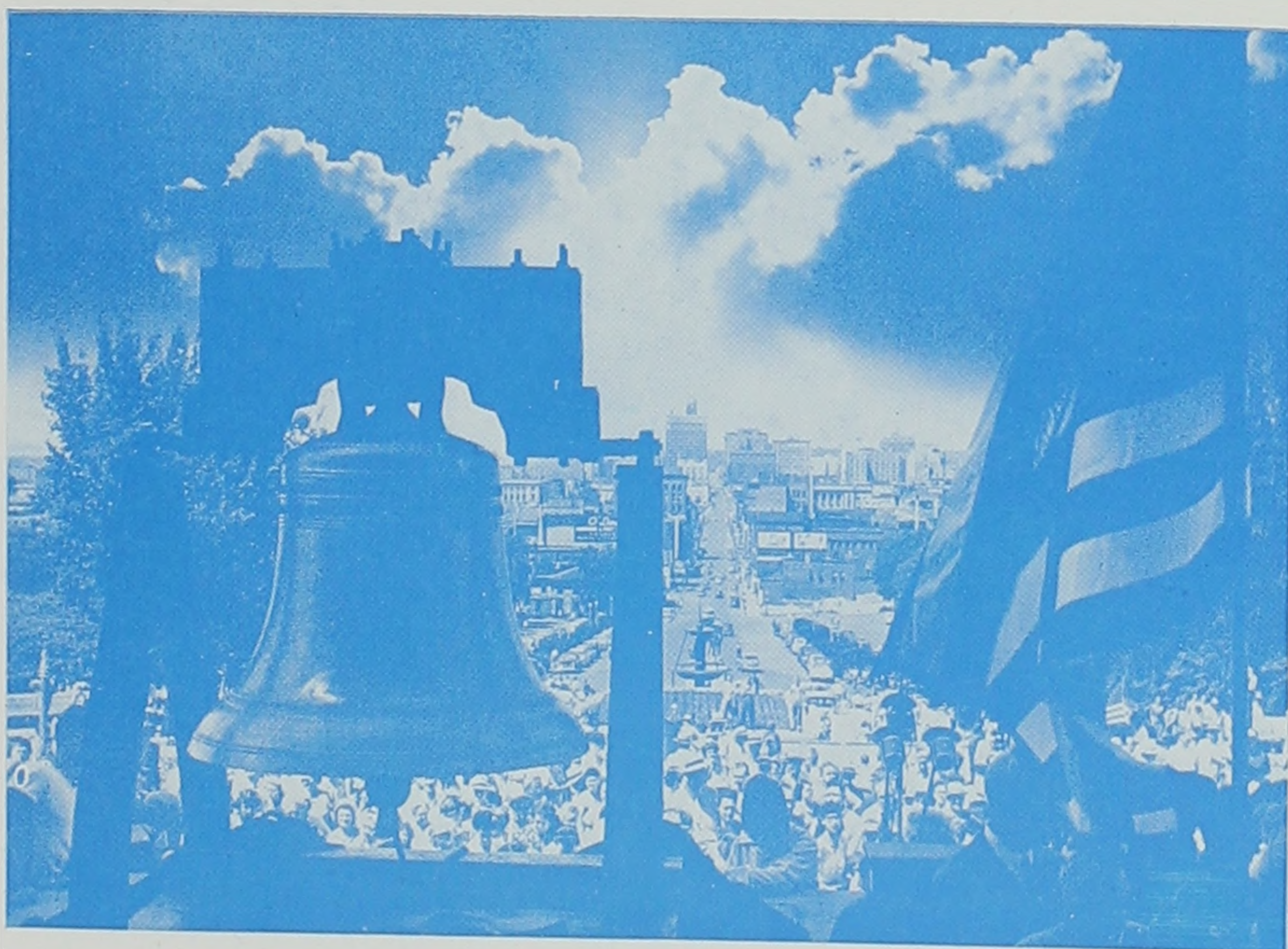


# *The* PALIMPSEST

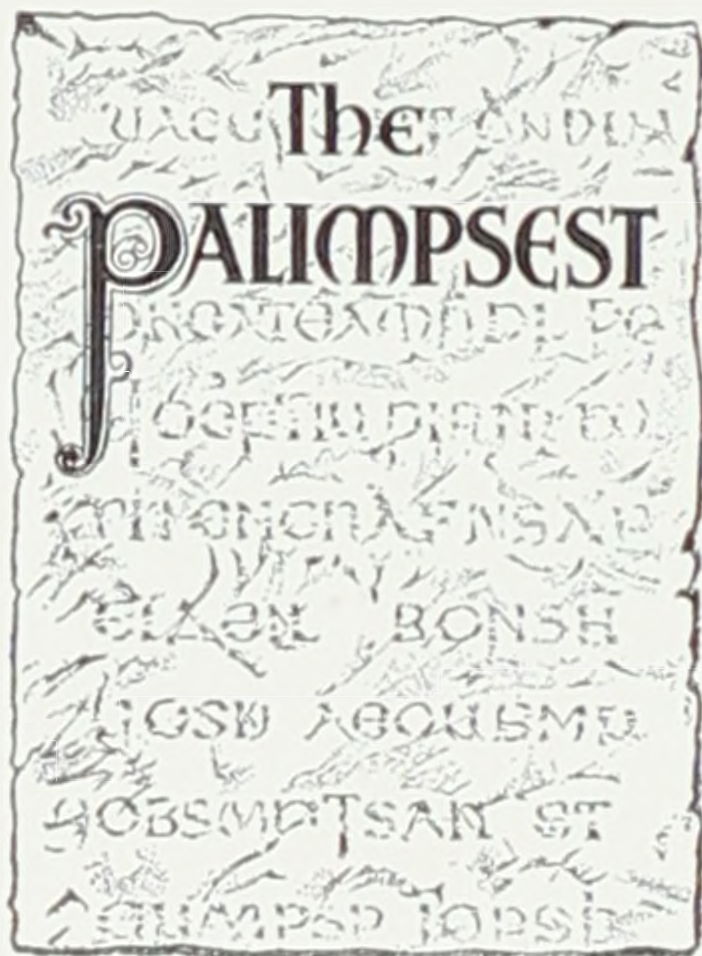


LIBERTY BELL ARRIVES IN DES MOINES

Published Monthly by  
**The State Historical Society of Iowa**  
Iowa City Iowa

SEPTEMBER 1951





## The Meaning of Palimpsest

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

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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### IOWA IN 1950

KENNETH F. MILLSAP

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## Cover

*Front* — Presentation of replica of Liberty Bell to the people of Iowa by the United States Treasury Department at Statehouse in Des Moines on July 4, 1950. (Credit Jervas Baldwin)

*Back — Inside:* President Truman addresses gathering at Ottumwa on his 66th birthday on May 8, as he made his cross-country "non-political" trip.

*Outside:* Federal census enumerators in Des Moines ready to start ringing doorbells for the 1950 census. Territorial censuses were taken in Iowa in 1836 and 1838, and the first federal decennial census in Iowa was made in 1840.

### PICTURE CREDITS

Unless otherwise noted, the pictures for this issue were furnished by the Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune*.

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT  
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# THE PALIMPSEST

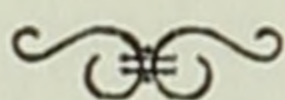
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## The Weather

Iowa weather was freakish during 1950. January was the first month since June, 1949, to record above normal precipitation generally throughout the state. An eight-inch snow, coupled with sleet, hampered Iowa travel on January 25. Intense cold followed almost all over the state; Decorah reported 31° below zero on the 27th. The summer was the coolest on record; in fact, the entire year was unusually cool, except for October which was the fourth warmest October in Iowa weather history.

The moisture pattern was also markedly irregular. As a result of a long dry spell in the fall and early winter of 1949, many sections early in 1950 were reporting a deficiency of moisture for farm crops. Many wells went dry, streams were low, and farmers were forced either to drill deep wells or to haul water for their cattle. The Geological Survey in February noted that the streamflow in the interior of Iowa was below the normal for the tenth consecutive month. Denison was one of



many Iowa towns that feared a water shortage early in January. The much-needed rains did not reach Iowa in considerable amounts until April.

Iowa was faced with a coal shortage in the first months of 1950 — a shortage that was most severe in eastern Iowa where the dealers depended heavily upon mines affected by strikes and shut-downs. Keokuk, with only a two-day supply of coal on hand, asked the aid of Rodney Q. Selby on January 24 to meet the serious shortage. Many public schools were closed in February for lack of fuel, and many towns — including Cedar Rapids, Anamosa, and Iowa City — were forced to ration coal. At Iowa City, the University offered to share part of its supply of coal with the community. On March 3, Sheriff Albert J. Murphy reported that a ton of coal had been stolen from a Johnson County rural school. A 25 per cent reduction in power consumption was ordered in several communities. In order to keep the plant in operation for a week, the employees of one industrial concern in Davenport sawed wood over the weekend. As a result of the fuel shortage many homeowners put in oil or gas heating, particularly in the Keokuk and Burlington communities.

On April 9 an Easter Sunday ice storm struck eastern Iowa: Clinton and Clinton County were most severely hit, and for a time Clinton's only link with the outside world was by short wave radio. Governor Beardsley, in response to an ap-



peal for help from the paralyzed city, ordered national guard troops into the area. Units from Dubuque, Davenport, and Cedar Rapids — numbering over 200 men — were sent to assist in cleaning up after the storm. Northwestern Bell Telephone Company reported that 133 towns in eastern Iowa were without phone service, and estimated that 4,600 telephones were out of order, 1,400 in Clinton alone. Clinton's hospitals and the police radio operated with auxiliary power. Literally thousands of trees were broken and toppled, but little crop damage was reported due to the late spring. Early estimates placed the Clinton losses at over a million dollars.

The following month, on May 5, Iowa was battered by an intense windstorm, the "outstanding weather event of the year." Winds of gale and hurricane force, gusts of which reached 90 miles an hour, caused extensive damage, injured twenty-two people, and killed three, one of whom was a schoolboy. At Pella, nine metal grain bins were torn from their moorings and careened through yards and streets; one finally struck a house. The FM tower atop the engineering building at Iowa City was ripped from its base, falling across the street and striking a parked car. The industrial arts building at Woodside School, north of Des Moines, was destroyed. Perhaps with a political motive, the "Welcome Truman" sign was blown down at Ottumwa, three days before the arrival of



the President. Many Iowa insurance companies reported that loss claims for damages would exceed anything experienced in their histories. One company, operating mainly in rural areas, received over 44,000 claims totaling over three million dollars. A conservative estimate of the damage was placed at five million dollars.

Spring was late in coming to Iowa. By the end of March there was very little indication of field activities, although a few farmers were sowing oats. April, which was even colder than March, was the most "backward" spring month over the state since April, 1920. In addition, the dry weather pattern continued to retard the growth of all vegetation, so that by the end of April the seeding of oats was not completed. Cool, wet conditions during the first half of May caused many farmers to despair of planting all their acreage. The cool and wet pattern continued into June — the fourth consecutive month of below normal temperature in Iowa — and the crop growth remained behind schedule. By the end of June normally 50 per cent of the corn is "laid by," but this year only 10 to 15 per cent of the crop had received its final cultivation. July was the fourth coolest July of record, with lower averages recorded only in 1882, 1891, and 1915. It was also the fifth consecutive month with temperatures averaging below normal. The corn crop was ten days to two weeks late. There were very few days with Iowa's usual 90-



degree temperature; many nights were unseasonably cool. The stay-at-home folks could send a card to vacationing friends and truthfully say, "Slept under blankets last night." The weather bureau termed July "as pleasantly cool," which was a delightful contrast to July 25, 1936, when the mercury boiled to 117 degrees.

August, with an average temperature of 67.7 degrees, was the third coolest August since 1873, when the keeping of Iowa weather records was started on a statewide basis. However, the cool weather which retarded the corn crop also delayed the second-brood corn borers so much that they never did materialize. By the end of August, when normally one-half of the corn crop should be well dented and hard, only 23 per cent was in the process of denting and it was anticipated that only two-thirds of the crop had prospects of maturing without frost damage. A low temperature of 30 degrees, which was first recorded at Elkader on August 30, 1893, and later at Mason City in 1915, was equaled on August 20, 1950, at Britt and Sibley.

Frost made its appearance in Iowa in September, but the damage to the corn crop was mainly local. However, warm weather in October — the fourth warmest in 78 years — was welcomed by the farmers. The October tests for corn moisture conducted by the Weather Division of the Iowa Department of Agriculture revealed that the 1950



Iowa corn crop averaged 36 per cent in moisture content — the second highest on record — exceeded only in October, 1945, when the corn tested 40 per cent. In Des Moines the temperature jumped 14 degrees within 5 minutes on October 16 — rising from 73 to 87 degrees. On October 30 Keokuk reported a record-breaking 92, while a state high of 94 was recorded at Iowa City on the 18th.

The average temperature in Iowa for 1950 was 46.0 degrees, 2.6 below the normal average for the state. The total precipitation of 29.12 inches was 2.25 below normal for the year.

Mark Twain once said that "Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it." When bad weather grounded two speakers scheduled to appear on the program of the Monument Builders of Iowa convention, the committee decided to call upon someone traditionally blamed for the weather. As a result, James D. McQuigg, who is in charge of forecasting services in Des Moines, was the substitute speaker for the occasion.

KENNETH F. MILLSAP



## Iowa Politics

Iowa Republicans were worried in 1950. The Democratic party had dented their ranks in 1948 by electing Guy M. Gillette as Senator and by carrying the state for President Truman. Political observers were wondering if these successes would be repeated in 1950, thus indicating a break in the state's traditional conservatism and Republicanism.

The top position at stake was that of United States Senator. The candidacy of incumbent Bourke B. Hickenlooper was taken for granted, but Harry B. Thompson of Muscatine was the first candidate to enter the primary race. In 1938 Thompson had defeated Hickenlooper in the primary for the nomination for Lieutenant Governor, but had later withdrawn, and the state convention had then nominated Hickenlooper.

The field of Republican senatorial candidates reached three, with the entrance of Earl F. Wisdom, a Des Moines attorney. Wisdom, a former Iowa public school official and the executive secretary of the Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, hoped to win support from the farmers.

Meanwhile, the Democrats were busy. The Democratic primary in Iowa is not usually marked



by strong competition, since the candidates face almost certain defeat in the general election. However, an atmosphere of optimism still prevailed from the successes in 1948. By February five candidates had entered the senatorial primary: Alvin P. Meyers, Van Meter; Ernest J. Seeman, Waterloo; E. E. Poston, Corydon; Willis M. Shaw, Newton; and Otha D. Wearin, Hastings. Albert J. Loveland, Under Secretary of Agriculture, entered the primary in March, announcing that he would advocate the passage of the Brannan farm plan. As a result, he was labeled as the candidate put into the race with the blessings of President Truman and Secretary of Agriculture Brannan. Hints of presidential interference in local elections brought unpleasant memories of Roosevelt's "purge" in 1938. Wearin declared that the Democrats of Iowa could "settle this contest themselves," while Poston commented that it appeared to him to be a "plain case of the secretary of agriculture trying to name the senator from Iowa for the Democrats of Iowa."

The "Brannan Plan" was already a subject of heated debate. One of the highlights of the National Farm Institute in Des Moines, in February, had been a bitter clash between Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan and Allan B. Kline, president of the National Farm Bureau. Kline spoke first, to the alternate booing and cheering of a throng of 4,000; during Brannan's reply, Kline



occupied himself by shelling one of the ears of corn that the Secretary of Agriculture had requested be brought to the platform.

When former Governor Nelson G. Kraschel, "the old campaigner," entered the field in April, the number of Democratic candidates reached seven. Kraschel stated that he wanted to give the Democrats a free choice in a party referendum on the Brannan plan. Two days after the Kraschel announcement, Poston withdrew in an effort to avoid a selection by the state convention.

The second office on the 1950 ticket, that of Governor, was also second in interest. Republican Governor Beardsley was unopposed for the traditional second term. Only two candidates entered the field for the gubernatorial nomination on the Democratic side, but the resulting primary campaign was just as spectacular as that for Senator. Myron J. Bennett, Des Moines public safety commissioner and former radio "disk jockey," switched his party affiliation in January in order to seek the nomination, announcing that he would run as a "liberal, independent Democrat." A month after Bennett opened his campaign the Young Democrats of Polk County passed a resolution stating that they did not "welcome" him as a Democratic candidate, undoubtedly because of his sudden switch from Republican ranks. Bennett protested this action; Jake More, Democratic State Chairman, replied that it was the "privilege"



of the Young Democrats to make such a declaration.

Two months after Bennett's campaign was under way, Lester S. Gillette announced his candidacy, supposedly with the blessing of the Democratic State Central Committee. Although he was not related to Senator Guy M. Gillette, some confusion existed in the minds of the voters because of the similarity of names. However, Lester Gillette was a popular candidate in his own right because of his work in the State Senate and as a member of the State Board of Education.

The primary campaign in the spring of 1950 was lively. Some of the more colorful incidents of the campaign were provided by "Nels" Kraschel, the survivor of the greatest trio of Democratic campaigners that ever stumped the state together (Murphy, Herring, and Kraschel). Kraschel maintained that he was upholding the "integrity of the Democratic party" against the "hitchhiking Brannan farm plan," which he denounced as "one man's dream."

President Truman's "nonpolitical" trip through Iowa in May served to highlight the political campaign. The presidential train crossed the state on May 8, the President's birthday. At the Ottumwa stop, the town turned out in force to welcome the presidential visitor and present him with a huge birthday cake. The thousands of Iowans who greeted the presidential train in Iowa irritated the



Republicans; Robert K. Goodwin, Republican State Chairman, said that the stops were "nothing but political rallies."

Local contests for Congress and for the state legislature completed the primary tickets of both parties. By the final day for filing nomination papers, the number of candidates totaled 392, over thirty more than in 1948, but not close to the record 574 set in 1936. Republicans and Democrats filed for all twenty-one of the seats open in the State Senate. Of the 108 House seats, Republicans sought only 103, while Democrats filed for 105.

On June 5, 1950, Iowa voters went to the polls to decide the issues of this turbulent primary campaign. Over 256,000 votes were cast in the Republican senatorial contest: Senator Hickenlooper received approximately 75.3 per cent of this total, carrying every county in Iowa and receiving 30,000 more votes than all the other Republican and Democratic senatorial candidates combined. Governor Beardsley led the gubernatorial field with 238,686 votes.

In the Democratic senatorial contest Albert J. Loveland won the nomination outright by polling 37.8 per cent of the ballots cast. Conforming to party expectations, Lester Gillette defeated Myron J. Bennett by a margin of three to one.

Within twenty-four hours after the primary, the election campaign was under way. The con-



troversy over the Brannan plan continued. Loveland reaffirmed his support of the issue which had been a decisive factor in his victory, and Hickenlooper pointed up the controversy with his statement: "Loveland is for it, and I am against it." Frank Nye, writing in the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, commented that it had been several years since the issues in an Iowa senatorial campaign were as "clear cut" as in this one. However, by September the emphasis had shifted to such a marked degree that political writers could call the Brannan plan a "dead duck." Possibly a growing opposition to the plan, indicated in several public opinion polls, led to its decline as a leading issue. Loveland's popularity with the farmers of Iowa could still be a cause for concern, however, since he had been well known over the state as the chief of the triple-A. In addition, the Democrats revived memories of "Herbert Hoover and the depression" — a slogan that had been winning elections for them for eighteen years.

During the campaign Hickenlooper called Loveland the "payroll farmer" and claimed that he was hand-picked because "he would be a rubber stamp for the administration." Loveland retorted that Hickenlooper's record showed a "startling lack of service to the people of Iowa" and that the place for a man with such a record was "back in his law office in Cedar Rapids."

Loveland attacked Hickenlooper on the basis of



his attendance at meetings of the Senate agriculture committee, charging that Hickenlooper had attended only 30 of the 177 meetings of the committee held since the beginning of the year. The strategy backfired when Hickenlooper cited facts from the *Congressional Record*: there were not 177 working days; there were only 34 agriculture committee meetings, 30 of which he had attended.

The appearance in the state of several important "salesmen" of the Democratic party was evidence of the nationwide interest in the senatorial contest. Vice President Alben W. Barkley made speeches at Waterloo and Sioux City, where he praised his party's farm record but avoided any mention of the controversial Brannan plan by name. The crowd roared when Barkley said that Iowa should elect Democratic congressmen because "When you have Republicans down there, that's taxation without representation." In October, Secretary of Agriculture Brannan delivered a speech at Iowa State College on "Agricultural Policy." Secretary of Labor Maurice J. Tobin barnstormed Iowa for Loveland, while Senator Guy M. Gillette made three speeches in which he asked his Republican friends to support Loveland.

Declaring that "honesty in state government is at stake in the present election," Lester S. Gillette centered most of his gubernatorial campaign around two major issues: the liquor control commission and activities within the State Department



of Agriculture. With regard to the liquor control commission, Gillette charged that the Governor had been interfering in commission business. In addition, he asserted that the commission had been conducting its affairs in an unbusinesslike manner and "hoarding" unknown brands of liquor, particularly one known as "Old Hector." Gillette promised, if elected, to operate the Iowa liquor control act as written — "an act to promote temperance in Iowa" — and declared that state liquor stores should not sell to "taverns, bars, and roadhouses." He also demanded that the Governor either call a special session of the legislature to investigate the liquor situation or turn the matter over to the interim committee.

The issue regarding activities within the State Department of Agriculture developed when Secretary Clyde Spry, in overruling chemists of his own staff and of Iowa State College, approved an antifreeze, popularly known as P-60, for sale to the public for field testing purposes. For this action, Gillette demanded the resignation of Spry.

Governor Beardsley restyled his campaign tactics in 1950. While he had a full schedule of speaking engagements, his speeches in the main were of the nonpolitical variety. Beardsley consistently maintained that he was seeking re-election strictly on his record. This approach was a definite contrast to 1948 when he had waged a vigorous campaign.



The outcome of the campaign was closely watched by national observers, since the election of Loveland would have meant a defeat for the conservative Republicans and a go-ahead signal for the reviving of the Brannan plan. But Iowa was safely Republican at mid-century. On November 7, Senator Hickenlooper was re-elected by a majority of over 88,000 votes; he carried all but fifteen counties. His victory, which had been forecast as one of the closest of his career, turned out to be a "normal" one. Governor Beardsley won re-election by over 156,000 votes, a larger majority than he had received in 1948. An entire Republican state ticket, including eight Congressmen, was swept into office. The only place the Democrats could report a gain was in the State Senate, where their membership increased from seven to nine. The nonpartisan issue on the ballot — whether or not a state convention should be called to revise the Constitution of Iowa — was defeated by a three to two margin.

As a result of the election the Republican party became more firmly entrenched at the grass roots — the county offices — than it was in 1930. Solid Republican county slates were installed in 52 counties, with the Republicans electing 563 county officials to 128 for the Democrats. Once again the Republicans were assuming their pre-New Deal position of power in Iowa. Indications of Democratic strength, which had appeared in 1948, had



been dispelled. Republicans now looked forward with optimism to plans for the 1952 campaign with its larger significance. For in 1952 international affairs were likely to be at a boiling point, national politics were creating an ever-increasing interest among Iowans, and the state and local scene had many challenging issues which would inevitably confront the voters.

KENNETH F. MILLSAP

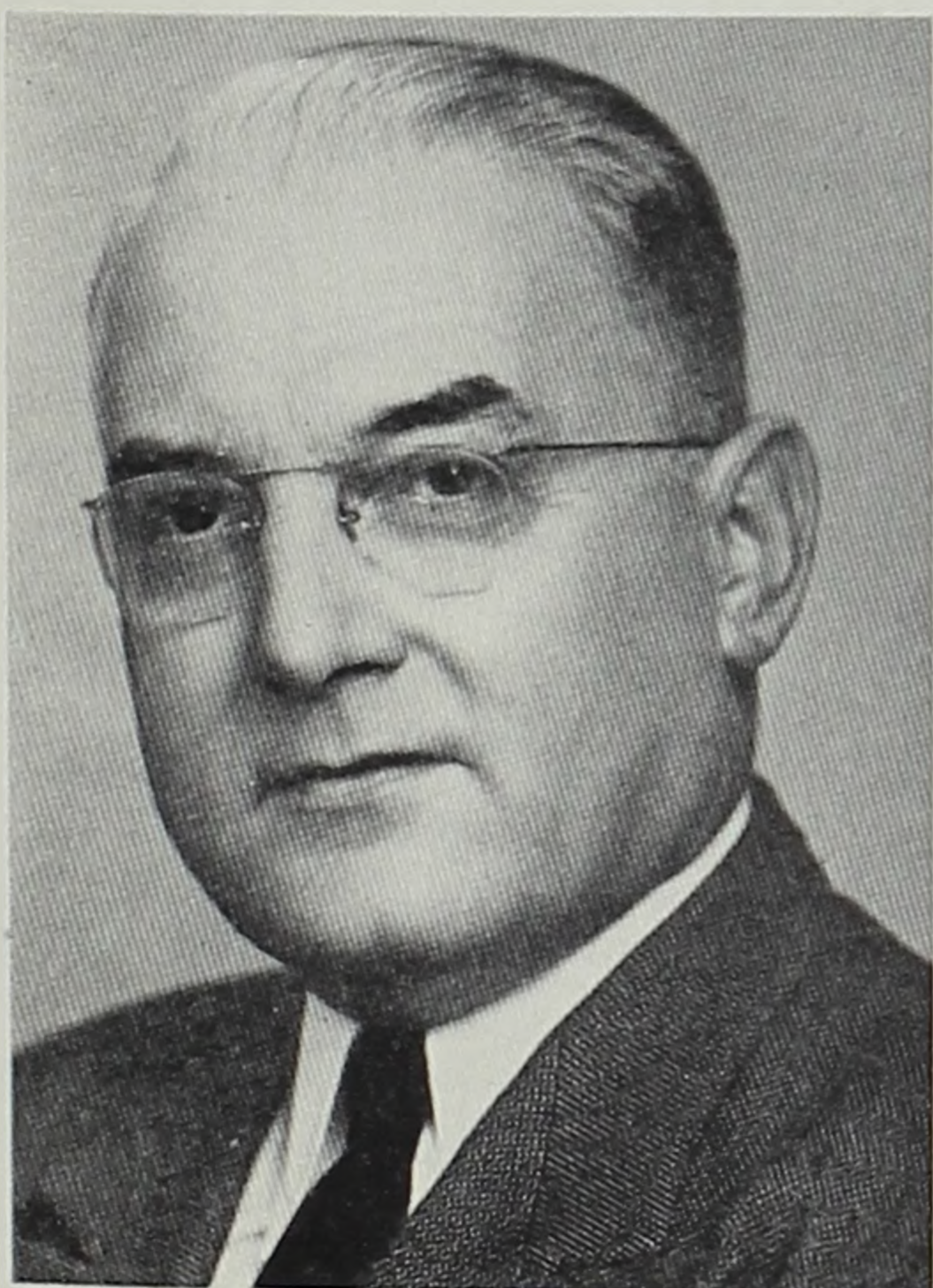


MAJOR POLITICAL CANDIDATES

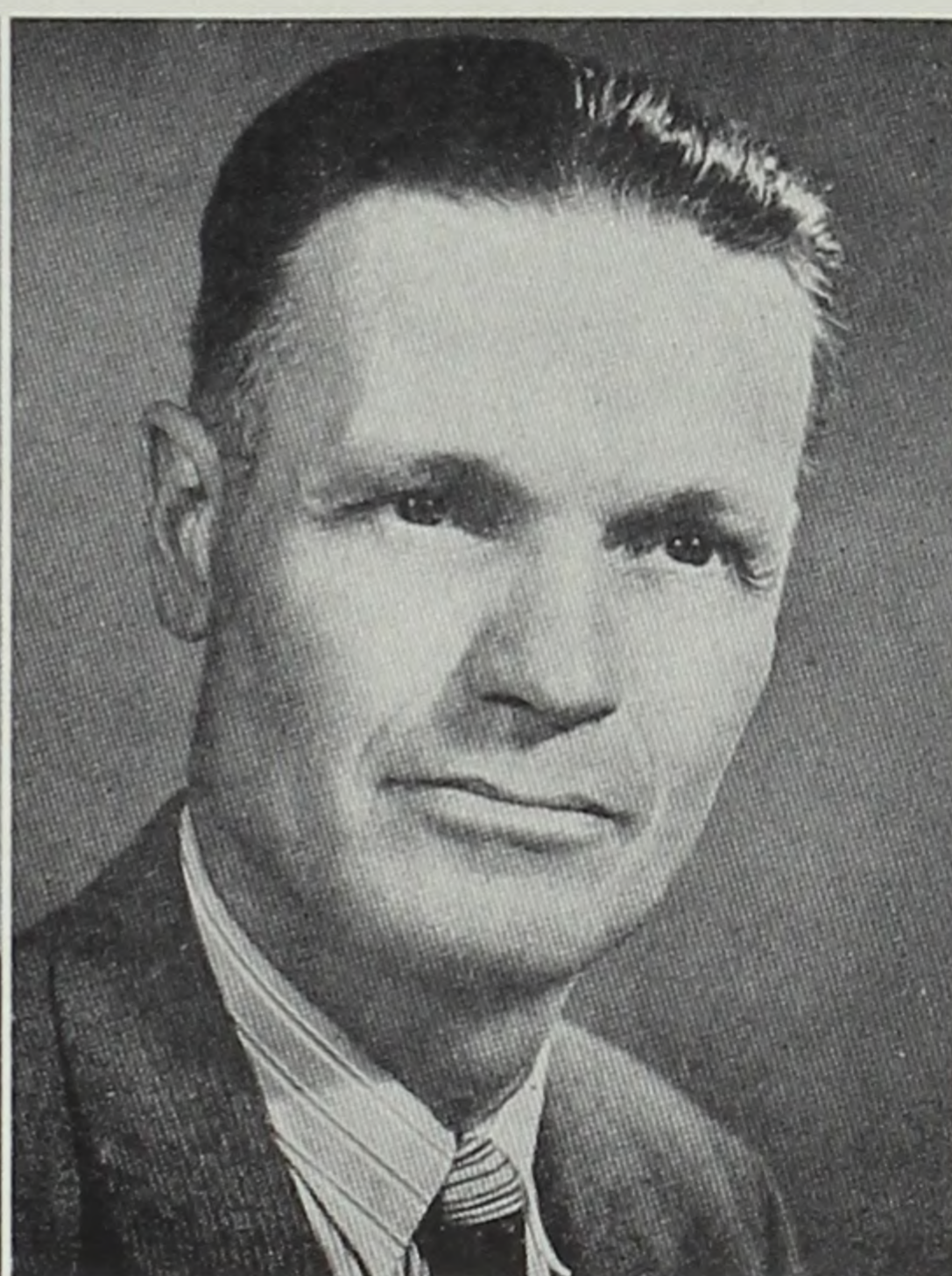
Republican

Democrat

GOVERNOR

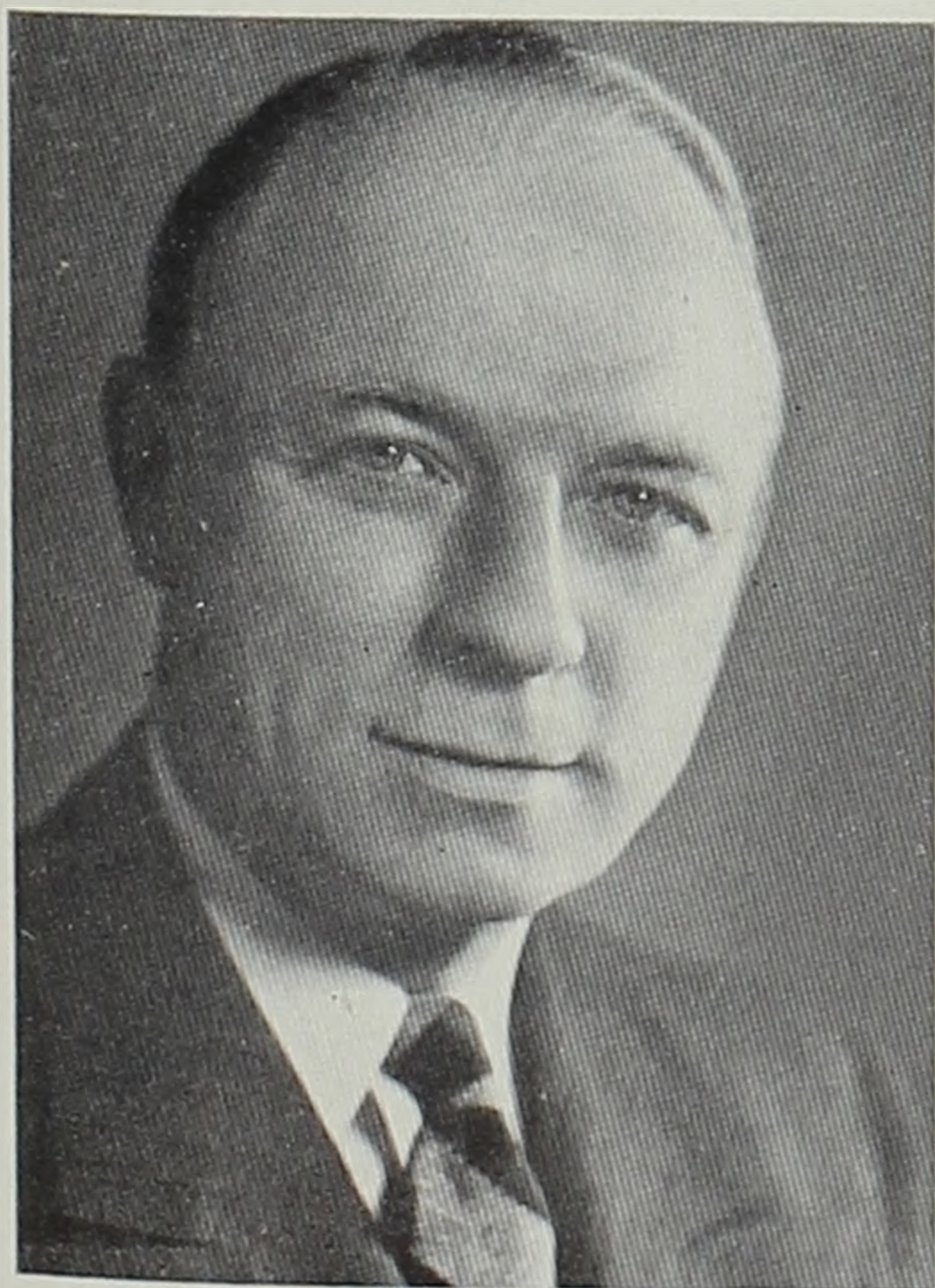


Wm. S. Beardsley



Lester S. Gillette

UNITED STATES SENATOR



Bourke B. Hickenlooper



Albert J. Loveland



ICE AND WIND STORMS



Easter Ice Storm: Damage at Clinton



May Windstorm: Havoc at Des Moines



## SOME MEMORABLE RELIGIOUS EVENTS



*Opposite:* Rev. Charles E. Fuller, director of the Old Fashioned Revival Hour, offers prayer on the west steps of the Statehouse for soldiers in Korea. His prayer climaxed a unique Iowa for Christ Crusade rally of some 30,000 people gathered in a "canvas cathedral" on the Statehouse grounds. During the meeting, a train loaded with big guns passed through the city railroad yards.

*Below:* The Rt. Rev. Gordon V. Smith is consecrated as the new Episcopal Bishop of Iowa in impressive ceremony at Des Moines.

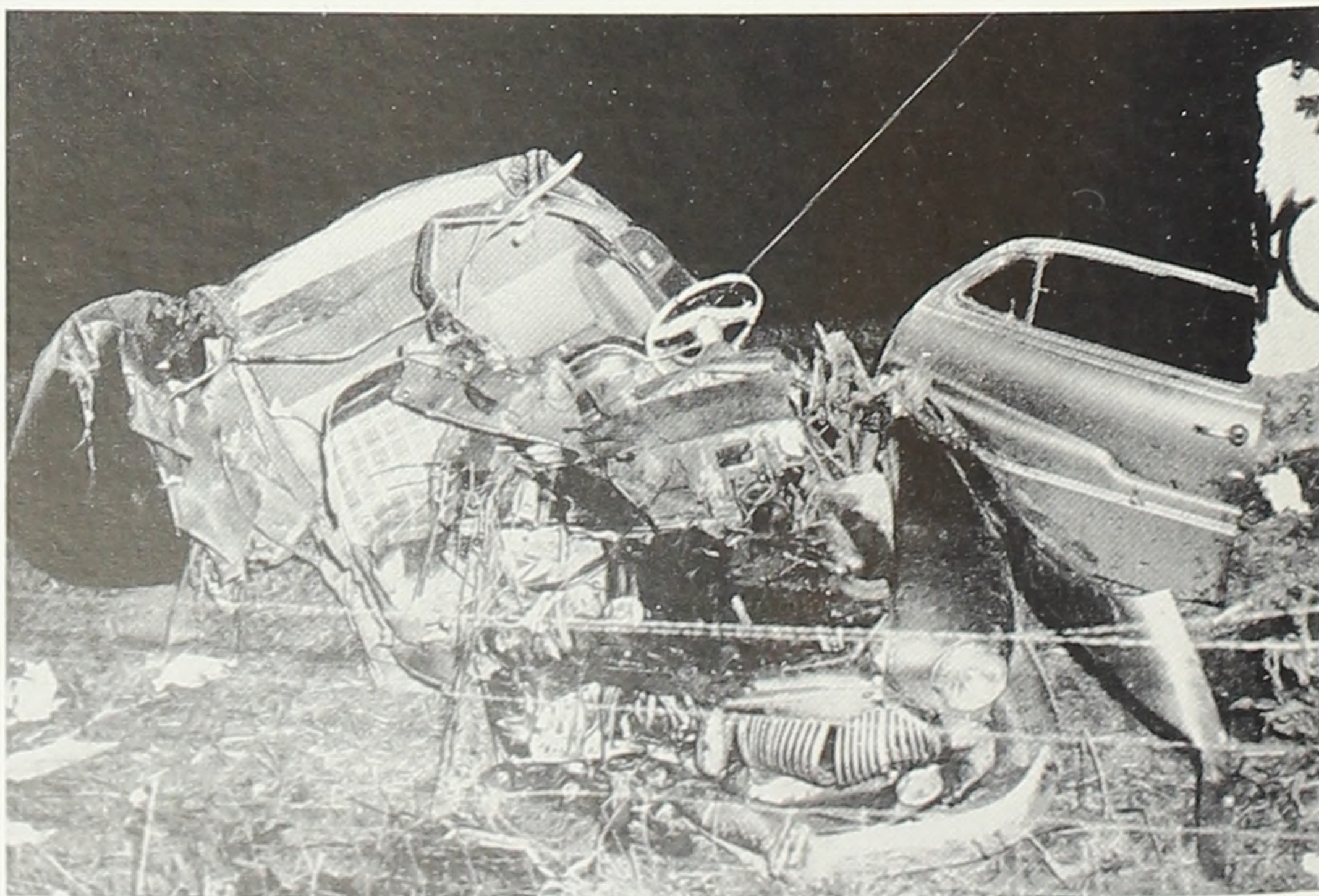




TRAGEDY STRUCK IOWA IN 1950



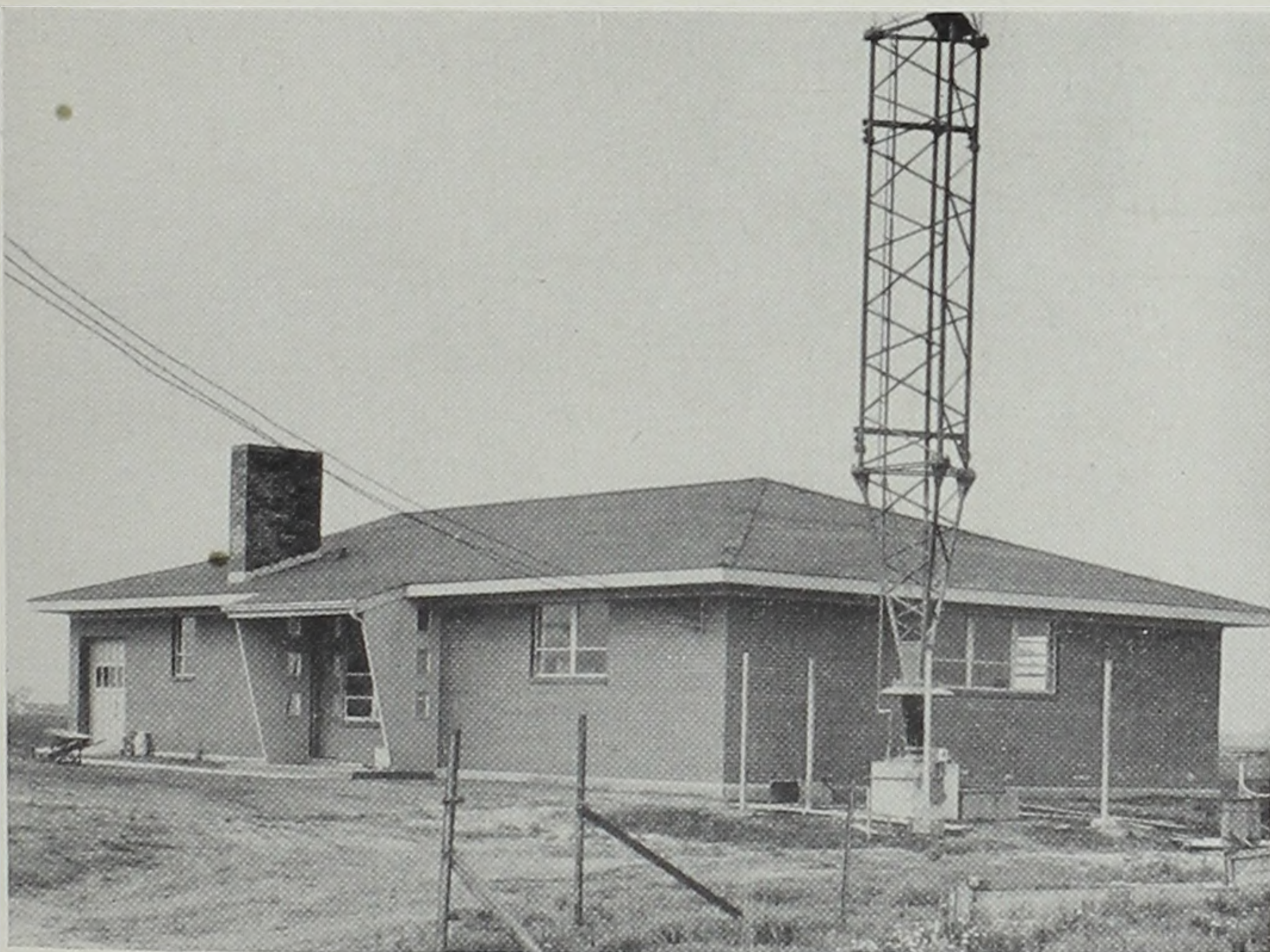
Fire at St. Elizabeth's Ward of Mercy Hospital in Davenport



Five Teen-agers Killed in Wreck Near Harlan



CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION



New WOI-TV Station at Iowa State College



Highway Post Office Coach Inaugurated



LABOR UNREST IN DES MOINES



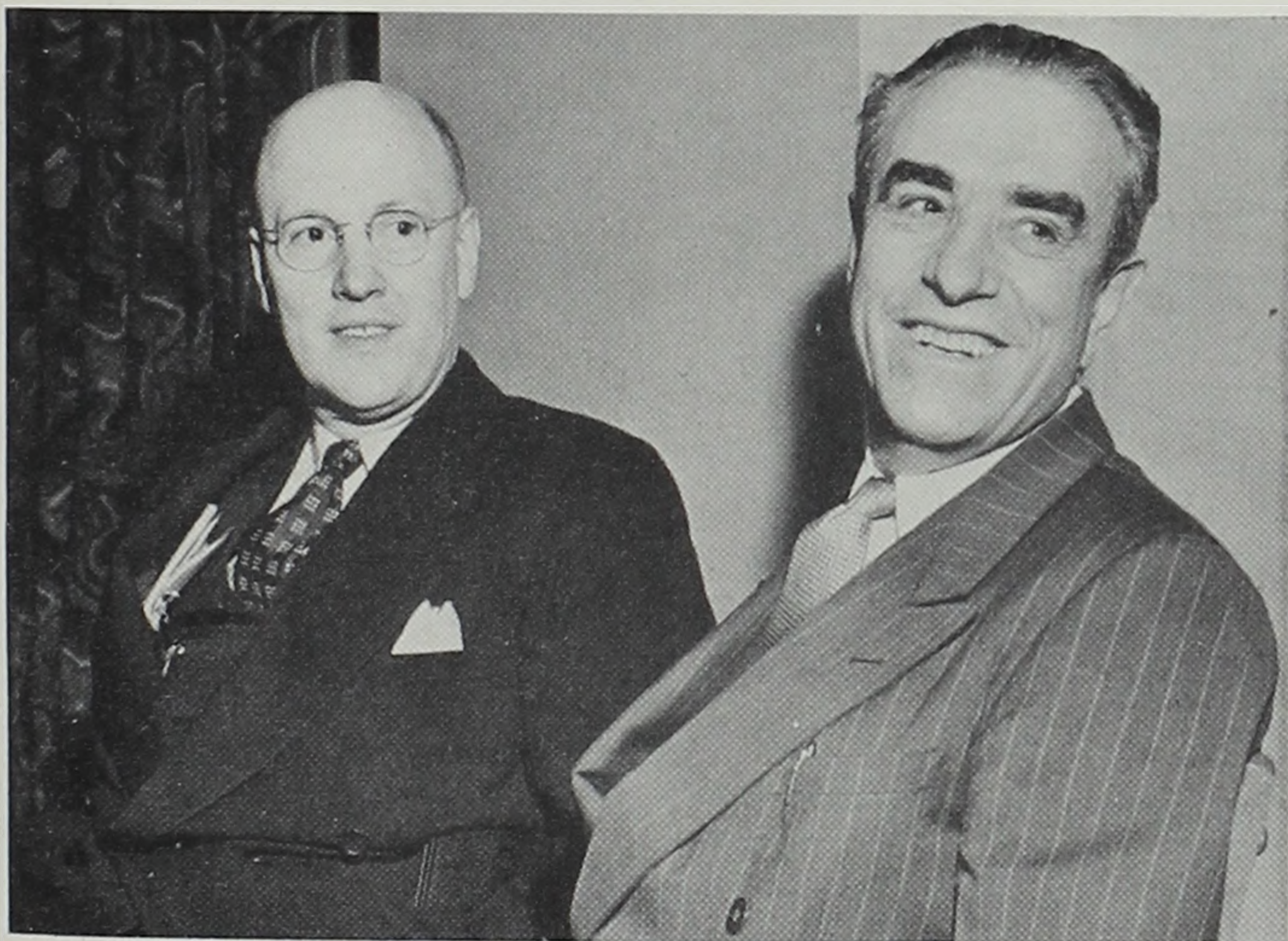
Wives of U.A.W. Union Members Picket at John Deere Plant



Women Pickets at John Deere Plant



HEADLINERS IN POLITICAL CONTROVERSY



Charles F. Brannan and Allan Kline Debated Brannan Plan  
Before National Farm Institute at Des Moines



William F. Riley of Des Moines is Sworn in as Federal Judge  
for the Southern District of Iowa by His Son

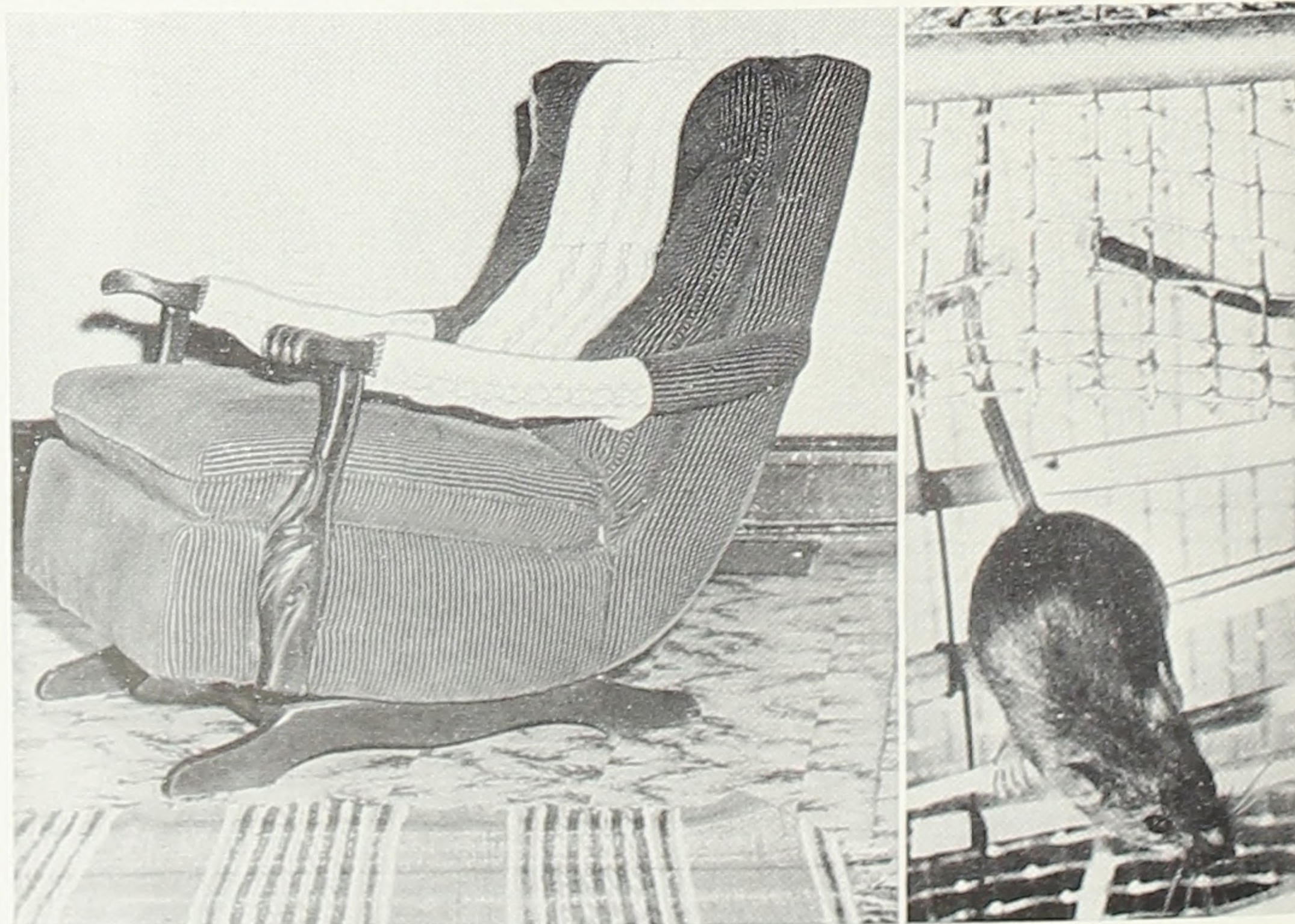


CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TEAM



Some Members of I.S.T.C. Wrestling Squad

IOWA ODDITIES WON RADIO-TV FAME



Left: Muscatine Platform Rocker  
Right: "Midnight" — the Cherokee Singing Mouse



## Town and Country

Iowa is a great agricultural state, but in recent years her industrial might has been growing rapidly. In 1950 Iowa factories outproduced Iowa farms: the estimated value of manufactured products was \$2,500,000,000, in comparison to a cash farm income of only \$2,000,000,000.

The bulk of Iowa's manufacturing deals with the farm — either in the production of machines and tools for the farmers or in the processing of the farmers' products. In a state famous for its cattle, meat packing is naturally a leading industry. In 1950, for the second consecutive year, the volume of livestock slaughtered by Iowa packing plants exceeded that of any other state. Federal estimates for the first ten months of the year indicated that Iowa packers handled 11.7 per cent of all cattle, calves, hogs, sheep, and lambs processed in the nation. The state's main packing plants are located at Des Moines, Sioux City, Ottumwa, and Waterloo.

The production of machinery for Iowa's farms is likewise an important industry. For that reason, the strike of some 13,000 workers at the John Deere plants in Illinois and Iowa hampered Iowa business, both industrial and agricultural. This



107-day strike, affecting the Iowa plants at Des Moines, Waterloo, Ottumwa, and Dubuque, was finally settled on December 16. The strike, which began on September 1, was marked with considerable violence, especially at Des Moines and Waterloo.

The sale of the busy Middle Amana refrigerator factory, where nationally-known freezers are built, was an important change in the Iowa industrial scene in 1950. Not since 1932, when the changeover in the ownership of the Amana Colonies occurred, had there been so much excitement in the seven villages of the Community of True Inspiration. Howard Hall, a Cedar Rapids industrialist, headed the concern which bought the refrigerator plant at a price which was expected to net the Society between \$1,500,000 and \$1,750,000.

Iowa's industry, which ranges from food processing to washing machines, was prosperous in 1950. The 3,858 manufacturing plants in 566 Iowa towns employed approximately 148,000 people at an average weekly wage of \$59.26. A report on checks cleared through Iowa banks showed that business activity had reached an all-time high in 1950, with an increase of 11 per cent over the figures for 1949. This increased business activity was reflected in a decline in the state unemployment figures: claims for unemployment insurance dropped 33 per cent, from 32,711 in 1949



to 20,813 in 1950. During June alone 11,678 workers were placed in jobs in Iowa.

In spite of the growing industrial strength of the state, the Iowa farm continues to be the largest single source of revenue. The state has 25 per cent of all the grade A farmland in the nation, and produces over 10 per cent of the nation's food. A typical Iowa farm averages 173 acres; there are over 200,000 of them on the state's 35,000,000 acres. These farms produce more corn, hogs, oats, poultry, eggs, and finished cattle for market than any other state in the Union, and Iowa's total production of grain crops leads the nation.

Iowa's bluegrass seed "business" is a growing concern. Dating back to pioneer days, bluegrass has long been a popular crop in the state. In the early 1890's two huge bluegrass palaces were constructed to draw attention to the importance of the crop. The Creston area is today one of the largest bluegrass seed producing regions in the world; farmers there even supply the seed to the famous bluegrass state, Kentucky. Because of a blight, the 1950 crop was less than the previous year, when seed men in Iowa produced 35 per cent of all the bluegrass seed harvested in the world. More than half of this production comes from an area within 35 miles of Creston. Farmers pay from \$15 to \$30 per acre for their seed.

Iowa farm values rose \$20 an acre for the year ending November 1, 1950. This increase was the



largest in the state's history, except for the boom year of 1920. In addition, the number of farm sales increased for the first time since 1943. During the summer of 1950 land buyers made a noticeable shift from the high to the low priced areas. Farmers and other buyers, without sufficient cash for a large down payment in the higher priced areas, purchased farms in the northeast and southern sections of the state. One of the highest prices paid for Polk County land in recent years was that of \$410 an acre, while a farm south of Shenandoah sold at auction for an average of \$420 an acre.

The high rate of farm production was continued in 1950, in spite of a none too favorable growing season. The final estimate of the Iowa corn crop made in December placed the total at 463,655,000 bushels or an average of 48 bushels to the acre. This was a sizeable decrease from the 550,608,000 bushels produced in 1949, probably due partly to the fact that Iowa farmers cut their corn acreage by 1,600,000 acres in compliance with the government's crop control program. According to the Production and Marketing Administration (PMA), more than 67 per cent of Iowa farms participated in this agricultural conservation program. Soybeans increased from 30,000,000 to 42,262,000 bushels. Iowa oats averaged 41 bushels to the acre, with over six million acres in production. However, the total of all grains harvested in Iowa during the year was 10 per cent below the



1949 tonnage, with production totaling approximately 18,141,000 tons. In addition, almost 21,000,000 hogs, over 5,000,000 cattle, and some 900,000 sheep were raised by Iowa farmers in 1950.

Plagued first by a cool, wet, and late spring, Iowa farmers later were confronted with a serious infestation of corn borers. In 1949 this disease had caused an estimated total loss of over \$150,000,000, or an average of \$750 per farm for the state as a whole. Meetings were planned to teach farmers how to cope with the disease. These meetings, first held at Harlan on June 7, Cherokee on June 8, and Algona on June 9, were sponsored by *The Iowa Farm and Home Register*, the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, the extension services of Iowa State College, and county, farm, and civic groups.

One of the most effective methods of killing the corn borer is by plane. This involves flying across fields at knee-height, laying down a fog of DDT from nozzles in booms stretched out under the wings. Pilots flying at 75 miles per hour must be alert for fences, telephone poles, and even gentle rises in the land. A good pilot can spray 20 acres in about 12 minutes. In July there were approximately 100 flying outfits ready to start spraying activities. Cool weather retarded the second crop of corn borers, so that total losses for 1950 amounted to only 75 to 80 million dollars.



While harvesting their rich crops of grain, and feeding their large herds of cattle, Iowa farmers continued their efforts to help provide food for the famine-stricken areas of the world. Through the Christian Rural Overseas Program — popularly known as "CROP" — \$175,000 worth of produce was donated by Iowa farmers during 1950. George J. Steinbron, a Jessup farmer, was the first Iowan to sign up for the Friendship Acres Program of CROP, which provides that farmers set aside a part of their acreage for the less fortunate of other lands. In July the Iowa Development Commission reported that an estimated 400,000 bushels of seed corn had been planted on Iowa farms for the aid of Europeans.

The federal Department of Agriculture is building up a large organization in Iowa. More than 1,500 persons draw a large part or all of their salaries from this one department. Largest of the federal agricultural agencies functioning in Iowa is the PMA, with 119 employees in Des Moines, and over 300 county and 4,809 township committeemen in the field. The PMA supervises various governmental programs, including crop loans, storage of grain either under government loan or owned outright by the government, and acreage control allotments.

The aid received by Iowa farmers from the federal government during the 1950 crop year totaled \$9,721,000, an increase of \$1,215,000 over the



1949 payment. This money compensates farmers for materials, work, or practices deemed essential in conserving soil and water resources.

An important feature in soil conservation publicity is the plowing contest. At the state contour plowing contest held on September 16, first place was won by Robert Barrow, a thirty-six-year-old farmer who operates a 560-acre farm near Keosauqua in partnership with his father. Tom Daugherty of Eddyville previously had won the state level land plowing title. Between 48,000 and 50,000 people attended the National Soil Conservation Field Day held at Zeoring on September 19, where more than twenty soil conservation and farm improvement practices were demonstrated.

Iowans won their full share of honors and prizes at the various livestock shows. Russell Bucks of Davenport was crowned "king" of the nation's cattle feeders after he showed the grand champion carload of fat cattle at the International Livestock Exposition at Chicago. The thirty-two-year-old newcomer broke the long winning streak of Karl Hoffman of Ida Grove who had a record of twenty grand championships.

The grand champion load of hogs in the swine contest at the Chicago show was shown by Stanley K. Swift, a twenty-three-year-old veteran of Gilman. In the horse show, Gay Warrior, owned by Charles W. Willhoit and Son of Batavia, was named reserve champion junior Clydesdale stal-



lion under three years. Iowa State College showed the reserve grand champion steer at the International Livestock Exposition, where Iowans had ten steers in the final judging. John Willier of Bloomfield placed second in the sheep shearing contest.

In January, Cross Bar Classic, a steer shown by Arthur Timm of Tama, carried his Hereford class crown to the grand championship in the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show at Fort Worth, Texas. The 1,085-pound animal also won the Hereford championship at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

For both "Town and Country," 1950 was a prosperous year for Iowans, in spite of strikes and bad weather. As the year closed, Iowa business, both urban and rural, looked forward to increased demands for its products, due largely to the defense program of the national government.

KENNETH F. MILLSAP



## Highlights of 1950

Iowa's mid-century was ushered in with the usual New Year's Eve observances. For the gay, there were parties, theaters, and night clubs; for the serious, "Watch Night" services in the churches. As the New Year dawned, the usual number of "firsts" was recorded.

Keokuk's first baby, born a few minutes after midnight, weighed but six ounces — a "robust" male muntjac, a rare species of dwarf deer imported from Java. Tragedy struck first in 1950 at McGregor; Raymond Boyle's car crashed into the steps of the Catholic Church there; two days later his funeral was held from the same church.

On January 7 a fire in the mental ward of Mercy Hospital at Davenport took the lives of forty-one elderly women, and a nurse, Mrs. Anna Neal, who died trying to rescue some of her charges. In Cedar Rapids, Dr. Byron H. McKeeby died at the age of eighty-two. His name might have meant little to most Iowans, but his face — that of the farmer in Grant Wood's famous "American Gothic" — was familiar to everyone in the state.

Roy Rogers is popular with many young Iowans; on January 17 two admirers, Rex Carter and Irvin Birkenholz, twelve and thirteen years



old, made up their minds to "go west" and become cowboys. They set off from Knoxville, armed with a can of spaghetti and plans for killing wildcats along the way, to eke out their food supply. Their sense of direction was faulty, however; they were heading north through Ankeny when apprehended by anxious authorities. Another reminder of the "wild west" was a raid by cattle rustlers on a farm at Honey Creek near Council Bluffs — they made off with \$1,300 worth of cattle.

Iowa's musical fare ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous on January 23. In Des Moines, the great Negro singer, Marian Anderson, sang to an audience of 1,600. Simultaneously, television audiences were treated to a concert by "Midnight," the singing mouse, who had been trapped by Mrs. Ella Rausch after she heard him "singing" in her home at Cherokee.

In 1949 Iowa's first television station, WOC-TV at Davenport, had begun operation. On January 24, 1950, a second station, WOI-TV at Ames, began its first day of test pattern telecasting. The Ames station, the one hundredth to be opened in the nation, is the first to be sponsored by an educational institution.

The sporting world was surprised on January 28 when the University of Iowa's head football coach, Dr. Eddie Anderson, announced his resignation. He was replaced in February by Leonard Raffensperger, former head football coach at East



Waterloo High. Hardly had this sporting news become history before the University announced the dismissal of Lawrence Harrison, head basketball coach. Rollie Williams replaced "Pops" Harrison.

Basketball is always the leading sports interest in Iowa in the winter. In addition to the big college games, the girls' and boys' high school championship tournaments draw huge crowds. Fifteen thousand gathered in the University of Iowa fieldhouse to watch Davenport defeat Ankeny in the boys' finals; at Drake, in Des Moines, 6,700 saw the girls from Slater defeat Kamrar.

Some of the best wrestlers in the nation are Iowans. Six of the ten first-team positions on the Third Annual All-American wrestling team went to men from the Hawkeye State. Bill Nelson of Iowa State Teachers College was selected as the "outstanding amateur wrestler in America for the 1950 season."

Mail has been delivered to Iowans in many ways over the years. From the pioneer days of river boats and stagecoaches to present-day railway mail cars and airplanes is a long way. In 1950 another type of "mail man" was introduced — the highway bus. On March 11 two 18,000-pound red, white, and blue buses left Des Moines for Muscatine and Shenandoah, on runs which serviced some forty towns.

The state of Iowa lost one of its outstanding



figures on March 13 when William R. Boyd, for forty years finance chairman of the State Board of Education, died at Cedar Rapids.

Every ten years Uncle Sam counts his children. On April Fool's Day some 2,700 people began taking the seventeenth decennial census in Iowa. It was July before the results of their work were announced. In 1950 Iowa had 2,621,073 people, an increase of 2.9 per cent over 1940. For several decades, in Iowa and in the nation, one fact has been evident. The rural population, long dominant, is declining as compared with that of the city-dwellers. There were 4.2 per cent fewer farmers in Iowa in 1950 than in 1940.

A new bishop of the Iowa Diocese of the Episcopal Church was consecrated in April at an impressive ceremony in Des Moines. The Rt. Rev. Gordon V. Smith succeeded the Rt. Rev. Elwood L. Haines, who had died in October, 1949.

In January Iowans had a "singing" mouse; in May, they had a "rocking" chair. An eight-year-old platform rocker, belonging to the Floyd Holladays of Muscatine, had started rocking, "all by itself," in March. Inevitably, offers for television programs came; in May the chair was taken to New York where it "rocked vigorously" for a large audience. The trip was too much for the now-famous chair, however; by August 25 the Holladays announced that "for all practical purposes" the chair had stopped rocking.



On May 31, at Harlan, sixty-five young people graduated from high school. The commencement speaker made a plea for safe driving. An hour later, five young people, two of whom had just received their diplomas, were dead. Their car, with the speedometer jammed at 92 miles an hour, was a crumpled mass of wreckage. But even this tragedy did not stop the fearful toll of highway accidents. By the end of the year the records showed that 1950 was Iowa's second worst year for death on the highway: 607 lives had been sacrificed to speed and carelessness.

The world was becoming more and more conscious of the Communist threat to peace in 1950. In an effort to illustrate the workings of Communism, the town of Hartley, Iowa, decided to stage a full-scale Communist attack on its citizens. The enthusiasm of the "Communists" was somewhat dampened by a heavy rain and by the lack of interest of the townspeople, one of whom threatened to "sic" the dog on them if they came near his house. However, forty "guerrillas" took over the government, "executed" the officials, lined people up for ration books, and seized and burned "capitalistic" books in the library.

Only a few days after this attack, Americans awoke to find that the real thing had begun in far-away Korea. When American troops were sent to aid the South Koreans, and when draft boards swung back into action, the "war" was brought



home to many Iowans. In July Brigadier-General Charles H. Grahl called for 344 men as the first quota from the state. Two Iowa marine units were ordered to active duty: the 21st Engineer Company in the Quad Cities area, and C Battery of the 6th 105 mm Howitzer Battalion of Waterloo. Enlistments in the army, navy, and air force increased rapidly, while the recall of Iowa enlisted reservists reached 2,000 by September. In August the first organized army reserve unit had been alerted: the 339th MP prisoner-of-war processing company of the Dubuque-Guttenberg area. By December the fifty-million-dollar Burlington Ordnance Plant was back in operation, with 1,900 employees. Iowa was again "at war."

The Fourth of July was marked with an unusual ceremony in Des Moines. The Liberty Bell came to Iowa, not in person it must be admitted, but in the shape of a 2,000-pound replica. The Bell, given to Iowa by the United States Treasury Department, was received by Governor Beardsley; it will be permanently housed in Des Moines. A symbol of the Independence Drive to encourage the purchase of savings bonds, the Bell had been touring Iowa since May 15, covering 4,503 miles in 80 counties.

On July 24 one of the University of Iowa's most distinguished alumni, S. Joe Brown, died in Des Moines at the age of seventy-five. Mr. Brown was the first Negro to graduate from the University,



and the first of his race to be elected to the chapter of Phi Beta Kappa there. During his lifetime he had been a leading attorney in Des Moines.

August is "Fair Month" for Iowa. People come from all over the state "to the Fair." Gerry and Kent Vandervelde probably chose the most novel mode of transportation: rowing almost 200 miles down the Des Moines River from Emmetsburg; on reaching the Fair the first thing they did was take a boat ride at the "Old Mill Stream." One feature of the Fair which attracted large crowds was the Iowa Crusade for Christ revivals, one of which was addressed by "Ma" Sunday, still vigorous at the age of eighty-two.

This Crusade was continued in September with a series of revivals on the statehouse grounds in Des Moines; over 30,000 persons filled a huge "canvas cathedral" to hear the speakers, one of whom was Dr. Charles E. Fuller, director of the radio "Old Fashioned Revival Hour."

In October the oldest living member of the Meskwaki Indians at the Tama reservation died: Jim Poweshiek, a great-grandson of Chief Poweshiek, was ninety-seven at the time of his death. In Des Moines Louis C. Kurtz, businessman and politician, died on October 1. Mr. Kurtz had begun his political career as campaign manager for Albert B. Cummins in his senatorial campaign of 1908.

A year-long political squabble in the Democratic party was healed when President Truman,



on November 29, appointed William F. Riley of Des Moines to the federal bench of the Southern Iowa Judicial District. The judgeship had been filled, over the protest of Senator Guy M. Gillette, by Carroll O. Switzer since late in 1949; but Switzer's appointment had never been confirmed by the Senate. When the Senate agreed to accept Riley, political jokesters at once reported that for a year Switzer had been "living the life of Riley."

In the last months of 1950 death claimed many prominent Iowa political figures. Daniel F. Steck, the state's first Democratic Senator since pre-Civil War days, died on December 31. He had served the state in Congress from 1926 to 1931. E. H. Birmingham, Democratic State Chairman from 1935 to 1941, died in November. Others were John K. Valentine, the last Democratic Lieutenant Governor of the State; Justice Oscar Hale, a member of the Iowa Supreme Court since 1938; and "Dad" A. H. Avery, beloved Iowa legislator, who had served in the House from 1931 to 1949.

At Exira, "Grandma" Mary Kilworth, probably the oldest living person in the state, celebrated her 109th birthday on December 18. Ten days later, Iowa, five years younger than "Grandma" Kilworth, observed, without ceremony, her 104th birthday. Three days later the year 1950 bowed out and Iowans cheerily greeted the arrival of the young man who ushered in 1951.

KENNETH F. MILLSAP



WELCOME TO TUMWA, IOWA  
Welcome PRESIDENT TRUMAN

