

The
PALIMPSEST

Volume 72, Number 2

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

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Inside —



NATIONAL ARCHIVES, BRADY COLLECTION

A soldier passes a canteen to a wounded Civil War compatriot. In this issue, an Iowa soldier articulates his convictions and doubts, his insights and emotions in his detailed diary covering early 1862, when the Fifteenth Iowa Regiment fought at Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh. His diary and letters home begin on page 51.



The Meaning of the Palimpsest

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

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

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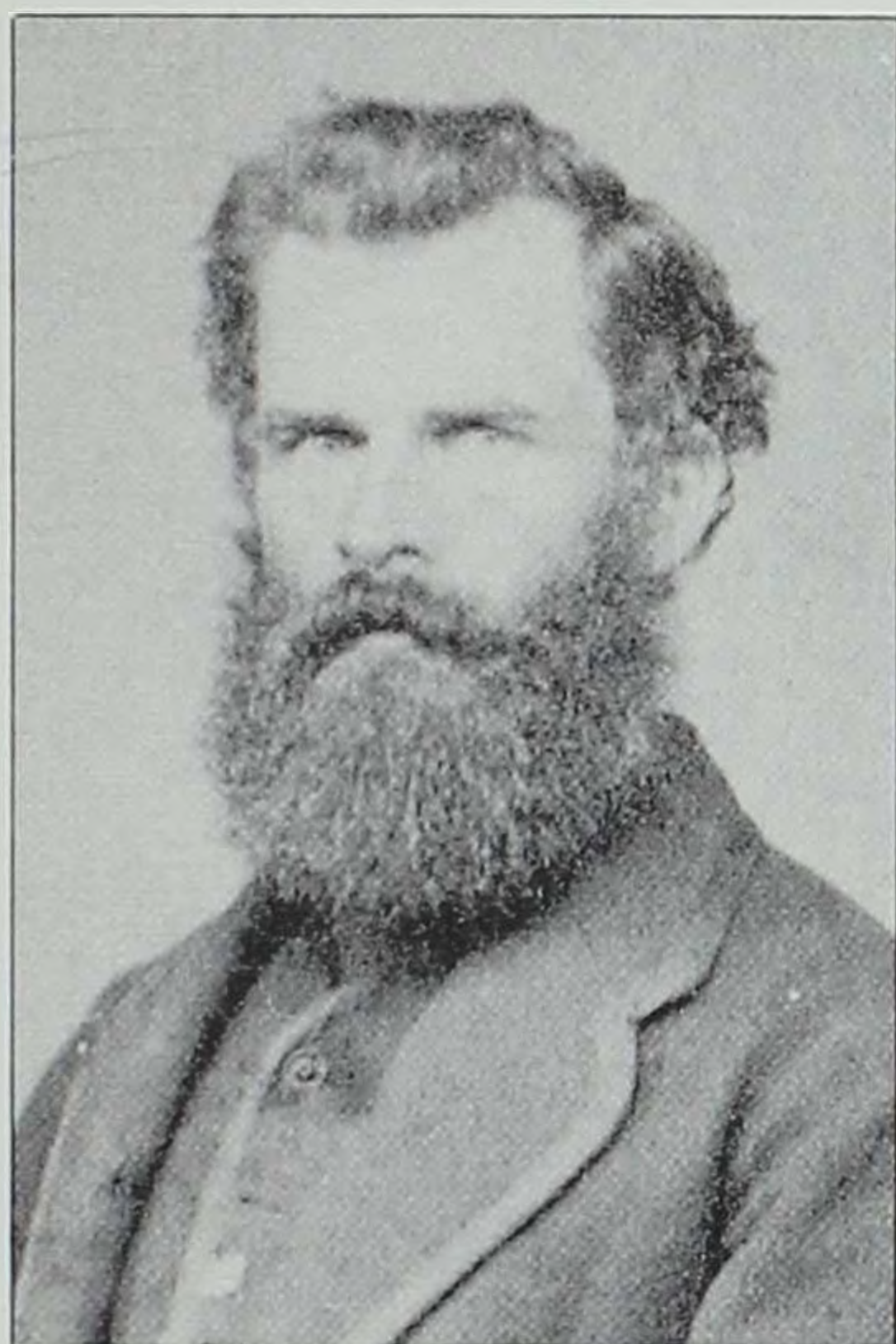


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Philip Goode at Shiloh 51



Decoration Day in Riverside 83

COVER: Stylized floral beadwork (16" × 16") on velvet and broadcloth Mesquakie breechclout, circa 1900–1925, originally owned by Tab-o-she (grandfather of Young Bear). Mesquakie women conveyed their skills through fine beadwork and ribbon appliqué. More on Mesquakie costume begins on page 70. Breechclout from State Historical Society of Iowa museum collections (Des Moines). Photographed by Chuck Greiner.

The PALIMPSEST

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

Ginalie Swaim, Editor

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Listening to the Voices

IN FASHIONING THIS ISSUE, I worked with three contributors who had been drawn to make personal connections with the past. Lauren Pille Robinson wanted to know about Riverside, a small town in Washington County, in the 1920s. "Those of us who were born after 1930 can experience the 1920s in only two ways: by reading the writing of historians, or by reviewing contemporary accounts of the times," Robinson explains. "I found another way — by talking to the people who were there." What she learned through oral history interviews was that Memorial Day was a day of commemorating soldiers and veterans. The memories of three Riverside citizens are complemented by photographs of girls in white dresses carrying bouquets up a dusty road to the cemetery. At the end of the essay, Robinson voices her own thoughts about oral history projects.

Donald E. Fish tells us about his work as a county agricultural agent during the Great Depression. Much has been written about the New Deal on a federal level, much less on a local level. Fish knew the experiences from those days were significant, in his own life as well as in the nation's. He writes, "My life has seemed as if it has flowed by in fits and starts. There were times that moved so fast that I was breathless trying to keep up with the events of the day, and again there were times that seemed to drag, and nothing really happened." For him, the New Deal years were one of the fast-moving times. "It's a shame that the people who worked with me on the Corn-Hog Program couldn't have seen this story in print. They were a great bunch."

Edward Vollertsen spent years researching his great-great-grandfather, Civil War lieutenant Philip Hayes Goode, and transcribing his Civil War diary and letters. Last year, on the 128th anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh, Vollertsen visited the site. On the eve of April 6, he wrote his own thoughts about the past: "I can see the faces of these men and boys lit only

by candlelight or kerosene lamps as they might be writing letters home or in their diaries and not knowing what lies ahead for Sunday, April 6, 1862. At 8:20 pm the rain begins and again I think of those lonely men preparing for battle and not realizing that many of them would not live to write home again. Their final night on earth." The next day Vollertsen wrote from the battlefield, "I am standing in the rain knowing this is where my great-great-grandfather and many brave men from both North and South were wounded or died. What am I feeling? I'm not quite sure, but I've never felt like this before."

Finally, we listen to a blend of voices in "Clothe Yourself in Fine Apparel: Mesquakie Costume in Word, Image, and Artifact." In the Summer 1991 *Annals of Iowa*, art historian Ruth B. Phillips writes extensively on the meaning of Mesquakie costume. This companion piece in the *Palimpsest*, inspired by her work, adds a visual dimension to Phillips's research and features voices of Native Americans and those European-Americans who had early encounters with them.

Each of these articles, then, presents a primary source, a first-hand account of Iowa history. One value of primary sources is that they offer texture to a historical event. They breathe life into it. They people it with individuals who disclose dreams and fears. Artifacts and photographs and artwork help us envision the environment in which these individuals lived. The words, especially when they are those of the participants or observers of the actual event, provide the voices, the dialogue.

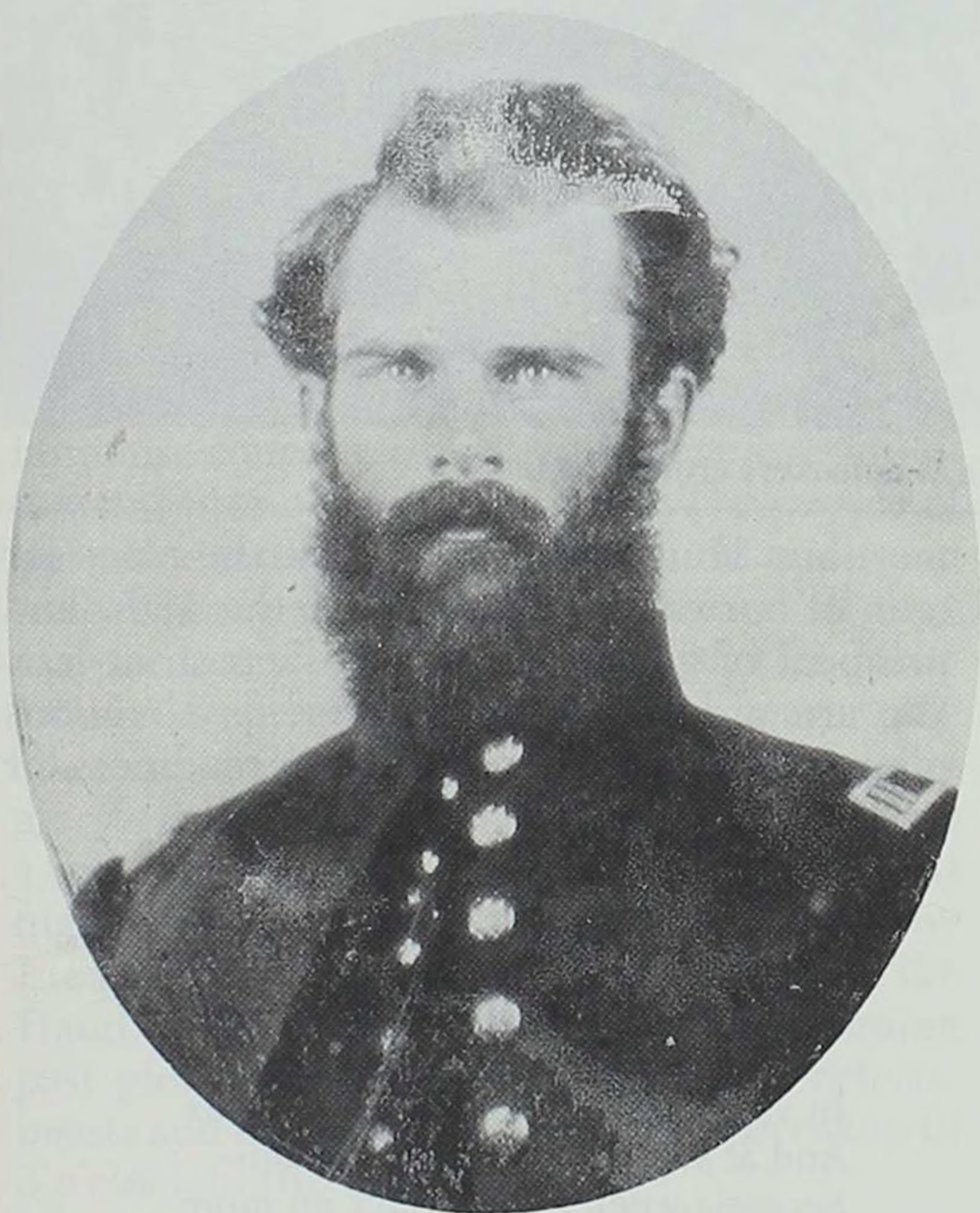
I offer here my continual thanks to all *Palimpsest* contributors who are curious about the past, who research and record that past, and who then share their findings on these pages, helping others connect with that past. In this issue in particular, I invite you to listen to the voices of an earlier Iowa.

— The Editor

'A Pretty Hard Business'

The Civil War Diary of Philip H. Goode

transcribed by Edward W. Vollertsen



Philip H. Goode's two-month diary includes his account of the April battle at Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh.

Camp Halleck, Keokuk, March 15, 1862

The 15th Regiment is still at Keokuk. After remaining Inactive some five months we are still at Keokuk but the time of our departure is at hand. The ice [that] has during so many months blockaded the river and cut off communications from below is almost gone. . . . A boat came up today within sight of town but after battering at the ice a while gave up the undertaking and went back. Our experience so far in military life has had neither hardships nor dangers connected with it but soon it will be different. We are going to the scene of conflict, there to face the enemy. How will we conduct ourselves? Will we be able to place the fame of our Regiment side-by-side with that of the glorious Iowa Second? I believe that it is the firm determination of all of us to act like men and like patriots and all of us feel a strong desire to prove our claim to merit on the field of battle.

But it is a serious thing to face death in any form. When I think of my own home, the dear wife and helpless little ones that I have left

Philip Hayes Goode was born February 7, 1835, in Madison, Indiana, to William H. Goode and Sarah Burfort Pearson. By 1856 the family had moved to Glenwood, Iowa, where Philip married Margaret F. Galeher on December 24. In October 1861 Philip joined Company F, 15th Regiment, Iowa Infantry. His diary ends the day after he resigned. Back in Glenwood, he published at least two issues of the *Mills County Standard*. On November 23, 1863, he reenlisted as a captain in the Fourth Independent Battery of Iowa Volunteer Artillery. After the war,

Goode worked as a lawyer. On February 27, 1877, he committed suicide.

In editing the diary and letters for publication here, some punctuation and capitalization were added for clarity and ease of reading. Spelling was corrected minimally. Beginning lines indicating date and place are here condensed to one italicized line. Brackets indicate editorial additions; ellipses mark omitted material. A complete copy is in the State Historical Society of Iowa library in Iowa City.

—The Editor



Soldiers on the *Bill Henderson* leave Bellevue, Iowa, in 1861 as onlookers crowd the bank.

behind, life is indeed sweet and I almost shrink from the uncertainty of a soldier's fate. This evening I have been looking to receive a letter from the one dearer than all others to me, my affectionate wife. I have not received it. My thoughts involuntarily turn in the direction of home. Shall I ever see those dear ones more? Or have I kissed them and spoken my farewell for the last time in this world? God alone knows and while I feel a strong desire to be spared to rear my own little ones and enjoy the sweet companionship of my wife I am equally desirous to do my duty as a citizen and as a soldier. I am not insensible to danger but I believe the man is truly brave who while he realizes the danger he incurs has nerve enough to do his duty. May the time soon come when the necessity for shedding blood will no longer exist in our beloved and once happy United Country.

Camp Halleck, Keokuk, Sunday, March 16, 1862

. . . The river is at last open and the *Hannibal City*, a Saint Louis packet, came up this evening. The *Die Vernon* is expected up tonight. It was announced to us on dress parade this evening that we will leave on Tuesday

morning. Hurrah for Dixie. Just the place for men of our caliber. "Bully" for the 15th, and prospect of getting down into Secesh at last. We are ordered to cook three days' rations tomorrow and have everything in readiness for marching.

In vain Secessia boasts her fair
 (sable hair)
 Their white-eyed beauties and their
 kinky hair
 In vain exalted chivalry she charms
 And at supremacy for cotton aims.
 Secessia weep thy chivalry no more
 Secessia weep king cotton's lost his power
 Tremble Secessia for thy boasted sway
 The mud sills armed are eager
 for the fray. . . .

Camp Halleck, Monday, March 17, 1862

Beautiful day. Arrangements for our departure are rapidly being made and the packing for removal is going on briskly. About noon we are informed that we can not get off tomorrow but will get off Wednesday morning. It is a disappointment to us. . . . I went to a concert tonight and after the concert to an oyster supper at the residence of H. H. Sullivan,

Esquire, now Sutler to our Regiment. Had a very pleasant time. All the officers . . . were there. Also, Lieutenant Charles J. Ball, 13th Regiment Infantry Regular Army.

The mumps have broken out among the 17th Regiment and I suppose they will go through ours.

I received a letter this morning from my dear wife. It was a very welcome one to me for I had not heard from her for more than a week. All well at home and for that I am thankful. I had almost omitted to state that we lost another man today. His name was Johnson from Fremont County, disease measles. He was buried at 4 p.m.

Camp Halleck, Tuesday, March 18, 1862

Our last day in Keokuk. It was announced to us this evening at dress parade that we will start without fail tomorrow. The boys appeared on dress parade with knap sacks, canteens, and haversacks. They made a good appearance. An immense concourse of citizens were assembled to witness our last dress parade. The people of this place have been very kind to us and seem to feel really sad at our departure. Well they may for many brave fellows will start for Dixie tomorrow never to return. Many hearts now "beating with high hope" and anticipating glory's achievements in a few months, perhaps a few weeks, "will molder cold and low." At night I attended an oyster supper given by Lieutenant Charles Ball and Captain Pike Hand to the officers of the 15th. The evening past pleasantly and livened by jokes, retorts, boasts and responses and we did not breakup til 3 o'clock in the morning.

Steamer Jeannie Deans, Mississippi River, March 19, 1862

. . . It commenced raining and continued to do so til 4 p.m. The men were drawn up in line in front of the quarters ready to start and at 4 precisely we embarked. Notwithstanding the mud and rain the street along the river was crowded with people to witness our departure and we feel assured that we carry with us the best wishes of the good people of Keokuk. . . .

Benton Barracks, March 20, 1862

At daylight this morning our steamer was

opposite Alton, Illinois and about 8 a.m. we reached Saint Louis. The 23rd Missouri Regiment arrived just in advance of us. . . . They gave us three rousing choruses as we past which were returned with interest by our boys. The 21st Missouri (Colonel Moore's) lay below us on the Steamer *J.C. Simms*. They had embarked for the "Land of Dixie" and are engaged in loading their luggage. About 10 a.m. we left the boat and formed in line on the levy, we marched through the city and out to Benton Barracks a distance of about four miles. . . . We were cheered on all sides and the windows were filled with ladies waving their handkerchiefs to us. . . .

Benton Barracks, March 21

. . . In the evening Captain Blackmar returned with a telegram from General Kirkwood announcing that our First Lieutenant James G. Day is commissioned Captain of Company C, Captain Simpson having resigned. This has been expected by us for some time. I received the appointment of First Lieutenant in place of Day. Tonight we held an election in our Company for Second Lieutenant. Our Ordinate Sergeant Job [Joe?] Throckmorton was elected almost unanimously. Speeches were made to the Company by Captain Day, myself and Lieutenant Throckmorton. After each of which the boys cheered loudly. . . . At 10 o'clock at night Captain Blackmar, Captain Day and myself went up to Colonel Reid's headquarters and announced the results of the elections and the Colonel wrote immediately to Governor Kirkwood applying for a commission for me as First Lieutenant and for Second Lieutenant.

The 16th Iowa Regiment landed from a steamer about dark tonight and attempted to make their way through the mud and rain to the barracks. They lost their way, wandered around and came in in small parties about 12 o'clock very muddy looking objects.

Benton Barracks, Saturday, March 22nd

. . . I this morning learned that a soldier was poisoned by eating an orange which he had purchased of a huckster woman. He was taken sick immediately after eating it and died before they could get him to the hospital. The orange

was examined and found to contain poison. There are hundreds of huckster women all through the barracks selling apples, oranges, cookies, pies but a man risks his life if he eats anything they sell. I wonder that the Commander allows them to come in at all.

This morning a soldier picked up an apple on the sidewalk and was about to eat it when he discovered that it was plugged on one side. The plug was drawn out and it was found that poison had been inserted. We will have to be very careful what we eat or will half of us be poisoned by this Secesh.

. . . Up to this time we have been boarding with the men, having as yet no cooking arrangements of our own. Today I commenced boarding with Colonel Sullivan (our Sutler). He has a "contraband" for a cook that does things up in very good shape. . . .

Benton Barracks, Sunday, 23rd

We are almost beginning to forget there is a Sabbath. At 9½ a.m. the Captain had not yet returned [from a trip to the city] and I took charge of the Company at inspection. The boys mostly spent the day playing ball. Our Chaplain remained in Keokuk in charge of the hospital where we left the sick of our Regiment so we can have no Regimental services. I'm sorry for

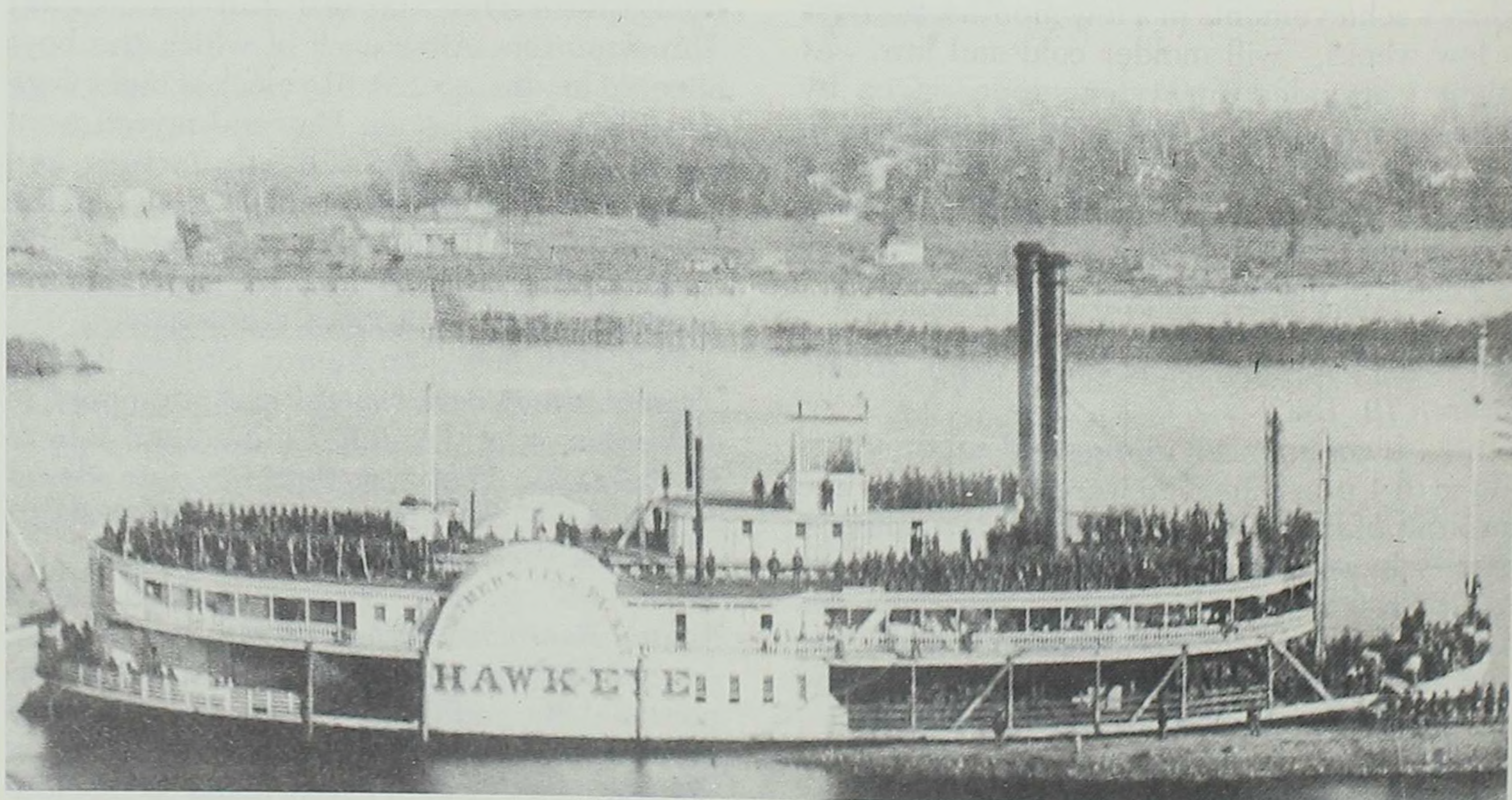
it for I think the boys begin to need some religious restraint.

A number of ladies came out today. I think of home, the dear wife and children that I left there and feel a strong inclination to give up military life and go home to the love ones that miss me there. But I believe duty calls me the other way. Oh how I will rejoice when the war is over and we get back to home comforts and better influences than those which now surround us. I fear the morals of the boys will suffer by the indolent life we have been leading. . . .

Benton Barracks, Monday, 24th

Weather cool and cloudy, mud beginning to dry up rapidly. It is reported this morning that one of the guards was shot last night by a concealed foe but I do not know as to its truth. . . . Morning Company drilled from 5:45 to 7 a.m. Squad drilled from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Battalion or Company drilled from 2 to 4 p.m. Dress parade is at sunset.

. . . We appeared on Dress Parade at Benton Barracks for the first time today. Our Regiment drew a large crowd of spectators and was unexpectantly pronounced the best in the barracks. A number of persons mistook us as regulars from the regularity and precision of our



The *Hawkeye State* carries troops to the South. Diarist Goode rode the steamboat *Minnehaha*.

drill. Not an officer in the Regiment but was proud of his men.

This evening a week has elapsed since I heard from home. What can be the matter? I can not but believe that my wife writes regularly but from some cause I get no letters from her. Well, soldier's luck. . . .

Tuesday, March 25th

. . . Major William H. English of the 4th Iowa Infantry was here today. He is just off the field and looks healthy. He brought 300 secesh prisoners taken at Pea Ridge. Our arms and tents arrived today. There is every indication that we will be expected to take the field soon. Our arms are the best quality of Springfield muskets. They will be distributed tomorrow. The character of the Iowa Regiments stands high here. . . .

Wednesday, March 26th

Day fine. Our wagons were brought out today. The mules also and drivers detailed from different Companies. Nothing else of note. No letter from home yet. I feel very much troubled about it. Can anything be the matter with my family?

Thursday, March 27th

Regiment drilling in the morning. Our drivers are actively engaged in breaking and training our mules. Our ammunitions arrived this morning. . . . About a dozen of the men we left at Keokuk in hospital came down. They reported three men from our Company dead, the rest recovering. The sick that we brought with us are recovering rapidly and the general health of the Regiment is much better than when we came here.

Friday, March 28th

. . . We are now well clothed, well armed and fully equipped for a march. In the afternoon we had hard thunder showers.

This evening on Dress Parade Colonel Dewy informed that we were under marching orders and we have orders to prepare as rapidly as possible. The armament was received with hardy cheers from the officers and men. We do not know where we will go but expect soon to be where fighting is going on. I have still had no

letter from home and I greatly fear that I will have to leave for the field without hearing any more from my dear family. . . . There are many privations connected with a soldier's life but the hardest thing for me to bear is the uncertainty of hearing from home. I hope all is right there. No one but the husband of a loving wife can appreciate the feeling of loneliness and anxiety that expresses me this evening. Good night dear wife, good night dear children. Should anything serious befall you it would break my heart. Well some time I hope to be with you again.

Saturday, March 29th

We learned this morning that we will start Tuesday morning. Our destination said to be Tennessee River to join General Grant's Command. All is excitement in the Regiment. . . .

Sunday, March 30th

. . . Received a letter from my wife at last dated March 14th, 15 days on the road. I hope I may not always have to wait so long for letters. Well it is some satisfaction to know that my family were well 15 days ago but it leaves a large margin for anxiety and suspense. Captain Blackmar and myself were busy a very late hour at night making up payroll reports and getting the Company books in order.

Monday, March 31st

Our last day at Benton Barracks. In all probability the next place we stop will be in the enemy's country. Everything is boxed up, marked and loaded in the wagons and on the way to the river. . . . Tis a tiresome business, this waiting for orders to move but it is part of a soldier's duty.

Steamer Minnehaha, Mississippi River, Tuesday, April 1st

. . . We had to wait for a long time before the call beat to fall into line which was at 11:25 a.m. Three other regiments, the Iowa 16th, the Missouri 23rd, and a Wisconsin Regiment also fell into line with us and marched down. Also five batteries of artillery. In all there was a column considerably over a mile long. We did not get on board til 2 p.m. and the boat did not start til 5 p.m. Four other boats go down the river with

us to take the other regiments and battery. We left landing first. Our boat the *Minnehaha* is a large boat and runs tolerably well but she is very heavily loaded and quite old. We are crowded together on board like so many hogs. It was with greatest difficulty that the officers could get state rooms. Shortly after dark while the boat was going at full speed . . . she struck a sandbar with so much force as to nearly throw down all who were standing in the cabin. I was somewhat apprehensive that she might be injured but she backed off and went ahead all right. About 9 p.m. one of her tiller ropes gave out and she had to run into shore to get it fixed. . . . When the boys went to bed the boat was literally covered with sleeping men. You could not walk through the cabin or around on the deck without stepping on them. . . .

Steamer Minnehaha, Mississippi River, Wednesday, April 2nd

When I waked this morning the boat was under way but I learned had not been long. . . . As I walk about over the boat I cannot help reflecting on the uncertainty of our fate as soldiers. I look round at the boys vigorous with health, young, full of hope and eager to meet the foe. How many of the boys will return, certainly not all. Then who will be the missing ones? Perhaps some of my best friends, perhaps myself. I feel sad when I think of the strong probability that ere a month many of us will sleep the sleep that knows no waking but so we will die gloriously and fill a soldier's grave. It is comparatively easy when prostrated by disease and suffering intense physical pain to look on death with resignations as a relief from present ills, but when the man healthy and vigorous with many ties to bind him to life thinks seriously of the subject he cannot but feel a strong desire to live if not incompatible with the interests of his country.

. . . About 7 p.m. we passed Cape Girardeau, Mo. where several battles were fought between Jeff Thompson and our forces. The place is still fortified and from the boat we could distinctly see the heavy earthworks and the cannon peeping over the embrasures. A gun was fired for us to round, to which of course we did without delay as the 2nd gun would have carried a shot.

. . . Just as we were turning from the Mississippi to come into the Ohio we were very nearly run down by a steam tug. . . . Night before last there was a very heavy storm at and above Cairo. At Cairo nearly all the steam and wharf boats were blown across the river and several sunk. . . . While we were there the Steamer *Illinois* came in without her chimneys, having lost them overboard in the storm. Her decks were broken in and the cabin almost totally destroyed. Other boats showed symptoms of having suffered severely. There are a number of cannons at Cairo but no fortifications. . . . I saw a great number of large bomb shells, grape canister, and roundshot on the wharf boat. I laid in some provisions such as crackers, cheese, and bologna sausage for the trip ahead of us.

Steamer Minnehaha, Ohio River, April 3rd

Started from Cairo about 8 a.m. The Ohio River is very high and quite muddy, is not the dear tranquil stream it generally is but I feel a strange attachment to it. It is the stream near which I was born and many of the happiest hours of my childhood were spent upon its banks. But my present trip up it is a sad one, sad because I can not help thinking of the very melancholy circumstances which occasions it. About 4 p.m. reached Paducah, Kentucky which is just at the mouth of the Tennessee River. The boat had considerable amount of freight for this place and remained over night. I took a stroll through the city. It is a place of 8,000 inhabitants and once fortified . . . but it is now in the hands of the Union men. Nothing however but the presence of our troops keeps the Rebels in line. The place is full of them. The people generally look sulky and dissatisfied, very much as if they are under the influence of bayonets and would cut our throats if they could. I enjoyed it hugely for I have suffered from them when they had power. Now their own mouths are closed and I must say their vexation is only half concealed. I like to hear them holler for the Union when they hate to but they are afraid to do anything else.

Saint Louis as well as Cairo is under martial law but one does not realize it as fully as at Paducah. In Paducah armed sentinels pass the streets day and night. Half the houses in the



April 6: "Reached this place about 4:30 a.m. Soon after daylight a heavy cannonading was heard on our line. . . . Ammunition was served out and we started for the scene of action." Above: Pittsburg Landing.

place have guards before the door. The churches are closed so far as the legitimate use is concerned and transformed into hospitals or arsenals. Business is entirely suspended and fine hotels and business blocks are used for hospitals or some other government purpose. There seems to be a reign of terror in the place. In the evening I had the pleasure of hearing an address from Honorable Ethridge of Tennessee. . . . His language was strong and forceable and I never heard such a skating as the Rebels got and the beauty of it all was there were many present to hear it and they had to submit for Uncle Sam's boys were there. . . .

Steamer Minnehaha, Tennessee River, Friday, April 4th

Did not leave Paducah til evening. I saw large stacks of guns, a great quantity of clothing and ammunition and several pieces of artillery that were taken from the Rebels at Fort Donelson. All were marked CSA. A report reached us this morning that a fight is already going on between our forces and the Rebels at or near Corinth. . . .

Steamer Minnehaha, Tennessee River, Saturday, April 5th

This morning our four day rations which the men prepared before leaving Benton Barracks were exhausted. They had enough for breakfast but have had nothing since but dry crackers and it is now 2 p.m. Quite early this morning we passed Fort Henry. . . . It is a low flat piece of ground with no defenses but earth works. The buildings are small log cabins and show the marks of the bomb shells. Our troops do not use them but are quartered in tents. I was anxious to get off and pick up some relics of the battle but had not time. . . . The boat lay by for about two hours. At night a guard of 60 men was detailed and stationed on the hurricane deck to act in case we were fired into. No disturbance.

Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, Sunday, April 6, 1862

Reached this place about 4:30 a.m. Soon after daylight a heavy cannonading was heard on our line and we were ordered to take the field. We were drawn up in line, ammunition



FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED FAMOUS LEADERS AND BATTLE SCENES OF THE CIVIL WAR (1896)

At Pittsburg Landing: "Horses and men dropped on all sides." Goode's regiment lost thirty-two commissioned officers.

was served out and we started for the scene of action. We were led into an ambush and the Regiment suffered severely. They held their ground gallantly under a galling fire from the front and right flank. Our Colonel, Major and Adjutant were wounded. The Lieutenant Colonel had his horse shot under him, Captain Blackmar was disabled by a shot from a cannon ball and taken off the field. I took command. I received a shot in my right hand which shattered my one finger and otherwise disabled my hand. A Regiment over to the right of us broke and ran, then another, then our Regiment began to retreat Company at a time and at last all went, our Company being one of the last to leave the field. In our Company we lost three killed, 14 wounded, one mortally, two dangerously. The Regiment lost 32 commissioned officers in the fight, 2 were killed, 15 wounded and 2 of the wounded taken prisoners.

At the river our Regiment rallied and went back and maintained their position during the fight. I was unable to go back. There were some dozen large steam boats at the landing. The ground was covered all around the landing with wounded and dying who had been brought in. I went on board the *Minnehaha*. Surgeons so busy I could not get my hand dressed. Ah, the

sights on that boat. Men mangled in every conceivable way groaning and many of them yielding up their last breath. I sat on top of the boat and watched the progress of the battle. The gun boats *Tylor* and *Lexington* were just above us in the river and thru shells into the enemy. As night closed in the firing ceased and the report came in that we were gaining ground on the enemy. I suffered too much to sleep. Spent the night up in the pilot house of the boat. Rained hard all night. One of the gun boats occasionally thru a shell into the enemy to keep them uneasy and to soldiers from time to time fired random shots.

Pittsburg, Monday, April 7, 1862

Early in the morning the firing commenced again in earnest. Buell's men had come in during the night and were largely reinforced. Our boys went back with a will and firing with telling effect on the enemy. I had one of my fingers amputated. The boat without my being aware of it left the landing and started for Savannah seven miles below to leave the sick so I was unintentionally taken along. The sick and the wounded were taken off at Savannah and placed in tents. . . . I spent the night on shore in a tent. Rained all night.

Pittsburg Landing, April 8, 1862

This morning early I got aboard the boat to return to Pittsburg but the boat did not start until 10 a.m. . . . We learned that the Rebels were defeated with great loss and were being hotly pursued by our cavalry. . . .

Pittsburg, Tennessee, Wednesday, April 9, 1862

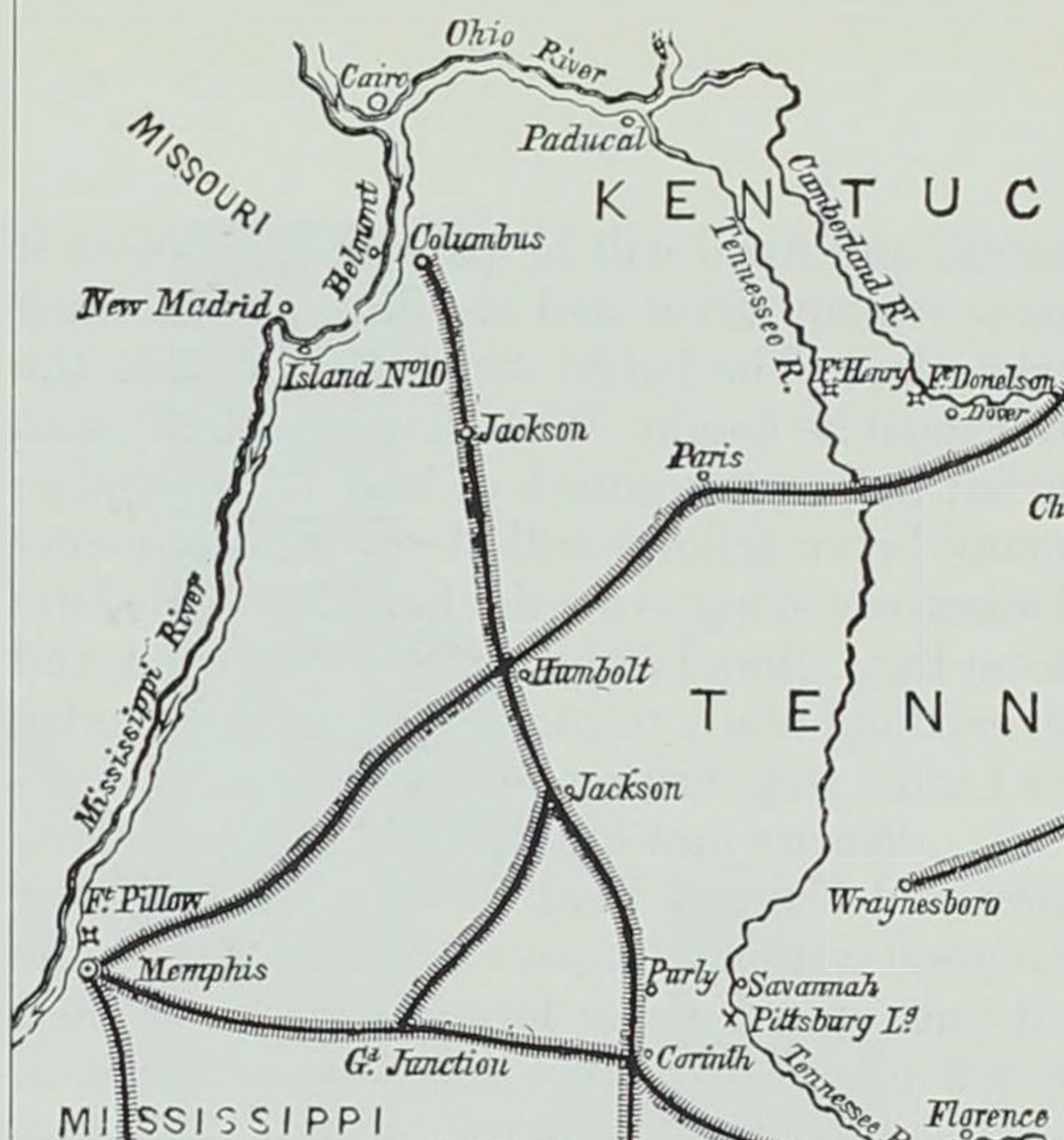
Got a place for some of our sick on the boat to be taken to the hospital. Sent the rest to camp. About noon went out to camp myself, found our tents just arriving. The boys had been sleeping in the rain without blankets or tents. I had tents put up immediately but we had to sleep in the mud without blankets.

Pittsburg, Thursday, April 10th

Moved our camp about 200 yards to dry piece of ground. Great many of the boys sick. Rained nearly all day.

Sunday, April 13th

Weather fine. I had the boys open the tents and spread their blankets to dry. A great deal of artillery was taken out during the day to worry the enemy positions. We will undoubtedly have another battle within a few days. Dress parade again this evening. Rained some during the night.

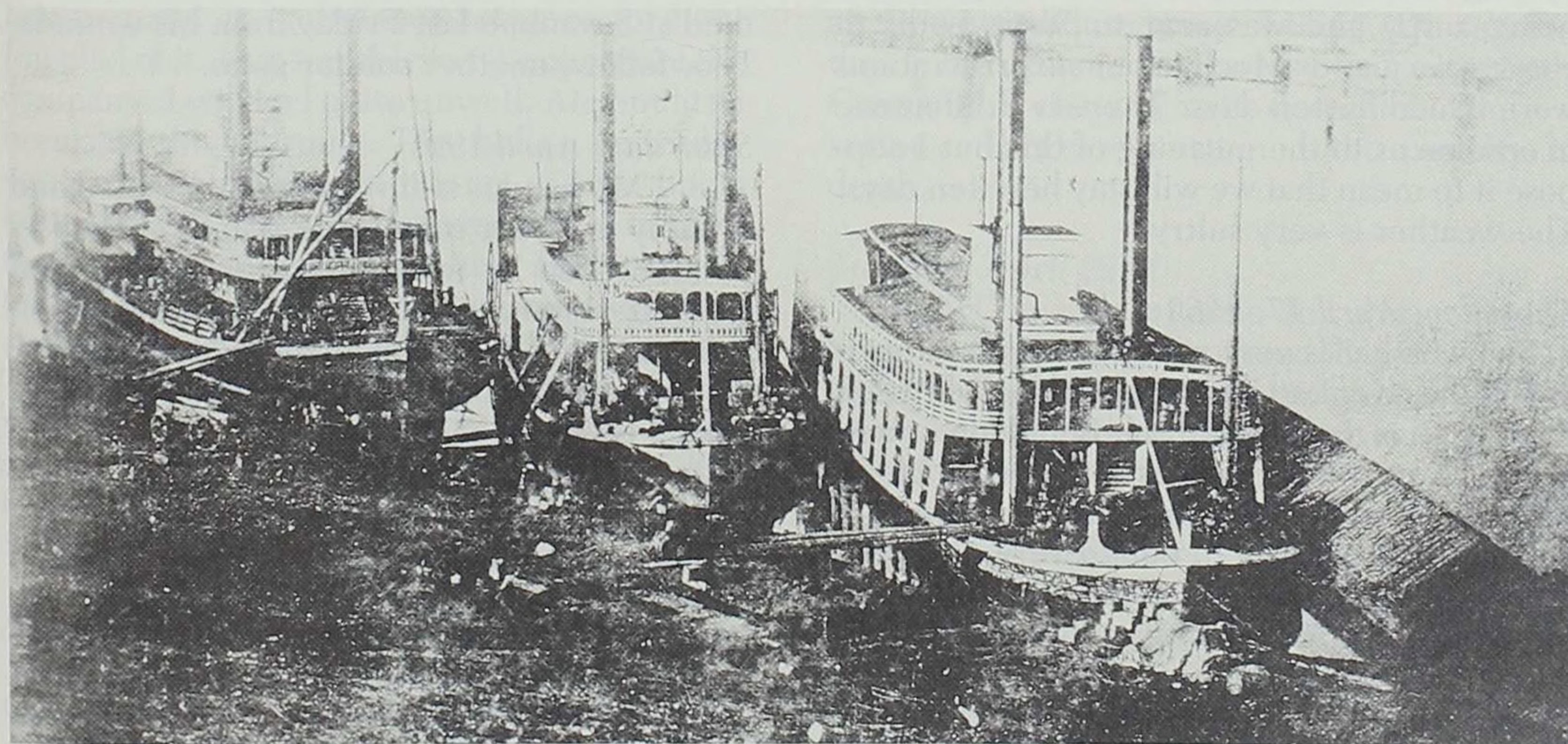


Monday, April 14, 1862

. . . Artillery still passing us all day. The battle can't be far off and to judge from our preparation the victory can't be doubtful. It is reported that 2,500 Rebel prisoners were brought in this evening. Eighteen Rebel deserters came into camp this evening. Said they had been pressed into service and that they were Union men. They took the oath of allegiance and were mustered into U.S. Service.

Tuesday, April 15th

The middle of the month but little over two



April 6 entry: "There were some dozen large steam boats at the landing. The ground was covered all around . . . with wounded and dying who had been brought in." This photo, taken a few days later, shows Grant's headquarters boat, the *Tigress* (center). The gun boat *Tylor*, barely visible here, is docked on the opposite shore.

weeks and April will be passed, but before it passes many great and startling events must take place. The battle which is to decide the war must be fought. We will undoubtedly gain it but before the month of May is ushered in many brave fellows will sleep the sleep that knows no waking. An order has just reached me from the Colonel to have the tents struck and everything ready to move by 11 o'clock today so I must stop writing and go to work.

. . . We are now in General McKean's Division and Colonel Reid, his Brevet Brigadier General commanding our Brigade. We are the advance guard of our forces and are within a half a mile of the picket line. When I begin to write I never know what the roll will call us into line before I get through. Our present camp is a beautiful place, dry and comfortable. A great many of the Rebels killed in battle were buried here. One grave is right at the corner of our tent and others scattered all around. . . . It may be well to state that Colonel Reid does not owe his elevation to any brilliant conduct on the field but to the fact that he is Senior Colonel, verifying the adage "the bigger the foot the better the luck."

Wednesday, April 16, 1862

This morning a Rebel was taken prisoner lurking inside our lines. He was suspected of being a spy and was sent to Saint Louis in charge of a guard. Much to our surprise rations were issued for ten days. There is a difference of opinion as to the meaning of this but I suppose it to mean that we will stay here ten days. The weather is very sultry.

Thursday, April 17, 1862

The weather is very warm. Troops are passing up the river and it is supposed by many that the design is to surround the Rebel forces and compel a surrender with as little loss of life as possible. The Secesh buried at the corner of our tent is beginning to emit a very disagreeable odor. We had some more dirt thrown on him today. I suppose he was not put more than a foot under ground. That is the way the boys buried them. Our own men they put a little deeper and stick up a board to mark the spot. Our Sutler who has been at the river moved out today. I had been doing without tobacco for

several days. Went out and got supply for chewing and smoking. Also got a bottle of lemon syrup and a jar of damson's preserves. I have felt as if I was almost starved for something better than hard bread and fat meat. Oh, well soldiering is a pretty hard business just at the present but I guess we can stand it, til we get the Secesh disposed of any how. My hand is slowly getting better. The inflammation is subsiding but it is not healing much. Yesterday received a letter from my wife urging me to resign. Several days previous I received one of a similar character. What shall I do? The reasons she gives for my coming home are good ones. My family is helpless and without friends. They need me at home but I can not resign honorably while there is daily probability of a battle. I have promised her that as soon as the active duties of the campaign are over I will resign, go home and leave family no more. I think the time is at hand when the hard fighting of the war will be over. . . .

Friday, April 18th

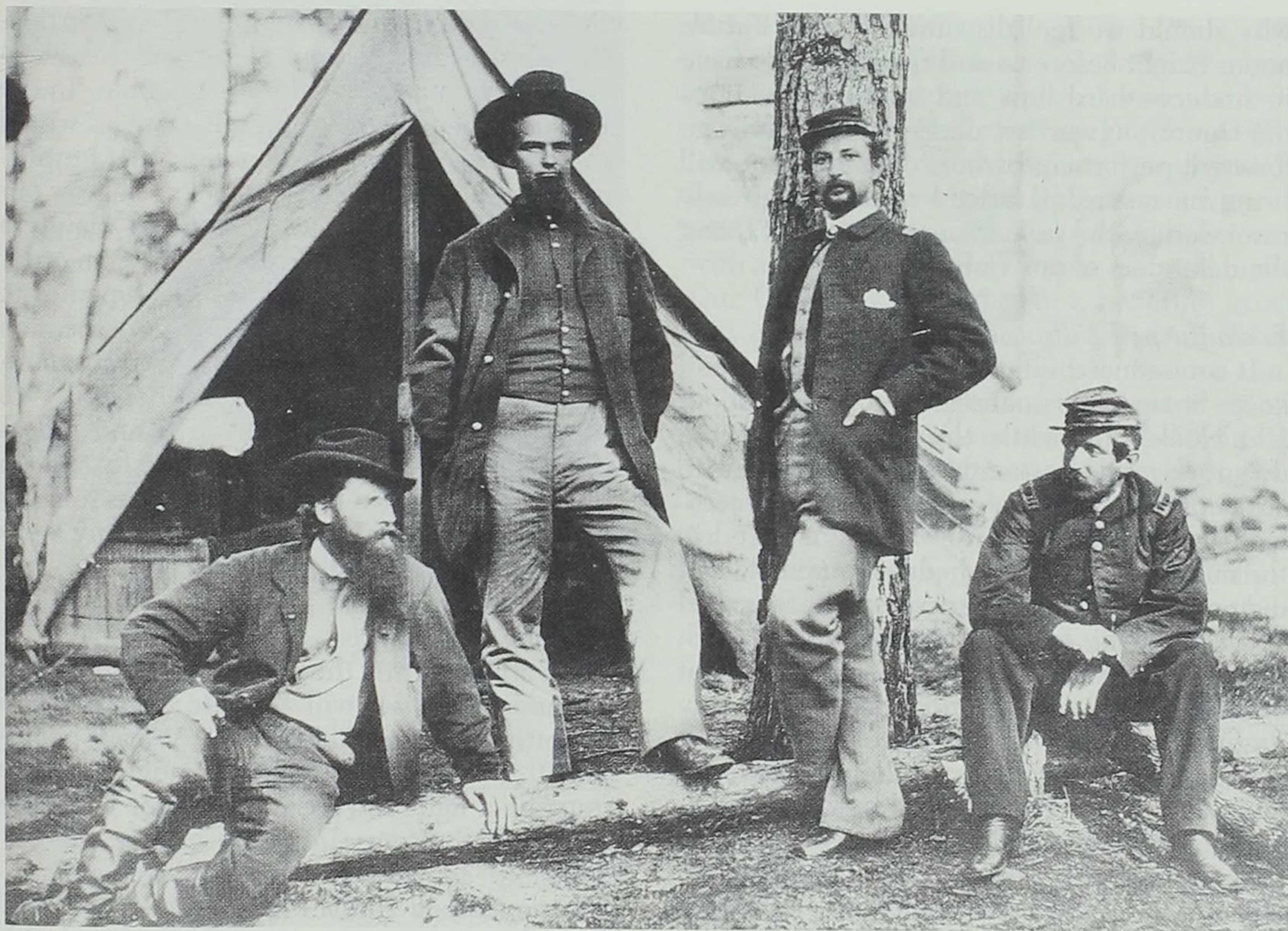
. . . Lieutenant Throckmorton and myself spent the morning making out lists of the clothing, pay for the boys of our Company who are wounded or sick and detached from the Company. I learned yesterday that S. W. Scott, one of our boys who was wounded in the battle, died at Savannah last Friday from his wounds. Poor fellow, another soldier gone. . . .

Saturday, April 19th

. . . My hand is still very much disabled and is likely to be for some time. General Wood's Division said to number 8,000 men moved forward yesterday and took up their position half a mile in advance of us so we are no longer on the post. Major Belknap has been placed in charge of a Wisconsin Regiment. . . .

Sunday, April 20th

The Holy Sabbath Day but one would hardly realize it's here. I had wholly forgotten it myself until I was reminded of it by another person. Every day is alike to soldiers. Two weeks ago today the Battle of Pittsburg commenced. What will another two weeks bring forth. It is still raining and very muddy. It is reported that Captain Blackmar is at Pittsburg



Goode writes, "No one but he who has tried it knows the privations and hardships of the soldiers. They richly deserve the nation's gratitude." Here, Union camp, 1863.

Landing and an ambulance has gone for him. I'm glad of it. I am not able to take charge of the company. I will feel quite unwell. Ate but little breakfast this morning. Day before yesterday some Secesh fired into one of our boats between this place and Savannah. Three of them were captured. General Halleck sentenced them to death and I suppose they were shot yesterday but I did not learn certainly. This will probably make the Rebels a little more careful what they shoot at. Captain Blackmar arrived in the evening but is wholly unable for duty. I am still quite unwell. Eat no supper. Still raining hard.

Monday, April 21st

Still raining. I am detailed Officer of the Guard. This is what comes of reporting for duty. Well I have learned something. . . . Some of our boys are quite sick. They get no attention whatever from the surgeon. I am

afraid we shall lose some of them. During the day I am called on to arrest two men from Company B charged with desertion. Quite a serious charge, if sustained the penalty is death. . . .

Tuesday, April 22nd

Report myself unable for duty. Quite unwell, eat hardly anything. Reported that General Pope has arrived with about 20,000 reinforcements and as many more to arrive in a few days.

Thursday, April 24th

Still quite unwell. . . . The boys are excused from drill today and are busy washing their clothes. A great many of the boys are sick and the blues seem to be prevalent among officers and men. I believe that if the boys were at home feeling as they do now it would be a hard matter to get them into the service again. But

why should we feel discouraged? The future opens bright before us and though we do have to undergo hardships and endure privations our Country is worth it all. Let us cheerfully go forward, perform our whole duty and time will bring our reward, if indeed we are not already rewarded by the proud consciousness of being the defenders of our Country. . . .

Friday, April 25th

It commenced raining during the night and keeps it up with unabated vigor. . . . About 10 o'clock p.m. while the rain was pouring down and mud all around we received orders to strike our tents and be ready to move immediately. . . . Our Company wagon got mired in the mud and everything had to be unloaded. It did not get in til nearly dark, then our tents had to be pitched, suppers cooked and all such things done. Our situation was anything but agreeable, sleeping in mud on a cold rainy night. I was still quite unwell myself but walked over rather than ask the dignitaries of our Regiment a chance to ride, though I was fairly entitled to it. Soldiering is bad enough at best but is made worse by the negligence of officers whose only apparent use is to ornament the Regiment and draw salaries. They seem to consider the highest crime known under military law and I believe are glad when the sick die so they are relieved from the trouble. Well we are fast finding out some of our officers that we supposed to be men [? End of sentence missing.]

Saturday, April 26th

. . . The whole Brigade . . . is now being inspected by some very ornamental looking gentleman whom I presume to be General and staff. Well it is but little use to be a dog unless you can be a big dog. After inspection of arms and accoutrements the Company books were called for and were examined. Ours were pronounced "well Kept." . . .

Sunday, April 27th

The morning dawned clear and pleasant. After Company inspection in the morning our Chaplain held divine services in front of field officers quarters. He read at length some passages of scripture and offered some well timed

and sensible comments on them. I was particularly interested. I suppose we will have services every Sunday when it is possible. In the afternoon he called together as many as would come and held prayer meeting. This he purposed to do several times a week. I believe our Chaplain is a good man and he is plainly a working man. After tatoon at night . . . an order was sent around to Captains of Companies to inspect the arms and accoutrements of the men and see that they were supplied with ammunition as a night attack was apprehended. We roused the men from their beds and did as ordered, gave the men the order to rest on their arms and went to bed and slept as soundly and dreamed as sweetly as if no enemy were within a thousand miles of us.

Monday, April 28th

No attack during the night. I think there will be none, but we will have to march on to Corinth if we want to fight. . . . We are beginning to get tired of waiting. We know that there must be a fight and we want it over with, the sooner the better.

Tuesday, April 29th

Early in the morning the road was lined with troops all taking the road to Corinth. Brigade after brigade of infantry, squadrons after squadrons of cavalry and battery after battery of artillery crowded along the road during the entire day. Cannonading was heard in the direction of Corinth. About 10 o'clock the long roll was beat and the whole Brigade was called into line. I was quite weak and the Colonel sent me an order to take command of the guard, relieve Lieutenant Throckmorton then in command and let him take charge of the Company. Our men were ordered to stack arms and get their canteens filled and 24 hour rations in their haversacks and be ready to fall into line at the tap of the drum. This they did and at about 1 p.m. were given "forward march." I remained in charge of the camp. We supposed at the time that a decided advance on Corinth was intended. We afterwards learned our Brigade was sent out to support General Lewis Wallace who had made an attack on Purdy (a small town west of Corinth) to destroy the Memphis Railroad. After marching about



HARPER'S PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR (1866)

"May the time soon come," Goode begins his diary, "when the necessity for shedding blood will no longer exist in our beloved and once happy United Country."

10 miles they were informed that General Wallace had succeeded without them and ordered "right about march" and returned to camp. It was already night so they encamped for the night. As Officer of the Guard I had a pretty hard tour. Lay out on the wet ground until 9 o'clock when I felt very unwell and at the risk of arrest I went to my tent and laid down with my clothes still on giving the Sergeant orders to call me if I was needed. . . .

Wednesday, April 30th

Our Regiment got in about 10 a.m. very tired. . . . I omitted to state yesterday that S. G. Bridges, a jeweler from Keokuk and a particular friend of the Regiment, arrived here with a magnificent silk flag, his own gift to the Regiment. Such kindness touches our hearts for it shows us that we have friends [who] are watching our movements with deep interest and are not willing to believe any slanderous report put in circulation against us. Mr. Bridges took our old flag back with him to present to the State Historical Society. Its tattered condition will be a sufficient evidence that we have been where balls flew thick and fast. . . .

May 1, 1862

Started early this morning, weather pleasant, moved about four miles. I was unable to march with the Regiment so I took my own time. I stopped to rest frequently and got into camp about noon very much exhausted. . . . I passed a restless night and [was] threatened with a bilious attack, have quite a few all night. Our Company ground is in a beautiful grove and our march was through pleasant, shady trees without any under brush. But we can't enjoy it. Our movements are restricted within narrow limits and if any time we feel tempted to let our systems relax and give ourselves up to enjoy the pleasures of the scenery or of the cool refreshing breeze the brief stern word of command and from some part of the camp recalls us to the fact that we are soldiers in an enemy's country. . . . No one but he who has tried it knows the privations and hardships of the soldiers. They richly desire the nation's gratitude.

Friday, May 2nd

Weather still pleasant. We have for a time been attached to a Brigade, commanded temporarily by Colonel Crocker of the Iowa 13th and composed of four Iowa Regiments. . . . We had been in General McKean's Division but now in General Sherman's (Port Royal Sherman). I am quite unwell and taking medicine today. I have to get back up and fix it for myself and I can not help thinking that if I were at home the careful hand of my wife would prepare it and I might rest myself in bed. But here we must work sick or well. . . . We are said to be within seven and a half miles of Corinth. The next move will perhaps take us within cannon range and then the work of devastation and death will commence. Who will survive that bloody contest no one knows and it is not unlikely that this may be the last that I shall ever write in this journal. But if I should fall I want my family to know that I have tried faithfully to discharge my duty and the heinous pain that I suffer in view of the uncertainty is when I think of them. . . . If we succeed at Corinth as we hope to I can not see how it is possible for the war to last much longer. . . . It may not be out of place to mention that since the Battle of Pittsburg I have only once taken



Wounded soldiers from the Battle of the Wilderness. As at Shiloh, Union and Confederate casualties were high.

my clothes off to sleep. I hardly think I shall know how to behave myself if ever I get back home.

Monday, May 6th [5th?]

Since last Friday I have been unable to write and am still quite feeble. We moved our camp seven miles on Saturday. I walked the entire distance. It was too much for me and completely prostrated me. On our route we passed through deserted Rebel camps. They left in such haste that they left blankets, mattresses, clothing, provisions and ammunition in large quantities. Saturday evening General Pope took Farmington, a small town some four miles from Corinth with 1,500 prisoners. . . . We are . . . at Monterey where Beauregard dated his dispatch to General Grant asking permis-

sion to come and bury his dead. The whole country is swarming with soldiers all on the move and everything indicates that a strike will very soon be made. . . .

Sunday, May 11, 1862

I have again been compelled by the state of my health to neglect my journal. Since writing the last I was taken way from camp and brought to the place where I have much better care taken of me. I am still quite weak. Have to walk with a stick and keep to my bed the greater part of the time. Captain Blackmar is here laid up with his back. Yesterday the order came to break up this hospital. The sick will be taken down the river, the convalescent will be taken to Hamburg some miles above and those able will return to camp. . . . Yesterday fighting

was going on all day with the enemy on the left of our lines. Reports say we had 150 men wounded.

Yesterday I sent in my resignation as First Lieutenant and asked a discharge from the service. I doubt whether it will be accepted. It has caused me a struggle to do this but I believe it is best. I am not able for duty, have not been and not likely to be. It is of no use for me to stay doing nothing while my system is running down all the time. The weather is getting intensely hot and water is getting scarce. Good water we have never had in Tennessee.

Tuesday, May 13th, 1862

Still unwell but better than I have been. I am quite weak and afraid that my back will fail entirely. I am very anxious to hear from camp. I think I shall go out and report for duty the first chance. I will probably have one today or tomorrow. Got three letters last night from my wife and from my sister and one from my friend Noah. I must answer some of them this morning. The weather is very hot, hot enough for July up in Iowa.

The report this evening is that Corinth is evacuated. If so there will be another general movement of the Army. . . .

Wednesday, May 14, 1862

Morning fine but very warm. The mosquitoes trouble me. . . . I have had no chance to get to camp. Have just returned from the bedside of one of our sick, Marion Harman. He has typhoid fever I think is out of his head and will not recover I greatly fear. Poor fellow, he has a wife and children at home whose hopes for life will in great measure be blasted. . . .

Thursday, May 15th

. . . Weather warm and roads very dusty. On the road [back to camp] saw 16 teams of six mules each run away and cause a general smash up. . . . I found that our men had been called into line of battle. . . . After waiting under arms for about four hours word was received that Corinth had been evacuated and they were ordered back to camp and dismissed. They broke ranks with a shout. . . . Resignation I sent in some days since was never placed in the Colonel's hands and I this evening wrote

out a new one and handed it in. I think it will succeed but I can not know with certainty for several days. There can certainly be no dishonor attached to resigning when after facing the enemy six weeks expecting a battle we find them gone and no probability of a fight. . . .

Friday, May 16th

A heavy firing is heard in the morning and we begin to indulge some suspicions that Corinth is not evacuated after all. We have orders for our Regiment to be ready at 9 o'clock with one day's rations to go out on picket guard, but from the heavy firing we expect a general engagement. . . . Are close enough as we lie in the open air to hear the Rebel drums and rattling of the cars on the track. . . .

Saturday, May 17th

. . . A heavy firing begins and is kept up with but little intermission during the afternoon. It seems to extend along the whole line and we suppose the engagement to be general. . . . We suffer very much during the afternoon from heat and want of water. We camp at night in line of battle with two lines in front and two in the rear of us. The artillery which we are to support is just in front of us. We suppose a battle to be fairly begun and expected to be followed up tomorrow. Lie on our arms all night. I still have a dim suspicion that the enemy have mostly evacuated Corinth, leaving only a sufficient force to retard our progress until the main force gets well out of the way. . . .

Sunday, May 18th

I awake very much refreshed and in place of being roused by the roar of cannon and the music of long roll everything is quiet. Everything looks as if we might have a very peaceful Sabbath day. I hope it may be so. I think the soldier, harassed as he is by uncertainty and kept in a continual state of doubt, should have one day of rest. There is not even picket firing. . . . I can get no definite information in reference to the fighting yesterday. Suppose I will know nothing until I see it in the papers. That is the way we are generally informed in regard to our own movements. The fatigue party sent out this morning are engaged in

building breastworks in front of our lines. Forces are still being moved up from our rear. Every movement seemed to be made with utmost caution as if there were a certainty that the enemy were in Corinth and an attack on us anticipated. The artillery horses are constantly kept harnessed and saddled. All this does not convince me that there will be a fight but only that General Halleck does not know exactly whether the enemy have gone or not and he does not intend to be surprised. We all have the utmost confidence in him. I wish we could say the same of all the officers under him.

. . . If I had my resignation back I should not send it for some days as the time I handed it in I thought Corinth evacuated and no chance for a fight for some time to come, perhaps not at all.

As it is I am badly situated. My resignation is probably by this time approved but will perhaps not reach me for a day or two. If I go into battle and get wounded or taken prisoner my pay will be stopped because I will no longer belong to the Army. Should I be killed or disabled for life, suppose I or my heirs would be entitled to no pension as I will be out of the service at the time and not entitled to pensions other than a citizen going into battle. I am in a state of suspense. . . . If my dear family were only provided for I have no disposition to quit the service. . . .

Comments: Colonel Reid informed me that . . . if I got into engagement before I received acceptance of my resignation my pension is alright and I will stand as if I had not tendered my resignation so if there is a battle, here goes.

Monday, May 19th

Had another first rate night's rest. Yesterday evening late we were ordered carefully to inspect the guns of our men and see that they had 50 rounds of ammunition, two days' rations ahead and prepared for an early march this morning. . . . It is now just 5:30 a.m. . . . I have had no breakfast. Am sitting on the trunk writing on a box and smoking my pipe. I am in a state of great suspense. I have heard that my resignation is returned accepted. I do not know whether this is true if it is in the Adjutant's hands and I will have not been notified of it. I would like to know the truth. I am the third officer in the Regiment who has resigned.

Another Captain sent in his resignation last night makes the fourth. In less than one month I believe half of the officers in the Regiment all resigned. . . . We had just got our wagons loaded when an order came that the orders to move had been countermanded and we must unload. This we began to do when another order came to let things remain as they were for a time and wait orders. In a few moments the Major came around, ordered us to get our Companies formed as the enemy were advancing on us. This we immediately did. The wagons with the Company property were ordered back to the rear. Additional details were made to work on the breastworks. After forming our Companies we waited some time, no further orders were given. We ordered our men to stack arms and the rest but be ready to fall in at a moment's notice. In this position we waited the supposed advance of the enemy all day. But they didn't come. In the evening our tents were brought back. While we were engaged putting them up the enemy advanced throwing shell at us with the intention I suppose of ascertaining our position. They all fell far short of us but sufficiently near to wake up some of our large siege guns which I think the Rebels soon found to be a hornets' nest. Their shells burst immediately after the report of the guns. I sat down on the knapsack, took out my watch and timed ours. The most of them exploded in from 7 to 8 seconds after report of the gun. Some burst in 5 seconds, some went 12 seconds, long enough to carry them three miles and I have no doubt they did execution. It was rather a cool piece of business sitting down to time shells but a soldier gets to be cool. In the evening we had Dress Parade with as much unconcern as if nothing was going on. . . . One circumstance during the day which I must mention. While I had our Company drawn up and was at my place in front Colonel Reid came up three times with orders and in every case gave them to the Second Lieutenant. I know Reid dislikes me and I can only regard it as a deliberate insult. I felt inclined to go to my tent and stay there at the risk of an arrest. The more I thought of the matter the more I did not like it and at last I went to him. Said I, Colonel don't you intend me to command our Company today? Said he, you can do as you please about

it. I told him that I had formed the Company and expected to go out with them, but that when he came around to give orders he gave them to the Second Lieutenant when I considered myself Commander of the Company. Said I, I did not understand it, it looked as if you did not recognize me as Company Commander. Said he, I did not see you. I do not know whether this is the truth or not but I had to be satisfied with it. In the evening I was detailed Officer of the Guard, whether as a favor or as a punishment for my impudence I am unable to say. Well it will not be long that I will be under his power. . . .

Thursday, May 20th

. . . . The cars at Corinth seem to be unusually busy this morning running to and fro and whistling all the time. I should not be surprised if the Secesh are getting away as fast as possible, but can't tell. . . . Got three letters in the evening, two from my dear wife and one from my Father. No stir of any kind.

Wednesday, May 21st

Orders issued early this morning to be prepared with two days' rations in their haversacks and be ready to march at moment's notice. . . . We may have a fight or may not. . . . I am almost getting tired of this continued suspense. We know nothing 10 minutes ahead but that is one of the trials incident to a soldier's life. If we do get into a battle and I fall, good bye my dear wife and children. If I [die], I die loving you as I have always loved you, only it seems to me more fervently. It seems to me I could die more cheerfully if I could only see you a few moments to speak a few loving words to you, but Dear I have to leave it to you to imagine what I feel and what I would say for I cannot express the multitude of emotions that come crowding on my mind. But this much I assure you, I am not afraid to die for my country. Good bye dear, good bye. May God take care of you and the little ones. 12½ o'clock.

Not gone out yet, think it doubtful whether we do today. . . . Report says that the firing this morning was caused by a Rebel Battery throwing a shell into our lines and killing three men. Our guns opened out on the Rebels who incontinently skidaddled leaving some say

three, some say five guns, which we forthwith and due regard to the rights of property took possession of. Everything seems calm now. I go to bed early. Get a good night's rest. I have been regularly sleepy headed for 4 or 5 nights. I can sleep soundly and comfortably with the guns booming all around and the comfortable reflections staring me in the face that a shell may enter our camp at any time and very unceremoniously disturb my slumber. Well so long as they don't come I shall not mind it.

Thursday, May 22nd

Morning dawned clear and bright. The night was cool and heavy dew fell. . . . This morning there was a heavy firing heard, some cannonading just before reveille. The bugle of the artillery near us sounded the alarm and called to harness. Our drums made a mistake and in place of beating an alarm, beat the reveille. So our orderlies called the men into line, called roll and dismissed them.

The firing stopped and they were allowed to remain dismissed. I slept through all and did not wake till an hour or so afterward. . . . I do not much apprehend a fight unless the Rebels attack us which I hardly think they will have the impudence to do. If they try it once I think they will get their sufficiency of it. . . . General Halleck seems to understand his business. He is very cautious. He intends to have Corinth and will have it and the Rebel Army too unless they take the back track but I think he intends to take his own time. I have eaten my breakfast and finished my smoke. The boys, as many of them as can raise a pipe full of tobacco, are standing around smoking and talking. Others are smoking moss which they pick off the bodies of decayed trees, an article now frequently called into requisition by the smokers of our Regiment. Some pronounce it an excellent substitute for tobacco. I have never tried it myself. An irresistible laziness has taken possession of me during the last few days. If there is in the camp a lazier man than myself I would like to have him trotted out. I am really anxious to see him.

[*End of diary. More candid accounts of Shiloh and the Civil War continue on the next page.*]

'My Dear Wife'

A Soldier's Letters

Written by Philip H. Goode
and transcribed by Edward W. Vollertsen

A week after Shiloh

Pittsburg Landing, Saturday, April 12, 1862

My Dear wife

. . . I don't expect to get [this letter] finished for several days because it is a long painful effort for me to write. . . . Our boat arrived at Pittsburg Landing Sunday, April 6 at 4:30 A.M. I got up early and finished a letter to you and packed my trunk, ready to leave the boat. I couldn't see any signs of leaving so I took my writing materials and was about to begin another letter to you when Major Belknap told me the enemy had attacked us and we were ordered onto the field. I tell you the truth, dear, there was no alarm so far as I was concerned, I was glad of it. It was the opportunity we had long wished for. I took off my uniform coat and put on a blouse top, ripped the bugle off my cap, filled my canteen with water, put a few crackers in my pocket (I had no breakfast), fastened up my trunk and was ready. Captain Blackmar was acting officer of the day and it was thought that he would not go out so I called the Company in line, examined their guns and gave them cartridges. A great many were sick. We only had about 48 out. I told them what we had to do and what I would expect of them. About this time the Captain came and took command. We marched up on the hill and halted and drew up the Regiment in line of battle, the colonel, Lt. Colonel and Major rode along and talked to the boys. With few expectations the boys were cheerful and full of spirits. Deransel was on duty at the boat and did not go out in the morning. Van did not go out at all.

We were left on the hill an hour waiting orders. We could hear the reports of volleys of musketry following each other in quick succession and the heavy booming of cannons. The wounded were brought past us by loads, some horribly mangled. At sight of these, some of the boys' nerves quivered a little but most of them stood firm.

At last the word came "right-face; forward march" and the column moved forward with firm tread, hope and determination marked on every face.



COURTESY EDWARD W. VOLLERTSEN

Margaret "Maggie" Goode, years later.

Would you know, Maggie, what I thought of? I thought of you, I had always intended to have a letter written to you, to be sent in case I was killed but it was so unexpected I did not get it done. I went to the Captain, told him if I fell to write to you, but before I could finish my feelings were too strong, my voice gave way and I rushed back to place at the side of the camp. Maggie was it unmanly? I could not help it when I thought of my wife and little ones I might never see again, but I was resolved to do my duty. On the road out (it was 3 miles) Colonel Dewy rode along the lines, shaking hands with most of the officers and a great many men. He came to me, offered his hand, "God Bless you, Phil." Maggie, from that moment I loved him. He proved himself a man in the hour of trial and is the only field officer that is worthy to hold his position. We were deceived in men before. We know them now. When I got to the field there was no discipline at all. Colonel Reid first confused the boys by giving wrong orders. He once gave an order when he wanted the men to face the enemy and fire so that it brought in line with their backs to the foe and right under a galling fire. It was not their fault they obeyed his orders. As soon as the proper command was given they faced right and fired without flinching. This was the command we got all the way through when we got in it. The Colonel would say fire, we would give the command to the company and they took deliberate aim and blazed away like good fellows and then he would say stop firing, as you are shooting our own men. This was not the case, but it confused the men. My private opinion is he didn't know which end was up and I hope the next battle we go into he may be too sick to go out. The last hour we were out I never saw a field officer. Each company acted independently. Captain Blackmar was wounded and taken away. I was hurt so I could not use a

weapon, but at the time I did not suffer any pain. We were under a heavy front and flank fire from musketry, grape, round shot and shell. The ball whizzed past us and tore the trees almost around. A shell burst on an encampment just in the rear of us and set the tents on fire, they blazed up furiously. Men were falling on every side two or three at a time. Three of our own company were already dead and many wounded.

Two of our Regiments over on the right had given way, most of our own Regiment had gone. Should we stay there? I looked around, saw Major off at a distance and called to him, Major, what shall I do? He replied, "I don't know." I felt like shooting him off his horse. He was taking care of Major Belknap. I turned to the boys and said, "Boys, give way but don't run." Retreated to a ravine about 100 yards back and halted, but our company had been much scattered in the action and many were disabled. The rest of the Regiment had gone and for me to go back with the little handful would have been to sacrifice them. I would not do it.

When we first got in the bullet range I was scared but I don't think anybody could tell it for I would not allow myself to dodge. I soon got over it and I don't think I ever felt cooler in my life than on the bloody battlefield of Pittsburg. . . . The ball broke my finger in two places so the shattered bone stuck out through the skin, then the bullet passed into my hand. I did not get it dressed for 24 hours. . . .

. . . Monday morning my finger was amputated. But Maggie I can't write much more. I have been two days writing this. We gained the day. You will hear all through the papers General Halleck is here, made a speech last night. He says if as much is done in the next forty days as have been done in the last 20 then we will all be home in 60 days. We may have another fight here or may push on to Memphis if the Rebels retreat. Keep up your spirits, dear wife, it can't last long. . . . Oh, will I have so much to tell you when I come home. Leave the minds of those who think we won't get paid for we have now been in service, but when the pay will come I don't know. I think early in May. Kiss the little ones for me. . . . Your loving husband.

Coming home

Sat., May 24, 1862

Dearest Maggie

. . . My resignation is accepted. I expect to start home in a few days. I am trying to get my pay. Should a battle begin before I leave I shall stay and

see it through though I do not expect it. . . . I feel somewhat disappointed for I have always looked forward to the time when I might come home with the company. I feel as if my military career is ending rather ungloriously but I cannot yet get the consent of my mind to leave you longer in your dependent and friendless situation. My health is very poor. . . . I am quite unwell now, took a dose [of] calomet yesterday and last night . . . a dose of oil. I hope that the trip home with change of air and better diet may improve my health. Deransel is getting rugged and in fine spirits. My leaving does not seem to trouble him at all. Wats is still lame, I'm afraid always will be but otherwise in good health. . . . Goodbye. Phil

Reenlisted and waiting

Head Quarters 4th Iowa Battery

Thibodaux, La., Dec. 24th, 1864

My darling Wife

. . . Eight years ago at this time you and I dear were sitting by a big log fire at your father's house. We were spending our first evening as husband and wife. How well I remember every incident of that day. . . . When eating breakfast I thought this time eight years since I was in a sleigh going to meet my bride. About 9 o'clock I arrived and how well, dearest, I remember my feelings when I first saw you attired in your bridal dress. . . . In our conversations what air castles we built and what fond dreams of the future we entertained. But tis for none of us to read the future and this is fortunate. . . . Of those who were with us in the evening a Dear Brother, Deransel, fills the honored grave of a gallant soldier. . . . Mat and Fanny, one at that time a young lady and the other a child, are both widows. . . . Today I took my flute and played "do they miss me at home?" "Sweet Home" and "when this cruel war is over." They made me feel sad and I wound up with "Bonnie Blue Flag," The Marseilles and "We'll rally round the flag" to raise my patriotic ardor a little. . . .

. . . I expect tonight the little stockings, four in number are hung in conspicuous places where Santa Claus cannot fail to see them.

. . . Now darling, cheer up your lonely heart. Rest assured that your husband's love and anxious thoughts constantly hover about you. Kiss all our little ones for me and tell them their Christmas gifts as well as one for Ma will be forthcoming between this and spring. Good night Dearest, pleasant dreams. Affectionately Phil □

'Clothe Yourself in Fine Apparel'

Mesquakie Costume in Word, Image, and Artifact

THE COSTUMES of the four women on the right immediately tell us something about who they are: women of Native American and European-American descent. We might guess that their clothes are special to them — carefully chosen for a formal studio portrait.

In all societies, costume is a public and private expression of one's self. Costume sends messages about one's stage and rank in life and about individual and cultural aesthetics. Costume can be read as a code. Consider the cultural messages in the red "power" necktie of the early 1990s, of boys' knee breeches in turn-of-the-century America, of bell-bottoms and long hair of the Sixties, of white wedding dresses and black mourning clothes. Consider also the more personal or individual meaning in one's adornment: lodge pins, favorite colors that impart self-confidence, a piece of jewelry with special meaning.

The following presentation was inspired by a fascinating article in the upcoming Summer issue of *The Annals of Iowa*: "Clothed in Blessing: Meaning in Mesquakie Costume" by art historian Ruth B. Phillips. Calling dress "the most personal of art forms," Phillips finds in Mesquakie costume "highly specific statements about the accumulated interior experience [and] psychological state" of the wearer. Appreciating such private meanings "permits us to understand how donning a particular kind of costume could affect the wearer and selected beholders."

Phillips wisely cautions us that costume is greater than the sum of its parts.

Too often we see only isolated pieces of historical costumes in static photographs or exhibits. Absent is the individual and the occasion, the qualities of movement and sound. Missing are the temporal elements of face paint and hair arrangement. Beyond most of us is comprehension of wholistic Native American cultures and their all-pervasive sense of the sacred.

Within these limits, the *Palimpsest* brings together on the following pages the voices, faces, and historic costume of the Mesquakie. Combined they begin to sketch the context from which we might glean insights into Mesquakie culture. Our goals are to find the common ground, respect the differences, and accept an individual's or a culture's right to keep certain meanings private. Finally, we consider some of the limits in using the primary sources of document, artifact, and image.

We direct interested readers to Phillips's sensitive and thoughtful article in the summer *Annals of Iowa* and also to Gaylord Torrence's excellent essay in *Art of the Red Earth People: The Mesquakie of Iowa* (see sources in box on page 82). We also invite the reader to consider one's own costume. What clues speak to others in your culture? What personal and private meanings do you incorporate into your appearance? And how might future historians interpret that costume? "Clothe yourself in fine apparel," one Mesquakie account reads. Hereby lies an expression of one's life and values.

— The Editor

Artifact photography by Chuck Greiner

Left: Silk appliqué ribbon panel for blanket or skirt (6" × 35"). Right: Studio portrait by H. C. Eberhart, Tama, Iowa. All artifacts are from the State Historical Society of Iowa Museum (Des Moines). Although most were probably made between 1880 and 1915, and collected from 1915 to the mid-1930s, they represent a continuity of traditional Mesquakie designs and materials.





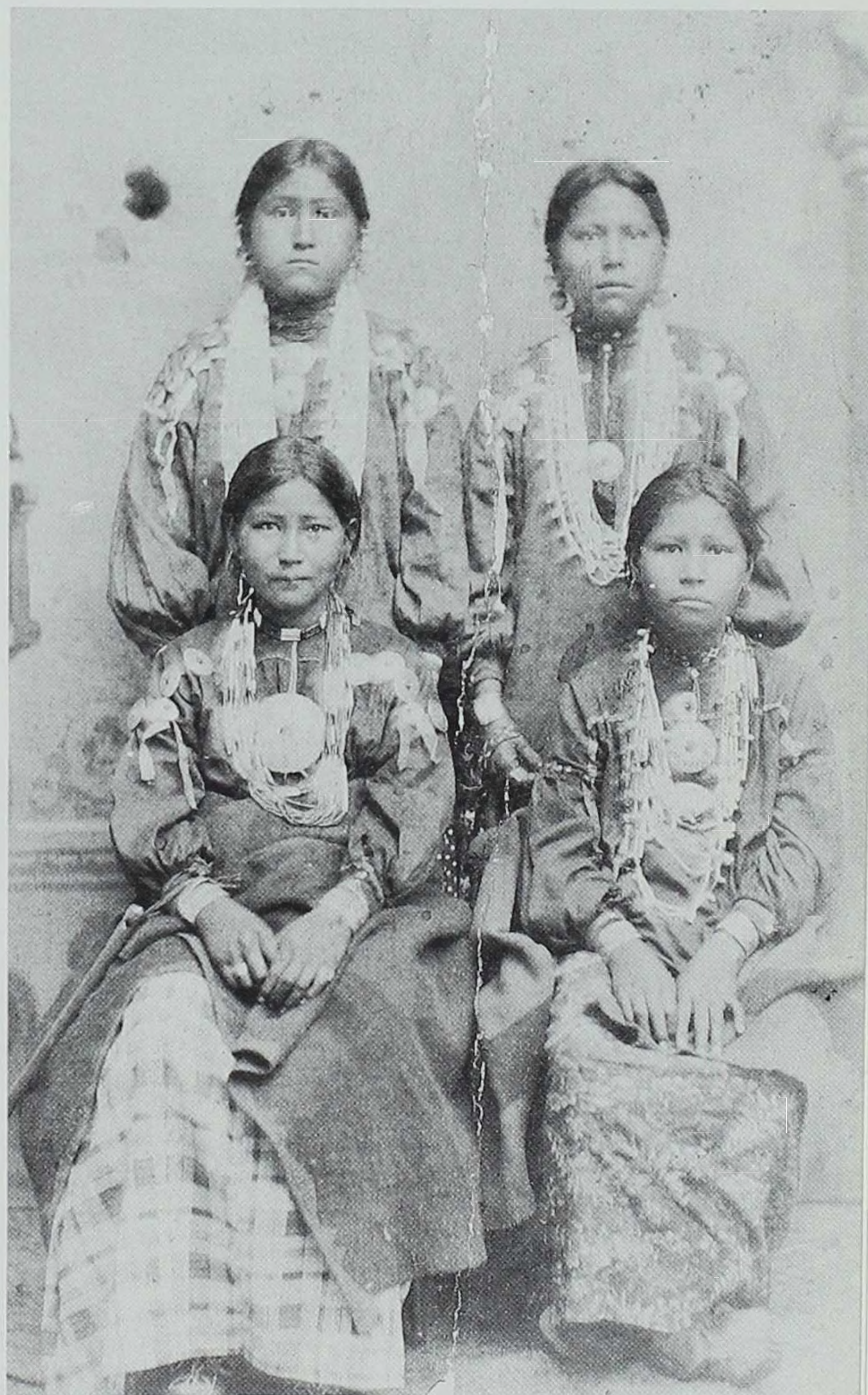


Expressions of Skill

“You may now try to sew bead and appliqué ribbon work. If you know how to sew you are to make things to wear when you dance. If it is known that you can already sew, (people) will hire you. Not merely that. You will be paid. You will be benefited by knowing how to sew,’ my mother told me. Then indeed I began to practice sewing. It took me a long time to sew well. It (must have) taken me two years to sew well. From then I was always making something.

“I was sixteen years old when we were making mats in the summer. In the winter we were making sacks and yarn belts, (and) we were sewing appliqué ribbon work and bead work.”

“Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman”



Mesquakie women demonstrated their skill in beadwork, appliqué, and other textile work in garments made and worn for special occasions, shown here. Right: four Mesquakie young women, circa 1890. Opposite (clockwise from upper left): Beaded wool hair binder with cotton edging and loom-beaded pendants. Blue cotton blouse with ribbon trim and German silver brooches (alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel) on yoke and back. Tubular shell necklace. Wool sash with loom-beaded otter tail pattern, an ancient Great Lakes motif. Front-seam legging with stylized floral, beaded design. Beaded moccasin cuffs. Blanket bordered with silk and ornamented with beads, made by Ada Poweshiek.



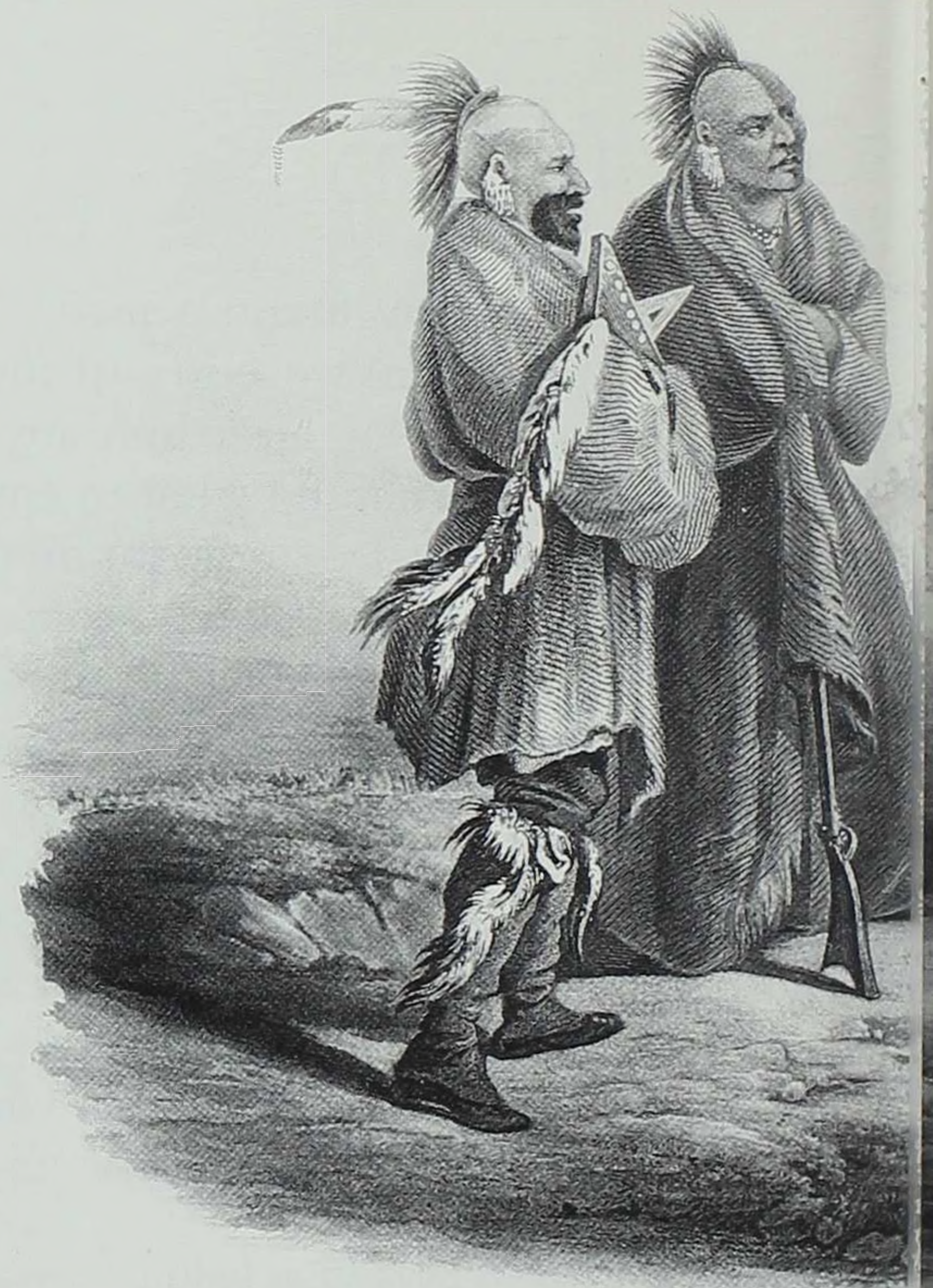
Gifts of Finery

“Well, I have surely found a man,’ I thought. ‘If this (man) were to cast me off to-day, I should tag after him anyhow,’ I thought. When he went to any place for a long time, I yearned for him. And I thought, ‘He has made me happy by treating me well.’ Then I began to make things for him, his finery, his moccasins, his leggings, his shirt, his garters, his cross-belt. After I had made finery of every kind for him, (I said), ‘These are what I have made for you as you have made me happy as long as I have lived with you, (and) because you have never made me angry in any way.’”

“Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman”

Top: Women made wool yarn sashes, to be worn by men and women for ceremonial occasions, either belted at the waist or, for men, sometimes wrapped around the head or over the shoulder. Jagged and zigzag patterns symbolize transmission of spiritual powers. The shortest sash, ornamented with turtle bones, was made by Mrs. John Young Bear. These three range from 2½" to 7" wide. Below: Detail from wool side-seam leggings, trimmed with ribbon and beads, made by Mrs. Harry Wasekuk for son-in-law John Young Bear. Panels of silk ribbon appliqué were often sewn onto dark backgrounds for dramatic effect. Left: John Painter and family (Duren Ward Collection, SHSI-Iowa City).





Symbols of Status

A man's rank as a warrior was conveyed through certain aspects of dress, such as bearclaw necklaces or tomahawks (akin to dress swords worn by European-American military officers). Above: Sauk and Mesquakie leaders are depicted carrying such symbols here by artist Karl Bodmer on April 10, 1833 and are described below by Prince Maximilian zu Wied on their expedition up the Missouri River. Left: Mid-19th century pipe tomahawk, 21" long, brass head with stamped design and bands of pewter or alloy. The hardwood handle was decorated by applying a heated file. Several companies made pipe tomahawks, in varying qualities, specifically for trade since the mid-18th century. Another symbol of a Mesquakie man's stature is the roach, described by Maximilian here. (See also artifact photo, page 78).

"The Saukies and Foxes had shaved their hair off the whole head except a small tuft behind, the greater part of which was cut short, like a brush, and



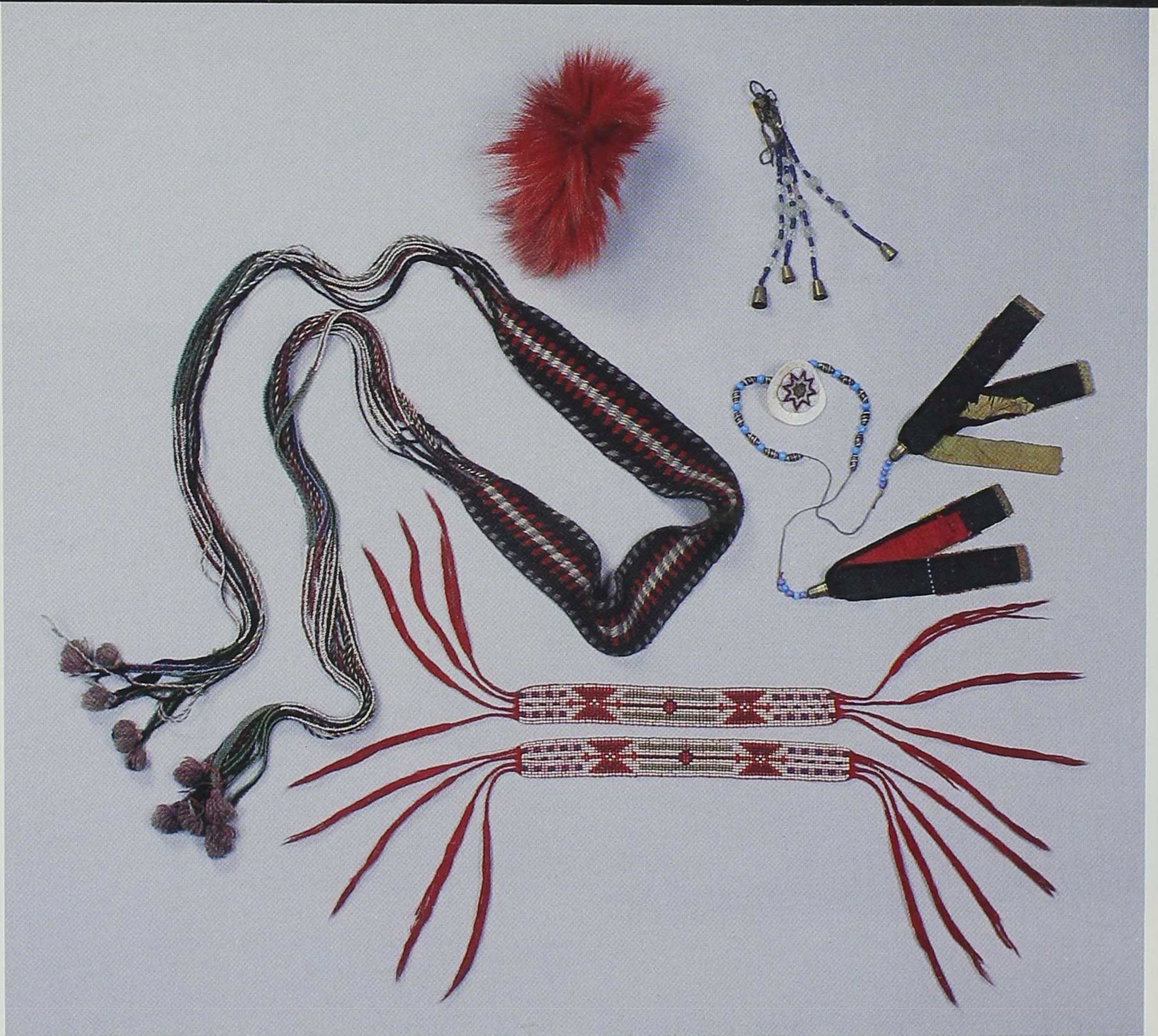
NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

which terminated in a thin braid, to which was fastened the chief ornament of the head, the deer's tail, which is a tuft of hair from the tail of the Virginian stag, white, with some black hair, the white part being dyed red with vermilion. It is fastened in an ingenious manner, with some strings and pegs of wood, to the tuft of hair at the back of the head; and in the middle of it, concealed between the hair, is a small piece of carved wood, to which a small bone box is affixed, into which a large eagle's feather is fastened, projecting horizontally behind; this feather is often dyed with vermilion, and is the characteristic distinction of a brave warrior."

Prince Maximilian zu Wied (1833)

"The [Saukie and Fox] men, who were between thirty and forty in number, never appeared without their arms; they carried tomahawks, or else the common Indian club, which has, at the upper end, a steel plate, sharp on both edges, and pointed. We did not see any bows and arrows among these Indians, because they had not come out on a warlike expedition, but on a festal visit; many of them had a kind of lance, made of a long sword blade, fastened to a pole, which was covered with red cloth, and ornamented with many black raven's or eagle's feathers, hanging down either in a long row, or in long bunches."

Prince Maximilian zu Wied (1833)



Costume elements for dancing imparted kinetic qualities. Clockwise from top: Roach, made of deer hair dyed with vermilion (further described on pages 76-77). Hair ornament, leather thongs with glass beads and brass thimbles (to be tied to back of scalp lock). Clamshell medallion or gorget necklace (the strings of blue and Venetian beads, ending in brass thimbles and ribbons, were tied behind the neck and trailed down the back). Pair of red and green beaded garters, in colors denoting the two original Mesquakie clans, Bear and Fox. Sash, with beaded streamers.



Kinetics of Costume

“You must dance vigorously,’ I thought. That is why I made [these garments] for you.”

“Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman”

“Not only the ritual, but the aesthetic of costume depends on the animation, rhythmic movement, and music of the dance. The choices made by the makers of costume for particular textures, colors, and decorative elements are determined not only by their visual qualities but also by their kinetic and auditory qualities. One has to hear the tinklers on moccasins as well as see them, to see fringes and feathers sway and nod, and silver, beads, and ribbon shimmer in shifting light and shadow.”

Ruth B. Phillips
“Clothed in Blessing”



Dancers at the 1948 powwow at the Mesquakie Settlement near Tama, Iowa. Left, Eagle Dance. Above, Rabbit Dance. Below, Pipe Dance. Opposite, another scene. (Killy Collection, SHSI-Iowa City.)



Private and Sacred Meanings

“The private meanings of costumes are rarely recorded, but they are, in every culture, a part of the totality of meaning that is being expressed.”

Ruth B. Phillips, “Clothed in Blessing”

Right: Charm bag, 4½" × 6". Charm bags carried amulets, charms, and medicines and often bore designs of spiritual guardians. The underwater panther (on the left bandolier strap and detail) is a mythic spirit often depicted by Great Lakes tribes and capable of great destruction and great blessings. The design of four parallelograms (right strap) is a classic Mesquakie pattern.

Below: Beaded hair binder (center, 12½"), and beaded band and pendants. Mesquakie women wore their long hair parted in the middle and bound in the back with ribbons or binders. The rectangular binder was wrapped around the hair and held with a short, beaded band. From this hung long pendants almost to the ground. “The hair binder and pendant were regarded as talismans,” notes art historian Gaylord Torrence. “The pendant was also believed to be transfused with the woman’s soul. It was regarded as her most important possession, equal to all other sacred objects she might possess.”





Mesquakie warriors Kishkekosh (above) and Nesouaquoit (1837 portraits by Charles Bird King). Face and body painting conveyed various meanings, according to art historian Gaylord Torrence: "Although some designs may have been purely decorative, most were symbolic of religious society or clan association, military achievement, or visionary experiences." Changes in one's life, such as marriage and mourning, were also signified by costume, as in the three autobiographical passages here.



"Black . . . was worn in the face of danger or the threat of death, and it was associated with the absence of ornament and the poorest clothing. . . . The Mesquakie thus humbled themselves in encounters with the spirit world in order to induce the spiritual beings to pity them and to bestow their blessings."

Ruth B. Phillips, "Clothed in Blessing"

[For a marriage]: "Then he gave me his horse, and the clothing which he used at dances, his finery. . . . I arrived where we lived clad in finery."

"[Later my husband] became sicker and sicker. I cried in vain, as I felt so badly about him. And he died. Soon it was terrible for me. I undid my hair and loosened it. For several nights I could not sleep as I was sorrowful. . . . And then the female relatives of my dead husband came to comb my hair. And they brought other garments for me to wear. I wore black clothing."

[After an adoption feast, in which a new person fills the place of one who has died]: "Then they began to clothe me in fresh clothes, and my hair was combed and my face was washed. And then I was told, ' . . . You may begin to wear finery. You may go and do whatever you please. If you are desirous of marrying anyone, you may marry him.'"

"Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman"

Beware of Cultural Viewpoints

HISTORIANS rely upon primary sources, or first-hand accounts of historical events, to impart the facts and flavor of our past. Sources vary in value, however, and in weighing the potential contribution of a source, one must consider many factors. Especially when investigating the juncture of two cultures, a researcher must remain aware of the cultural prejudices of the speaker. Ruth B. Phillips makes this point in "Clothed in Blessing: Meaning in Mesquakie Costume" (*Annals of Iowa*, Summer 1991): "Western observers have been struck by the strangeness and splendor of the costumes, and by the high level of craftsmanship employed by their creators, but writers of a less subtle turn of mind have commonly used words such as *gaudy*, *grotesque*, or *barbaric* to characterize elements of costume they did not understand and an aesthetic they could not appreciate."

European-American accounts of encounters with Native Americans are often laced with this ethnocentrism. In the 1830s, trader's wife Caroline Phelps wrote: "The Indians got up and then the squaws all commenced dancing around and around the fires. . . . Their faces were differently painted, some red with little black bands marked on each side of their mouth, and some with one eye black and the other white, and grass enough about their necks and their legs to feed a mule all winter, they went round & twisting and jumping and screaming and singing as loud as they could holler, and clapping their hands upon their mouths to make the sound more awful, they appeared more savage in their amusement than any other time." Phelps disregards the values and aesthetics outside her own culture that

govern the native dancers' dress, sounds, and actions.

Likewise, in 1837 a Boston journalist described a "war dance" by tribal chiefs: "Their war exercises were not very striking. One beat a drum, to which they hummed monotonously, and jumped about grotesquely." Did the reporter expect to be entertained by rituals meaningful to the participants?

Language can also affect the value of a primary source. "The Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman" is a detailed account of a Mesquakie woman's life on the tribal settlement near Tama, Iowa, published by ethnographer Truman Michelson in 1918. As Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands comment in *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives* (1984), the interview was "told in Mesquakie to Harry Lincoln, corrected by his wife, Dalottiwa, translated by Horace Poweshiek and finally edited and published" two years later. The layers of translation and interpretation, and the researcher's interests, increase the dangers of serious omissions or misinterpretation in such sources.



Keokuk's wife (artist: George Catlin).

Regarding photography and artwork, might subtle errors be introduced when the image-maker works out of context? Prolific frontier artist George Catlin captured the personality of his subjects but sometimes confused important details of specific tribal costumes; perhaps he sketched in details later. Artist Charles Bird King painted visiting tribal chiefs in Washington, D.C.; were their costumes chosen by the subjects or by the artist? Many of the Mesquakie photographs collected by Iowa minister Duren Ward in 1905 were studio portraits; Mesquakie in native dress are seated on ornate Victorian wicker chairs.

To be useful, artifacts also require context: origin, maker, and function, at the least. The tendency to view native traditions as static may obscure evidence of change and contact between other tribes and cultures — especially if artifacts grouped in an exhibit or photograph represent different time periods or tribes. Artifacts require sufficient documentation to be interpreted correctly.

When using primary sources, be alert to the biases, context, and personal or cultural viewpoints inherent in anything recorded or collected by human beings. With these cautions in place, then relish the immediacy and texture that primary sources and materials lend to history.

— The Editor

NOTE ON SOURCES

The Annals of Iowa summer issue, featuring Ruth B. Phillips's article, can be purchased from SHSI, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240 (319-335-3916). SHSI staff Jerome Thompson, Marvin Bergman, and Christie Dailey helped shape this photo essay. Gaylord Torrence's sensitive and thorough essay in *Art of the Red Earth People: The Mesquakie of Iowa* (U of I Museum of Art, 1989) was invaluable. Barbara A. Hail's *Hau, Kola!* (Brown University, 1983) discusses Catlin and other frontier artists. For "The Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman," see Truman Michelson, *Fortieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1925).



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR

Memorial Day in the 1920s

by Lauren Pille Robinson

RIVERSIDE, Iowa, observed Memorial Day in the 1920s in the manner of most of America. The purpose of Decoration Day, as it was then called, was to honor the nation's veterans and war dead by decorating graves and holding memorial services. This excerpt from an oral history project focuses on this national holiday and its social customs on a local level — through the words of three Riverside citizens and the photographs of local photographer William Crozier. A concluding essay considers the role photographs play in interviews, and other aspects of oral history.

Delbert Flynn: “[Memorial Day] used to be really the deal. They’d have the band and the color guard and about forty of ’em marching — this was right after the war. And the Civil War vets — I remember when there was five of ’em — they’d have to have them in a car in the parade.”



SHS ARCHIVES



Marie Havel: “Everybody took part. I can remember they all lined up. . . . All the little schoolchildren were in the parade, the Civil War veterans — and there were a lot of them — a good many of them had beards . . . old, old men. And the band, and the Relief Corps, and it always came out in force. And they would start way downtown and go up the hill and I can remember walking clear up to the cemetery.”

Grace Dautremont: “It was really a full day. And it was *hot*. It seems like it was always a *hot*, burning hot afternoon.”





Grace: "Memorial Day wasn't one of those big picnic-eating days. It wasn't a fun day. It was just for remembering the soldiers. We didn't, I think, the week ahead, say 'Oh, goody, it's gonna be Memorial Day.' But when the time came, we went."

Marie: "[We'd have] spirea and early peonies, and . . . iris. *Lots* of flowers, ordinarily. In those days, it seemed like to me, we never had a problem with flowers. I think the climate's changed. Certainly, it's uncertain. I can't ever remember that we didn't have flowers on Memorial Day. We *had* to have them. . . . Everybody was dressed in their best clothes . . . but I don't remember ever wearing a hat. I always had a big hair ribbon on, maybe there was no room for a hat."

Grace: "I guess each one of us had a bouquet. . . . If you didn't have some [flowers at home], you'd go to the neighbors'. And then, also, you could always get wildflowers. Violets would be out — that kind of thing."



Memorial Day 1924
Crozier Photo D.

Delbert: "Then they'd have a little ceremony up to the cemetery, there by the grave of the unknown soldier."

Grace: "I guess there'd be leaders — there'd be some older [schoolgirls] picked out for that. And they would have a couple kids going along [with each leader]. The leader would have their grave picked out for them. And then we'd go and put our flowers on the grave. That's what Memorial Day was created for, to commemorate the soldiers who died."

Delbert: "Everybody went to an observance somewhere. . . . On Memorial Day, like everything stopped. They might have gone to something in the morning and gone back to [work in] the field in the afternoon, but I don't think they'd think about just skipping it altogether. It seems like it generates less and less interest every year. Now, people got cars and money and more fun things to do — or they think they have anyways."



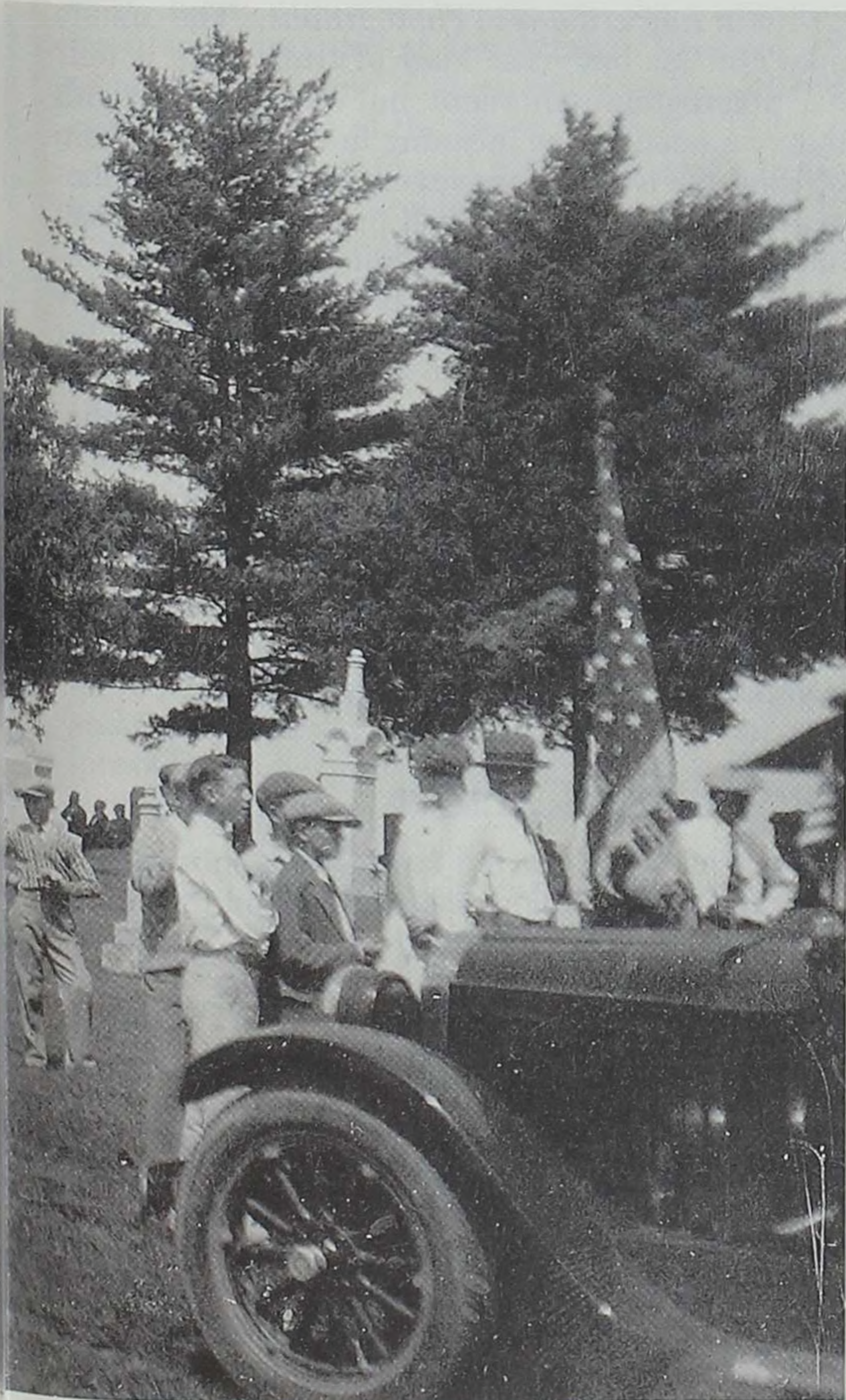


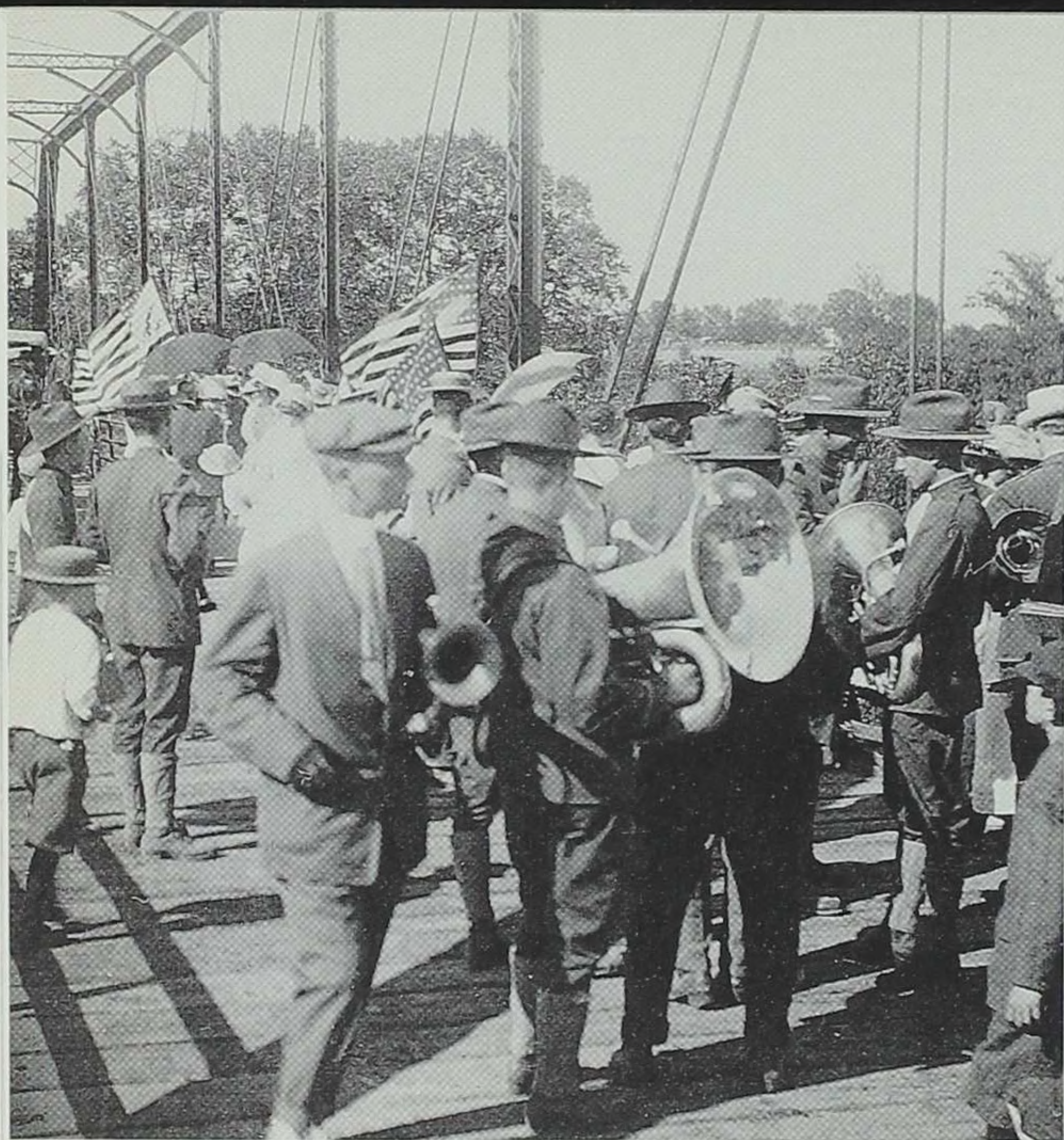
Riverside Ia May 30 1921
CROZIER PHOTO 95

Marie: “Boy! All the relations came for Memorial Day and they brought picnics. It was family reunion day. And one of the things I was brought up to do was to make a pilgrimage through the cemetery and *everybody* that was a relative — you went by their grave and your mother told you about them and you dropped a flower on their grave. And, my goodness, *I can remember that*. That’s how we got informed about our families and their backgrounds. We did this every year.”

Delbert: “There’d be a lot of visiting goin’ on. You’d see some of your relations you hadn’t seen for a month or two. Like my aunt and uncle in Iowa City, they’d come down here. They had family buried here, you know. They *came* from here.”

Marie: “It was such a ritual that I remember the year before my mother died, she said, ‘You know, this is the last year I’m going to be able to do this.’ She wasn’t alive the next Memorial Day.”





Linking Photos and Oral History

by Lauren Pille Robinson

SEVERAL YEARS AGO my friend, Grace Dautremont of Riverside, Iowa, gave me a collection of old photographs. (Some of these appear on the previous pages.) The photographs pictured Riverside during the early years of the century. Most were signed by the photographer, William Crozier. Besides other subjects and events, there are pictures of Memorial Day parades in which nearly every man, woman, and child in Riverside appears to be taking part.

Commenting on the tendency to read meanings into photographs, oral historian Paul Thompson writes in *Edwardians in Photographs*: "The camera may not lie, but what kind of truth does it tell? . . . Photographs are silent, but we cannot rest with that: we need to see meaning in them. And where no message is given, we invent one. Most old photographs, therefore, are half pieces of history, half out of our own minds. . . . Photographs do not convey the consciousness of the people in them — why they were doing what they were doing and what they felt about it."

I wondered about the people in Crozier's photographs — and about Riverside. Were the people as comfortable together as they looked? Did everyone actually take part in the Memorial Day festivities? Was their sense of community really that strong? Or was that something I saw there because I wanted to see it? The photographs, of course, could not answer these questions by themselves.

Establishing Context

In spring 1986, I started formulating an idea for a master's project in journalism based on the Riverside photographs and my questions. I began my research with written sources, including such general overviews as Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday*. This book looks at the events of the 1920s as they affected the daily lives of ordinary men and women. The general history in the book was useful, too, in helping me establish a historical context in which to work. I also read about Iowa, Washington County, and Riverside. I obtained microfilm copies of the *Riverside Leader*, the newspaper that was published in Riverside throughout the decade. Thompson cautions historians about relying too

Marie: "We went to the river — the English River bridge — and threw flowers over the bridge. We'd throw bouquets off into the water, which was symbolic of the sailors."

Grace: "The hardier ones — Mother would never let us go — would go down to the river and they'd have saved some [flowers] and [would] put some in the river for the people who were lost at sea."

Delbert: "They'd have a speaker at St. Mary's Hall and get everybody wound up. They'd usually get some politician . . . or some would-be politician . . . it'd be an *oration*, you know. . . . Somebody'd give the Gettysburg Address. I think Hazel Blythe'd be there to play the piano and sing a few patriotic hymns. Then there'd be a big ball game in the afternoon."

Grace: "They'd have the veterans up on stage . . . each year there'd be one or two less."

Delbert: "I think that they had something that we don't have now. They had different feelings. More of a sense of duty maybe, you might say. I don't know — were those the good old days?" □

much on newspapers as a source. In *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, he writes, "Few historians would deny the bias in contemporary reporting or accept what the press presents at face value, but in using newspapers to reconstruct the past much less caution is normally shown. This is because they are rarely able to unravel the possible sources of distortion in old newspapers."

"Thus the evidence which historians cite from newspapers suffers not only from the possibility of inaccuracy at its source, which is normally either an eyewitness account or an interview report by the journalist," Thompson continues. "It is also selected, shaped, and filtered through a particular, but to the historian, uncertain, bias."

With Thompson's caution in mind, I carefully scanned the newspapers for information that would help me establish a background from which to seek more detailed information. In spite of its obvious pro-Riverside bias, the *Leader* was helpful in two ways. First, it pointed out for me the community events it considered important. Second, the *Leader's* stories and advertisements suggested the economic temper of the times.

Finally I turned to oral history as a way to find more answers. By "oral history," I mean simply the interviewing of a source in order to find out — and record — information about past events that may not be available in any other form. I decided to ask three long-time Riversiders to help me. Marie Havel, Delbert Flynn, and Grace Dautremont were excellent choices. They are articulate and intelligent people, keen observers with excellent memories. They were physically well enough that the interview process would not be a hardship for them. And they seemed genuinely interested in the project and wanted to be a part of it. I had another, more personal reason for choosing Marie, Delbert, and Grace. They're three of my favorite people and lots of fun to be with. I wouldn't have missed their acute observations and witty comments for anything.

Before I began the interviews, I read several books and articles about oral history techniques and procedures. The most helpful was Willa K. Baum's *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*. Thompson's *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* was also very helpful in this regard. Initially, I tried to use more open-ended, statement-type questions, rather than asking specific, information-seeking questions. For example, I would say, "Tell me about Memorial Day," not "What did you do in the morning on Memorial Day?" I felt that the first type of question would be more likely to elicit a wide range of freely chosen detail than the second type of

question. I expected that additional topics for questions would then arise as I talked with Marie, Grace, and Delbert. They did. Band concerts led into bootlegging and downtown Saturday night stories. Downtown Saturday night stories, in turn, became reminiscences about Riverside's business district. Remembering Memorial Day sparked interesting details about clothing and family customs.

Using Photographs

I conducted the first interviews with each source without using William Crozier's photographs. I held the pictures in reserve until later rounds in the interviews, hoping they would elicit more details. I wanted to see for myself how much memory was dependent on the prompts provided by the pictures. Here, though, I was disappointed. While some additional details were recalled when interviewees looked at the photographs, the photographs also seemed to hamper memory. The free recall that a relaxed source enjoyed while talking with me seemed to vanish and be replaced by a furrowed brow and a serious effort to remember as the same source looked at photographs. If I were to continue this project, I think I would try to determine how I could have presented the photographs differently.

After the interviews, I spent much time transcribing, editing, and arranging the material into a readable and interesting format. This *Palimpsest* presents only a small selection of the photos, interviews, insights, and methodologies from the finished project, *They Didn't Play No Jazz: An Oral History of Riverside, Iowa, in the Roaring Twenties*. (Copies are in both State Historical Society libraries.)

And now that it's all done — what do I think is the value of oral history? Oral history can record information about the usual and the commonplace and often investigates those who have no important public accomplishments — people who have lived unexceptional lives. Oral history records a personal view of public events. Family anecdotes and traditions may be recovered in an interview and be committed to printed form. Finally, recording voices often conveys information about the speakers, about the quality of their memories and their reliability.

Historians will long argue whether oral history provides accurate information. But for me, the point of oral history is that it strengthens our tenuous webs of connection with other human beings. Besides, it's a lot of fun. □

The Emergency Years

Remembrances of a County Agricultural Agent in the Great Depression

by Donald E. Fish

Artwork by James Fish

AS I LOOK BACK on more than a half-century of experiences in Iowa agriculture, I am forced to conclude that the period of the early 1930s was the most exciting and eventful. It was a period in which situations and events crowded in upon people with relentless pressure. During those years I was the county agricultural agent for Dallas County, in south-central Iowa. Dallas County was then rural, with approximately two thousand farms. Now, there are less than a thousand farms, and the eastern and southern parts are dotted by much urban sprawl from Des Moines. Like all other rural counties in the United States in the early Thirties, Dallas County was at the low point of the worst agricultural depression in history. Most of the farmers in the county, if they were still solvent, were hanging on by the skin of their teeth.

Who knows when the Great Depression started? For some it may have started in 1928

or 1929. For others, it probably did not hit hard until 1931 or 1932. For sure, 1932 was the low point. If you marked the start of upward movements, you would probably circle the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt and March 1933, when the New Deal began. Perhaps the human psyche is not designed for permanent depression and there will always come a time when optimism and hope struggle to make the present and future seem rosier. Psychology plays a key role in the ups and downs of business cycles, and in early 1933 we were ready for good things to happen. We didn't know what these good things would be, and we didn't know when they would start, but definitely a strong current of optimism began to run through life in the United States. No where was this more evident than in the midwestern corn belt and Dallas County, Iowa.

In January of 1933 I had begun work as the county agricultural agent, fresh from the Uni-



Inside the Dallas County Courthouse in Adel, the author helped coordinate the New Deal Corn-Hog Program.

versity of Minnesota with a degree in agricultural business administration. My office encompassed the northeast quarter of the ground floor of the Dallas County Courthouse in Adel. It was called the "Farm Bureau Office" because at that time the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Agricultural Extension Service of Iowa State College, and the Farm Bureau were actual partners, even though this relationship was becoming a little uneasy. The Farm Bureau, at county, state, and national levels, was basically a pressure group interested in exerting legislative influence and in improving farm conditions, with special emphasis on the family farm.

Our office was typically a beehive of activity. Most of the general farm education programs were conducted by specialists from the extension service in Ames, but it was the county

agent's job to set up and publicize these meetings. We had several ongoing projects: corn and melon demonstration plots, farm record and analysis projects, swine meetings, vaccination schools, seed exchanges, farm outlook meetings, seed and soil testing services, and demonstrations of cutting meat and using new machinery. As county agent I was also in charge of boys' 4-H, just now changing from county-wide clubs to township clubs. Girls' 4-H and women's projects were coordinated mostly by the home demonstration agent, Florence Williams, or specialists from Ames, though I helped out where needed.

Funding for our programs came from three sources: Farm Bureau dues (five dollars per member family), the extension service, and county appropriations from tax funds. Under state legislation, any county farm organization

with a minimum of two hundred paid-up members was eligible to receive appropriations from their county supervisors (based on the size of the county and the number of members over two hundred).

This arrangement between Extension Service, Farm Bureau, and the USDA had been legislated in 1918, and in 1933 all but one or two Iowa counties operated under this "hybrid" program. The legitimacy of the arrangement was now being questioned by leadership in other farm organizations and had been severely criticized by Henry A. Wallace, editor of *Wallaces' Farmer* and about to become secretary of agriculture. While perhaps there were times when county agents were not sure for whom they were working, they knew that they were working for the good of all farm people. And in Dallas County, the plan worked well. Farm Bureau was the only active farm organization, and so practically all of the active leadership in the county came from Farm Bureau members.

IT WAS ON THIS SCENE that the national Corn-Hog Program was announced late in 1933 by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. This was one of several emergency farm programs set up through the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). An emergency wheat adjustment program had been put in operation earlier that year, but Iowa was not a major wheat state. In Dallas County only about a hundred farms were involved, most of them in a very small way.

Yet the wheat program had given Evalyn Mark (the office secretary) and me an idea of what to expect. I could see that if any program involved a very large number of farmers, the work would require a good deal of office help that we didn't have.

After attending a state-wide meeting in Des Moines, we launched the Corn-Hog Program in late December. I scheduled seventeen information meetings, at least one in every township. Dallas County, like most of Iowa at that time, was corn and hog country, and so interest in the program ran high.

I had been given a set of large charts, and in

the first part of each meeting I tried to explain the economic conditions that had gotten American agriculture into such bad shape. The solution, government economists reasoned, was that if you would cut production, you could raise the price of farm products. This seemed logical, and our charts were simple enough that most farmers understood what we were talking about. Then I explained the mechanics of the Corn-Hog Program itself.

I didn't know what to expect from these meetings. Dallas County was a Republican county, and this was a Democratic program. In addition, there were a few very radical farmers in the county, and fireworks were rumored. But the meetings went off without a hitch. I have never seen such interest. The turnout was overwhelming. There were over two thousand people attending these meetings, about 99 percent of all the farmers in the county. I am sure that nearly every farmer in the county attended one meeting, and some attended more than one. Probably at least half of the farm women attended also. I answered questions as well as I could, noting that most were not related to the charts I had shown, but to the actual mechanics of the program, especially to the amounts of money each farmer might receive. All the details were not known, and at least every week for the next six months a new set of administrative rulings came out from Washington to clarify details.

The Corn-Hog Program paid farmers to cut production of corn and hogs. County agents would help set up contracts between the government and participating farmers. Payments to farmers would be based on the number of acres of corn taken out of production and the number of hogs *not* produced.

Each participating farmer would provide evidence of how many acres of corn had been planted on that farm for the base years 1932 and 1933. A farmer would then reduce corn acreage by 20 to 30 percent, and rent the idle land to the government. (This acreage early got the name of "government acres.") Farmers also had to present evidence verifying how many hogs they had raised and sold in 1932 and 1933. From these bases they would reduce their hog production. Compliance in fulfilling the contracts would have to be verified.



A farmer from Grimes signs up for the Corn-Hog Program. In nearby Dallas County, 85 percent of the farmers participated in the program, one component of the AAA.

OVERSEEING EACH COUNTY was the state committee for the Corn-Hog Program, already set up in Des Moines. The committee took the advice of local Farm Bureau leaders, my predecessor, Harry Codlin, and me to set up temporary county and township committees to initially sign up interested farmers. At township meetings, farmers filled out non-binding applications for contracts and then elected permanent township committees of three to five members. The same process was carried out in all Iowa counties.

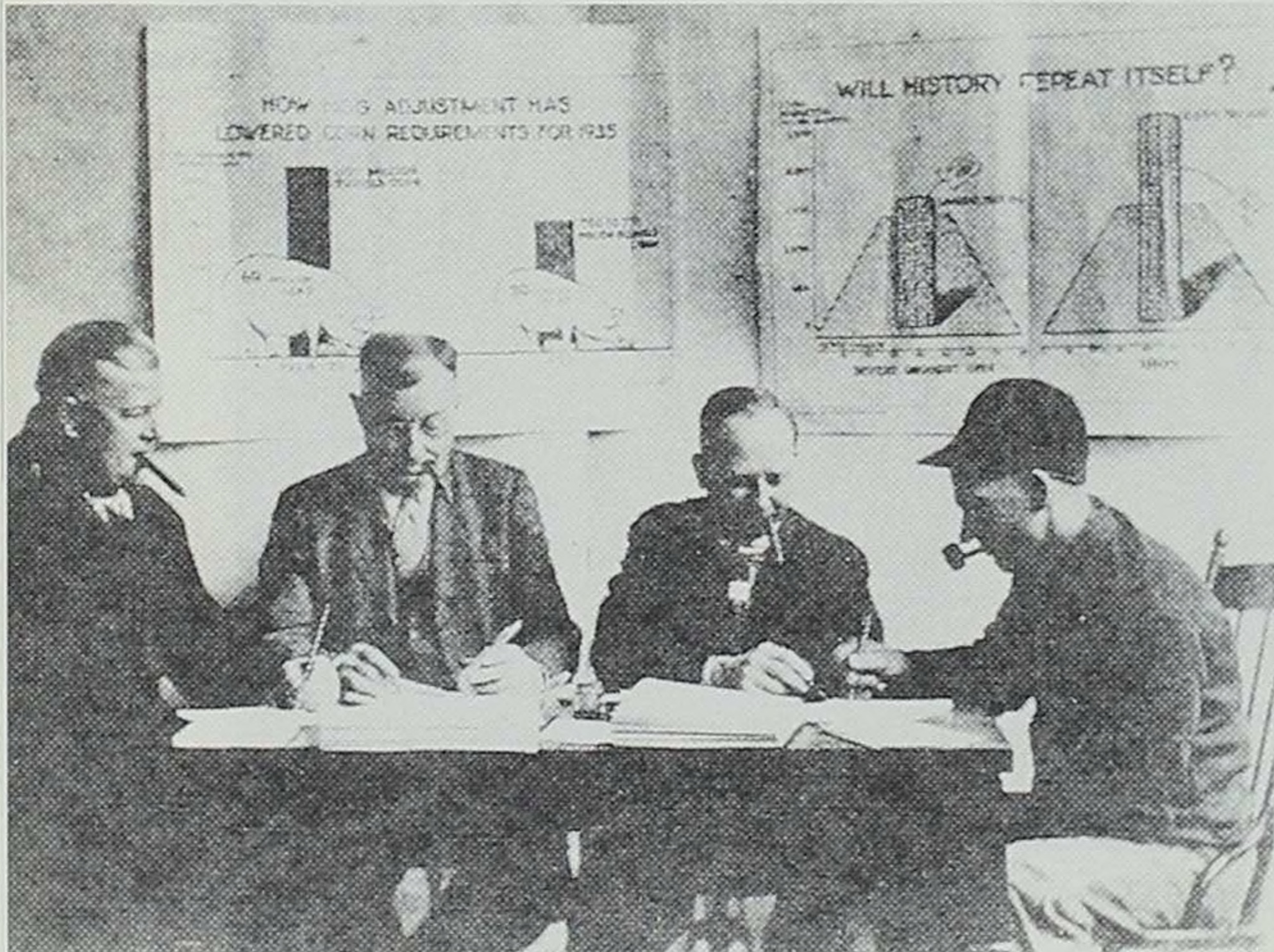
The state committee was quite politically oriented, and some complications naturally arose. This conflict could be partially traced to a feud in 1930 or 1931 between Henry A. Wallace, then editor of *Wallaces' Farmer*, and Charlie Hearst, state Farm Bureau president. Although the Farm Bureau was then the only farm organization in Iowa of any size and included a much greater number of farmers than

any other organization, the Farm Bureau was completely omitted from the state Corn-Hog Program committee. State chairman R. M. Evans of Laurens represented the United Farmers, a small organization that had developed during the depression. Ralph Smith of Newton represented the Iowa Grange, also very small, and Bill McArthur of Mason City was considered anti-Farm Bureau. For the next few years the strong Farm Bureau counties always had some conflicts with the state committee.

The state committee had field men who each worked about ten counties. The field man in our region, Jay Whitson of Indianola, was in Dallas County several times but seldom in the office. Apparently, he was doing quite a little underground work to see that Farm Bureau members were largely omitted from township and county committees. Finally we had a little showdown in our office one day when the temporary county committee happened to be in

session and Whitson happened to come in. It took the committee about half an hour to persuade Whitson that probably most of the township and county committee members would be Farm Bureau members — not because they belonged to Farm Bureau but because they were the best people available. Whitson left finally, and we didn't see much of him after that.

IOWA YEAR BOOK OF AGRICULTURE FOR 1934 (IOWA STATE DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE)



A township committee in Hardin County helps farmer A. J. Marske (right) sign up for the Corn-Hog Program.

By early spring 1934, Dallas County had its elected township committees, a county allotment committee (of which I was secretary) — and about two thousand applications from farmers. It was not long before we found out what a stupendous task we had ahead of us. Ralph Mortimer, the county chairman, was an Iowa State College graduate and very able. With a full-time hired man on his farm, he could come to the office every day. With USDA funds we hired two tabulators and a stenographer, and rented a typewriter and three second-hand Monroe calculators (most of us had never seen a Monroe calculator). The large Farm Bureau office became the home of all of the work on this program.

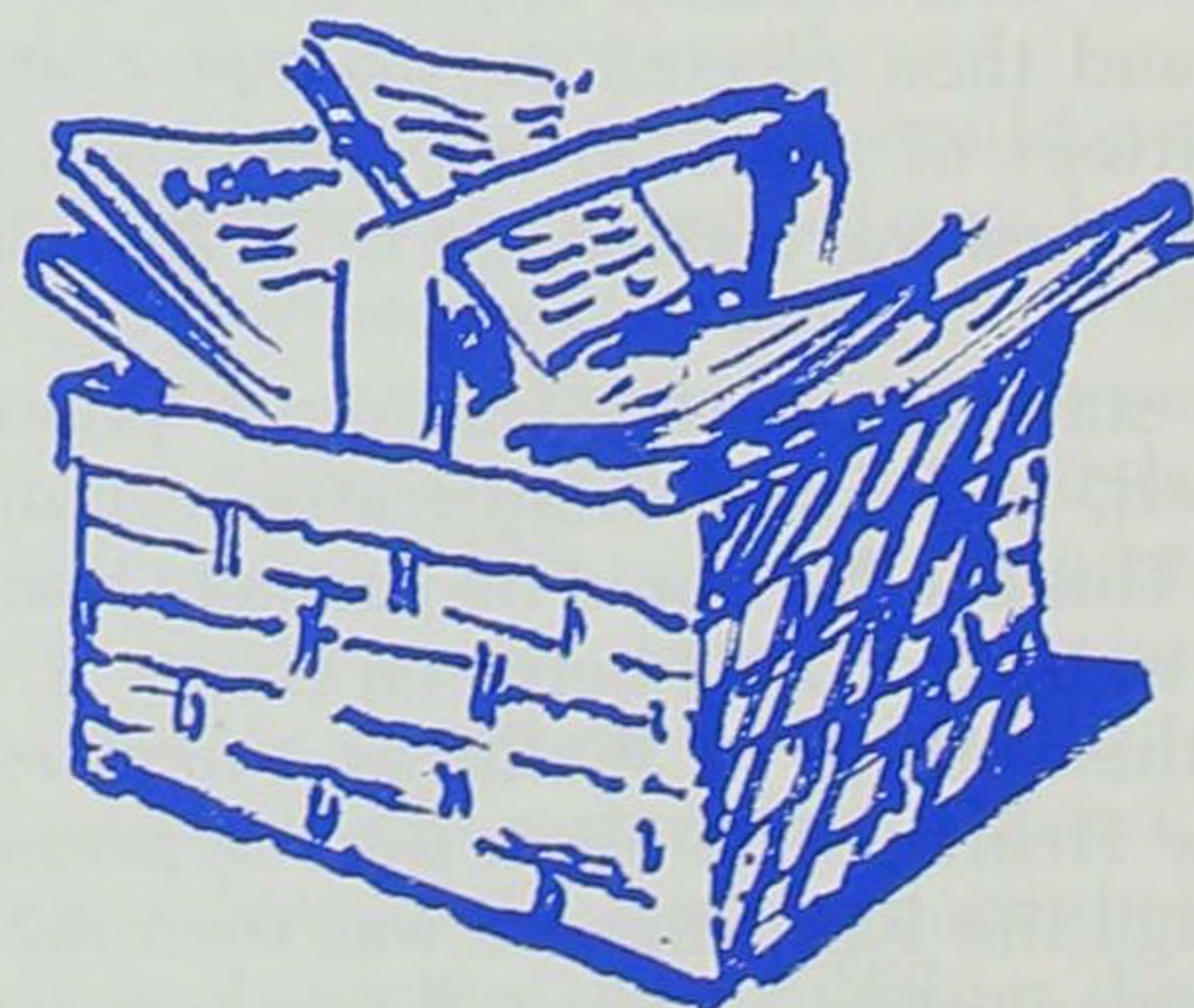
We were fortunate in our help. Marie Mann, a very competent young woman with a local farm background, was the stenographer. Tabulators A. L. Barngrover and Howard Wilcox were young men who had been raised on farms

and were temporarily out of work due to the depression. Both were good with figures, and worked well with farmers who came into the office. Jim Brown, an ex-vocational agriculture teacher, was also a tabulator, but he couldn't put in as much time because he was also farming. In retrospect, much of our success in starting the program was due to the excellent office force. Ralph Mortimer and I got along very well together. For most of that year I was responsible for keeping the office work going smoothly, and Mortimer, with the committee, made final decisions about production bases, allotments, payments, and appeals. At different stages, the township and county committeemen also worked in the office. Evalyn Mark, our Farm Bureau secretary, helped when she had time.

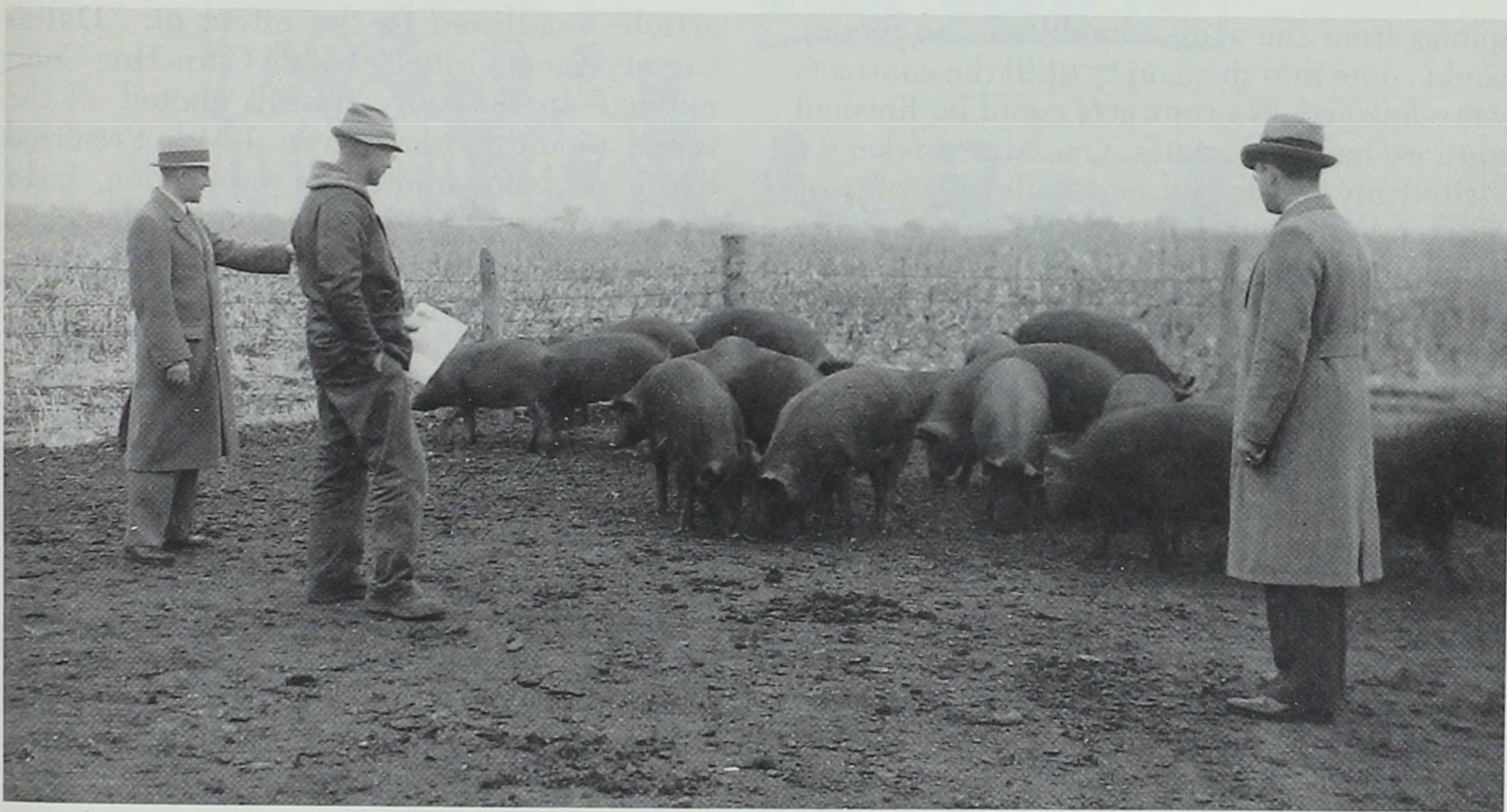
OUR PRINCIPAL TASK that spring was to verify figures from the farmers' applications, and transfer them to the contracts, which would then be signed by the farmers. Verifying was sometimes simple, sometimes not, depending on a farmer's "evidence" of corn and hog production in the base years. One morning, as I opened the office at about a quarter of eight, a farmer named Billy Morrison parked outside my office. I knew Morrison well, and he handed me a market basket full of papers.

"This is my hog evidence," he said. "See what you can do with it."

Morrison was a prominent cattle feeder from Redfield, and he didn't plan to raise any hogs. But he always bought feeder pigs, including



HOG EVIDENCE



Farmers in the Corn-Hog Program contracted to reduce hog production. Here, a Grimes farmer and program officials.

“wet” sows, to follow the cattle. Quite often the sows that he had bought had litters — he called these “catch pigs” — and so it was quite a job to figure out how many pigs of his own raising he had sold. After about two hours, Morrison went home with an empty market basket, and we had a file full of “hog evidence.”

Morrison’s problem dramatized one of the thornier parts of the hog program. The farmer who raised all of his pigs from his own sows had few problems, and those who only bought and sold feeder pigs could not be in the program. The problems principally lay with those, such as Morrison, who raised some of their hogs and bought the rest. While these farmers were in the minority, their contracts were the most complicated because of the difficulty of getting satisfactory evidence of numbers of pigs bought and sold. In many cases, farmers had to go back to the packing companies and buyers to get sales slips and other information. When this evidence first began to come in, we all just shook our heads and wondered if we would ever get it worked out to anyone’s satisfaction. On at least a hundred of the contracts, the hog evidence was very much in doubt and slow to be resolved. Truly, our old hand-cranked Monroe calculators were nearly cranked to death. As the program progressed, we were

finally allowed to get an electric calculator, and this was a real blessing.

For corn acreage figures, the word of the farmer was generally taken as evidence. But if the figures didn’t look right, the township committee actually measured the land. We had been given a county acreage allotment and county and township yields. Because corn-reduction payments were based on production as well as acreage, sometimes county and township committees had to assign corn-yield evaluations or productivity ratings to each farm, but that would come later.

Corn payments to the farmer were based on the yield we assigned the diverted acres. One of the first jobs of the township committees was to determine the number of diverted acres and then assign productivity ratings for each farm so that the whole thing would come out within the county quota. At first this seemed like an insurmountable task, but we finally solved it by factoring the productivity ratings up or down to fit within the assigned quotas.

For the next three months, the traffic in and out of our office was stupendous. Often there were twenty or thirty people in the office at once. By early May, all the contracts were ready to send to Washington — except for one step. So far we had only received temporary

quotas from the state committee. No money could come into the county until the contracts were finished. No contracts could be finished until we had final quotas. One May weekend I visited my old friend and college professor Warren Waite in Minnesota. Waite was on the Minnesota state corn-hog committee, and I asked him why he thought our state committee was so slow. As I remember, he said that the main delay in Iowa seemed to be in deciding how big a reserve pool the state committee would need if the total contracts came in over the state quota.

"Well, I think they could work that out very easily," I said. "In Dallas County we are needing the money badly, and every delay we get is causing additional hardship."

"Well, they could get it out anytime they want to," he replied. "We have, and we see no reason for following their procedure."

It happened that when I returned home the next Monday morning, J. S. Russell, farm editor of the *Des Moines Register*, came by. Russell stopped in often on his way back and forth to Des Moines to see if he could pick up any news in our office. During the course of our conversation, I told him about the information I had picked up in Minnesota, and I must have been quite vocal about some of the goings-on by the state corn-hog committee. We visited for quite a while, and I thought very little about it until the next day.

The *Register* was always waiting for me when I came down to the office, and much to my surprise the next morning I saw a front-page

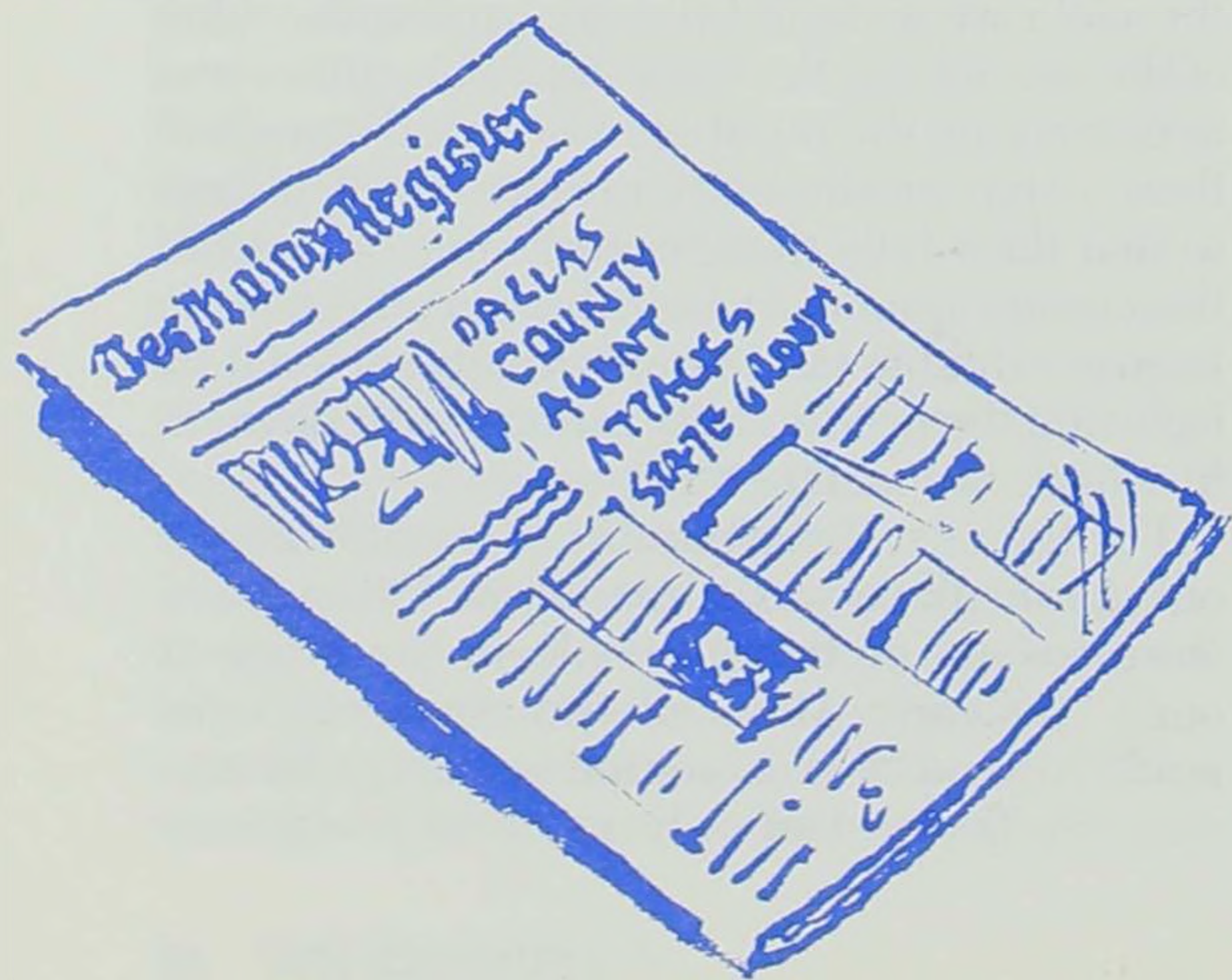
article headlined to the effect of: "Dallas County Agent Criticizes State Corn-Hog Committee." In the story Russell quoted all the information that I had given. I hadn't realized that I was being quoted for publication, and I was very upset. I didn't have much chance to catch my breath because my phone rang immediately. I had a call from R. K. Bliss, director of the State Extension Service. His call was not exactly complimentary, and a couple of hours later, Lee Nutty, my district supervisor, arrived. It was decided that I had to apologize to the state committee. I don't remember the exact form the apology was in, but I do know that we got our quotas almost immediately. (I also learned that it's a good thing to be very discreet when visiting with a newspaper reporter.)

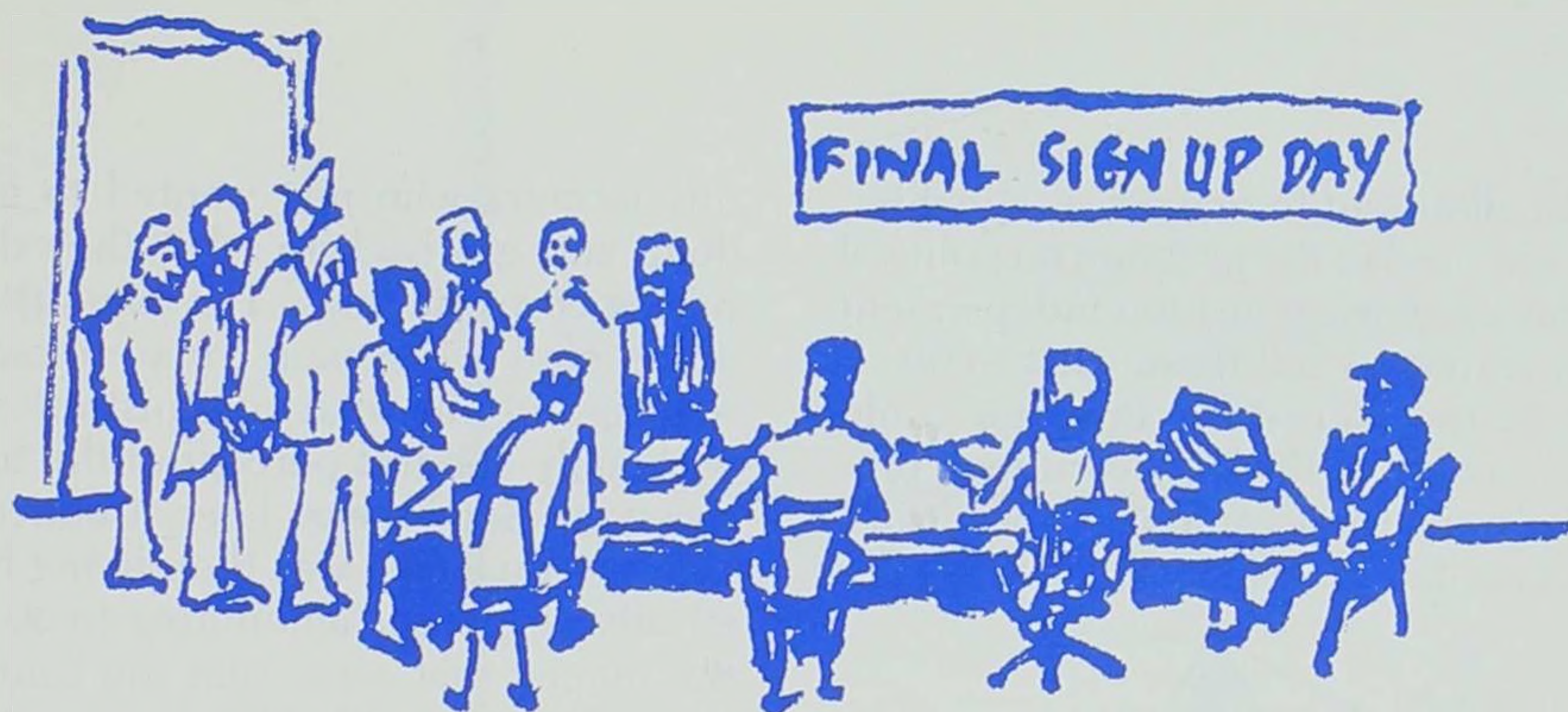
WITH THE QUOTAS finally out, we quickly did a blanket cut of four percent on corn and cut down some of the questionable hog contracts. This placed our total contracts within the allotted quotas. A week later we had all the contracts filled out. Farmers would sign the final contracts at township locations. Anyone who was not satisfied with a contract, however, was to come to the county office on Friday or Saturday.

Thursday night, Mortimer told us, "You better be down here pretty early in the morning, because I believe we are going to be pretty busy."

I made it a point to be at the office about seven A.M., and there were already about fifty people in the courthouse lobby. By eight when we opened our doors, there must have been two hundred excited people milling about. Fred Fry, on the allotment committee, arrived late at 8:30. To bypass the crowd in the lobby we let him in through a ground-floor window.

We had anticipated such a rush, and the procedure set up proved successful. John Goodrich, the chairman from Linn Township, was posted at the front door with two of the tabulators to meet farmers one by one. Mistakes in typing or addition on the contract were corrected on the spot by the tabulators. About





a third of the complaints were of this nature.

As the morning wore on, Goodrich, assisted by tabulator Jim Brown, took on other complaints, and about a half of those were fixed up in short order. The really tough cases were admitted one by one to the inner office, where the allotment committee was divided into two groups in session.

Only a few people were really irate. Many of the special cases involved estates, and these contracts all had to be accompanied by court orders. I had taken them up to the clerk of court. Just as I was wondering what had happened to these contracts, I was called up to Judge E. W. Dingwell's chambers. There sat a couple of local attorneys. These men were all dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, and they proceeded to give me a hard time about the Corn-Hog Program, a "foolish Democrat program," they called it. I was not sure whether I was being baited or not, but I stood my ground quietly. Finally the judge signed the court orders, grudgingly, I thought.

By working through the noon hour, we cleared the halls by five o'clock on Friday. Saturday was almost a repeat, but we knew what our problems would be and moved through the process quickly. By three o'clock, all but four or five of the 2,063 contracts were signed and ready to go to Des Moines.

WE WERE THE SECOND COUNTY in the state to get our contracts to the state office, and the fourth to get our money. As I look back, perhaps we were too concerned with getting our contracts in speedily and getting the checks to the farmers. But when I think back to the desperate

financial conditions of that time, I can still feel the urgency of our work.

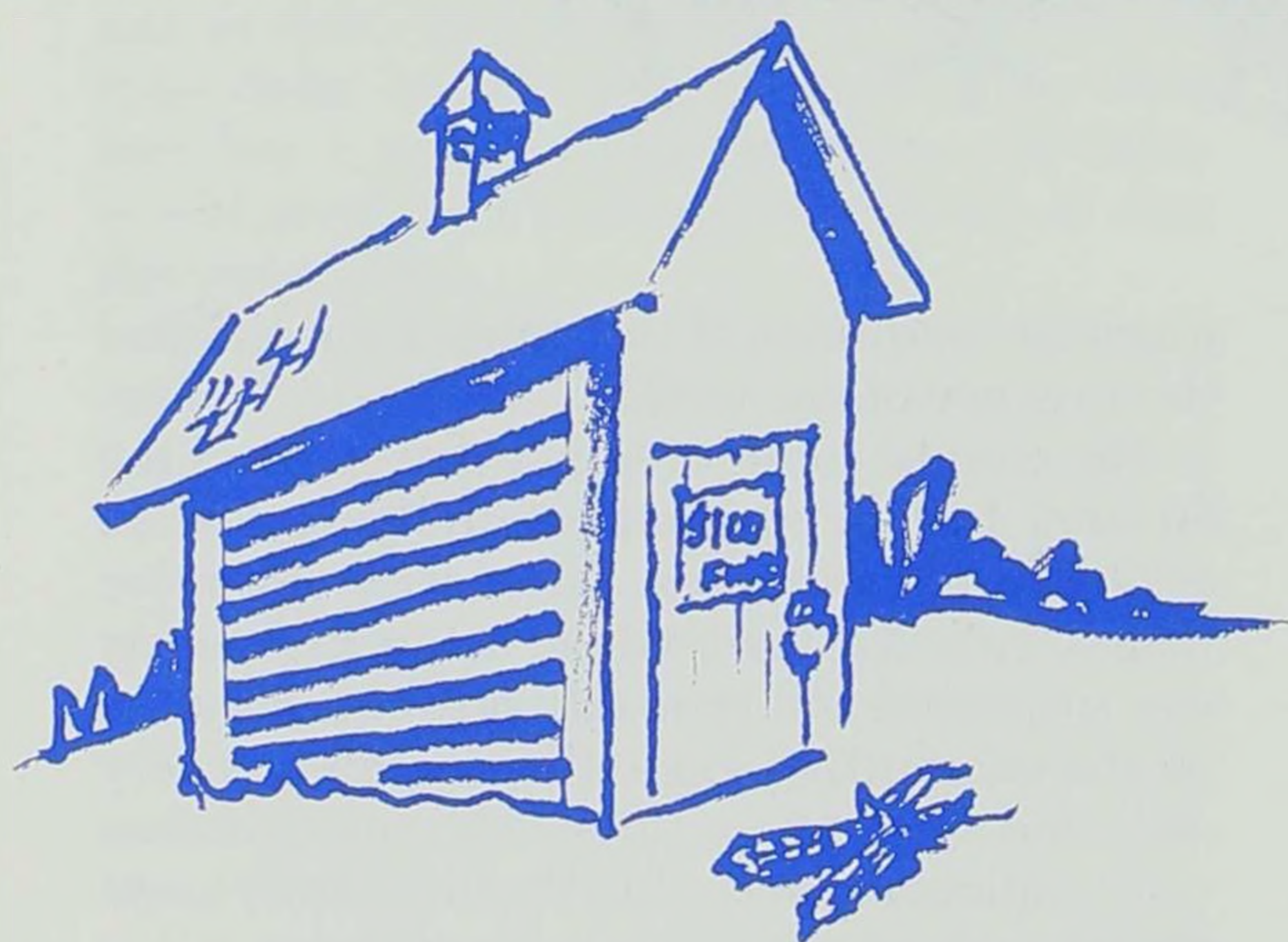
The county committee felt that most of the farmers had been fundamentally honest in establishing their bases. There were not more than twenty-five cases where actual dishonesty was suspected and probably present. Farmers on the committees knew their neighbors very well, and while two or three of these cases were very unpleasant to deal with, the county committee took care of them in good shape.

The drought of 1934, plainly in evidence before the contracts were all signed, took care of one of our big problems — there was almost a complete crop failure in Dallas County, and *none* of the diversion acres had to be measured to see if farmers were in compliance with their contracts. The hogs did have to be counted later on in the year. The national press had some horror stories about "little pigs being killed in the corn belt." The only cases I remember in Dallas County were when farmers' sows favored them by giving birth to too many pigs, and in a few cases, four or five little pigs had to be killed. I doubt, however, if more than one hundred pigs were killed in Dallas County, and I would guess that most of these were runts who would never have lived to go to market.

About 85 percent of the farmers in Dallas County participated in the Corn-Hog Program that year — representing about 90 percent of the corn land and 93 percent of the hogs raised. The farmers who didn't enter the program — there were not many — chose not to for a number of reasons. Quite often because of crop rotations or changes in operation, their corn acreage was not representative and they didn't

have enough allotment to make it worthwhile. A few were opposed to the program on political grounds, and a few were just too independent to let the government tell them what to do.

Farmers in the Corn-Hog Program could also take advantage of the new corn loan program, whereby a farmer could use stored corn on his farm as collateral. First, a licensed sealer



would come out to a farm to officially “seal” the corn in a crib. This meant nailing a small metal sign across the door. The sign warned against tampering with the sealed crib and stated penalties. Then the corn sealer measured the crib and calculated the number of bushels. Paperwork was completed in our office. At a local bank a farmer could be loaned forty-five cents per bushel of sealed corn. Participating farmers had three choices: sell the corn later and pay off the loan with interest; buy back the corn with interest for their own use; or deliver the corn to the government as full payment on the loan. In Dallas County nearly 2,300 corn loans were closed, with an aggregate total of over \$1.4 million.

ALTHOUGH IT IS still exciting to look back on that year of emergency Agricultural Adjustment Act programs, it is impossible to reproduce the spirit and the emotions. The Corn-Hog Program was a ray of hope in a dark sky, and in Dallas County at least, farmers accepted it enthusiastically.

The program was effectively carried out by

dirt farmers who just wanted to get the job done and get back to what they did best — raising corn and hogs. The committee and the office staff were paid very nominal hourly wages, and our total administrative expenses were only about 2 percent of the total money received. Some years later, I noticed that the county in which I was then living had administrative expenses amounting to 50 percent of the money that came into the county. But in Dallas County in 1934 bureaucracy had not yet arrived. A group of competent people had worked conscientiously for a program that they believed would lead them out of the Great Depression.

The old courthouse office must still echo with the feverish activities of some sixty years ago. I remember especially that Friday in June when we finished the contracts of the farmers crowded in the lobby. I can see Fred Fry climbing in late through the window. I can see John Goodrich placating angry farmers in the outer office. I can see Glenn Rowe cracking his knuckles as he weighed an important decision. I can see Max Gutshall kidding Ralph Mortimer about the poor land in Adel Township. There was fun mixed in with the work, too. What a relief when the contracts were all carted down to Des Moines, and what a relief when the first checks arrived in rural mailboxes across the county. From that first program Dallas County farmers received about \$387,000 as diversion payments on corn acreage and about \$486,000 as payments for hogs not raised.

YET IT IS PROBABLE that the drought of 1934 did more than the Corn-Hog Program in reducing production of corn and hogs. Although 1933 had been a fairly normal season, and the crop yields reasonably good, there had been some signs that year of what was to follow.

I remember one warm day in May 1933, for instance, when I drove all over the county with my lights on and my windows rolled up because of a dust storm. Cornfields had recently been harrowed, and the wind blew fine particles of soil through the air. Most every farmer was out stripping the cornfields, cultivating



"I remember one warm day," writes the author, "when I drove all over the county with my lights on and my windows rolled up. . . . You couldn't see the sun, and visibility was almost zero." Above, a dust storm in the early 1930s.

rows about thirty feet apart. This seemed to stop the worst of the wind erosion. If the field had not been planted, the farmer disced rows at intervals across the field to try and stop the dust.

All that day — and there were a few others like that — you couldn't see the sun, and visibility was almost zero. Other times in 1933 you could see dust clouds on the southwestern horizon. Sometimes these clouds were almost red. The story was that this was soil from eastern Oklahoma. If it rained, the first rain that came down looked like red paint.

Despite these omens in 1933, the drought of 1934 slipped up on us without much fanfare. No one, except the very old people, could remember when Iowa and Dallas County had had a severe drought. Certainly there had been "dry spells," but nothing calamitous had occurred since the turn of the century. The years 1931 through 1933 had all been rather dry, but there had been rains and they had come at good

times. Crop yields in Dallas County and most of the corn belt were quite adequate. We had heard of drought in the Dakotas, eastern Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma, but these were only rumors as far as we were concerned.

Imagine, then, if you will, a period when no rain falls from March until late fall. This was what happened in Dallas County in 1934. On top of this the temperatures were much higher than normal. Some days in May the temperature passed a hundred, and it seemed like there was always wind — hot, burning wind. The oats and grass seed planted in March and April never germinated but lay in dry soil. Pastures dried up almost before they had a chance to turn green. Some corn came up, but it did poorly. And then came the chinch bugs.

Apparently there had been some chinch bugs the years before, but they had done relatively little damage. These small, black, leaf-eating bugs wintered over in permanent pastures or wheat fields. In normal summers,



(From left): Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, *Register* farm editor J. S. Russell, and R. M. Evans, chair of the state Corn-Hog Committee, inspect Iowa's 1934 corn crop. Drought caused almost complete crop failure in Dallas County that year.

there is enough grass to give them all they need. But 1934 was not normal. By the first of June, the chinch bugs started to move into the cornfields.

None of us had any experience in combating chinch bugs, even the specialist at Iowa State. At first, to prevent the bugs from marching into the cornfields, we plowed single furrows as barriers. Next the farmer hitched a post to a horse or tractor and pulled the post back and forth down the furrow, pulverizing the soil to a mass of very fine dust. Every fifteen or twenty feet, a small posthole would be dug. The theory was that the chinch bugs didn't like to cross the dust and they would crawl up and down the furrow until they would fall into the posthole. Soon it was clear that this was not a very effective method of control.

The next method tried was pouring a strip of creosote oil on one side of the ditch to further discourage the chinch bugs. The government shipped three carloads of creosote oil into

Dallas County that summer. The local Work Relief Program loaned us some workers to help dispense the volatile oil from the tank cars parked in Van Meter, DeSoto, and Redfield. On hot days the fumes were irritating, and in one instance a relief worker had to have his eyes treated. I'm sure more barrels of creosote were hauled home by farmers than were ever used against chinch bugs. Twenty-five years later there were still farmers with creosote oil in their machine sheds.

The chinch bug war did not last long, for two reasons. First, when chinch bugs learn to fly, their appetites are largely gone. They fly into the cornfields and lay eggs, but the second crop of chinch bugs usually does considerably less damage. And once they can fly, there's nothing much you can do to control them anyway. Second, the corn just burned up. In many fields, there wasn't any corn to save.

Because all the crops had dried up, there was hardly any cultivating to be done. There was very little hay made. There was no threshing. There were no weeds to contend with. On many farms there weren't too many things that could be done. The county 4-H club agent, Joe Beving, and I decided we would start a softball program among the boys' clubs. We played a regular summer schedule, had a county tournament, and sent an all-star team to the state tournament. The teams not only gave the boys something to do, but I'm certain that they swelled our membership in 4-H.

IN THE LATE SUMMER, the government came in with a cattle-buying program. The first cattle sale I saw was in Creston, and farmers brought in four or five hundred head. For the cattle that could be butchered for meat, the government paid packinghouse prices plus a small bonus. Many of the cattle were simply too starved and emaciated to be worth anything, but the government still paid a minimum price for these. About a hundred of the worst of these cattle were simply trucked out to a huge grave west of town, shot, and bulldozed over with dirt. At a later sale in Adel, only about a hundred cattle were brought in. Fortunately all of them had some meat value.

Pastureland in Dallas County was mostly



W.J. NORRIS COLLECTION (SHS-IOWA CITY)

County agricultural agents helped coordinate extension, 4-H, and Farm Bureau demonstrations and meetings. "Rocky times' had created more interest in small fruit management problems," wrote W. J. Norris, county agent for Benton County in his 1932 annual report. Above, a demonstrator prunes black raspberry canes for an interested audience.

devoid of cover. Livestock had literally eaten the grass into the ground. The county was really half southern Iowa, with hills, timber, and much livestock, and half northern Iowa, with much level, fertile soil and to some extent a cash-grain area. In the southern part, most of that year's corn had little value for anything but fodder — and there wasn't even much of that. In some northern areas, in rare instances farmers got as much as ten or fifteen bushels to the acre. The oats crop and other small-grain yields were almost nil. The total amount of feed grown in Dallas County was not nearly enough to support its normal livestock population.

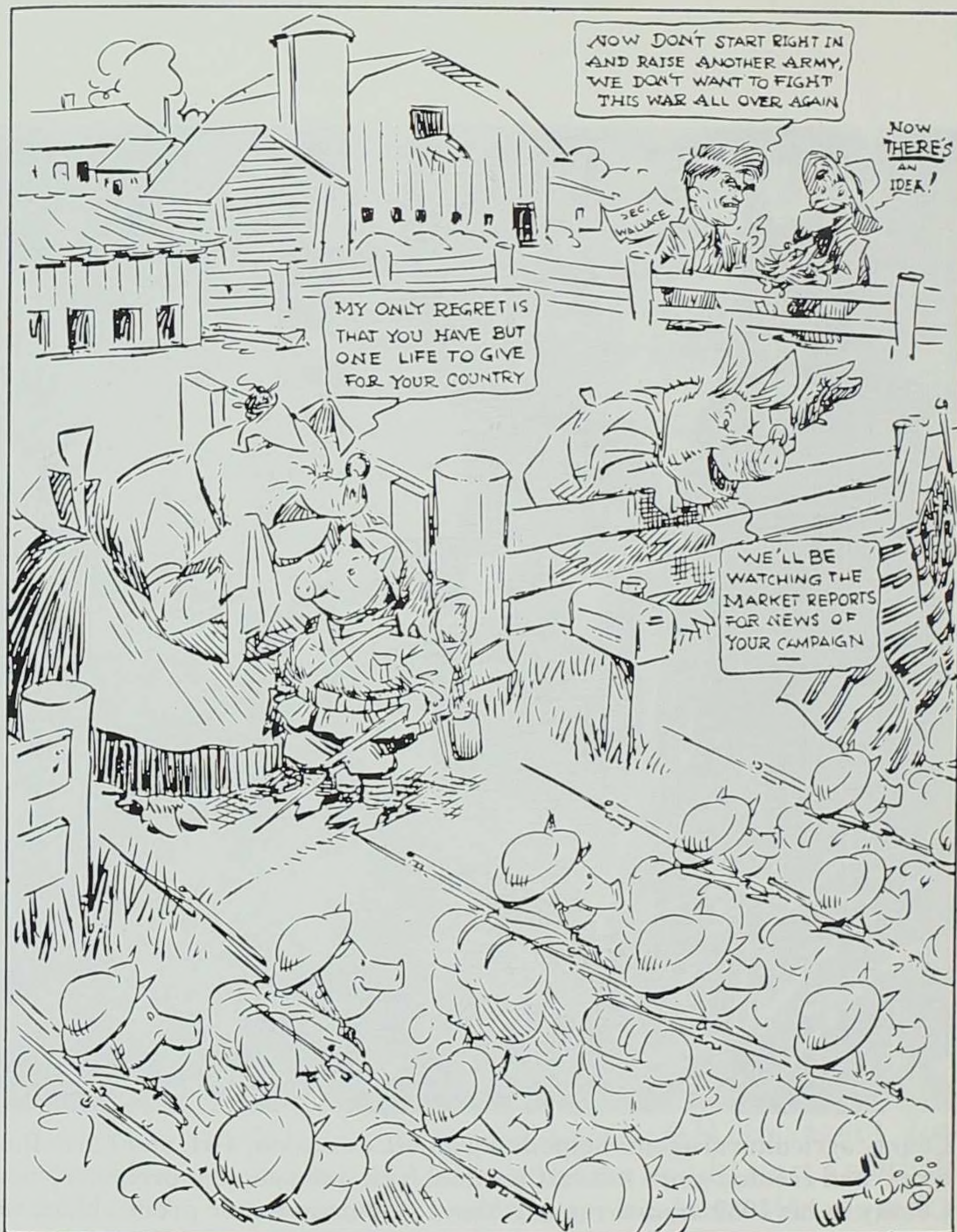
By fall 1934 it was obvious that more emergency measures were needed. The government had a small emergency feed and seed loan program to furnish feed for livestock herds farmers were trying to keep intact. Working through private buyers and sellers, we shipped in several carloads of hay from northern Iowa. It didn't seem quite right to be paying twenty

to forty dollars a ton for foxtail hay, but that was what happened that fall.

For emergency seed loans for the next season's hay crop, we looked into soybeans, which were just beginning to be grown in Dallas County. Soybeans make excellent high-protein hay if cut with a mower just when the first lower leaves are starting to turn yellow, raked with a dump rake, and bunched into small cocks to cure. So we set up a plan to buy soybean seed and distribute it through the Dallas County Cooperative Elevator. We bought and shipped in from Illinois over five carloads of bulk soybeans to be used for seed for emergency hay. Our office was very busy during the fall and winter making emergency feed and seed loans, first through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and later through the Farm Credit Administration.

We hadn't distributed very many soybeans for seed before we found horse nettle seeds in them. Horse nettle seeds are in little pods

"OFF TO THE ECONOMIC WAR" by Des Moines Register cartoonist Jay N. "Ding" Darling (August 23, 1933)



about the size of soybeans, so it's hard to separate them out. There was really quite a furor for a while. Farmers wondered why the county agent and Farm Bureau would bring in seed full of noxious weeds. I knew that farmer Lloyd Roland had developed a small business of going around to farms and doing custom cleaning of seed oats and soybeans with a gas-powered fanning mill. We made a deal with Roland. He cleaned all the soybeans that had already been distributed to six or seven hundred farms. Finally, Dallas County farmers had about ten thousand bushels of clean soybeans to plant for emergency hay in the spring of 1935.

WITH 1935 came rain and good crops, although the lack of ground cover or crop residue had severely increased erosion. Forces were also at work eroding the partnership between the Farm

Bureau, the Extension Service, and the government programs. They would soon have separate offices and separate personnel, but that is another story.

By the end of 1935, I had been county agent for three years — and had attended meetings of some kind on nearly half of those nights. Working with county and township committees, our office had successfully administered AAA emergency programs of a scope hitherto undreamed of. I had played a part in helping Florence Williams and Joe Beving develop an exceptionally strong program in extension work and 4-H and township Farm Bureau meetings. These successes were partly due to the spirit of the time, but mostly due to the money and excellent personnel funneled into extension work in those "emergency years." There was never a spirit of defeatism or complacency. The most credit, however, must go to the people of Dallas County, who rose to

high levels of leadership and responsibility to make these programs succeed.

Now by the end of 1935, we had entered a period of hope and prosperity. People seemed to have acquired a new faith in agriculture and eagerly availed themselves of all of the many opportunities. But I was experiencing a let-down feeling now that the emergency programs were over. Then a job offer coincided with my reluctance to settle down into more routine county extension work. I decided to take the new job as extension farm management specialist in Ames.

On December 31, 1935, for the last time, I

closed the rolltop desk and locked my office door. I had met nearly two thousand people in Dallas County. Most of them had been in that office, one time or another. And our staff had literally taken our programs to the people. I had been on nearly all the farms in Dallas County. In many cases, I knew all the members of the farm families. I felt sincerely that most of these people were my friends. And with these good people, I had shared the traumas and triumphs of 1933 through 1935. We had survived the drought and we had emerged from the depths of the Great Depression. □

[Next page: A county agent's day out of the office!]

CORN-HOG SONG

By H. F. MILLER, County Agent, Poweshiek County

Henry was a farmer so the story goes
He lived in the state where the tall corn grows,
He worked from early morning till the stars began to shine
For the last ten years he never made a dime.
He raised a lot of corn and about a thousand hogs
Yet every year he felt himself going to the dogs.
He mortgaged all his property and tried to make it pay
But soon found out he couldn't farm that way.

Chorus:

Henry Jones, better cut production
Henry Jones, you're doing not so well
Henry Jones, better cut production
If you don't start reducing you will end in—————

The market goin' lower, Henry's gettin' blue
'Cause the time was fast approaching when the mortgage was due
Said Henry to Mirandy, "This is more than I can stand."
When along came Wallace with his Corn-Hog plan.
He called up the sealer and borrowed on his corn
Paid his interest and taxes, just as sure as you're born.
Started workin' on his work sheet, says, "We've got to leave the ruts."
And he figured and he figured till he nearly went nuts.

Chorus:

Henry Jones, sharpen up your pencil
Henry Jones, you're doin' fine
Henry Jones, keep right on a figurin'
And it won't be long until we're all in line.

Says Henry to Mirandy, "What'll I do now?
I can't find the place I sold the old red sow."
He wrinkled up his forehead and scratched his old dome
And finally figured out the sow was still at home.
He kept on a-workin' he was at it night and day.
But he didn't seem to mind it for he knew that it would pay.
He signed up the contract and he put it in the mail.
Said, "We're pullin' all together and we know it can't fail.

Chorus:

Henry Jones, now we're all reducin'
Henry Jones, prices bound to rise
Henry Jones, clouds are disappearing
And we all come out beneath the sunny skies.

A Stakeout for Bonnie & Clyde

by Donald E. Fish

ONE JULY DAY in 1933 I was in my office when Evalyn Mark, my secretary, asked, "What do you suppose is going on out north of the courthouse?"

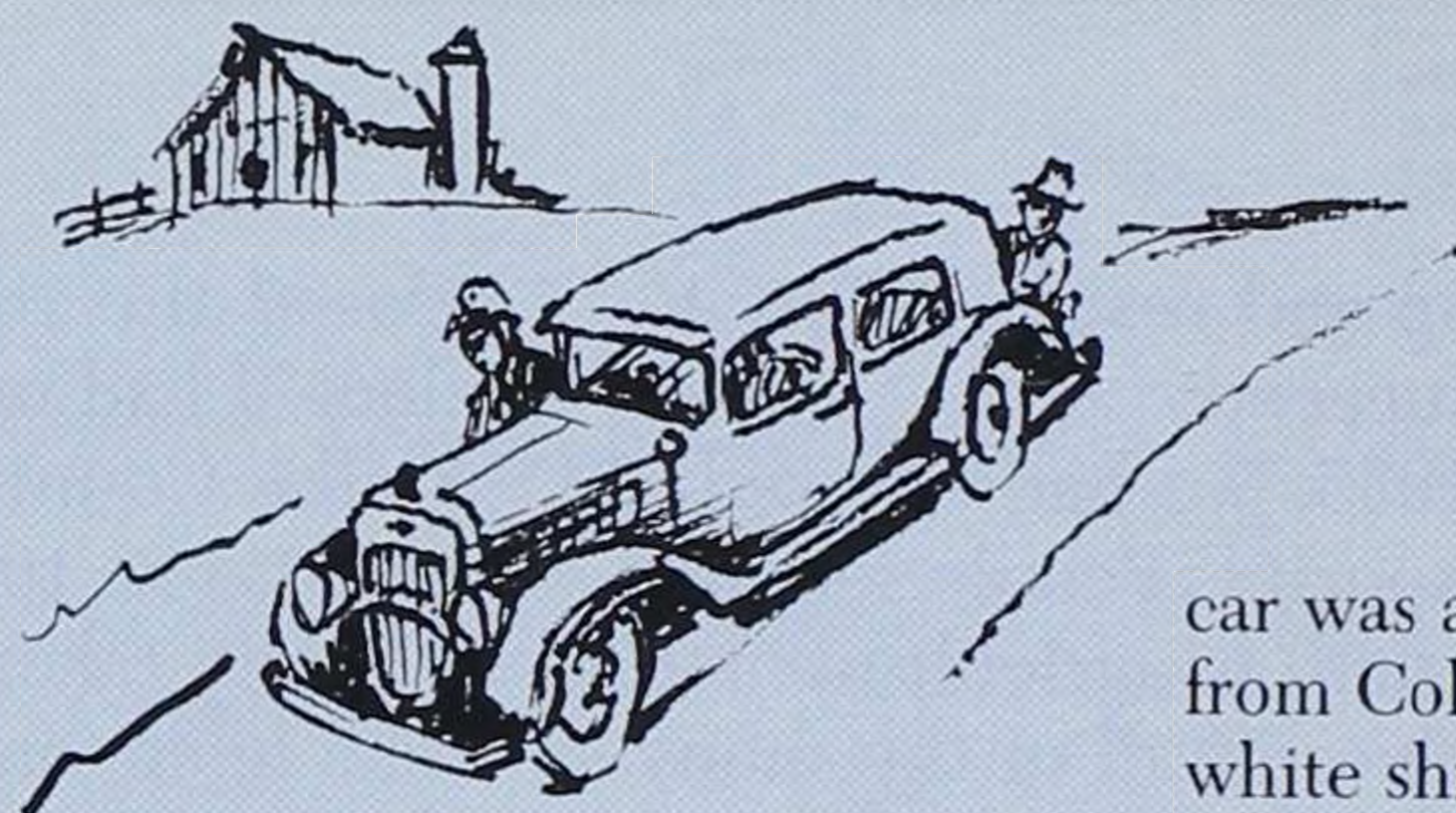
"I don't really have time, Evalyn. I have a few more wheat contracts to check. Then I'll go out and see."

Evalyn was not to be put off. "You'd better look. There's really something going on."

I looked. I couldn't believe it. About twenty-five men were getting out of cars and walking into the Dallas County Courthouse. All of them were armed, with revolvers, rifles, or shotguns. One or two appeared to have machine guns.

I urged Evalyn to go investigate while I quickly finished up. She returned in a flash with news of a shoot-out with the Barrow Gang in Dallas County. This got me properly excited, and I ran down to the sheriff's office. Sheriff Clint Knee announced, "We had a shoot-out with the Barrow Gang early this morning out at Dexfield Park. We got two of them, but Bonnie and Clyde and another man got away."

Deputy Evan Burger tossed shotguns at Harold Garoutte, Andy Wallukait, Pete Mason, and me and said, "Why don't you fellows go up to the Four Corners and see if the Barrows go by? Bonnie and Clyde escaped into the brush, forded the South Coon River, and ran through a riverbottom cornfield that belongs to Valley Fellers. They held him up and took his car. He drives a '31 green Pontiac two-door. If you see anything that looks like them, follow



ARTWORK BY JAMES FISH

them and try to get word to us. Don't try to shoot it out with them."

We drove as fast as we dared up to the Four Corners, five miles north of Adel at the junction of highways 169 and 7. We parked behind a highway commission shed. At the Four Corners, cars were visible from a long ways — except from the west, where the bandits would probably come from. After crossing the Highway 7 bridge, cars winding up the hill were lost to sight until fifty yards from our position.

"I'm sure Bonnie and Clyde would just as soon shoot at us as look at us," I told Harold. "If we see them coming, we better duck out of sight and follow them at quite a distance."

My car was a 1932 Chevy two-door, not particularly fast like the Barrows' Ford V-8s, but I was certain it could keep up with the 1931 Pontiac they'd stolen from Fellers.

We must have sat there almost two hours. Most of the cars in those days were black, and I can't remember seeing *any* green cars. Then a flash of green crossed the bridge. "Oh, oh, Harold, this is it. We better duck down."

Harold didn't waste any time. I ducked down too — but I kind of peeked. In a few minutes the car got far enough up the hill for me to see that it was a '31 two-door Pontiac, or very similar.

"Duck down, you darn fool, duck down," Harold said.

But there was something funny about the car. Finally I raised right up and laughed. Driving the

car was a Dunkard friend of mine from Colfax Township. He wore a white shirt buttoned at the collar, a black vest, and the black hat typical of his religious sect. Next to him sat his wife in a black dress and sunbonnet. Relieved, we headed back to the courthouse in Adel.

There, later that day, a crowd watched as officers struggled to get a woman out of a car. Somebody told us that this was Buck Barrow's wife. She was small — not over five feet and a hundred pounds — and she was kicking, screaming, and cussing. I had never seen a woman with such a hard-looking face. Four men were having a great deal of trouble just holding her. Buck had been shot, and she wanted to be with him in



the hospital. They finally got her over to the jail.

I didn't get any more work done on the wheat contracts that day. The Barrow Gang was all that anyone could talk about.

Buck Barrow died of gunshot wounds the next week at the hospital in Perry. His wife was taken to Des Moines. The rest of the Barrow Gang — Clyde, Bonnie, and the other man — got away. (We didn't hear about them again until they were shot down the next year in Louisiana.)

Everyone in Adel locked their doors tight that night, and the jail was well guarded. You didn't take chances when a Barrow was screaming in the county jail! □

CONTRIBUTORS

Donald E. Fish has had three careers, in extension work in the 1930s, in farming from 1938 through 1964, and in teaching English at Tripoli, Iowa Central Community College, and Buena Vista College since 1964. He still owns farmland and follows agriculture closely. He writes, "It's a shame that the people who worked with me on the Corn-Hog Program couldn't have seen this story in print. They were a great bunch."

James Fish, the younger brother of contributor Donald E. Fish, drew the six sketches that illustrate "The Emergency Years" and "A Stakeout for Bonnie and Clyde." James Fish worked as a vice-president of advertising and merchandising for General Mills in St. Paul, and later as a dean at St. Thomas College in St. Paul, where he initiated a program in business communications. He has served as the vice-president of the Advertising Federation of America. Donald Fish comments wryly, "He's a great guy, even though he's my brother."

Chuck Greiner photographed the Mesquakie artifacts in "Clothe Yourself in Fine Apparel." Greiner's photog-

raphy appears often in *The Palimpsest*. A commercial and portrait photographer, he operates from his Front Porch Studio in Huxley, Iowa.

Lauren Pille Robinson wrote "They Didn't Play No Jazz: An Oral History of Riverside, Iowa, in the Roaring Twenties" to complete a master's degree in journalism in 1987 at the University of Iowa. She lives in Iowa City, where she is executive director of the Johnson County Historical Society.

Edward W. Vollertsen lives in Tallahassee, Florida. He transcribed the Civil War diary and letters of his great-great-grandfather, Philip H. Goode, and compiled photographs, documents and biographical material so that Goode's story could be passed down through his family. Beverly Boileau, of Henderson, Iowa, assisted in the research. The diary and letters are taken from the complete biography and diary prepared by Vollertsen, and appear here with his permission.

SUBMISSIONS

The editor welcomes manuscripts and edited documents on the history of Iowa and the Midwest that may interest a general reading audience. Submissions that focus on visual material (photographs, maps, drawings) or on material culture are also invited. Originality and significance of the topic, as well as the quality of research and writing, will determine acceptance for publication. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced, and follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (13th edition). Please send two copies. Standard length is within ten to twenty manuscript pages, but shorter or longer submissions will

be considered. Although the *Palimpsest* presents brief bibliographies rather than footnoted articles, footnotes should appear in the original submission. When using newspaper sources, please cite page as well as date of issue. Include a brief biographical sketch. Because illustrative material is integral to the *Palimpsest*, the editor encourages authors to include photographs and illustrations (or suggestions). Please send submissions or queries to Ginalie Swaim, Editor, *The Palimpsest*, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

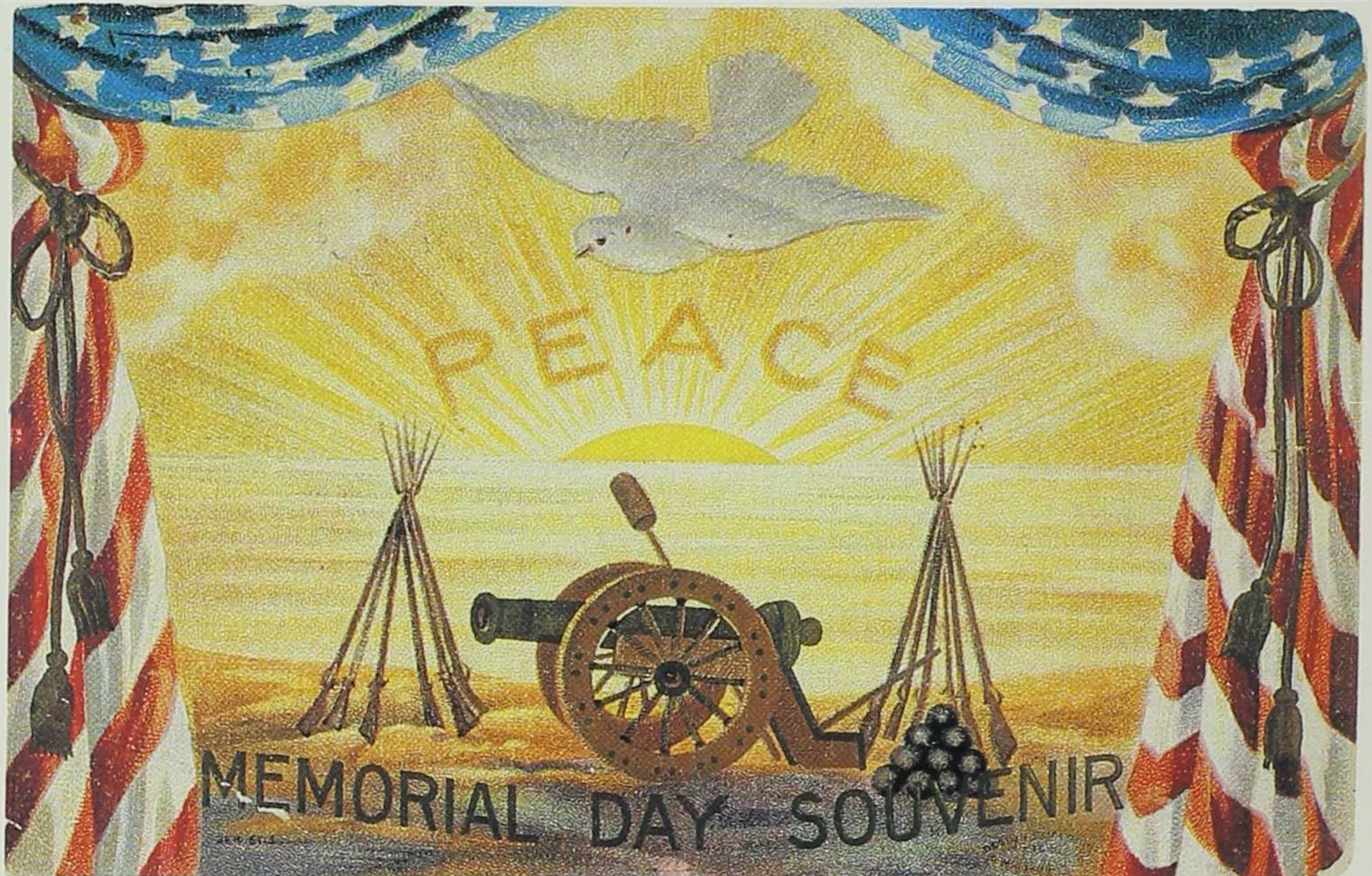
EDITORS' EXCHANGE

For more on Mesquakie culture and costume, see the upcoming issue of *The Annals of Iowa*, the scholarly history journal published by the State Historical Society of Iowa. According to *Annals* editor Marvin Bergman, the Summer *Annals* features Ruth B. Phillips's "Clothed in Blessing: Meaning in Mesquakie Costume." "Phillips supplements descriptions of Great Lakes Native American costume by nineteenth-century observers with a careful reading of two texts dictated by Mesquakie Indians," Bergman tells us.

Bergman also informs us here of the other major articles in the Summer *Annals of Iowa*: "New Buda: A Colony of Hungarian Forty-eighters in Iowa" by Béla Vassady, and "Staying on the Farm: Surviving the Great Depression in an Iowa Township" by Frank Yoder.

"Vassady employs a wide range of obscure sources—some of them Hungarian—to offer a lively and definitive account of the settlement of Hungarian revolutionaries of 1848 at New Buda in Decatur County," Bergman says. "Yoder found in a systematic analysis of deeds and tax and probate records for 1920 through 1950 that the Great Depression certainly threatened the economic survival of most farmers in a township in southeastern Iowa, but it was not as devastating for most as typical accounts of that era have led us to believe."

To order copies or subscriptions to *The Annals of Iowa*, contact Carol Carey, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240, (319)335-3916. Single copies: \$6 plus \$1 postage. Subscriptions: \$20 (\$18 for active SHSI members).



This *Palimpsest* explores the social customs surrounding Memorial Day in a small Iowa town in the 1920s, presented through oral history, photographs, and (above) picture postcards. Also in this issue: a Civil War diary and letters, the New Deal in Dallas County, Mesquakie culture, Bonnie and Clyde, and more.

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