundred Native Americans camped around their settlement at the same time that draft officials were rumored to arrive. According to one townsperson, after a few days "the draft passed over and they departed." During the Civil War years, the wife of a Union doctor kept whisky spiked with morphine so in the event that tribesmen did encroach upon her household they could be drugged, giving the family a chance to escape.

Probably many of the fierce characteristics of Iowa tribes were imputed to them by pioneer women looking through eyes already jaundiced by other problems and anxieties. To the pioneer women, however, the fears of attack were very real and certainly did nothing to relieve what was already a psychologically-taxing style of life. In many cases, pioneer women saw no other white women for many months at a time. In 1836, Caroline Phelps remarked that it had been 11 months since she had seen a white woman, and in 1842 Mary Ann Ferrin, the first white woman to settle in Marshall County, noted that she lived there for "five months without seeing a white woman and not but a few white men." Yet pioneer women seldom dropped out, or broke down, or gave up. Most of

them seemed to persevere. As one said, "the drudgery was unending" and the "isolation was worse" but "we had bought the farm and there we were."

This realistic attitude probably accounts for the many cases on record of pioneer women undertaking essential tasks whether they were within their traditional domestic sphere or not. One woman drove a team of oxen to help her husband with plowing because there was "neither man nor boy that we could hire." Another helped her trader husband "pack the skins, as we had no man to help." One woman served as a station agent, several took up homesteads in their own names, and another wrote on political matters for her county newspaper. Mary Street chopped a cord of wood a day for sale to the steamboats while others reaped wheat, cut hay, stoned up wells, and lathed houses. When the Kenyons' hired man left just at "corn plucking" time, Mary wrote, "I shouldered my hoe and have worked out ever since . . . . I wore a dress with my sunbonnet wrung out in water every few minutes and my dress also wet, this was all the clothing Clara and I wore." Her comment to her family back East regarding her field experience had a typically pragmatic tone: "I guess my services are just as acceptable as his [the hired man] or will be in time to come to the country."

With this spirit of competence and practicality, women moved into professional areas, which had been long restricted by custom to men. Marion Murdock became a trained Unitarian minister with a pastorate in Humboldt, Iowa. Mary Spencer became the first woman clerk of the Iowa legislature in 1870. J. Ellen Foster became a lawyer who, according to a friend, "mounted the stump and told the men how to vote, while they fairly held their breath at her audacity."

During the Civil War, Iowa women served their state and country through Soldiers' Aid Societies and Sanitary Commissions. Ann E. Harlan, wife of Senator James Harlan, was active in organizing Sanitary Fairs, in leading the Women's Sanitary Commission in Des Moines, and in initiating a military hospital for the Iowa wounded at Keokuk. Annie Turner Wittenmyer was notable for her service as the State Sanitary Agent from Iowa, for her establishment of a home for soldiers' orphans, and for her introduction of diet kitchens into military hospitals.

So even in pioneer Iowa, with all of its drudgery and hardships, there were plenty of what were disparagingly called "strong-minded" women. It was therefore not surprising that the question of women's rights eventually surfaced. A few scattered accounts regarding women speaking and lecturing on women's rights appeared in Iowa newspapers as early as 1854. At that same time, the first Iowa State Fair added a contest for "female equestrians" to their program due to public complaints by women. The first record of a major public debate on the question of women's rights can be traced to a lyceum held in Keokuk County only a few years later in 1858. In 1866, women's rights were mentioned in the journal of the Iowa legislature when there was some dissussion of striking out

the word "male" in the Iowa state constitution. In 1868, suffrage clubs formed in Dubuque and Burlington and soon spread over Iowa. One group of women even published a suffrage paper titled *The Upper Des Moines*, and in 1870, the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association was founded, largely due to the concerted efforts of Amelia Bloomer.

In the decade of the 1870s, Iowa seemed to be progressing rapidly toward the adoption of woman suffrage. In 1870, both houses of the Iowa Legislature passed a woman suffrage amendment but reconsidered their decision in 1872. By 1880, women were allowed to vote on some school and public building appropriation issues, in anticipation of their being granted the general right to vote. It was not until 1916, however, that a formal suffrage amendment was offered to Iowa voters, and the issue was defeated. The women of Iowa had to wait until the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920 to finally gain in law the voice that had long been granted to them in practice.

As the frontier passed in Iowa, the roles of women in society began to change. Freed from some of the most burdensome and pressing duties of pioneer life, women began to branch out into new areas of accomplishment, as witnessed by their participation in traditionally male activities during the Civil War. They bore the major burden in the suffrage reform movement and began to explore the possibilities of other legal and social freedoms. Even though these later activities are perhaps more dramatic than the details of everyday life in the earliest years of Iowa settlement, the rich heritage of the Iowa pioneer women must not be overlooked. Women carried major responsibilities during the creation of this peaceful and prosperous state. In spite of the chronic underestimation of the role of women in early Iowa society—the 1870 Federal Census report dismissed women in Iowa as "not gainfully employed"—the true importance of women's contributions is just now being recognized. It is past time to redefine George Parker's definition of "frontiersman" by adding "frontierswoman" to the lexicon of Iowa history. □

The Memoirs of Matilda Peitzke Paul

edited by Glenda Riley

Matilda Peitzke was the youngest of nine children born to Ferdinand and Wilhelmina Kant Peitzke. The Peitzkes migrated from Germany to Wisconsin in 1854 with hopes of providing a more comfortable life for their children. By the time Matilda was born in 1861, the Peitzke family had moved to Stacyville, Iowa. Four years later the family relocated again; in 1865 they purchased a farm near Riceville where Matilda's father planned to construct a brick home for the family.

Much of Matilda's life revolved around the Riceville homestead. She played and worked on the farm, she enthusiastically attended local schools, and after her father's death in 1870 she spent six arduous years helping her family finish the brick house and farm the land. Shortly after her mother abandoned the Riceville farm in 1876, Matilda became engaged to Ferdinand Charles Paul. When they married in 1880 they were able to recover the old Peitzke homestead which then became the Paul family home for many years.

Matilda, only 18 at the time of her marriage, ably shouldered the duties of a wife and, within the first year of marriage, the responsibilities of a mother. All four of the Paul children (Mabel, Amy, Edna, and Alice) were born in the brick home. The Paul family lived a modest yet full life until 1931 when Ferdinand Paul died. Matilda and her daughter Mabel moved to Clear Lake where they experienced another personal tragedy when Matilda's 50 year old daughter Amy died within the following year.

It must have seemed like the end of an era for Matilda Paul, yet she found other things to make her last years pleasurable: the company of her three daughters and her grandchildren, the writing of her memoirs, and the comforts of her new home. Her death in 1938 at age 77 concluded a long life which began in frontier Iowa and ended in modern, twentieth-century Iowa. Although Matilda Paul refused to believe that she was remarkable in any way, she was the prototypal pioneer woman who worked hard, made the best of life on the frontier, and as her youngest daughter Alice Paul Butz recalls, relied on humor and religion to cushion the rough spots in her active and demanding life.

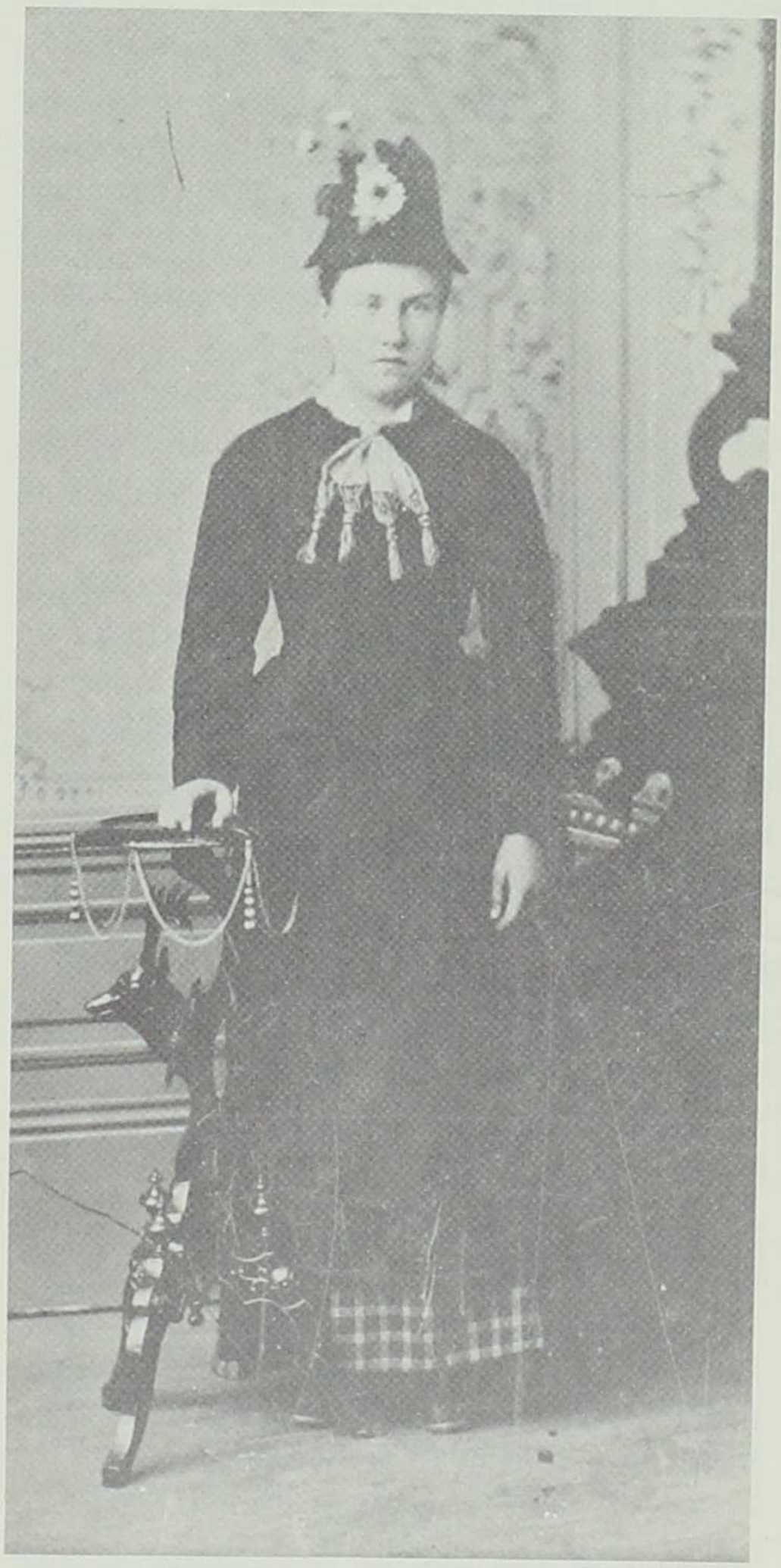
My memory takes me back to the summer of 1865 when I was four years old. I lived with my parents on a farm near Stacyville. My father cut all the wheat with a cradle and the hay with a scythe at that time. My next oldest brother bound all the grain and raked up all the hay with a homemade hand rake. He also helped do the stacking. He was less than 16 years.

One afternoon in the summer of 1865 the stage driver stopped at our door bringing a pale and sick-looking passenger. It was my oldest brother who was returning from the Civil War. He was sick most of

the time while in the South and on duty as a soldier, unable to march or take an active part, and finally was dismissed and brought home sick and unable to sit up. My mother and father were writing to him when he arrived not knowing he was on on his way home. You can hardly imagine with what joy he was greeted. He was very weak and slept most of the time for a long time after coming home. He was too young to be drafted to go to war, but was hired as a substitute by a man who had been drafted. My parents knew nothing about his plans until after he had gone as he was working away from home. [He] was very young, only a few months past 17 years old when he returned home in the summer of 1865.

In the summer of 1865 father bought a farm in Howard County, two miles north of Riceville just across the line from Mitchell County. There was an old log house and a straw shed on it. The house was about 12 x 18 all in one room, with one door and one window. There was a low upstairs all in one room without a window. Had to climb a ladder to get up to it to go to bed. The roof on the house was very poor, and the snow often drifted onto our beds at night while we slept. In the summer when it rained we used all our pans and pails to catch the water trying to keep the beds dry. A shallow hole under our house answered for a cellar, and when we needed potatoes we lifted up one of the wide floor boards to get down in.

Had no well on the place when we moved there. Had to carry all the water up a long steep hill from a little stream.



Matilda Peitzke at age 16, from an old family tintype.

There was not much land cleared nor broke when we moved there so there was plenty of hard work ahead.

The day we left our home at Stacyville, we loaded what little furniture we had, consisting of three chairs, cook stove, home made table and cupboard, two benches we used in place of chairs, and two large wooden chests that were brought from Germany, some beds and bedding.

The first winter, there was no school in our neighborhood but the next four summers had a few months of school in the old Still House. It was built of logs. For seats there were long benches placed on three sides of the room. Had no desks or table to write on, instead had a slanting shelf across one side of the room attached to the wall. When occasion came to use a desk, we turned and faced the wall while writing or working arithmetic.

We got our drinking water for the school from a spring about a quarter of a mile away. It was considered a favor to go after water; consequently we changed off. When the water came our teacher would let us pass it, first to teacher then to pupils, all drinking out of the same long-handled tin dipper.

Farmers in pioneer days had no pastures. The cattle roamed at large. The grain fields were fenced with rails. The farmers cut down trees and split them up in strips which they used for building fences. We turned the cattle out of the cow yard in the morning to go in any direction they pleased. Towards evening we children had to hunt for the cows until we found them. The leading cow wore a

A cow bell used by the Peitzke family when Matilda was a child.

bell which was fastened to her neck with a strap buckled around her neck. Often we had a hard time locating our cows as it was nothing uncommon to find them several miles from home. All bells had different sounds; I now have the one we used when I was a child and its ring still sounds familiar.

We as well as children of other families were required to herd our cattle certain times of the year, and sometimes when the weather was sunny and not too cold we really enjoyed it, but often when it was cloudy and chilly it was very tiresome and plenty hard enough to keep them from getting into the corn fields.

I must also tell a little about the way milk was taken care of. While we lived on our farm there were no creameries nor cheese factories, the milk was put in pans to cool and left long enough for the cream to come to the top which was about 24

hours, then the cream was skimmed off with this kind of skimmer and kept in a cool place if there was one, until there was enough cream to make several pounds of butter in a dash churn.

I remember how I used to dread to have mother call me and tell me to help with the churning. It seemed as if the butter never would come; sometimes it did take hours to churn. There was no ice to be had to keep milk or cream cool; and it had to be kept in the cellar if there was one; and if there was no cellar, the next best thing had to be done; and it all made plenty of work.

I will tell a little more about our school days while living on our farm north of Riceville, nothing so thrilling but we learned a little and always had plenty of fun. Our teachers had very little education and schools were not graded. [We] usually started at the front of our book at the beginning of every term and went as far as we could, then start[ed] all over again at the beginning of next term. [We] stood up in a row when we spelled, and some teachers gave a prize to the one who [was] left.

We played many games at school, such as Pussy wants a Corner, Pull-Away, I am on Dickies Land, Ring around the Rosie, Needles Eye, Drop Handkerchief, Poison, and other games. It still thrills me when I think of it. Often in the winter we slid on frozen ponds and slid down hill and snow balled each other.

I must mention flies and mosquitoes which tormented pioneers. There were no screened doors nor windows and flies were so thick in the houses and all over everything, we used a little limb, thick with leaves, to keep them off food while we ate. That is too terrible to dwell on. Later on had window and door screens made of mosquito netting. Every morning the flies had to be chased out of doors, with branches covered with leaves. Mosquitoes were so plentiful one could hardly endure their bites before the day of screens; we gathered up very fine chips at wood pile and made a smudge and kept it going to keep mosquitoes from tormenting us.

Then there were many kinds of snakes. The little green snake, garter snake, hoop snake, spotted water snake, and worst of

An award of merit won by Matilda at her school.

all the poisonous rattle snake which sometimes killed people. I was bitten by one when I was around 12 years old, but was doctored up right away by placing my foot in mud and keeping it in fresh mud for about six hours, and it left no ill effect. They also gave me a little whisky. Thus one poison offset another.

My father was a brick-maker by trade, and we had been living in our old log house for nearly four years. By the spring of 1869 he had gotten things in shape to begin making brick and build a new house, but his health failed and he had to give up the work before he burned the brick. He then had very poor health until his death on January 25, 1870. My brother William had to go ahead with the farm work that summer; father did stack the grain by having someone hand each bundle to him. After father got too weak to do any outside work, he spun yarn for stockings, and when spinning got too hard he knit woolen stockings for the family. In pioneer days no one in a small town kept ready-made coffins, but were made by a carpenter when needed. [Father's] funeral was held at the Baptist church in Riceville and he was buried in the Riceville cemetery.

In the spring of 1870 we went ahead finishing up the brick for the new house and hired a couple of men to lay the brick and got the new brick house all done ready to move in by fall.

For the next three years William, who was then 20 years old, had to go ahead and do the farm work with the help of the younger children. Herman, the next oldest boy at home, was 10½ years old the first summer after father died. We all helped what we could in the field. In the spring we younger children dropped the corn in the rows in planting time and the older ones covered it up with a hoe (there were no corn planters in pioneer days), also dropped potatoes. When the corn first came up we had to stay out in the field and chase the black-birds to keep them from digging and eating the corn as fast as it came up. It was our work in spring to pull weeds for the hogs for feed. We often had to watch our cattle to keep them out of other people's as well as out of our own fields. I think we had a reaper in the early '70s for cutting grain, but it had to all be bound by hand. Before I was old enough to bind grain I helped carry bundles in piles, ready to be shocked up.

In March 1876 Mother sold the farm to my sister Emma and her husband. Mother and I moved our furniture down to my sister Bertha's June 1, 1876, a week before I was 15 years old. Bertha let us have one room 15 feet square in her house to live till mother built a cottage right nearby for us to live in. I continued going to school the same as before; when there was no school I sometimes helped the neighbors some with house work, and I often did sewing for other people. We could buy no ready made garments but had to make all underwear dresses, and most of the ladies' and children's coats were homemade. Often the men's and boys' pants and jackets were homemade, so there was plenty of that kind of work to be had.

I drove horses on reaper for a neighbor

one harvest while we lived there; he paid me pretty well I thought. And the next year I drove harvester for Mr. George Smith who lived about two miles southwest of us. I got good pay there too. I think 50 cents a day and board. I got some money for clothes that way.

I met Grandpa [Mr. Paul] for the first time the fore part of March 1877—when he came to hire out to Fred Stark. I was nearly 16 years old. Little did I think then that he would be my life companion. He started to work the twentieth of March and worked there eight months. He presented me with a little beaded purse on my birthday the seventh day of June. He often came over to see us in the evening after his work was done. In July he asked me to be his wife, and after thinking it over from all angles, I promised him I would be his true wife as long as I lived.

On the thirteenth day of January 1880 Grandpa and I were married. I had a wine colored wedding dress made with a polonaise, and the skirt was trimmed with several rows of pleating and the polonaise with one row of pleating and a bias strip of velvet of the same color on top of the pleating. I had white ruching in the neck of the dress and pleating round the sleeves at the wrists and a nice white silk tie with little stripes of coloring of different designs across the ends. I had a velvet hat trimmed with white, a new black coat, and a cape trimmed with white ribbon. The cape was cut in a circular style and reached to my shoe tops. I had gloves and high shoes which laced up on side. I certainly felt that I was well dressed.

My sister Amelia was a dressmaker by trade, and she made my dress; I learned much of the art of sewing from her. I was busy all that autumn of 1879 getting my sewing done ready for housekeeping. I made enough quilts, sheets, and pillow cases for two beds. Mother gave me one feather bed and four goose feather pillows, [and] I had four linen table cloths, plenty of towels, and dish towels. I had all of ten dresses or more and plenty of underwear, all tucked and trimmed with ruffled embroidery, and several fancy night gowns, and this all kept me quite busy sewing.

Grandpa and I were certainly proud of our baby girls and took the very best care of them that we knew how. I made all their clothes by hand and enjoyed it. I really took pride and pleasure in the work, which I did mostly at night, after we rocked them to sleep. I did all the washing by hand, rubbing every garment, and often stood on one foot while rubbing and rocking the baby's cradle with the other foot to keep her from waking up.

Note on Sources

In 1935, Matilda Peitzke Paul's granddaughter, Mabel Ruth Haas, urged her to record her recollections of pioneer life in Iowa for her family. When the recollections were completed in 1936, Ms. Haas transcribed them into a typed document which she later deposited in the Manuscript Collection of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City. No segment of the memoirs has been published previously. Portions of the original have been deleted, and some minor changes made in grammar and punctuation for ease of reading. The excerpts and illustrations presented here appear with the generous permission and assistance of Matilda Peitzke Paul's two surviving children, Edna Paul Hammond and Alice Paul Butz of Clear Lake, Iowa.

A handbag made from the material of Matilda's wedding dress and the gloves and fan used on her wedding day.

We had considerable timber on our farm, [and] Grandpa sold wood. One time when taking a load of wood to town one of our colts was following its mother and ran into the pole wood which penetrated its lungs and killed it. This was a big loss to us financially; also a big loss because we had love for the colt.

During the years we lived there we often fed tramps. One morning four different ones begged their breakfast there, [and] we fed them. One summer evening after dark, two men stopped for bread and milk to eat [and] said they would pay us. They said they traveled nights and slept day times. They paid us each 10¢. We thought they were escaped convicts and were very much afraid of them. Their hair was cut close to their head.

Nearly every fall I made several gallons of apple pickles, canned plums, [and] mince meat. [The] several gallons of sauer-kraut added to the cucumber pickles, [which] I had packed in brine, and the green tomato pickles gave us considerable things to eat. We always had our own meat and potatoes and wheat for flour. [We] also raised buckwheat to be ground into flour for pancakes. Some years we raised sugar cane for sorghum [and] gathered wild crab apples for sauce.

Together with all my sewing and knitting I made a hooked stair carpet and a number of hooked rugs, rag carpets, and so forth. It took 1¼ pounds of rags for a yard of carpet. I think I had my first rag carpet woven in 1888; I was so pleased with it and appreciated it more than you can imagine. It was made with bright stripes and "hit and miss" and certainly looked beautiful to me.

We still went on with our farming the best we could. Grandpa's health was poor, but he did what he could and I helped with the work, such as driving harvester, mower, and hay rake. In the fall I helped husk corn [and] picked up the potatoes. We usually raised around seventy-five bushel. Mabel and Amy [M.P.'s daugthers] went to school, [and] we took Edna [a daughter] to the field and put her in a large box where she could play while I picked up potatoes. We built a new barn in the summer of 1887 or 1888; also a hen house. We had carpenters to do most of the work, but I helped Grandpa finish up.

Charlie VanAuken stayed with us several weeks during the winter of 1890. There were seven to do the work for. I did all the washing, on [a] board often standing on one foot operating cradle with other foot at same time. For the next year

The Paul family in 1894.

I had very little time to help Grandpa, but as he couldn't stand it to ride on the mower, he took care of Alice while I run that and the hay rake. I helped him do the milking. The girls took care of Alice. At that time we sold our cream which saved me lots of work. In the summer of 1891 we milked 12 cows; we had some of Mr. Biddle's cows and paid him for the use of them. That was the only time we ever milked so many cows.

We helped Grandpa considerable with the farm work. I quite often did a good share of the plowing, when we had a riding plow; also raked hay in haying time. Then the girls and I helped him pick up potatoes, and when it came time in the fall to husk corn the girls and I helped Grandpa with that, and it saved him hiring help. We enjoyed husking corn when the weather wasn't too cold, but sometimes it was altogether too cold for comfort, when there was even danger of freezing hands or feet.

Now I want to conclude my Memoirs. To me, what I have told doesn't seem worth while at all, for I cannot express myself as I should or would like to do. I must now tell about Grandpa's failing health. I noticed it very decidedly by 1928, and often I sat and looked at him, knowing he was failing fast. He also realized this and tried to get help by doctoring which gave some relief but nothing permanent. He not only tried Osteopathy, Electric machine, Chiropractic treatments, but several different kinds of medical doctors, sparing neither time nor means. At last he went to a hospital for medical treatment, but everything he tried failed, and about two weeks after his return from the hospital his sickness proved fatal, and on April 9th, 1931, he breathed his last. Then everything was so different for me. I hardly knew what to do.

We rented [out] our farm by the last of May, had our sale the latter part of October, and moved to our present home November 9. Then, we had so many callers every day. Our old friends and neighbors certainly remembered us. I am glad too to have Edna and Alice living so close by, and am thankful for many other blessings I have. Now, Mabel and I are comfortably settled; we have gas heat, which makes it very convenient for us. □

SOCIETY TO PUBLISH IOWA TRAVEL DIARY

The State Historical Board recently approved plans for the publication by the Division of the State Historical Society of a unique Iowa document. In 1876, the year of the nation's Centennial celebration, a prominent British land agent and farm manager, James Lonsdale Broderick, journeyed to Iowa. The purposes of his visit were to renew acquaintances with the many emigrants to Iowa from his native region of Swaledale in Yorkshire and to get to know Iowa better. The first Swaledalers came to Iowa in the 1830s, settling in the Dubuque region where they found a familiar landscape and opportunities to use their traditional skills of farming and lead mining. By the time of Broderick's visit, a thriving community of Swaledalers lived in and around Dubuque.

James Broderick was perceptive and articulate—and he kept a complete journal of his nine month visit to Iowa He noted the "character of the country" as he called it, and the character of the people as well. His manuscript (now in the hands of his descendents who still live in Yorkshire) reveals a fascinating picture of social, economic, and agricultural conditions in the Iowa of one hundred years ago.

The diary will be published as a paperbound book under the editorship of Loren N. Horton, Field Representative for the Division of the State Historical Society. The manuscript was submitted by Mr. Edmund Cooper of Arkengarthdale, Yorkshire, an historian of the Swaledale area, who has supplied a foreword for the book. The publication date has been tentatively set for September 1976. Society members will have an opportunity to order the book during the coming summer.

CONTRIBUTOR:

GLENDA RILEY, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, received a Ph.D. degree in history from Ohio State University. In 1969, she joined the faculty at the University of Northern Iowa where she is now Associate Professor of History. Her major interests are women's history and Iowa history. In addition to many articles and papers, she has authored a Forum Press monograph titled "The Origins of the Feminist Movement in America." She is currently involved in the development of a Women's Studies Program at UNI as well as in researching a book-length study on Iowa's pioneer women.

Neither the Division of the State Historical Society nor the editor assumes any responsibility for statements of fact or opinion made by contributors.

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) or color slides. Inquiries and correspondence should be sent to: Editor, State Historical Society, 402 Iowa Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

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