

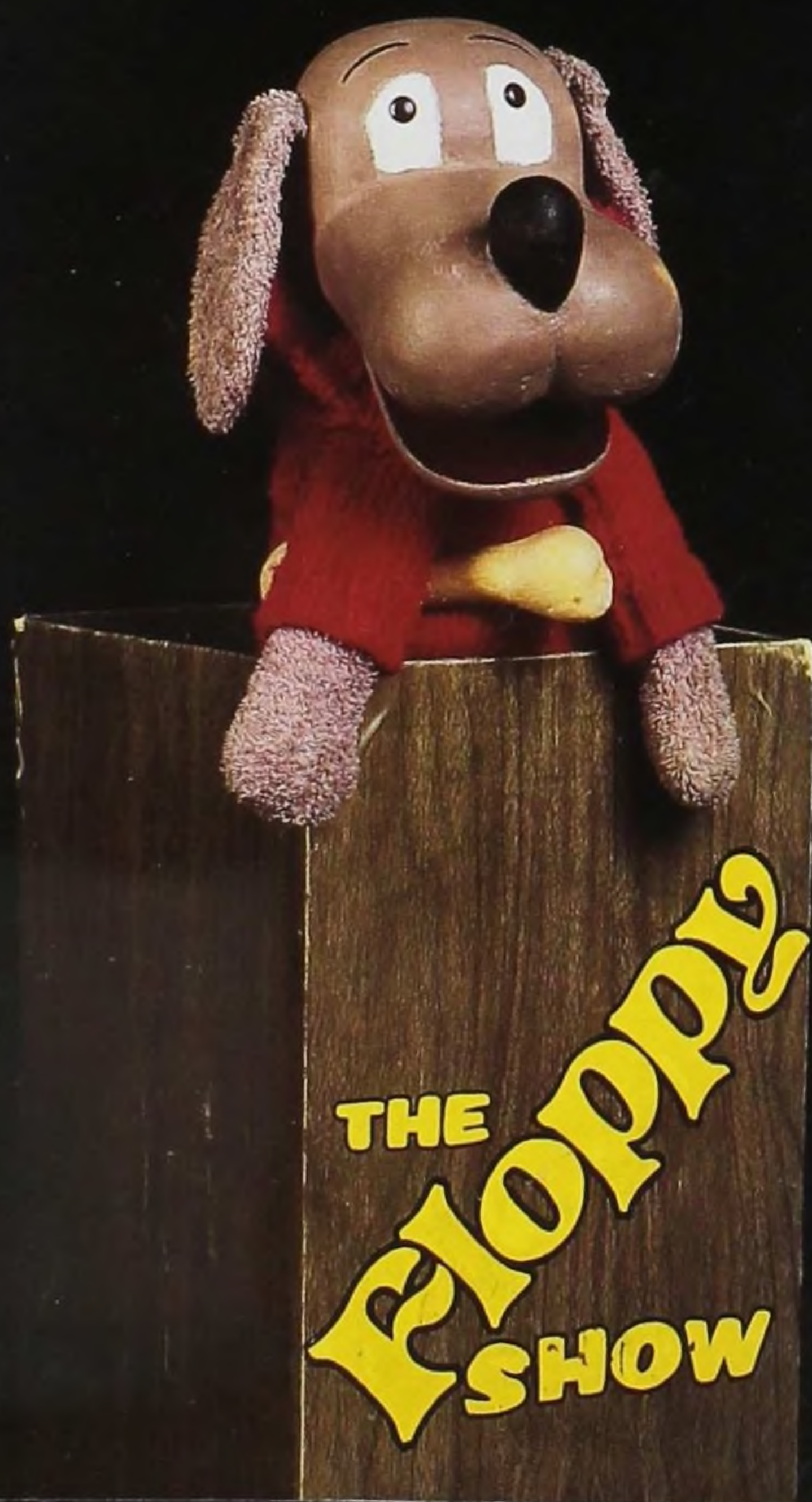
Television Comes to Iowa • Children's Shows • H.R. Claussen in German-American Davenport

The PALIMPSEST

Volume 75, Number 2

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

Summer 1994 \$4.50



Inside—

DUANE ELLETT COLLECTION, SHSI (DES MOINES)



Nationally known entertainer Steve Allen beeps Floppy's nose, as Floppy's creator and co-host, Duane Ellett, looks on. Although Allen reportedly was Ellett's "biggest hero," Floppy was the endearing hero of thousands of Iowa children who faithfully watched the show. This *Palimpsest* looks at children's programming and the arrival of the television set in the Iowa household. Stay tuned!



The Meaning of the Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest (*PAL/imp/ses*) 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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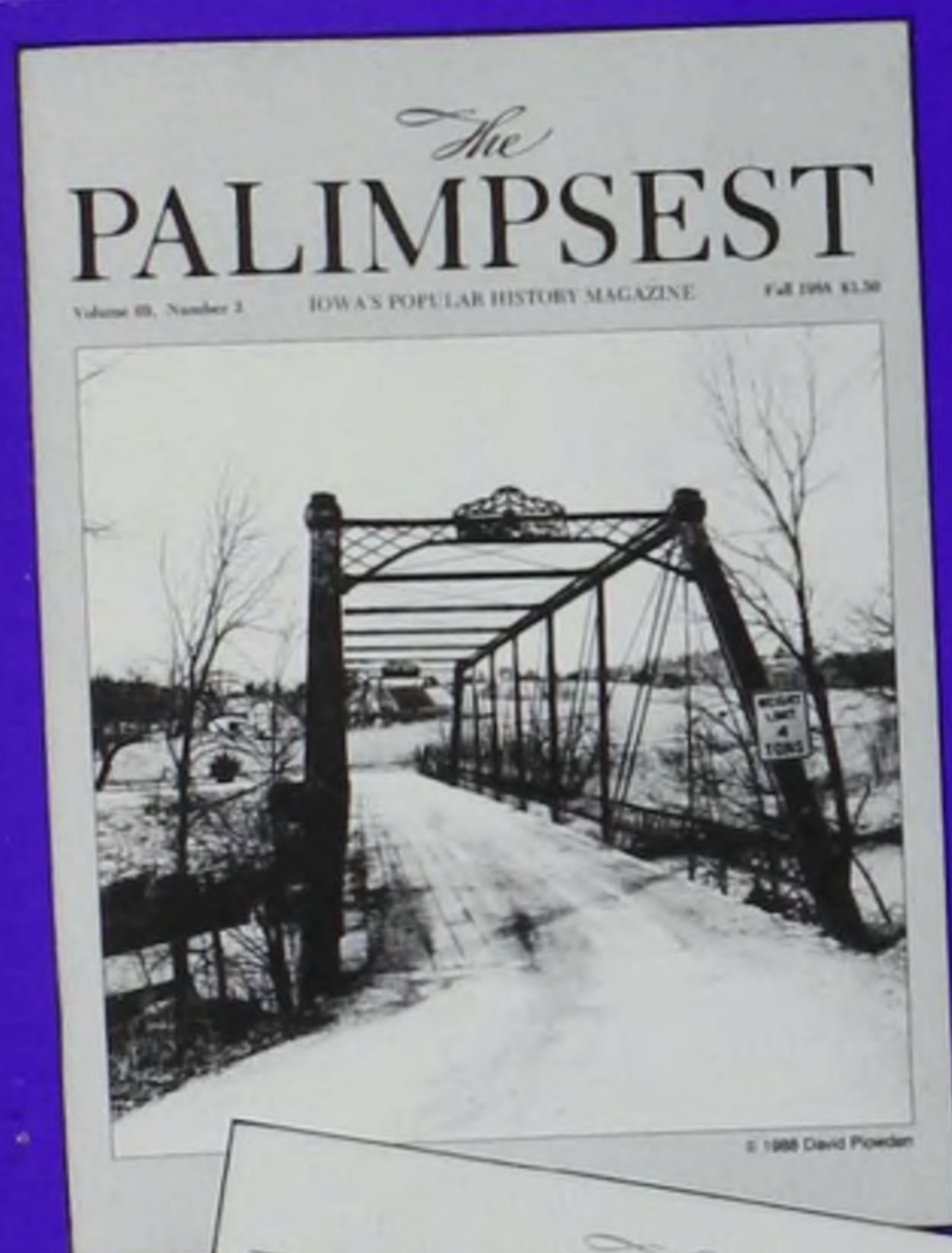
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travel back to the past?



Now you can --
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The Palimpsest.

The PALIMPSEST

POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

Malie Swaim, Editor

NUMBER 2

SUMMER 1994

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The history of Iowa which holds the record of the past can be deciphered and tell the stories which who write history.

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The PALIMPSEST

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

Ginalie Swaim, Editor

VOLUME 75, NUMBER 2

SUMMER 1994

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In the vibrant German-American culture of Davenport, Iowa, immigrant H. R. Claussen championed the rights of the individual.

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H. R. Claussen, German-American crusader 87



Local magic: Betty Lou Varnum and kids' TV 68

COVER: Floppy, the TV puppet, still has his bone and still has the spotlight, as photographed here by Chuck Greiner. Floppy and Duane Ellett were TV celebrities for thousands of Iowa children—as were a host of other children's TV personalities. Read about them all in this *Palimpsest*.

We're eager to hear about TV in your household in the 1950s and 1960s. Send us your response to the ideas and images on the next several pages.



When Television Entered the Iowa Household

by Ginalie Swaim

My family's Philco television from the early 1950s now sits in the basement of my mother's suburban house in Davenport. It doesn't work and has long since been replaced by a color set in a colonial cabinet for her den. But I remember the Philco in its upright mahogany cabinet in the farmhouse where I grew up. That was the set on which I watched *The Mickey Mouse Club*—though it interfered with late afternoon farm chores—

and *The Ed Sullivan Show* in the evening with my family.

Many in my generation grew up with television and can't recall home *without* a TV set. In fact, "between 1948 and 1955, television was installed in nearly two-thirds of the nation's home, and the basic mechanisms of the network oligopoly were set in motion," writes television historian Lynn Spigel. "By 1960, almost 90 percent of American households had at least one receiver, with the average person watching approximately five hours of television each day."

Early 1950s Iowa newspapers attest to this consumer rush. Multi-page sections of the newspapers were devoted to TV information (how to use all the control knobs—there were more than on radios), advice (how much light was needed in the room), and ads—and more ads. TV meant a "changing way of living" and "a closer knitting of family pursuits," one ad promised. "Everyone wants to see top sporting



What kind of set did you first own? These four are in the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa. Six-inch circular screen on this 1946 or 1948 Hallicrafter was watched by a Webster City, Iowa, family. Hallicrafter sets could be purchased assembled or as kits, attracting technologically oriented consumers.



This 1947 Admiral has a brown Bakealite cabinet and a whopping 9-inch screen.

Crow Radio Repair in Muscatine first used this Motorola as a demonstrator in 1949. Inside the "chippendale style" cabinet is a 10-inch TV screen, an AM/FM radio, and a phonograph that played 78 rpm records and "the new long-playing microgroove records." Cover of owner's manual



also shows a black ceramic panther TV lamp on the set. Inside it advises viewers that picture interference might be caused by car ignition systems, electric razors, and vacuum cleaners, and to place antennae accordingly.

events, Milton Berle, Howdie Doodie, Hopalong Cassidy, Kukla Fran & Ollie or a favorite movie on home television." Therefore, the ad reminded the consumer, "You'll require new versatility in your homefurnishings . . . larger sofas, lounge chairs that pivot easily from a conversational grouping to the receiver screen, subdued lighting arrangements." The ad pictured a "TV mantel lamp"; one wonders if the TV set was to become the hearth for the 1950s home.

But the circle around the TV would include more than the family. The Sidles Co. in Des Moines announced that a model with a "12 1/2-inch screen is ideal for viewing by the whole family plus the guests that will certainly drop in." A survey noted that 26 percent of the "set owners" polled had more new friends, and 24

percent were visited by old friends more often. A General Electric ad took advantage of this phenomenon: "Plan a Television Party in Your Home," the ad urged, and "We Will Furnish the Television Set Free!" "The only stipulation is that you must invite ten or more adults to your home to view the shows . . . and furnish the dealer with a list of your guests' names and addresses. INVITE your relatives—your neighbors—you'll have lots of fun . . . they'll appreciate your thoughtfulness."

Despite limited programming, TV ads boasted that "there are programs for every member of the family." An ad for Crosley sets listed "the children's hour packed with thrills and delights of wonderland . . . the homemaker's hour filled with 'how to' information by experts in homemaking . . . sports with husky thrills . . . drama and variety to give Mother and Dad or the whole family a theatre date at home!"

Even the set itself had something for every-

This Du Mont Teleset was used in 1954 by the Coonradt family in rural Osage, Iowa. Du Mont was



an early network and manufacturer. The manual promises "a full range of picture tones—deep, rich blacks, blending grays and crisp clear whites."

FOUR COLOR PHOTOS: SHS (PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHUCK GREINER)



JOAN LIFFRING-ZUG COLLECTION, SHSI (IOWA CITY)

Minnie D. Adams in her home in Newburg, Iowa, 1957. Note reflections in TV screen.

one: The "Ultra Fidelity" TV, for example, had all parts "designed from the Family Angle. For the lady of the house—there's cabinet beauty that will harmonize with her carefully selected furnishing. For children—bright, clear pictures that are steady and so easy on the eyes. For the man of the house—a marvelous piece of electronic engineering."

These Iowa newspaper advertisements echo locally the national research of Lynn Spigel in her book *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (University of Chicago Press, 1992). Spigel combed mainstream publications and professional journals to find out what they advised their 1950s readers about this new technology.

"Telegraph, telephone, and radio were all met with a mixture of utopian and dystopian expectations," Spigel reminds us, and so was television. This ambivalence about TV was manifested in contradictory predictions. For instance, pundits told Americans that television would improve women's homemaker skills with its how-to shows; or, conversely, television programs would tempt women to interrupt or abandon their housework. TV would add to housekeeping chores as people began to eat in front of the set; yet TV would bring the family closer together. Television would keep the husband home; or, distract him from his wife and family; or, disrupt his authority (just regained after his absence in World War II). To find out what the theories on young viewers were, see our article on children's local TV shows, starting on page 68.

While it's easy to find the newspaper and ad coverage of TV in 1950s Iowa, it's harder to find its impact in the individual home. We began by looking in the photo collections here at the State Historical Society of Iowa for images of Iowans watching television—and soon realized that people seldom photograph other people watching TV. (Would you?)

But what we did find were interior shots where the television is part of the "domestic environment," to quote Spigel. We see what room the set is in, what furniture surrounds it, what knick-knacks rest on it. In fact, Spigel notes, "The attempts [recommended by interior design magazines] to render the television set invisible are especially interesting in the

light of critical and popular memory accounts that argue that the television set was a privileged figure of conspicuous consumption and class status for postwar Americans."

Spigel acknowledges that while historians can uncover what Americans were advised about TV—whether to embrace it or be wary of it—it's much harder to find out how Americans really responded to its arrival in their households.

This is where you come in. *The Palimpsest* and the State Historical Society of Iowa are interested in what you remember about early television in your household or community. Even though television is part of the recent past, there is a surprising lack of documentation. On the following pages, we present a handful of photos and questions to jog your memory about early TV. If the questions don't address your experience, please tell us your own account of how TV did—or didn't—become part of your household. The questions are repeated on the tear-off mailing cover. We hope you'll take the time to answer some or all of the questions, briefly or at length, and send them to us. Consider turning on a tape recorder at a family gathering for generational perspectives of TV's impact on the household.

We're eager to receive your accounts. With your permission, the State Historical Society of Iowa will preserve your responses in the archives so scholars and students may use them as research material in the future. And we hope to publish some in *The Pal*. Please include your name, address, age in 1994, and phone number. Mail them to *Palimpsest*, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

Spigel concludes her book by reminding us that "a history of spectators in the home" is "a history that is only beginning to be written." Please help us gather that history.

—The Editor

Please turn the page to find the first questions.





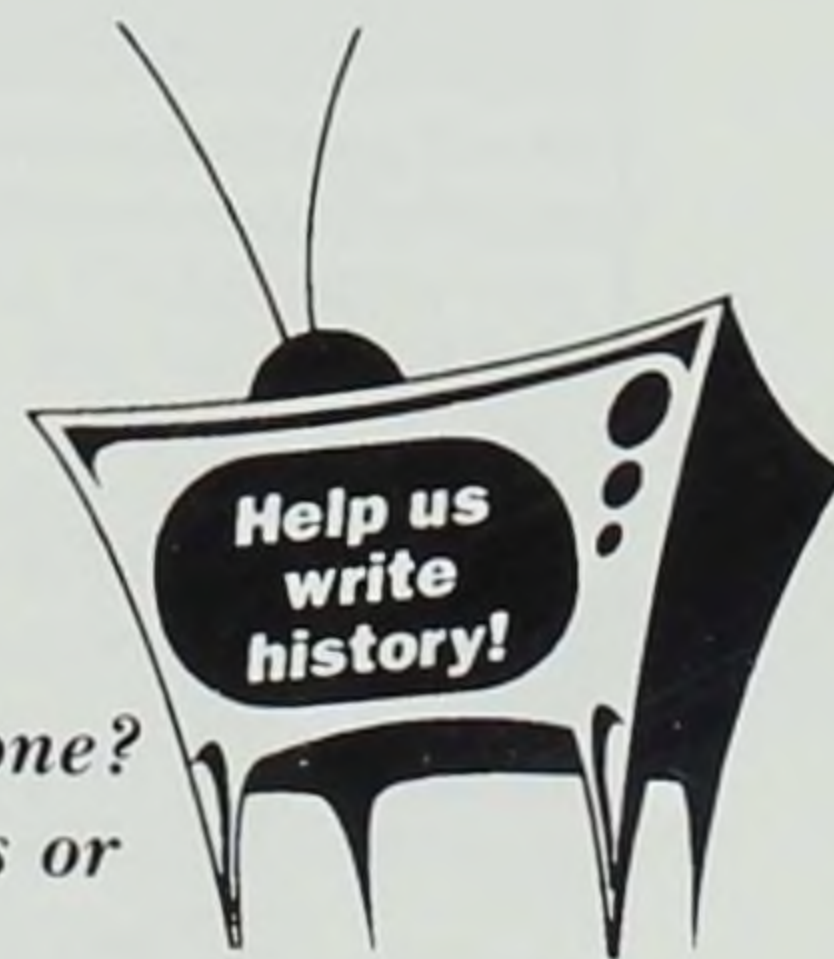
As TV sets begin to appear in homes, they also begin to appear in family photos. Here David and Anne Pickford pose with children John, Elizabeth, and Louise.

Q: *Did your household own a TV in the 1950s and 1960s? In what year was it purchased? What brand, size, and description?*

*What prompted the decision to buy, or not buy, a TV?
What was the occupation of the adults in your household?
Where did you live at that time?*



Photo from scrapbook kept by Alice Mary Gifford, in Iowa City, shows components of many an American home—family pets, fireplace, and television.



Q: *Did people in your household watch television alone? With other household members? With other adults or children from outside your household?*



Two TV sets (below bookshelves and through arched doorway) take their place amidst books, instruments, records, and skateboard, all enjoyed here by the Cecil and Evelyn Reed family.

Q: *In what room did you place your first TV? Was furniture rearranged or moved out of the room to accommodate the TV set?*

Did you later move your first TV, or other sets, to other rooms? What rooms?

Q: *Do you remember concerns or cautions about watching TV? What were they and who told them to you?*

What member(s) of the household decided what shows would be watched?



Trophies adorn TV set as Gordon and Susan Dehay have a father-daughter conversation.



Editor's note: All photos are from the State Historical Society of Iowa collections; see credit lines for specifics. Half were drawn from the extensive Joan Liffing-Zug Collection, a rich source of Iowa images in the last half of this century. For decades, Liffing-Zug has photographed Iowans in diverse settings. The nine Liffing-Zug images here, generally of Cedar Rapids families in the 1950s and 1960s, were culled from the negatives, contact sheets, and prints. *The Palimpsest* thanks SHSI archives assistants Kurt Berge, Vicki Schipul, and Paula Smith for help in selecting these images.



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JOAN LUFFING-ZUG COLLECTION, SHS (IOWA CITY)

Flanked by traditional furniture, the TV takes second place to dominoes and chess, played by William and Jane Bergman and children Billy and Lolly.

Q: *How did TV affect other leisure pastimes in your household? Did it replace certain activities?*



JOAN LUFFING-ZUG COLLECTION, SHS (IOWA CITY)

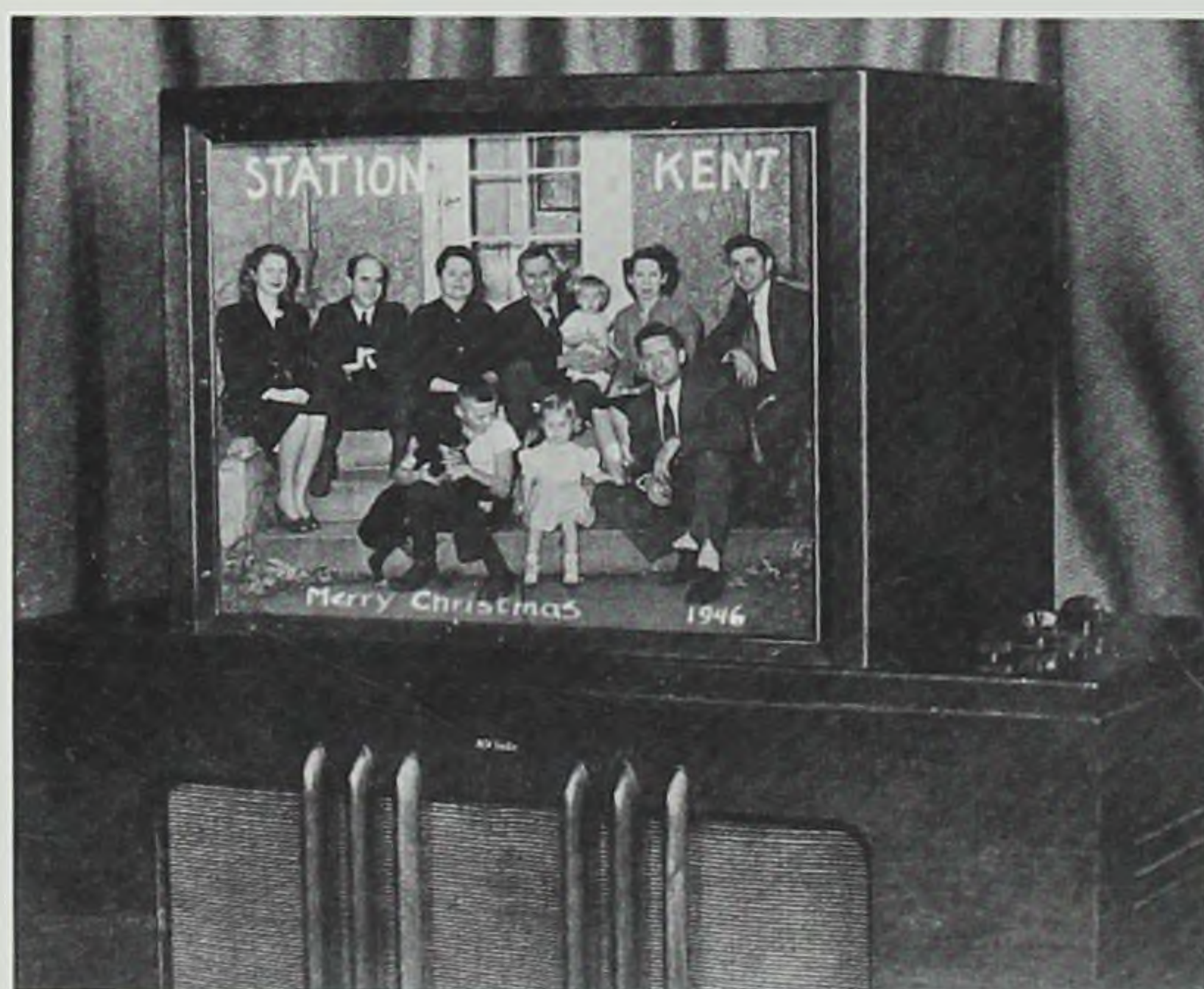
Music is the obvious focus here, as John, Elizabeth, and Louise Pickford perform, and parents David and Anne listen from the couch. Nevertheless, a portable TV set appears in the background, upper right.

Q: *What was the reaction of children in your household to TV? What were the parental attitudes towards children's viewing habits?*



Q: *In what ways did TV or its programs in the 1950s and 1960s influence children's leisure or what toys they played with in your household?*

Q: *Did any household customs and habits develop around TV watching? At holidays or other special occasions?*



Iowa City photographer Fred Kent made the family RCA radio look like a TV screen showing "Station Kent" for the family's 1946 Christmas card. Although impressed with the idea of television, he resisted buying a set for fear his wife would spend all her time watching it.



COURTESY BARBARA BUCKLEY

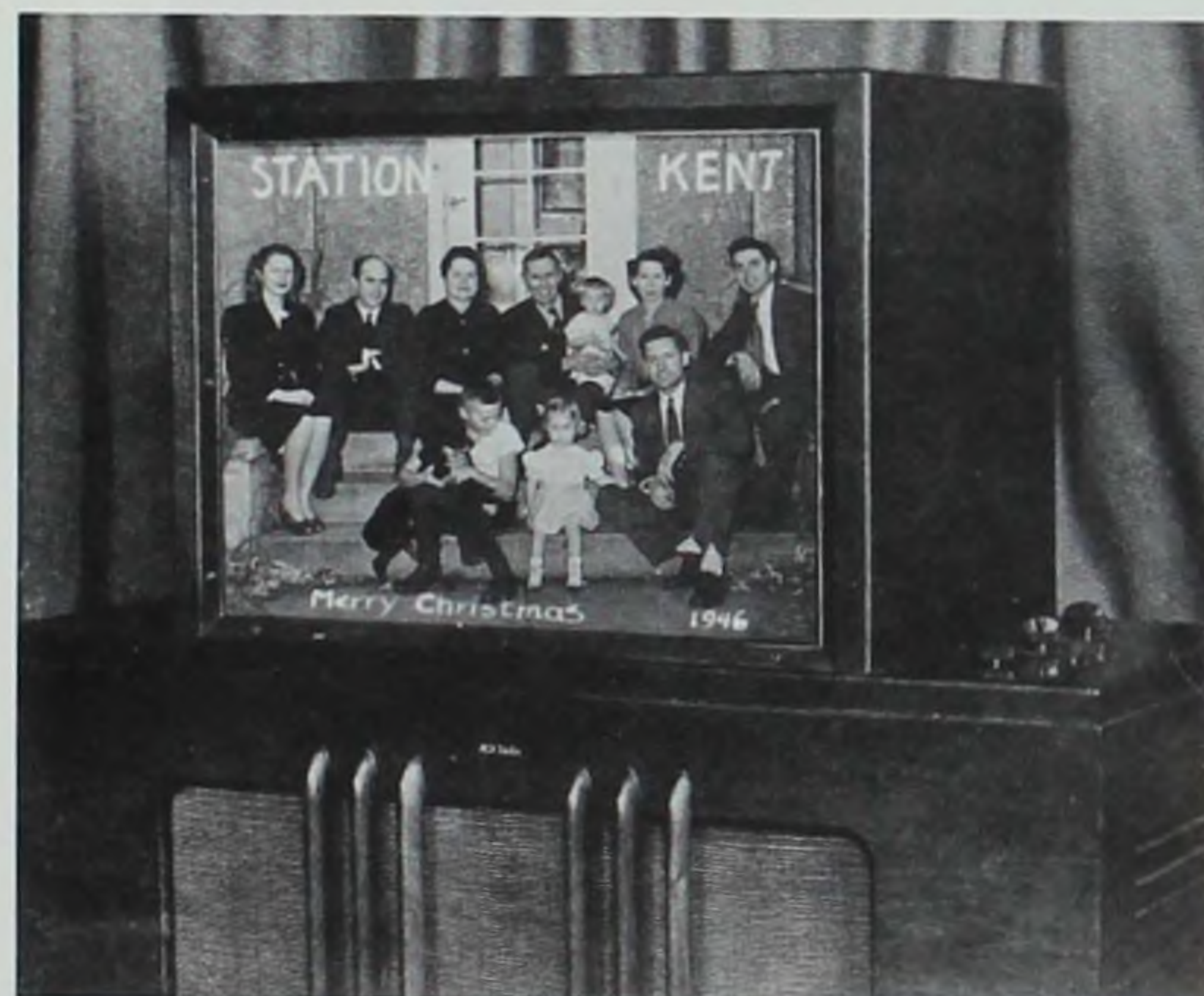


Wearing Western garb, Molly, Mike, and Tom Evans and friends work on log cabin playhouse in 1959.



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Wearing Western garb, Molly, Mike, and Tom Evans and friends work on log cabin playhouse in 1959.

for the genial host
who loves comfort...it's
the wonderful new **TV ROTO-ROCKER!**

\$39.95



A truly big-hearted chair for the host who likes to entertain...built for solid comfort, better tele-viewing, and good conversation. A beautiful piece of furniture, too, that will add new sparkle to the living room.

- YOUR CHOICE OF SMART DECORATOR FABRICS
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- LEANS BACK FOR SOLID COMFORT!
- MAKES ENTERTAINING MORE FUN!

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Open
Evenings
Monday
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Saturday
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Terms
Gladly
Arranged

Newspaper ads featured TV lamps and furniture for "better tele-viewing."

Q: Did your household purchase other furnishings or accessories to use with your TV (such as television clocks or lamps, furniture or TV trays), or devices to improve reception or enhance viewing? Describe them.

Q: Did television affect housework—how, when, or where you did certain tasks?

TV LAMPS

Your Choice

\$8⁹⁵



High gloss TV Lamp shown at right comes in Chartreuse, Gray and Oxblood. It's 3-Way.

3-Way TV Lamp shown at left in crystal and metal. Choice of Green or Black. Tole finish.





JOAN LUFFING-ZUG COLLECTION, SHS (IOWA CITY)

Fork in one hand, glass in the other, Randall Bezanson snacks from a TV tray.

Q: *How did TV affect dining patterns? Cooking? Where and when people ate? Cleaning up? Snacking?*





WORTHMAN COLLECTION, SHS (IOWA CITY)

A quiet moment at the Horton Rest Home in Mills County, Iowa, April 1951. From left, John Worthington (of Clarinda), Morris Evans (Oakland), and Levi Patton (Glenwood),

Q: *Did TV affect socializing—with others in your household, or with relatives or friends? In what ways?*



Counting this TV, in January 1951, the Des Moines Veterans Hospital now had sets in four of its six wards. Edgar Musgrave, Salvation Army board member, instructs World War I veteran H. H. Guernsey of Waterloo.

Q: *Besides inside your home, where else do you remember watching early television?*





As members of the "television generation" grew, so did the size of the screens. Here, a son of Virginia and Richard Evans, years after he and siblings "played cowboys and Indians" (see page 61).

Q: *Who repaired your TV if it broke? Where was it repaired?*
When did you get a color TV? What prompted that decision?



"How will I ever get the dishes done?"

Grace Karr's take on television

COURTESY HARRIET HEUSINKVELD



Grace Cronkhite Karr in the 1950s.

Grace Cronkhite Karr kept an eye out for change in her village of Cordova, Iowa (near Knoxville). And one change she watched for was television.

Between 1927 and 1967, Karr wrote a weekly column called "Cordova News" for the *Pella Chronicle*. Even though the village had only a few dozen people at most, the arrival of television in the 1950s was still something Karr noticed and wrote about, as you'll see from the following excerpts.

These are taken from *The Best of Grace Karr's Cordova News*, collected and edited by Harriet Heusinkveld (1991); dates in bold have been added. Cordova was abandoned when Red Rock Reservoir was created; its waters now cover the site of the village. But thanks to Karr's recorded observations, we can watch as television

became part of the Cordova community in the 1950s.

—*The Editor*

7/10/1952

Monday we visited at Joe and Myrtle's to see Douglas MacArthur on T.V.

1/8/1953

James Templeton and John Martin Visser have TV sets.

1/15/1953

A television set was installed at Bill's home, and are we enjoying it! Twenty-seven years ago when we lived in their home, little did we dream of such a thing as TV. Why even a radio was a luxury then.

1/29/1953

The pupils and teachers of the Red Rock school appreciated the opportunity to be able to see the presidential inauguration on TV. We also want to thank those who let us come to their homes and to the store.

2/5/1953

Between here and Monroe this morning, we counted seven TV sets. There are 18 TV sets between here and Knoxville, we counted yesterday.

Through town we counted 81, and from city limits to Croziers we counted 181. When will I get mine?

3/25/1954

Walter Cronkhite came Saturday evening and brought our TV. We are very glad to see all the good things, but how will I ever get the dishes done?

5/31/1960

Had visitors on Thursday. And what a crash of my two beautiful hand painted china plates did Roy make when he caused the TV tray to collapse! It broke the plates but not the cups. Hard for me to keep back tears.

10/20/1960

Friday night, Bill and his family, Roy and I, and Aunt Lida were supper guests in the spacious farm home of Hugh and Dorothy Templeton. First we watched the Nixon-Kennedy debate on TV and then a scrumptious supper was served. The table was very pretty with flowers, silver, and china, and of course the food was "tops." Dorothy's an experienced cook. There was Swiss steak, apple salad, jam, squash, etc. To finish, the dessert was a new one—frozen with ice cream as the base.

2/2/1961

I watched the presidential inauguration (JFK) all day Friday, January 20. We are seeing history being made. □

Early Television for Iowa's Children

by Becky Wilson Hawbaker

The day was hot and humid, and the sticky air was filled with the smell of grilled bratwurst and Maid-Rites. There were bands and bunting to celebrate the small central Iowa town's centennial in the 1970s, but for the crowd of children milling about, the event was a pilgrimage to pay homage to a local hero and Iowa cultural icon. The children's excitement, including that of my seven-year-old brother and me at age eight, built to a crescendo as we saw the approaching lemon-yellow Volkswagen van with the cartoon dog on the side and heard the loudspeakers announce, "Floppy has arrived!"

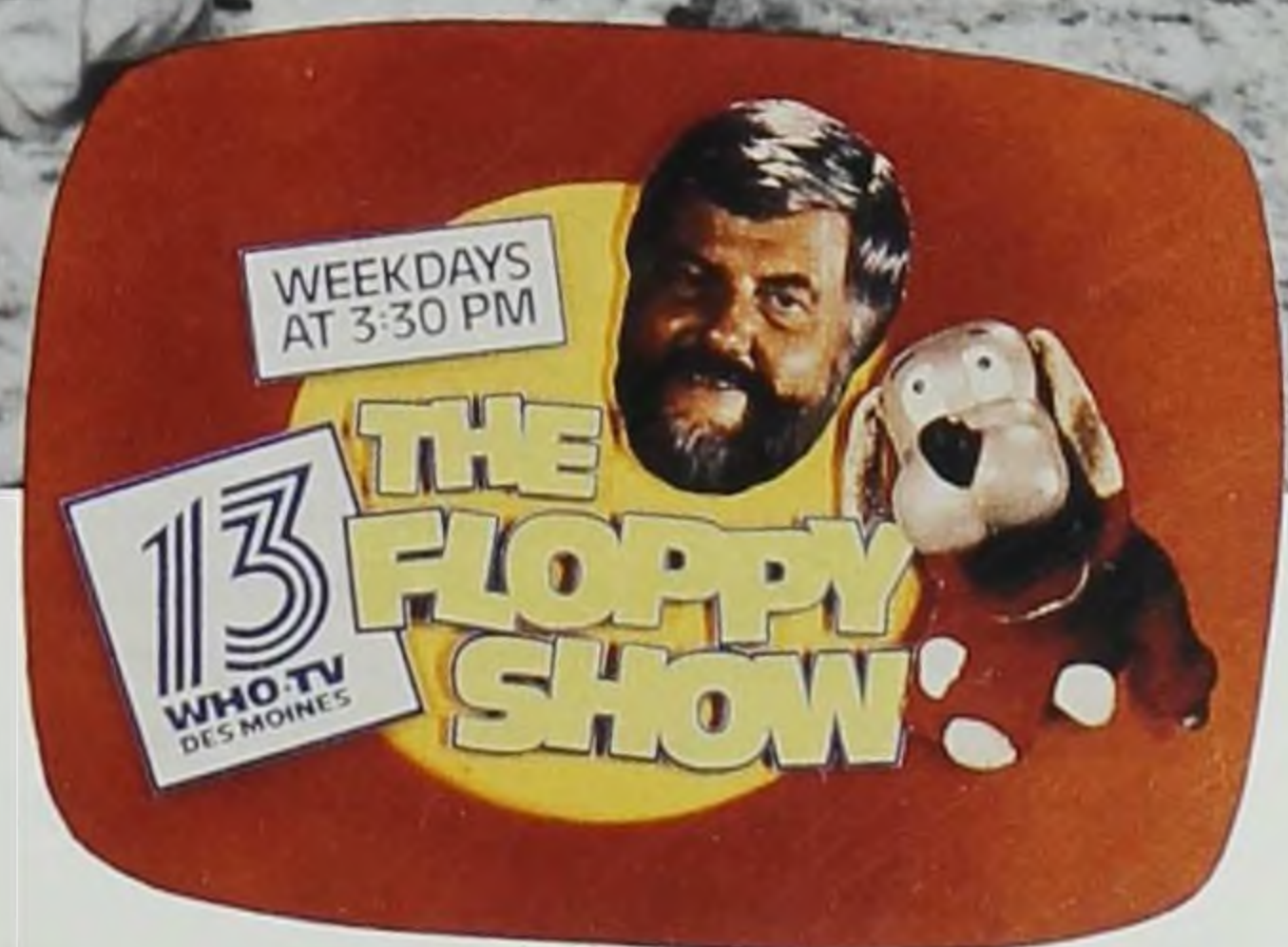
My brother and I left that day with an autographed picture of Floppy and his friend Duane Ellett (the picture was proudly hung in my brother's room even in college), two Floppy t-shirts that we wore until they were too frayed to be used even as rags, and the feeling that we must be very special for Floppy to visit us in this town. It was an experience on par with meeting the President or the Pope.

FLOPPY, as any true central Iowan knows, was neither a politician nor a religious leader, but a puppet. Floppy was not just *any* puppet, however; Floppy and Duane Ellett were the co-hosts of sever-





Duane Ellett and Floppy (back right) pose with guests January 3, 1978, on set used from 1976 through 1982. Dog mask (lower left) was a Floppy souvenir from the show and State Fair. "TV screen" sign promoted Ellett's popular kids' show on WHO-TV.



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al cartoon shows broadcast by WHO-TV in Des Moines from 1957 to 1987, and friends and heroes to thousands of Iowa children who watched the shows after school and on weekends. *The Floppy Show* is one example among many children's television programs produced in Iowa beginning in the 1950s, including *The House with the Magic Window* and *Canyon Kid*. These local shows shared common characteristics, yet were unique expressions of larger trends, and they captured the hearts of thousands of Iowa children and adults.

A GENERATION before this visit to see Floppy, television was in its infancy in Iowa. In the early 1950s, for example Woodrow and Kathryn Wilson were the first on their block in Perry, Iowa, to purchase a television set, ensuring instant popularity for their children. Although the children's viewing was restricted (their Aunt Helen thought that shows like *Superman* were "against God"), the now-adult Wilson children recall with nostalgia and surprising detail the shows they grew up with, and can remember all the words to the *Howdy Doody* theme song. Forty years have not dimmed Iowans' memories of early television.

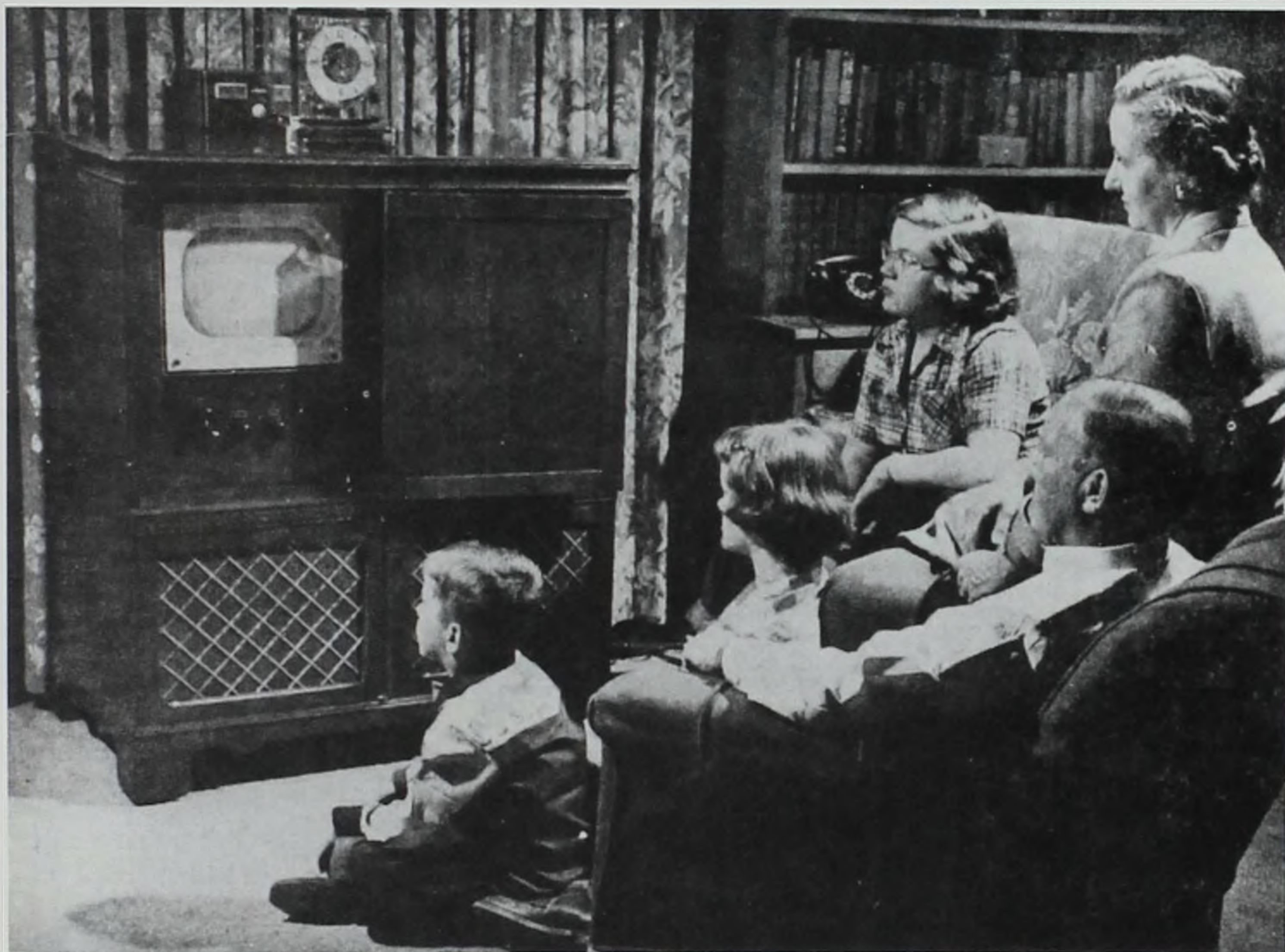
There were an estimated 7 million televisions in America in 1950, with 13,000 in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area, 6,344 in the Davenport area, and 3,500 in central Iowa, according to surveyed distributors. At that time, most Iowans could tune in to only one or two stations, including WOC-TV in Davenport, KMTV and WOW-TV in Omaha/Council Bluffs, and WOI-TV in Ames (which first broadcast in 1949 and 1950). Occasionally—on a clear night when the antenna was in just the right position—Iowans could receive transmissions from stations further away (Kansas City or Minneapolis, for example). Although a number of Iowa investment groups clamored for a piece of the television action, they were thwarted for several years by a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) freeze on approval of station applications until the FCC could set uniform standards and resolve technical issues.

The 1950s are often referred to as the "Golden Age" of television—a time of experimentation and excitement for both broadcasters and those receiving the broadcasts on national and local levels. Local Iowa stations followed at least one important lesson already learned by national networks: Children were an important group of television viewers, and programs aimed at children were a necessary component of any broadcast schedule. Across the nation, as new local stations began broadcasting, nearly each and every one developed some kind of children's show. As they did, they imitated the success of nationally televised children's shows like *Howdy Doody*, *Small Fry Club*, and *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*.

At the same time, local stations were constrained by the economic forces inherent in commercial broadcasting. As Jack Kuney, director of several nationally televised children's shows, reflected, "There were no lines drawn that made the ground rules for kids' programming any different than they were for

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12.		
8:55-News	4:00-Guest of Honor	1
9:00-Ding Dong	4:15-Gabby Hayes	1
School	4:30-Strike it Rich	1
9:30-Ask Washington	5:00-Magic Window	1
10:00-Schooltime	5:15-Beal Clock	1
10:30-United Nations	5:45-Televisit	1
11:00-Bride & G'm	6:00-Capt. Video	1
11:15-Love of Life	6:30-Those Two	1
11:30-Search for Tomorrow	6:45-News Car'van	1
12:00-12 O'clock, Whistle	7:00-RCA Show	1
12:15-News	7:30-My Friend Irma	2
12:30-Garry Moore	8:00-Farm Facts	2
1:00-To be ann.	8:30-Racket Sq'd	3
1:30-Guid. Light	9:00-Boxing	3
1:45-To be ann.	9:45-Greatest Fights	7
2:00-Big Payoff	10:00-Reporters' Digest	9
2:30-Mike & Buff	10:15-Football	9
3:00-Kate Smith	10:30-Life is Worth Living	
3:30-United Nations	11:00-Robert Montgomery	1
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13.		
12:30-To be ann.	6:00-20 Questions	1
4:00-Industry on Parade	6:30-Cisco Kid	1
4:15-This Week in Pictures	7:00-All Star Revue	1
4:30-Roy Rogers	8:00-Show of Shows	1
5:00-Strike it Rich	9:30-Hit Parade	1
5:30-This is Your Life	10:00-Sports	1
	10:15-Wrestling	1
	11:00-Film Theater	1

In 1952, viewers had a range of choices on WOI-TV (Ames)—from *Racket Squad* to *Farm Facts*, *Magic Window* to *Captain Video*, *Guiding Light* to *Ask Washington*, *Kate Smith* to *Roy Rogers*.



The Russell H. Schwartz family, above, and "hundreds of [other] families in Davenport and the Quad-cities have been watching test patterns on Station WOC-TV for the past month," says the *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, October 18, 1949 in a 24-page "television section." Davenporters waited "with happy anticipation for the beginning of regular programs" on October 31. Across the nation, Americans were poised for the arrival of television in their communities. See map on back cover for U.S. cities with stations four months later.

adults'. No program was useful unless it was saleable." That economic reality was tempered by the thrill of working live and the creative freedom of "working in a new medium that had not yet found all the answers, set its boundaries, defined its terms," as the director of an NBC local affiliate wrote in 1987. "Ideas and formats were not yet frozen, and the clichés of the business had not yet been manufactured."

Nevertheless, there were four main ingredients for producing a successful locally produced children's television show in the 1950s: puppets, cartoons, audience participation, and an adult host. Economic considerations, technological constraints, children's radio-show formulas, and the success of national network

children's shows joined forces to make two or three of these ingredients inevitable in every local children's show.

PUPPETS were one important ingredient for success in early children's programming. Radio's Edgar Bergen and his dummies Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd had popularized the puppet-act format for years. Once the *Howdy Doody Show* (originally *Puppet Playhouse*) and *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie* (hosted by former Iowa teacher and radio announcer Fran Allison) demonstrated the enormous success of using puppets in television, these shows were imitated nationwide.

Puppets made good sense for a local station



constrained by tight budgets and heavy cameras that didn't easily move to other settings. Puppets and puppet sets could be constructed cheaply, and only one person would have to be hired to make several puppets come alive. Even better, that person might also double as the show's host.

In Iowa, one of the first, longest running, and best-loved of the local children's shows was *The House with the Magic Window*, produced by WOI-TV of Ames beginning in 1951. Described by host Betty Lou Varnum as a "very gentle, friendly, accepting kind of program," it incorporated three main puppets; Catrina Crocodile, Gregory Lion, and Dusty Unicorn in its unrehearsed, unscripted dialogues. Varnum recently explained that WOI "didn't have a line in the budget for puppets—it was all volunteer." Most of the volunteers, including production manager Ed Weiss and educational broadcast director Red Varnum, the executive producer, and a publicity director, were part of WOI's management team.

Perhaps the best-known puppet character in Iowa was a dog named Floppy (so much so that in 1983 *Des Moines Register's* "Iowa Boy," columnist Chuck Offenberger, would declare Floppy recognition to be part of his "residency test . . . [of] questions every real Iowan should

be able to answer"). Floppy made his first appearance in 1957 on WHO-TV's *Pet Corner*, a show sponsored by the Des Moines Animal Rescue League to find homes for unwanted pets and to teach pet care, where he was originally called "Mr. Dog." Creating Floppy was a collaborative effort by the show's host, Duane Ellett, who carved the head from balsa wood in his home workshop; Ellett's wife, Lois, who sewed the body; and Ellett's mother-in-law, Cora Nystrom, who knit the bright red sweater Floppy wore even on the muggiest of Iowa State Fair days. *Pet Corner* was canceled, but Ellett and Floppy were offered their own children's show later in 1957, called *The Cartoon Shop*.

CARTOONS and film shorts were another necessary ingredient for locally produced children's programming, especially after Hanna-Barbera pioneered partial animation techniques using fewer drawings and repeated backgrounds, which made cartoon production far cheaper. As industry chronicler George Woolery observed, cartoons were "routinely dropped in a multi-purpose format which fused many elements too costly to produce as separate programs



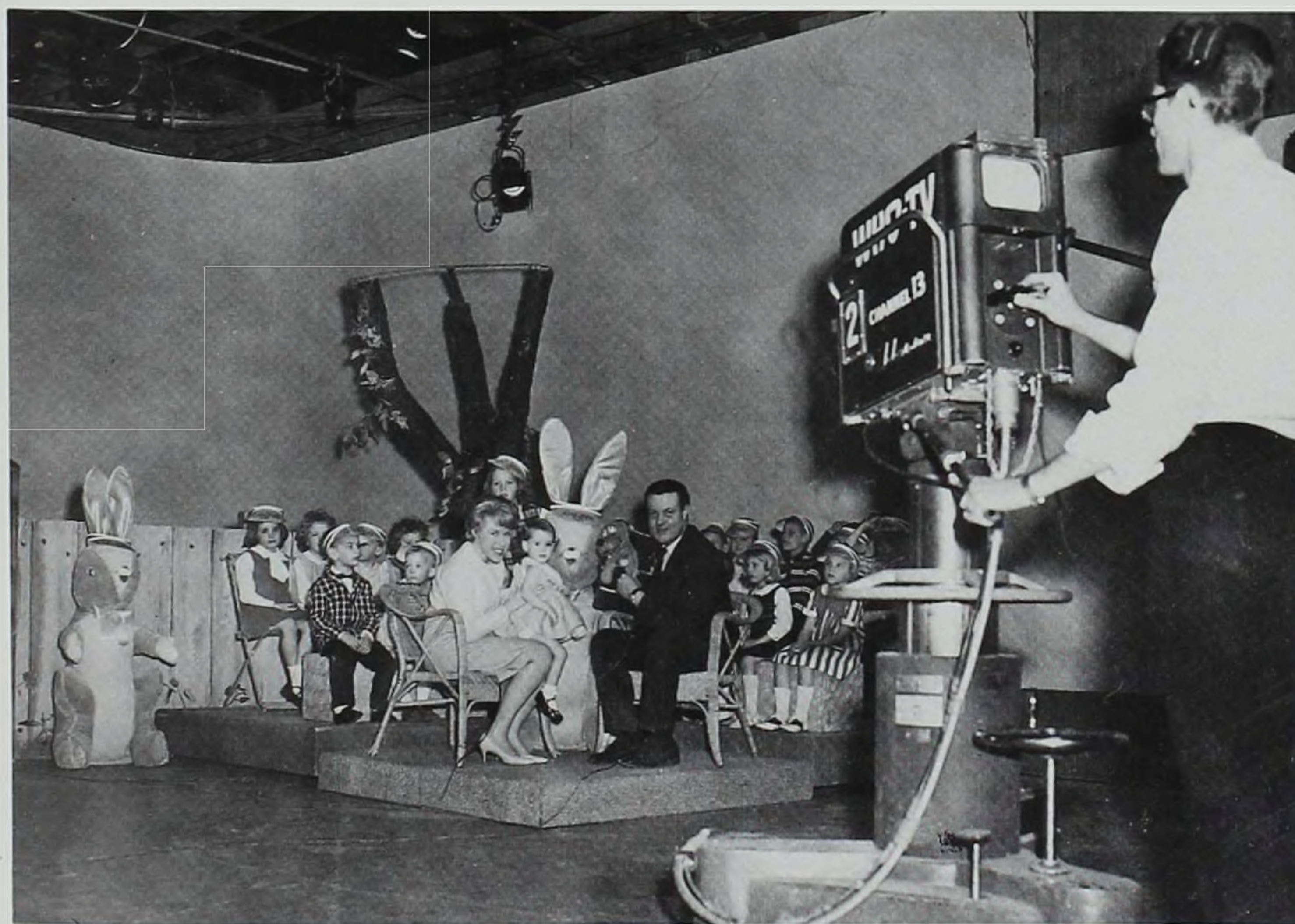
SHSI (PHOTO BY CHUCK GREINER)

Duane Ellett's puppet family. From left, Uncle Taffy, Standeen, Floppy, Matilda the Bookworm, Scary Mary, and The Inspector (whose earlier career was introducing Mr. Magoo cartoons on Ellett's show).

locally . . . the cartoons were seen between the games, songs, storytelling, crafts, and contests. . . . Nothing that would unduly tax the interest or attention span of a viewer." Ernie Mims, a.k.a. Captain Ernie of Davenport's WOC-TV's *Captain Ernie's Show Boat*, produced from 1964 to 1974, called cartoons his show's "main product."

Unfortunately, there were only a few animated film packages available at the time for distribution, and as a result, the same cartoons were repeated over and over again. In 1987, Duane Ellett explained his rationale for the redundancy: "People say, 'why don't you get some new cartoons?' and our theory is, keep using the same cartoons and bringing new children along. It's a lot more economical that way."

Despite the limited cartoon availability, Iowa children's shows did not all use the same pack-



DUANE ELLETT COLLECTION, SHSI (DES MOINES)

Heavy cameras, inexpensive sets, and lots of young guests typified locally produced children's shows. This set was used by Duane Ellett and Floppy in the mid-1960s.



Duane Ellett's puppet family. From left, Uncle Taffy, Standeen, Floppy, Matilda the Bookworm, Scary Mary, and The Inspector (whose earlier career was introducing Mr. Magoo cartoons on Ellett's show).

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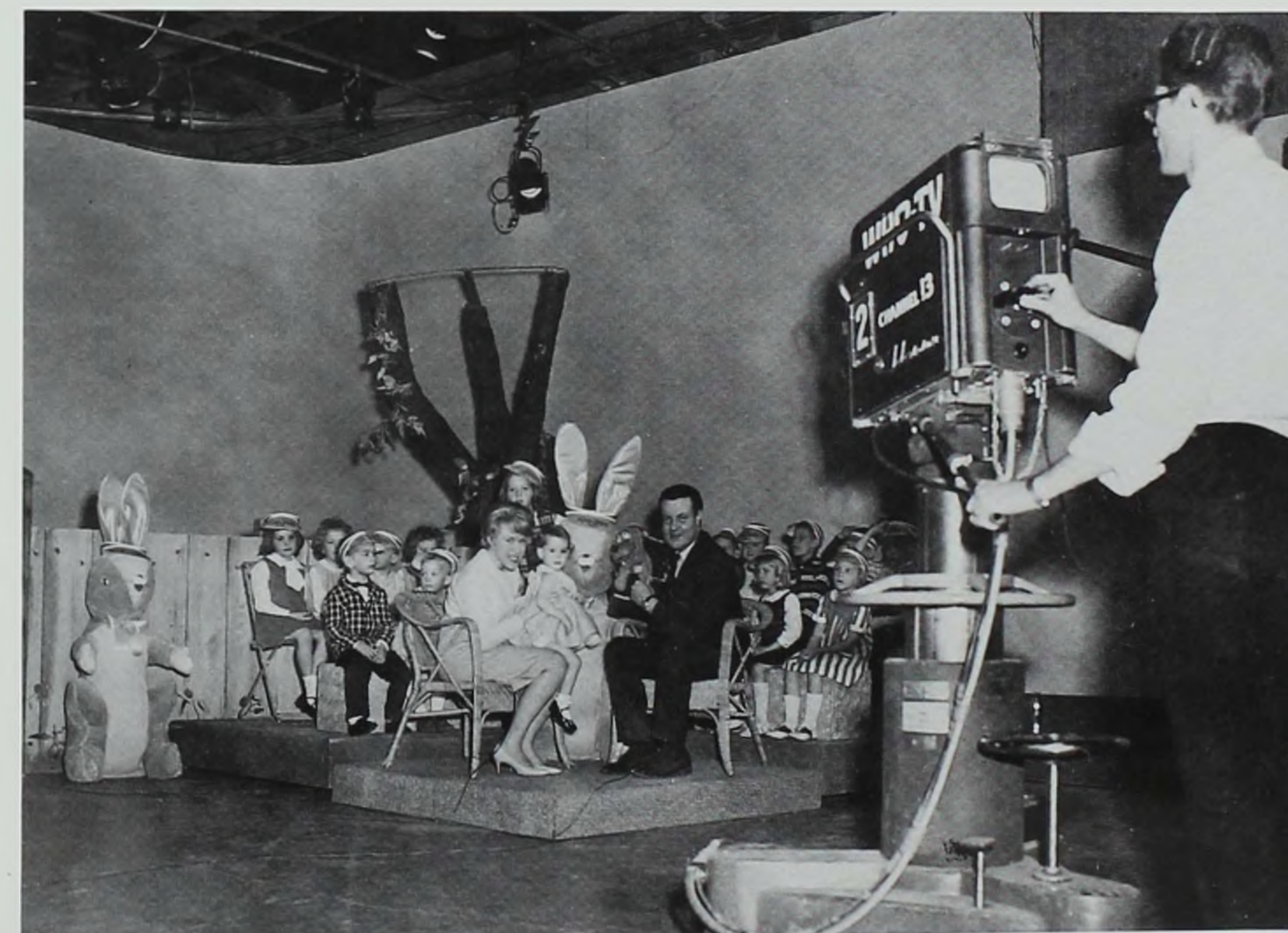
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As a member of the

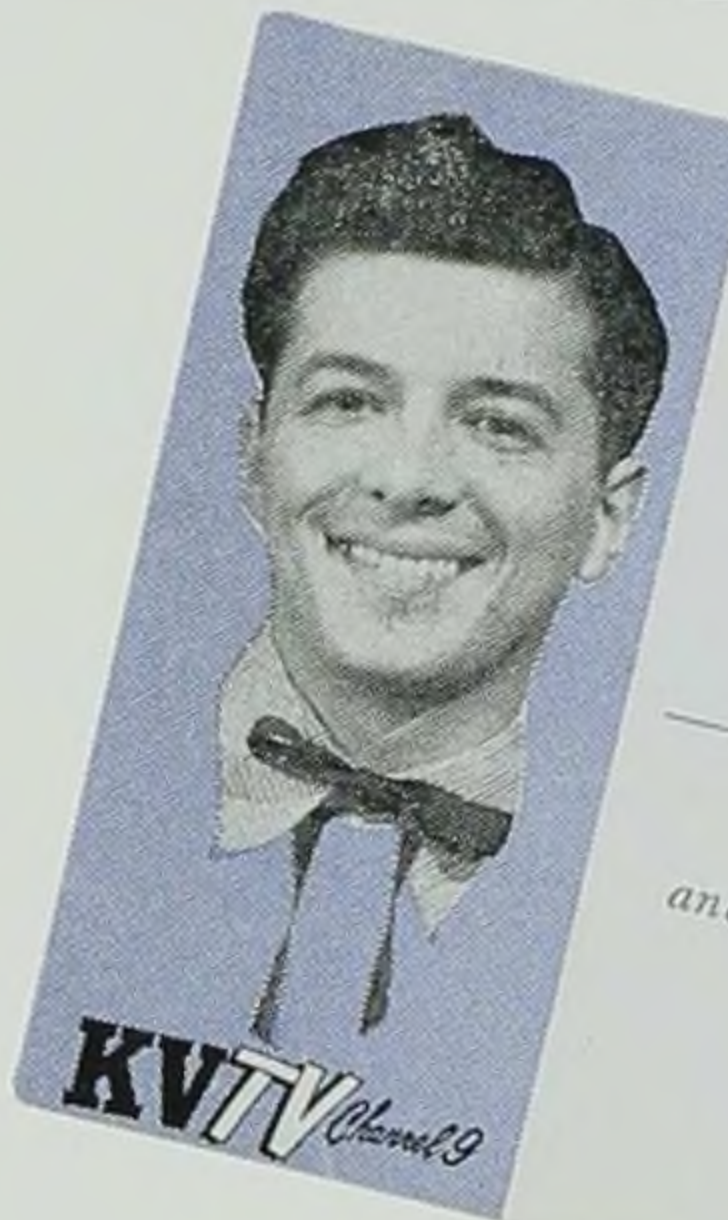


Canyon Kid Club

I agree

1. To obey my Father and Mother
2. To observe all safety rules
3. To attend church regularly
4. To always be a good sport
5. To be a good citizen
6. To always be honest

Signed _____



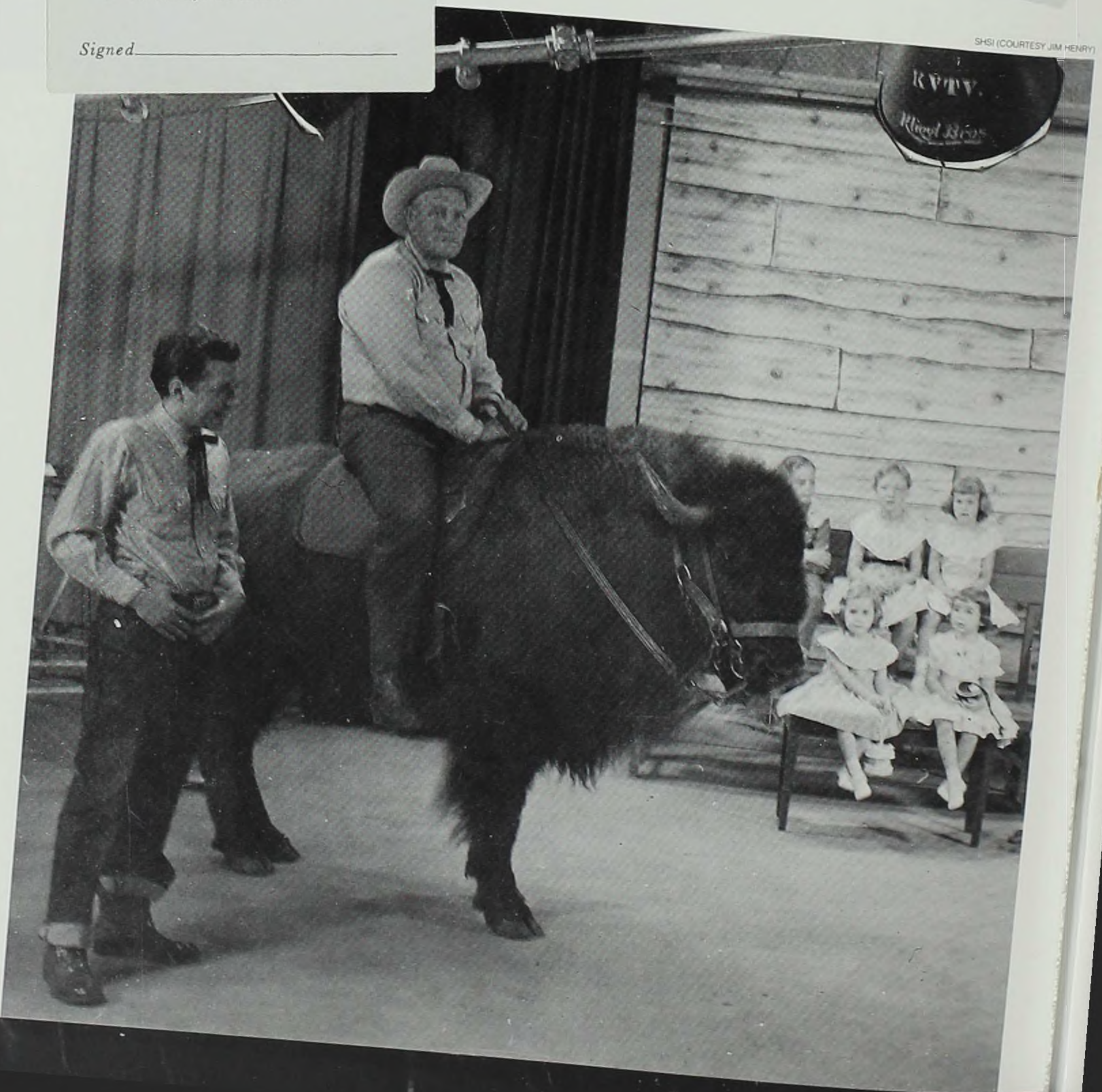
KIDS CORNER
Canyon Kid
CLUB

This is to certify that

is a member in good standing of the
CANYON KID CLUB
and is entitled to all the rights and privileges
that go with full membership.

Canyon Kid
Signature.
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

SHS (COURTESY JIM HENRY)



Opposite: Canyon Kid membership card and, below, a "special guest." Once a week the children could bring pets on the show; Jim Henry recalls the time a child's raccoon ate another child's turtle. So goes live TV.

ages. Betty Lou Varnum's *Magic Window* showed only non-violent cartoon shorts like *Simon in the Land of Chalk Drawings* and black and white film shorts of *Tales from the Riverbank*. Host Varnum recently explained, "I turned down some awfully popular cartoons" because they were too violent or taught children negative stereotypes. Beginning in 1954, KTIV-TV of Sioux City used Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon movie serials from the 1930s as the basis for their *Commander 4* program, which featured local host Red Quilleash dressed as a futuristic space pilot. Quilleash appeared on a stage set of flashing lights, introduced the episode, and read viewer mail.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION was perhaps the strongest and most unique draw to local kids' shows. As Jim Henry, Sioux City KVTU's "Canyon Kid," recently reflected, in "television's early years . . . there was no difference between local television and network television. . . . I mean, you were on television . . . and it didn't make any difference if you were coming from New York or from Sioux City. Wherever it was, they were impressed."

Sioux City-area children visited Canyon Kid's show on their birthday, or with their scout troop, other organizations, friends, or family. On Tuesdays they brought their pets to share with the television audience. On Wednesdays, they participated in Canyon's drawing contest on the set and at home, and on Thursdays, children made their debuts singing, dancing, and playing instruments. Some hoped to use the appearance as a springboard to other appearances and future fame (and some, like rocker Tommy Bolin, succeeded). Henry estimates that over 70,000 appearances were made by Sioux City-area children, some visiting the show six or seven times.

The most famous (or infamous) form of audience participation on *The Floppy Show*

occurred towards the end of each show when the children in the studio were invited to share their best (or worst) jokes with Floppy, "beep" his nose, and perhaps give him a kiss. Host Duane Ellett and Floppy patiently suffered through countless renditions of "Why did the man put the car in the oven? Because he wanted a hot rod!" and "What is the biggest pencil in the world? Pennsylvania!" They always responded with a hearty laugh and a positive comment like, "That was a good one, honey."

After a number of years of the same jokes, Ellett tried to "retire" some of the worst of them to the "Riddle Hall of Fame." He recalled that it was a disaster: "I learned my lesson. I would try to get some of the kids to change their riddle and they would cry. So I gave up and decided to let kids be kids."

In a recent interview with IPTV, Ernie Mims of Davenport station WOC-TV's *Captain Ernie's Show Boat* remembered that having local children on the show was an important part of its success. The show "provided a vehicle for youngsters and kids to be on TV," and allowed for local (though short-lived) fame, Mims explained. "They could say, 'Hey Billy, I'm going to be on *Captain Ernie's* with the cub scouts so be sure to watch.'"

Tied to the idea of audience participation was the role that each show's host played in the community outside of the show itself. Canyon Kid appeared at small-town celebrations, county fairs, schools, hospitals, and charitable events, and he always drew a crowd. Floppy and Duane Ellett made annual appearances at the Iowa State Fair, as well as at hundreds of town centennials and other local celebrations. The participation was thus two-way: children could visit their local TV heroes by appearing on their favorite show, and the hosts and puppets would visit children on the other side of the screen, in their own communities, as well.

Not all successful shows used audience participation. *Magic Window* did not include visits by children viewers, partially because of the constraints of the facilities, but mostly because Betty Lou Varnum wanted each child viewer to receive her undivided attention. "For that half-hour of the show," she explained, "each child

Floppy tours Iowa! Riding inside this well-traveled suitcase, Floppy made up to fifty personal appearances a year, including (clockwise, from top left) 1966 Boone speedway; 1984 Iowa State Fair; Oskaloosa mall celebration (where he shared billing with Harold Hughes, former governor and U.S. senator); 1966 Pella Tulip Festival; Emmetsburg celebration; and Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines, 1985.



UNLESS NOTED, ELLETT COLLECTION (DES MOINES); COLOR PHOTOS BY CHUCK GREINER

ROYALTY REGNS — Visit With The Many Queens From Throughout The State
1976 Miss Shamrock
Colleen Schumy

Glamorous Miss Shamrock Pageant
Friday, March 18
7:30 p.m.
Corrigan Hall
Chairmanship of Kiwanis Club

SATURDAY, MARCH 19th - 1 p.m.
Famous St. Patrick's Day Parade
Downtown Emmetsburg

Emmetsburg's 17th Annual St. Patrick's Day CELEBRATION

March 18 - 19 - 20

Drawing for \$1,000 Bill
1st Donation
Mr. and Mrs. Desmond O'Walley
Nigatory From Ireland

Dave Nize
M.C. For Miss Shamrock Pageant

Colleen O'Callaghan
New Lines Western Irish Airlines

FREE Kid's Show
11 Hour After Parade
at Iowa Theatre
Sponsored by Emmetsburg Heads Up
TEEN DANCE
Featuring the "Kite" Band
Saturday at Tommy McLean Farm
9 p.m. to 12

FREE "Floppy" Show
Featuring W.R.B.'s Show (Live)
Saturday - 1:30 of the P. High Auditorium
Sponsored by P. G. Co. Bar Association

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET
6 p.m. - March 19
Emmetsburg Country Club
Sponsored By The Emmetsburg St. Patrick's Association
Write or Call St. Patrick's Bar's
Phone 832-4326, Emmetsburg, Iowa 50526
For Tickets or Information

Pale Alto County Gun Club
"All Meat Priced"
Trap Shoot
At Sportsman's Park
Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

BINGO
Saturday
2 to 5
St. Thomas Hall
Chairmanship of Progress Club

Home Talent Show
Sunday, March 20th - 2 p.m.
Corrigan Hall
Entertainment From All Ages
For All Ages
Under Chairmanship of Cylinder Lions Club



SHS (COURTESY WHO-TV)



ATPIC MALL

Oskaloosa, Iowa
Grand Opening

Oct. 12, 13, 14

Special Guests



Harold Hughes
Sat. Oct. 14 at 2:30 P.M.



Duane Ellett & Floppy
Oct. 13 at 4:00 P.M.

GRAND PRIZE

FAIRMONT FUTURA 1979 RED FORD

Many Other Prizes Also!

Register At Each Store

CARNIVAL

BANDS

FREE

PEPSI

HOT DOGS

EVERYDAY

was at the center of my attention. I wanted them to feel that I was speaking directly to each one of them."

THE FOURTH INGREDIENT used in successful children's television programs of the 1950s was an adult host. In retrospect, many of the hosts of local children's shows seem unlikely choices. Few of them had had any kind of training in working with children, and most were radio announcers and technicians "temporarily" assigned to take over the new kids' show on the local TV station.

Jack Kuney, a producer of children's shows for CBS, recalled cynically that local kids'

shows were "usually hosted by some kind of father figure with little interest in the needs or wants of children. He was usually an actor/announcer of limited talent. . . . Producers created a whole new panoply of authority figures to supply banal programs for kids. There were Captains, Admirals, Circus Ringmasters, Policemen, Firemen, Canadian Mounties, Foreign Legionnaires, and lots of clowns and cowboys. Most of them were salesmen, and program hosts secondarily. They were neither emotionally or educationally prepared to be the TV Pied Pipers of America's children."

In the case of Iowa's children's shows, Kuney's observations about the lack of train-



"Canyon Kid" Jim Henry interviews Hoot Gibson, circa 1953. Cowboys were standard fare on many children's shows, like Henry's in Sioux City, Iowa.



Host Betty Lou Varnum with puppet on *Magic Window* studio set in mid-1950s. The alphabet on the wall behind her is indicative of the more educational content of Varnum's WOI-TV show.

SHSI (COURTESY WOI-TV)



Duane Ellett began his broadcasting career as the singing "Ghost Rider" on WHO-Radio's *Iowa Barn Dance Frolic*. Photo circa 1950.

ing of hosts are, on the whole, accurate. His judgment about their abilities and talents, however, seems harsh and unfair in light of the fondness and deep loyalty felt by thousands of Iowans who grew up with the hosts and their puppet friends as daily "visitors" in their homes by way of the television screen.

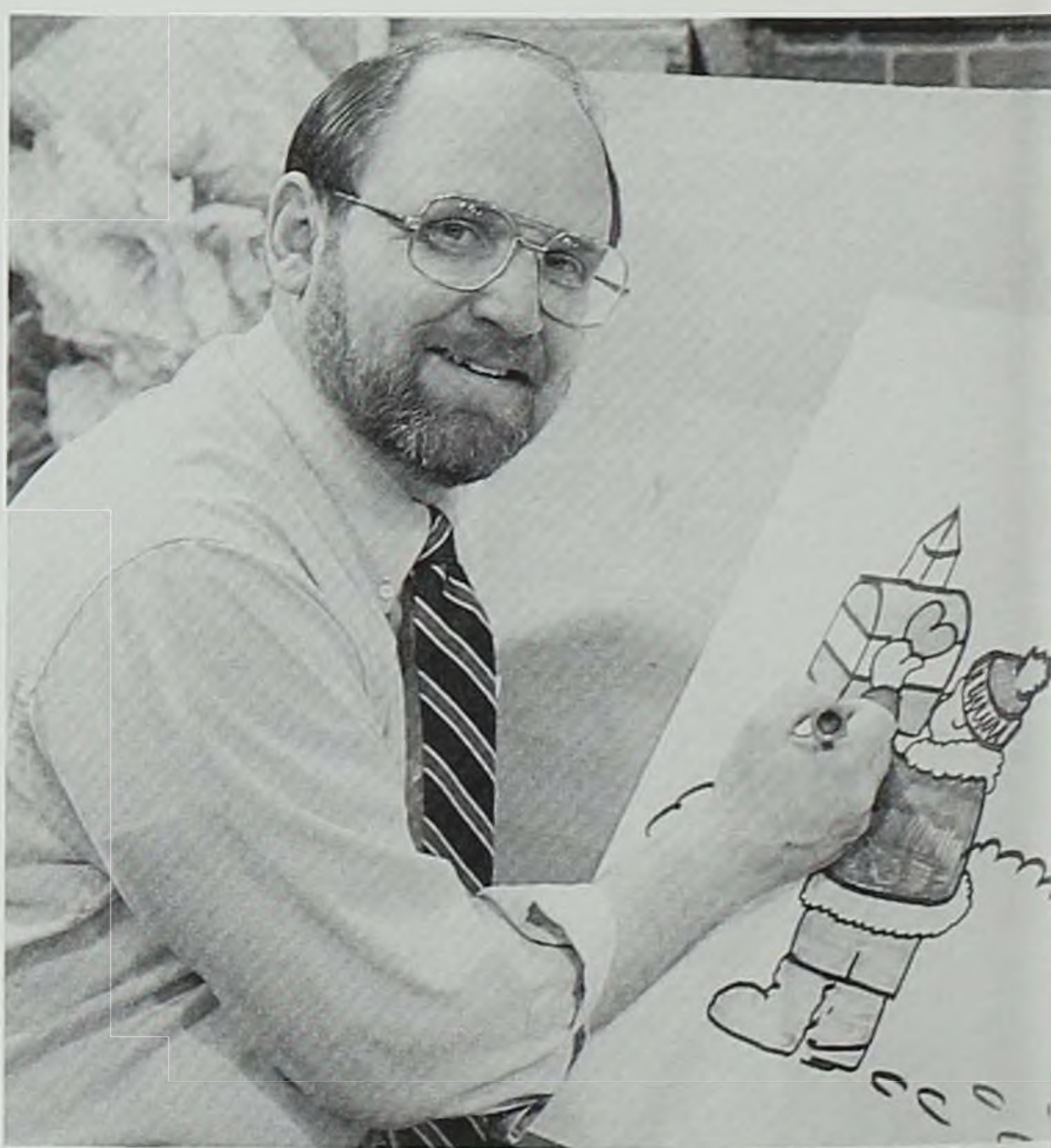
Jim Henry was active in the Sioux City Community Theater when KVTU came to Sioux City in 1953 and began looking for someone to host a kids' show. The station manager asked Henry to recommend someone. Henry could think of no one, but, as he recently recollected, the manager responded, "How about you? Why don't you do it? I mean, you could probably do this." Henry explained, "You'll have to understand that this was brand new. . . . Nobody had any experience here, whatsoever. . . . [The manager] knew as much about children's programming as I did. And so I said, 'Sure.'" Henry chose a western persona "because it was the easiest costume," and went to work planning the show's clubhouse format and set.

Duane Ellett originally wanted to be a lawyer, and was attending Drake University when a radio journalism class interested him

in broadcasting. He took a job at WHO Radio in 1947, playing the guitar and singing as "The Ghost Rider" on *Iowa Barn Dance Frolic*. By 1957, he was involved in WHO's television production with *Pet Corner*, the show for which Floppy was created.

Betty Lou Varnum is a notable exception in terms of her training. When Varnum was asked to interview for the show, she was a high school English teacher in Wisconsin, with both training and experience in education. Her background helps to explain the higher educational content of *Magic Window* compared to other local children's shows.

While most hosts had nearly complete freedom in choosing the topics and dialogues for their shows, one locally produced show stands in contrast to the free-wheeling, unscripted conversations on shows like *Floppy* or even *Magic Window*. *Romper Room* was a nation-wide program with a different teacher/host for each local area. The show's originators in Baltimore scripted everything from the teacher-host's appearance to the show's out-



SHSI (COURTESY WOI-TV)

"Mr. Fred" Kalamaja was a production manager, puppeteer, and artist on *The House with the Magic Window*. He taught children how to draw pictures by starting with simple shapes. The tissue paper flowers in background were a typical craft project.

DR. MAX



SHSI (IOWA CITY)

This has been my 1961-62 Important Book.
I have tried to keep it neat and clean and
up to date. I will treasure it and keep it
always to remember my childhood in the
years to come.

My Signature.

My Important Book

DR. MAX RULES FOR THE DAY

1. Brush my teeth
2. Be neat and tidy
3. Clean up my plate
4. Say my prayers at night
5. Fingernails clean
6. Be kind to others and animals
7. Go to Sunday School or church of my choice
8. Play safe always
9. Obey Mom and Dad or Guardian
10. Work hard at school
11. Read lots of good books

I AM A GOOD TRAVEL PAL

Souvenir book from *The Dr. Max Show* urged young viewers to do *all* the right things.

line and topic. And then, of course, there were the *Romper Room* brand toys, such as hobby horses that the children played with on the show and viewers could purchase in their local toy store. (One grassroots watchdog group, Action for Children's Television, in 1969 found that 16½ minutes of the 30-minute *Romper Room* broadcast comprised "one long commercial for *Romper Room* products.")

Even *Magic Window* had its constraints. While host Betty Lou Varnum was given some freedom in regards to program content, her

pregnancy was carefully concealed on the show with a long dark cape and hoop skirt, allegedly made for her by the little people in the magic forest.

E DUCATION WAS NOT the ultimate goal of most of the locally produced children's programming. Certainly, *The House with the Magic Window* had a reputation of having more educational content than most shows, with its craft activities, pup-



On *The Floppytown Gazette* weekend show (1982–1987), Ellett used all his puppets and drew cartoon posters like this one to present information for his young audience. Above: the *Gazette* set.

HEART BEATS
ONE HUNDRED
THOUSAND, EIGHT
HUNDRED TIMES

LET'S
NOT FORGET
THE HARDWORKING
DIGESTIVE
SYSTEM

I'M
TAKING
MY TUMMY
OUT TO
LUNCH

EVERY SECOND
OF THE DAY TEN
MILLION RED BLOOD
CELLS ARE DESTROYED
AND REPLACED

HEART PUMPS
FOUR THOUSAND
GALLONS OF
BLOOD

23,240
BREATHS
IN 24
HOURS

BLOOD COURSES
THROUGH ONE HUNDRED
THOUSAND MILES OF
BLOOD VESSELS

YOUR EYES
USE UP $\frac{1}{4}$ OF
YOUR NERVOUS
ENERGY

DUANE ELLETT COLLECTION, SHSI (DES MOINES)

pets, and educational film shorts from *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Nevertheless, most Iowa children's shows tried to serve some small educational function. As "Canyon Kid" Jim Henry explained, the main purpose of "this show, in my mind, was to entertain the children. . . . If we could give them some information along the line, if we could give them educational ideas, that's swell, that was fine." Part of the membership package for the Canyon Kid Club included a membership card that included what Henry described as "hints on how to get along in the world. You know,

be kind to your friends . . . obey your mother and father . . . go to church."

"Dr. Max" Hahn of Cedar Rapids's WMT-TV's *The Dr. Max Show* handed out booklets with space for children to write "important notes and messages I receive each day from Dr. Max" and "Dr. Max Rules For the Day," which included "brush my teeth . . . finger-nails clean . . . go to Sunday School or church of my choice . . . read lots of good books." Commander 4 from KTIV in Sioux City sent his fans cards with bicycle safety tips and rules for living. (First though, the cards had to be

decoded with a special device from "Space Legion Headquarters.")

In Des Moines, Floppy's 1982-1987 weekend show was *The Floppytown Gazette*. In this show, Ellett used all his puppet characters and added educational information. In between cartoons, Floppy, Matilda the Bookworm (who championed reading), Scary Mary, Standeen (Floppy's stand-in), Uncle Taffy, and the Inspector explored everything from skateboard safety and Halloween do's and don'ts to the human body and weather facts.

Despite the educational components, producers of children's shows on commercial stations generally believed that they needed primarily to entertain in order to hold their audiences. Increasingly, however, educators and parents wondered whether programming for the entertainment of children was at odds with programming to educate children. In 1952, this question would provide impetus for a purely educational network of stations to be broadcast across Iowa. As proposed in a report to the governor by the Joint Committee on Educational Television, the network would be funded by the state and by grants. This effort was tabled in 1953, but would be resurrected in the 1965 legislative session, leading to the Iowa Public Broadcasting Network in 1968 (now the Iowa Public Television Network).

AMIDST THESE DEVELOPMENTS, and as the numbers of television sets increased, an acrimonious national debate was gaining heat. The fields of education, psychology, sociology, mass communication, and journalism, as well as the popular press, were involved in a fractious discourse about television. This debate reaches into the present, with many of its points of conflict unresolved. At issue are the effects of TV viewing on the attitudes and behaviors of children and families, and the question of responsibility for such effects.

Early literature on the effects of television suggested that TV would have a positive effect on children and families. One of the earliest studies was a qualitative study by psychologist Thomas Coffin in 1948. He reported that families with TVs spent more time together, while families without TVs spent more time apart,

engaged in out-of-home activities. Another early study appeared in *Public Opinion Quarterly* in 1949. The study's interview data suggested that TV brought families together, bridged generation gaps, and formed new friendships. The authors concluded that TV was "stimulating new interests within the family, a new awareness of the family unit, and enlarging the immediate circle of social relationships."

The popular press played on this image, referring to television as "a member of the family." Architectural and women's magazines created the perfect space in the home for this "new member"—the "family room."

Des Moines Register "Over the Coffee" columnist Harlan Miller was less enthusiastic: "Frankly, I'm inclined to doubt rumors that the TV set is a new magnet that hugs the whole family together around the hearthstone," he wrote in 1950. "My theory is that lots of young people, if they don't find enough privacy around the TV set, will go where they can neck."

At the same time, researchers were questioning the quality of the time families spent together in front of the TV. A 1950 study by Edward McDonagh that appeared in *Sociology and Social Research* cautioned, "The television family during the evening hours is changing from a social group characterized by conversation to an audience sitting in the semidarkness and silently gazing at their commercially sponsored entertainment via television."

Education journals raised concerns about how television would affect children's academic performance. One 1950 journal article cited complaints by parents of "over stimulating experiences which lead to sleepless nights and fatigued eyes" and the experience of a teacher who left the field "since she finds that she cannot compete with the antics of the favored comedians" and that school subjects were "no match for the adventure and excitement of the cowboy programs." This particular study, however, argued that TV programming was not to blame for such a state of affairs; rather, it was lack of parental control of television viewing that was at fault.

Others worried that the popularity of television would mean the death of print literacy,

sparking a round of studies comparing media consumption "before television" to "after television." One of these studies, a 1960 State University of Iowa dissertation, compared survey data of Des Moines children taken eight weeks before WOI-TV began its first broadcasts to survey data from a similar sample eight years after the first broadcast. The study found that overall consumption of mass media had increased dramatically, with television dominating the media choices. Although motion picture attendance and radio listening were down, newspaper reading was not significantly affected, and leisure book reading had actually increased.

As juvenile delinquency became a national obsession in the 1950s, television was inevitably implicated in the moral ruin of youth, just as dime novels, radio, and motion pictures had been in the past. Yet some parents argued that TV helped to keep their children off the streets and out of trouble. By the mid-1950s, public debate over TV and juvenile delinquency culminated in a United States Senate subcommittee, special reports, and calls for FCC regulation.

By 1962, FCC chairman Newton Minow was calling television a "vast wasteland" that was "just as tasteless, just as nourishing as dishwater." Grassroots movements were growing that would eventually lead to projects like the Children's Television Workshop (CTW), and shows like CTN's *Sesame Street*.

ACTUALLY, *Sesame Street* modeled parts of its format on two successful programs broadcast by Des Moines Channel 11 (KDPS). The station was owned by the Des Moines school district, then sold to the state of Iowa in 1969. KDPS won a federal grant in 1967 to produce a three-hour daily block of children's programming Monday through Friday. The block was divided into segments for each grade level, first through sixth, and each section was coordinated with the curriculum of the Des Moines schools.

The show, named *KiDiPuS Land* for the station's call letters, was designed to create active rather than passive viewers. Cameraman Bob

McCloskey recently recalled that "kids were making things, doing things, learning things, not just sitting there." Program Manager Mike LaBonia explained that "we wanted to prompt kids to do things for themselves. Ironically, we wanted them to turn the television off and go try all the things they learned about."

Because the show was not required viewing for Des Moines students, however, it couldn't be dry, calling for experimentation with the elusive, perfect mix of education and entertainment. The show used a varied format of educational film shorts, puppets, and field trips. It was popular among children; sixteen thousand sent in requests to be members of the "KiDiPuS Club."

In the following year, 1968, Channel 11 (then KDIN after it was sold to the state) won a Ford Foundation grant to continue the block concept programming for Saturday as well as weekdays. The Saturday show was called *Volume See*, and it was seen not only in Des Moines, but also in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Hershey, Pennsylvania; Austin, Texas; and Roanoke, Virginia. Each of the other four member stations submitted segments to be aired on the show in addition to the segments produced in Des Moines and the educational films. The station in Hershey submitted segments on puppet-making, featuring soon-to-be-discovered Muppeteer Jim Henson and Henson's early versions of *Sesame Street* characters Bert, Ernie, and Kermit.

Fred Rogers (who would become "Mr. Rogers" of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*) was at that time working at Pittsburgh educational station WQED, was asked to host *Volume See* but turned down the offer. Instead, KDIN chose a talented African-American named Carl Williams, who played the straight man against such characters as Buford the Dragon, Cy the Eye, a swami, and two acrobatic writers. Although the shows were acclaimed, when the grant sources dried up, the station could no longer afford to produce such large blocks of children's programs, and *KiDiPuS Land* and *Volume See* were canceled. By that time, however, national educational shows like *Sesame Street* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* were being produced and distributed by public television networks. When *Sesame Street* was first in produc-

tion, the directors not only interviewed Carl Williams for a role, but also talked to *Volume See's* producers about their successful format and methods.

In fact, Iowa was an even earlier leader in educational television. From 1932 to 1939, the State University of Iowa's station W9XK conducted limited educational broadcasting and technical experimentation. The station transmitted a total of 389 programs on nearly everything from art to shorthand, drama to botany, using a "scanning disc" instead of a picture tube.

In 1950, WOI-TV in Ames was established as an educational TV station that ostensibly would be insulated from the demands of commercial TV. WOI was the first and for several years the only station of its kind in the nation and "literally pioneered educational television for the rest of the nation," stated the Iowa Joint Committee on Educational Television in its 1952 report to the governor. "Iowa can be proud to have been the mecca of educational television." WOI not only produced the nation's longest-running children's show, *The House with the Magic Window*, but also many other educational children's shows like *Iowa TV Schooltime* which brought art and music instruction to children whose small school districts could not provide such instruction in school, as well as programs on science and geography.

WOI-TV was sold in 1994, bringing many changes at the station, including the cancellation of Betty Lou Varnum's *The House with the Magic Window*, one of the nation's last remaining locally produced shows for kids.

IN IOWA, locally produced children's shows on commercial stations did not face public debate on their quality; instead their enemy was market forces. As the broadcasting day was extended and program schedules became more complex, children's shows were neglected completely or moved to less desirable time slots. As those time slots became lucrative for adult programming, and old network shows became cheaply available through syndication, the children's shows were shoved on to the Saturday morning lineup or canceled.

The Floppy Show is a prime example of this

pattern. In 1984, WHO officials decided to cancel *Floppy* from its 3:00 p.m. time slot due to decreasing ratings, competition from new independent cable stations, and changing viewer's habits. Although then-station manager William Jackson admitted that it was hard to cancel a show that had been part of the station's schedule for twenty-seven years, *Floppy* was replaced with *Love Boat* reruns "to become more competitive for the adult audience in the late afternoon." *Floppy* remained in the less desirable spots of 12:15-12:30 daily (*Duane and Friend*) and a thirty-minute show on weekends (*The Floppytown Gazette*), but these shows did not include the audience participation of the 3:00 show, and hence the notorious jokes were silenced.

Protests were organized and loyal fans picketed the WHO studio. One mother argued, "It's important to fight for good TV. Duane is a good role model," and a college student



Fans picket WHO-TV in September 1984 when *Floppy's* live afternoon show was preempted by *Love Boat* reruns. As programming became more competitive, locally produced shows—like Ellett's—which had once helped fill long hours of available air time, often lost out to nationally produced shows and reruns.

pleaded, "Floppy is important to a lot of people." It wasn't enough to bring Floppy back to his old slot and format. Ellett's comment on the cancellation was, "I've been in this business 38 years and you learn that there are peaks and valleys. You never know, Floppy may come back in all his splendor some afternoon, some year."

TODAY, most of the shows Iowa children watch are produced and distributed at the national level. One notable exception is the Iowa Public Television Network, which was born of a 1952 FCC regulation to reserve 242 channels in the broadcast spectrum for educational use only. This was "as significant and far-reaching in its implications as the Morrill Act of 1862 which created the Land Grant college system in the United States," according to a 1962 publication of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, & Welfare.

The advent of cable television has meant numerous choices for child viewers. At almost any time of day, a "channel-surfing" child might flip to a slick cartoon series produced by an international production giant like Walt Disney Studios, watch *Ninja Turtles* eat Domino's pizza, hear the classic strains of the *Sesame Street* theme or the newer "I love you, you love me . . ." of a certain notorious purple dinosaur named Barney, even find whole stations like Nickelodeon, the Disney Channel, and the Cartoon Network devoted to kids' shows and syndicated oldies. Indeed, many schools across Iowa and the nation begin their day with national television broadcasts from Whittle Communications' *Channel One*, a fast-paced news program with teenage hosts. What is harder to find, however, is the local, amateurish but lovable hosts and their puppet sidekicks. Local-access cable channels, howev-

er, can and do provide an avenue for such shows to reappear, and are an opportunity for children themselves to create, direct, and produce shows of their own.

What has not changed, however, is the continuing debate over the proper place of television in the lives of America's children and the effects of television on their behavior, with violence and passivity two particular areas of concern. This part of children's television history continues to be written, by tightening FCC regulations, by network producers, by researchers, by grassroots protest movements, and by parents and children themselves.

As children today spend more time watching TV than they do in school, playing with peers, or reading books, the words of then-FCC chair Newton Minow in 1961 on the age of television still ring true: "Just as history will decide whether the leaders of today's world employed the atom to destroy the world or rebuild it for mankind's benefit, so will history decide whether today's broadcasters employed their powerful voice to enrich the people or debase them." □

NOTE ON SOURCES

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Secondary sources on children's television include Carmen Luke, *Constructing the Child Viewer: A History of the American Discourse on Television and Children 1950-1980* (New York, 1990); Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago, 1992); George Comstock, *The Evolution of American Television* (London, 1989); and George Woolery, *Children's Television: The First Thirty-five Years 1946-1981* (Metuchen, NJ, 1983).

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Information on Floppy was found in several *Des Moines Register* articles and the Duane Ellett Collection at the State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines), and a WHO-TV special, *Floppy: Thirty Years of Fun* (May 1987 broadcast).

An annotated copy of this article is held in the *Palimpsest* production files, State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City).

You can see Floppy and his sidekicks at the State Historical Building in Des Moines, Tuesdays-Sundays. The "Where's Floppy?" exhibit features puppets, photos, videotapes, and memorabilia from the Society's Duane Ellett Collection, some of which appear in this article.

A REMARKABLE IMMIGRANT



PUTNAM MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND NATURAL SCIENCE, DAVENPORT, IOWA

Hans Reimer Claussen, from an 1848 lithograph.

THE STORY OF HANS REIMER CLAUSSEN

BY RICHARD, LORD ACTON

A YOUNG LAW STUDENT from Davenport, Iowa, toured Europe in 1877. A highlight of his trip came in his ancestral Germany. Years later he recalled: "In Frankfurt I visited St. Paul's church, in which in Germany's revolutionary days the Frankfurt Parliament held its sessions. Here I found the seat, and for a few moments occupied the seat, which my venerable friend H.R. Claussen had occupied while a member of that important and historic body."

The youth's action symbolized the respect many Davenport German Americans had for Hans Reimer Claussen, who lived a remarkable life in Europe and America. During the 1840s Claussen was a leading politician in his native Schleswig-Holstein, and became a member of the all-German Frankfurt Parliament. Forced to flee after the collapse of the 1848 revolution, Claussen immigrated to Davenport, where he spent the rest of his life as a distinguished lawyer and political leader of the

local German-American community. In politics he battled against nativism, prohibition, Sabbatarianism, and woman suffrage. Few immigrants to Iowa have played such a part on two continents as Hans Reimer Claussen.

Claussen was born in February 1804 in the German-speaking duchy of Holstein. As a boy, he worked on his father's farm. He studied law at the University of Kiel and, after admission to the bar in 1830, practiced law near Heide in Holstein. Two years later he married Annina Rahbek, daughter of an officer in the Danish War Department and niece of a famous Danish poet. Annina's father had died when she was an infant, and her German mother had taken the child back to her own hometown of Heide. There, on her nineteenth birthday, Annina married Claussen. The couple had four children. Two died as babies, but two thrived—a daughter, Elfriede, and a son, Ernst.

In 1834 the Claussens moved to Kiel, the main city of Holstein. There Claussen prac-

ticed as a lawyer in the supreme court and taught law at the university. He wrote many legal articles, and his treatise on an aspect of Roman law excited much discussion among German university professors. Intellectualism, law, and education were always important in his life, but gradually he turned to politics at a time of great political unrest in Schleswig-Holstein.

The history of Schleswig-Holstein is notorious for its complexity. The British statesman Lord Palmerston said that the history of Schleswig-Holstein was so complicated that only three men had ever understood it fully: one was Prince Albert, who was dead; the second was a professor who had become insane; the third was Palmerston himself, but he'd forgotten it. The twin duchies of Schleswig-Holstein were at the extreme north of Germany. Although most of the population was German-speaking, the duchies had been ruled since 1460 by the King of Denmark.

Germany in the 1830s and 1840s was a loose confederation of a multitude of states with absolute monarchs. A rising tide of German nationalism marked those decades. Claussen, who throughout the 1840s was a member of the Holstein Estates (or legislature), belonged to the German Party, which sought to join the German Confederation.

Matters came to a head after Paris broke out in revolt against the French king early in 1848, and revolution spread across Europe. The revolutionary atmosphere pervaded Schleswig-Holstein, and at an excited meeting their combined legislatures drew up five demands of the King of Denmark. The most important demands were a separate constitution for Schleswig-Holstein, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press. Claussen and four other delegates were sent to Copenhagen to put their grievances before the King of Denmark.

When the five men arrived in Copenhagen, the Danish people regarded them as criminals guilty of high treason. Claussen recalled how he and his fellow delegates were kept "in a kind of respectable confinement and had been compelled . . . to accept against their will the hospitality of a rich merchant. [The merchant] watched the doings of the delegates closely, and never allowed them to go out with-

out his company and a guard surrounding them."

As the delegates drove to the palace to see the king, a mob of infuriated Danes surrounded their coaches and tried to overturn them. But cooler heads thwarted the crowd's efforts, and the delegation reached the palace in safety. The king rejected the demands of Claussen and the others, and a Danish man-o-war took them back to Kiel.

On their arrival in Schleswig-Holstein, Claussen and his colleagues found a full-scale revolution had broken out against Denmark. With the approval of the provisional government of Schleswig-Holstein, Claussen journeyed to Prussia and other German states, where he succeeded in obtaining armed assistance for the revolt.

Meanwhile revolution had spread throughout the German Confederation, and a parliament from all the German states met at Frankfurt. Holstein elected Claussen to the Frankfurt Parliament, and during its lengthy deliberations, he was among the group of radical members. Eventually the parliament drew up a constitution for a united Germany based on universal male suffrage with freedom of speech and the press. The parliament offered the German crown to the King of Prussia, but he turned it down.

The Frankfurt Parliament then broke up, but a rump of members, including Claussen, retired to Stuttgart and continued deliberating. Finally royal troops prevented the members from meeting, which spelled the end of the parliament. The tide of revolution receded, and the Danes regained control of Schleswig-Holstein. In 1852 the King of Denmark published a general amnesty for the rebels in the duchies. However, he issued a decree that banished the twenty-one most important revolutionary leaders—including Hans Reimer Claussen.

But Claussen, realizing he had no future in his homeland, had already departed for a new life. In 1851, he set off with his family for America. His destination was a haven for many Schleswig-Holsteiners—Davenport, Iowa.

German immigration to Davenport had begun in 1836, and immigrants from Schleswig-Holstein first arrived in 1844. After

the failure of the 1848 revolution, a flood of German refugees known as the "Forty-eighters"—many from Schleswig-Holstein—fled to Davenport. One German immigrant, writing in 1851 about Davenport and its estimated 4,000 inhabitants, enthused: "One-third of the people are Germans, and in the country perhaps one half of the people are Germans. One hardly realizes that he is in America because everywhere you hear German spoken."

That same year, Davenport's German-language newspaper *Der Demokrat* was born. The arrival in 1852 of Claussen's future son-in-law, Christian Mueller—who had been a gymnastic instructor in Kiel—led to the founding in Davenport of the *Turnverein*, the Forty-eighters' quintessential organization. Similar groups were springing up in German-American communities across the Midwest. This political and gymnastic society believed in "a sound mind in a sound body" and "freedom, education and welfare for all." Soon the Davenport Turners had their own hall, where they drilled in uniforms of white duck, grey hats, and red neck-bands. Claussen's son, Ernst, was an early Turner, while Claussen himself was a frequent lecturer to the *Turnverein*.

The Forty-eighters set up a German literary

society with its own library and a German theater. They founded German schools, singing societies, and a rifle club. They started breweries and beer gardens. One historian has described Davenport and Scott County as "the new Schleswig-Holstein."

After arriving in Davenport in August 1851, Claussen—now aged forty-seven—set himself the herculean task of learning English and taking the Iowa bar examination. In just two years he achieved both goals and began to practice as a lawyer. He was soon writing legal articles for *Der Demokrat*.

From his earliest days in Davenport, Claussen encouraged other Germans to immigrate to Iowa. He contributed to newspapers in Schleswig-Holstein extolling the virtues of Iowa. For example, in June 1852 he praised the local freedom of the press: "Anyone who can feel pleasure at this development quickly feels at home and happy here." He also wrote a chapter on Iowa law in a German booklet for would-be immigrants. One German newcomer, on reaching Iowa in 1852, "spoke in glowing terms of the hearty reception he and his family had received at the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Claussen."

In 1855, Claussen turned in a new direction. Together with his son, Ernst, and son-in-law, Christian Mueller, he built a grist mill at Lyons

German immigrants in Davenport were quick to organize a local *Turnverein*, a political and gymnastic society that promoted "a sound mind in a sound body." Here, their 1857 Turner hall. Claussen was a frequent lecturer for the fraternal society.



SHS (IOWA CITY)



SHS (IOWA CITY)



near Clinton, some thirty miles upriver from Davenport. At first the venture was profitable, but grain prices collapsed at the end of the Crimean War. Claussen lost virtually all the money he had built up in Schleswig-Holstein. He left Lyons in 1858 and returned to Davenport to start again.

Now, at the age of fifty-four, Claussen hurled himself into his law practice. He proved most successful at finding clients among the German Americans of Scott County. A fellow lawyer recalled: "In a few years he had acquired both the practice and the reputation of an able lawyer. Many times I saw him in the court. He was stockily built, not above medium height, and very quiet in demeanor. His accent and appearance denoted his foreign origin. His clear and thoughtful expression showed he was a philosopher. His deep learning and high character gave him an excellent standing not only with members of the bar and courts, but with the community in general."

Outside the courtroom, Claussen spoke at the first recorded anti-temperance meeting in Iowa, held at Davenport in 1852. He gave a fiery speech championing the right of German Americans to drink alcohol—a cause they held dear. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prohibition threatened the social culture of Iowans of German descent, as well as their economic interests in breweries. In 1862 a Canadian traveler gave a vivid description of the Davenport German community at play: "The population has a preponderating element of the German race, who carry with them, along with their love of lager [and] sour-kROUT . . . their free and easy habits of Sunday afternoon diversion. At the 'Dutch Gardens,' as they call one place of amusement, I saw on Sunday afternoon several hundred people swigging lager on benches under the trees while listening to the strains of a fine band performing operatic selections. All ages and sexes were there. Six or seven

Jacob Eckhardt's saloon and the German sign above it are the backdrop for girls on their way to Schuetzen Park, a popular recreation center for German Americans in Davenport in the 1880s and 1890s.



SHS (IOWA CITY)

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Jacob Eckhardt's saloon and the German sign above it are the backdrop for girls on their way to Schuetzen Park, a popular recreation center for German Americans in Davenport in the 1880s and 1890s.



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Adelbert Riepe's pharmacy displays an American flag in the right window and German song lyrics in the left. Claussen died the year this photo was taken—1894. German Americans in Davenport would continue to publicly celebrate their heritage until World War I brought anti-German hysteria.

attendant imps of boys ran frantically hither and thither with handfuls of lager mugs. Three sweating bartenders handed liquor over the counter. . . . Towards evening, the performance was to wind up for the day with a dance—and then to open again in the evening for an amateur dramatic performance.” During his many years in Iowa, Claussen fought politically for the German Americans’ personal freedom to drink alcohol, and to enjoy dancing and other entertainments on Sundays.

Claussen originally supported the anti-slavery Free Soil party (he considered slavery “a sin and a crime”) and inevitably he became a member of the Republican Party upon its formation in 1856. He was elected a justice of the peace for Davenport on the Republican ticket in 1858 and again two years later.

As president of the German Republican Club of Scott County, Claussen in 1858 wrote an open letter to the Republican candidate for Congress, William Vandever. This letter, signed by a host of German-American Republicans, demanded to know if Vandever supported the anti-immigrant “Know Nothing” point of view. In particular, did he favor a longer probation for foreigners as a precondition to citizenship, and an extended period before naturalized citizens could vote? Claussen’s letter forced Vandever publicly to disown these nativist policies.

Two years later, Claussen’s influence was more widely demonstrated. On March 7, 1860, he called a meeting of the German Republican Club in Davenport to condemn Edward Bates of Missouri, who was then a prominent contender for the Republican presidential nomination (which ultimately went to Abraham Lincoln).

The club endorsed lengthy resolutions drawn up by Claussen. The resolutions stressed that Bates could not be regarded as a Republican given his political history: he had revealed anti-immigrant, nativist tendencies; he had recently supported a pro-slavery candidate for Congress; and he had said he would “cheerfully execute the fugitive slave law.” Therefore, Bates “has shown himself to be an appeaser and supporter of the plans and measures of the Pro-Slavery Know Nothings and a

disprover and opponent of Republican principles.”

Three weeks later, Claussen wrote to Iowa’s U.S. senator James Harlan: “We sent [our anti-Bates resolutions] to every prominent German in the Union, and have found general approbation among the German republicans.” The German-language newspapers of Milwaukee and St. Louis reprinted the Davenport resolutions. The *Chicago Tribune* and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* commented on the resolutions, and the German Republicans of Cincinnati endorsed them. Claussen’s efforts played a major part in destroying the Bates candidacy.

When the Civil War came, Claussen’s son, Ernst—who as a teenager had fought in the Schleswig-Holstein revolt—was one of the first men in Davenport to respond to Lincoln’s call for volunteers by joining the three-month regiment, the First Iowa Infantry. Claussen continued his legal practice, expanding it in 1862 by taking Ernst—now back from the war—into partnership. The following year, when the First National Bank opened its doors in Davenport, Claussen was one of the prime movers in the enterprise and served as a director from 1865 to 1870.

After the war, Claussen entered state politics. In 1867 he stood in Scott County as Republican candidate for the state senate. He chose an unfortunate year. In Scott County, the Democrats, conservative Republicans, and anti-prohibitionists united in the People’s Party, whose main platform was opposition to prohibition. The Republican Party remained officially neutral on prohibition and left the matter to each candidate’s discretion. The German Americans regarded the People’s Party as the hope of the opponents of temperance, and went over to it in droves.

In vain did Claussen write to the *Davenport Gazette*. “I agree with the . . . repeal of the prohibitory liquor law.” In vain did he challenge his opponent to a public debate. The People’s Party won all ten offices contested in Scott County. Claussen plunged to defeat, receiving 1,806 votes to his opponent’s 2,500 votes.

By 1869, when Claussen again tried for the state senate, the political map in Scott County had completely changed. The previous year,



In 1870 Claussen took his seat as a Republican senator to the Thirteenth General Assembly, pictured here outside the temporary capitol in Des Moines.

Ulysses S. Grant had won the presidency for the Republicans, and Scott County had elected all its Republican candidates. In 1869, the People's Party had collapsed and the Democrats in Scott County fought a lackluster campaign. The German Americans had returned to the Republican Party, which made a clean sweep of the county. Claussen won a four-year senate term with 2,306 votes—a majority of 523 votes.

During the 1870 legislative session, Senator Claussen made a forceful but unsuccessful stand against a bill that prohibited the sale of wine and beer, but left to each county the decision whether to enforce the law locally. Claussen, in a minority report of the

Committee on Suppression of Intemperance, argued powerfully that the bill was unconstitutional, citing as a precedent an Iowa Supreme Court decision on a similar law of 1857. (He was proved right—in 1871, the Supreme Court of Iowa struck down the law.) Among other objections, Claussen urged that the law “would be very injurious to the farmers raising barley, and to the brewers, having invested large capital in breweries.”

In a notable speech on the bill, Claussen portrayed prohibition as a movement out of step with American and European culture: “[The error] is certainly not with the three hundred millions of Europeans. . . . The error cannot be with the thirty millions of

Americans, but with the four millions who are in favor of prohibition." He urged that prohibition was unenforceable, and had been a complete failure in Massachusetts. Furthermore, wine "is highly praised in the Bible," and even had a positive medicinal value: "The people would not be half so sick here if they would drink wine."

When Claussen's time ran out, the other senators called, "Go on," and he said: "I know your minds are made up, and I have not the assumption to suppose that what I say will change you, but the German population expect their views to be presented." Claussen ended forcefully: "The advocates of a strict prohibitory law . . . want to make the State more moral and extricate vice. . . . I hate vice just as much as any Senator here, but should you wish to accomplish that purpose and deprive us of our liberty and our property? We

are not here to legislate in order to make the people moral by our laws. We are here to protect life and liberty, and to advance the educational interests of our State."

The German Americans loved their Sunday pleasures and loathed the "Act for the Observance of the Sabbath"—the so-called "Sabbath Law"—passed in 1857. This law forbade, among other things, dancing, shooting, hunting, fishing, buying, selling, or doing any but essential work on a Sunday. The penalty was a fine of between \$1 and \$5, and the 1870 House of Representatives passed a bill increasing the penalty to between \$5 and \$100. Claussen as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee introduced a minority report opposing the bill, and moved that the bill be postponed indefinitely.

Claussen argued in his report that the Sabbath Law was unconstitutional because it

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v. a. v. Säger Halle,

Bier Garten

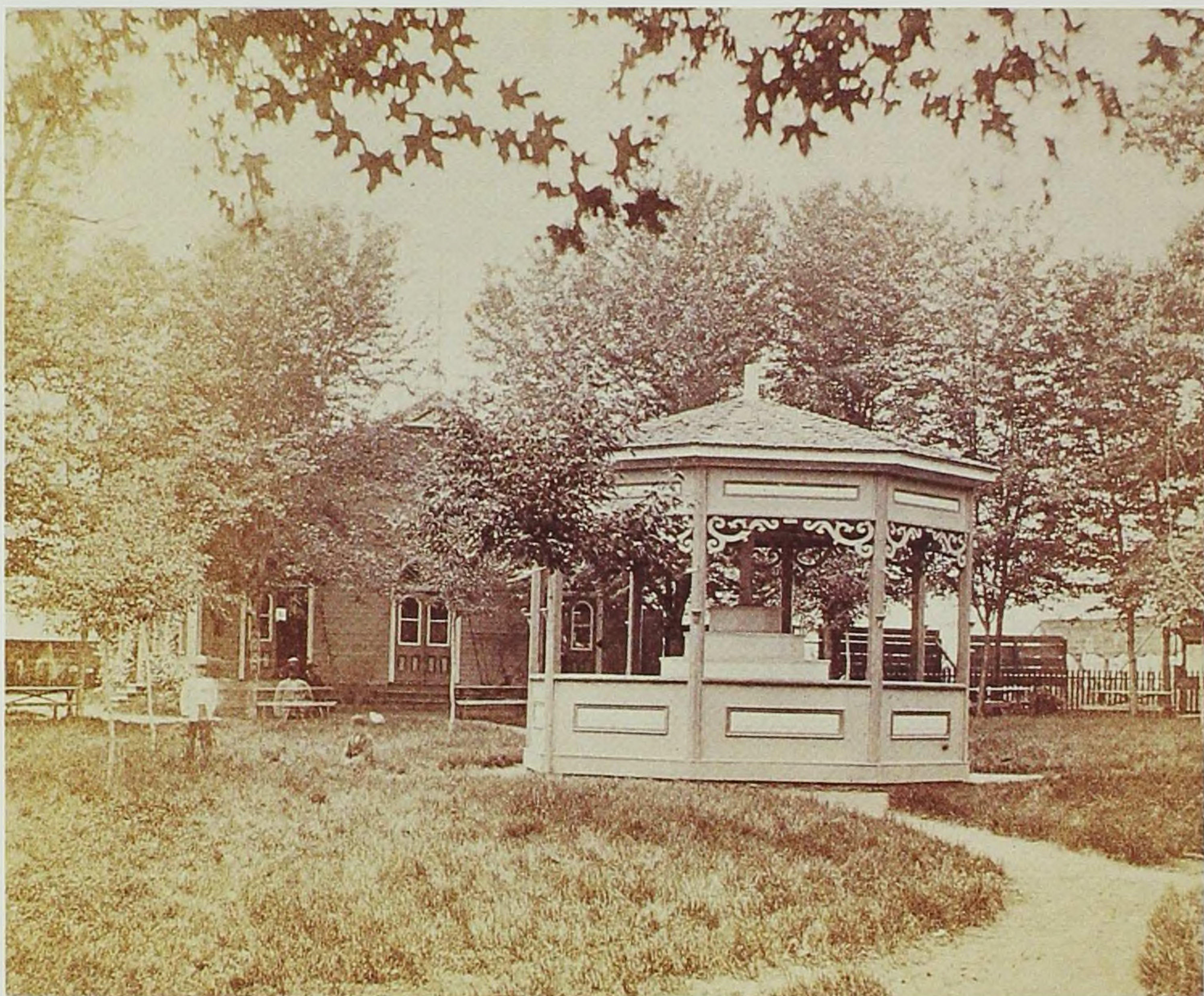
Die Feinsten....

Getränke und Cigarren
stets an hand.

Ice Cream und Frucht.

Reelle Bedienung, Emil E. Beyer.

The mix of music and beer gardens survives in this page from a souvenir program for the 1898 Saengerfest (or singing festival) in Davenport. A baritone's portrait is surrounded by advertisements for a "bier garten" and other businesses catering to German Americans—reminiscent of an 1862 observer's account of "several hundred people swigging lager. . . while listening to the strains of a fine band playing operatic selections."



SHSI (IOWA CITY); HUEBINGER BROS., ALBUM OF DAVENPORT AND VICINITY (1907)

Davenport's Schuetzen Park was privately owned and run by the *Schuetzen Gesellschaft* (or shooting society). Streetcars carried passengers there to enjoy Sunday recreations and to hear German band concerts in the music pavilion. Claussen fought to protect lowans' rights to enjoy such pleasures on Sundays.

was a law respecting the establishment of religion. He further urged that the Sabbath Law was "impracticable, inoperative and contrary to the notions of a greater portion of Christians." This last point was the nub of his argument. "Nearly all the European Christians on the continent go in the morning to church, but in the afternoon they enjoy and resort to places of amusements. . . . There is dancing on Sunday afternoon and in the evening." Claussen concluded: "There is nowhere any good reason for a provision that an act, innocent in itself, shall become criminal by every seventh revolution of the earth around its axis." The Senate voted that

Claussen's report be printed, and took no further action on the bill.

In May 1871 Claussen retired from his legal practice, and the Scott County bar gave a fine banquet in his honor, where a letter from Iowa Supreme Court Justice John F. Dillon was read. Justice Dillon wrote that Claussen had a "natural keen unperverted and ever active sense of Justice and Right. . . . His great knowledge of the civil law is a fountain to which, as he knows, I have often resorted."

The next day, Claussen and his wife departed for a six-month visit to Europe. He had been free to go back to Schleswig-Holstein—from which he had been banished in 1852—

since the Prussians and Austrians had ended Danish rule in 1864. As Bismarck had just unified Germany, Claussen now set out for the united Germany he had dreamed of in his youth. He heard Bismarck speak in the Berlin Parliament, and he visited Schleswig-Holstein. Yet it was to Davenport and America that he returned as home in time for the 1872 legislative session.

Although he was liberal in most causes, Claussen opposed woman suffrage, as did the Davenport Turners generally. Claussen had unsuccessfully voted against an 1870 Senate resolution to give the vote to women and, in January 1872, was reported as "working and writing letters in opposition to female suffrage." The Senate by a majority of two opposed the passage of this second resolution, thus preventing a constitutional amendment being put to a public referendum.

In the Senate debate on the subject, Claussen gave a major speech. "The old gentleman's eye kindles with a peculiar fire as he delivers a labored speech," reported a Dubuque newspaper. He listed three broad reasons for denying women the vote: "The particular interest of the females does not require Female Suffrage. . . . There is no natural right to Female Suffrage [and]. . . . The same is against public welfare."

Claussen developed his theme: "The women, generally, have deeper feelings, more intensive tenderness, a finer taste, and a nicer sense of propriety, than the rougher male sex. All these qualities make them excellent wives and mothers." He concluded: "We should leave the government . . . in the hands of men. The women have their sphere in domestic life. . . . Would it not satisfy the highest ambition of an American lady to be the mother of a second Washington?"

Claussen's views were typical of nineteenth-century males: women should concern themselves with the home, children, and cooking. A further reason for Claussen's stance may have been that—like so many German Americans—he believed if women had the vote they would ensure the triumph of the temperance movement, long supported by women reformers. Certainly on every aspect of women's rights other than the vote, Claussen was a progressive.

During the adjourned session of the legislature in 1873, he voted with the majority on measures to reform married women's property, inheritance, and other legal rights.

A glimpse of Claussen's home life suggests that his own wife, Annina, was far from kitchen-bound and enjoyed intellectual discussion. In the summer of 1872, Claussen offered to help a young German American, Charles Ficke of Davenport, with his law studies. Years later, Ficke recalled: "Those were glorious hours which I thereafter spent in Mr. Claussen's company on Sunday mornings. . . . When we had finished our discussions of legal subjects he would talk to me on a variety of other subjects most interestingly. . . . Often Mrs. Claussen would join us in these conversations."

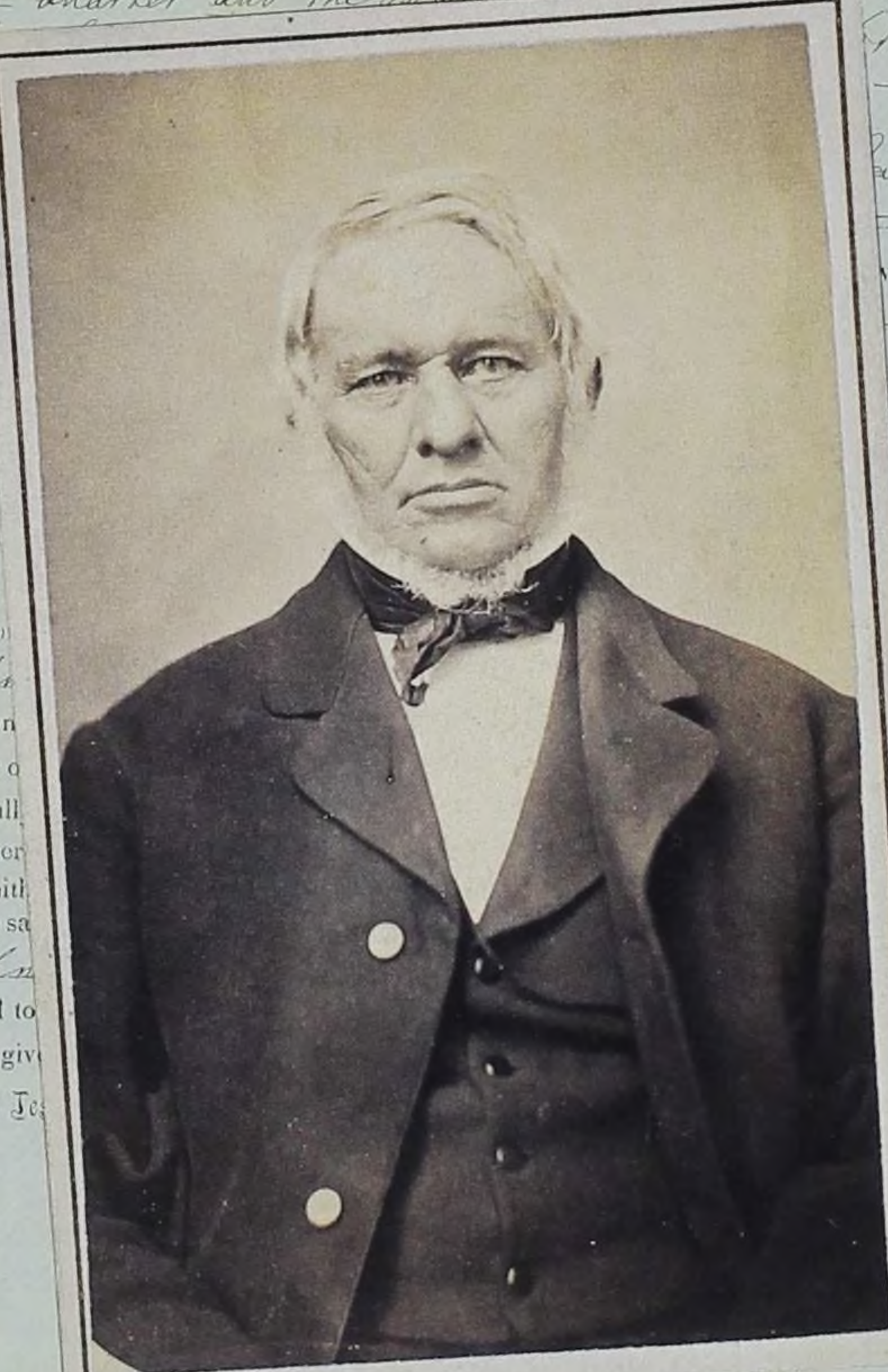
Now in his sixty-ninth year, Claussen was on the Senate judiciary committee, which had a crucial role in drafting the 1873 Code of Iowa. When the Senate decided to hold two sessions a day, Claussen asked to be excused from further service on the judiciary committee, saying that at his age participation in such an important committee and in two daily legislative sessions would be too much.

A few days later, the Senate unanimously asked Claussen to resume his place on the judiciary committee. The *Davenport Gazette* reported that Claussen "was visibly affected" by their confidence in him. To the *Davenport Democrat*, the honor came as no surprise. "This compliment was richly deserved by the white-haired philosopher of Scott [County]," the paper commented, "who has more legal knowledge under his frosty brow than half the lawyers of the State." Claussen once more took his place on the judiciary committee, and by all accounts played a major part in revising the Iowa Code.

Although Claussen may have seen himself as slowing down, apparently his colleagues did not. "One of the most remarkable men of this Assembly is Senator Claussen," commented a fellow senator in 1872. "He is now seventy years old, with hair as white as the snow flake, and step and movement as elastic and quick as a young man of twenty . . . and although his speech is broken, and his delivery in English somewhat difficult, yet there are but few who

This Indenture, Made the 17th day of January A. D. 1854, between Claus Mohr and his wife Margaretha Friederica Mohr of Scott County, Iowa of the first part and Gustav Schirger of Scott County, Iowa of the second part: Witnesseth: That the said parties of the first part for the consideration of two hundred and fourteen (214) Dollars, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do by these presents grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns forever, the following described tract of Real Estate, lying and being situated in the County of Scott, and State of Iowa, to wit: The South East Quarter of the South West Quarter and the South West Quarter of Section 18 of Range 4th two (2) East of

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The said Claus Mohr a promissory note for the sum of 54 with interest at the rate of ten (10) per cent per annum. effect thereof the said parties of the first part hereby convey in trust for the security of said shall fail or refuse to pay said note when as Trustee shall be authorized to least twenty days, and sell the same at Public Auction at the and tracts of such size as the said Gustav first part, or so much thereof as shall be necessary to satisfy and pay over the balance of the proceeds (if any there be) to said Gustav Schirger ses aforesaid, or so much thereof as he may sell, to the pur- their heirs or assigns from ever setting up any claim e death, incapacity, or refusal of the said Gustav the County Court of Scott County is hereby authorized and shall be clothed with all the power and authority to act, that 7 hands and Seals the date first above written.

Claus Mohr

Margaretha Friederica Mohr



STATE OF IOWA, }
SS: Scott COUNTY, }

Be it Remembered, That on the 17th day of January A. D. 1854, before the undersigned Hans Reimer Clausen a Notary Public in and for said County personally appeared, Claus Mohr and his wife Margaretha Friederica Mohr to me personally known to be the identical persons whose names are affixed to the foregoing Deed as grantors and acknowledged the instrument to be their voluntary act and deed.

Witness my Hand and Notarial Seal the day and year above written.

Hans Reimer Clausen
Notary public

Opposite: Although few images exist of Claussen besides this undated carte-de-visite, he left his mark on Scott County and the state. Here, his signature appears on the bottom right of an 1854 deed. Within two years of his arrival in America, he had learned English and passed the Iowa bar exam. His understanding of the language and laws of both Germany and America surely made his services valuable to German emigrants in Scott County.

speaking or writing the English language with more purity."

Shocked by the corruption of President Grant's administration, Claussen in 1872 joined the break-away Liberal Republican movement and chaired a Davenport meeting supporting Horace Greeley for President. After Greeley's defeat, Claussen played no further part in national politics. He retired from the state senate in 1873.

During his years in the legislature, Claussen had primarily concentrated on opposing prohibition, Sabbath observance, and woman suffrage. But he also promoted causes such as immigration and education, continuing to serve on Davenport's board of education after retirement. He voted consistently for the abolition of capital punishment and remained a staunch champion of freedom of the press.

Always of a philosophical bent, Claussen was himself a keen student of Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and others. He delivered at least seven lectures to the Davenport *Turnverein* on topics such as "The Moral System of Grecian Philosophers" and "Communism in Contradiction to Morality, Law, and Sound Politics."

In 1879, Claussen gave his last *Turnverein* lecture to a large audience at the German Theatre in Davenport. In it, he strongly criticized Bismarck's policies in Germany and looked to his adopted country for the future. The *Davenport Gazette* reported: "Mr. Claussen concluded with an eloquent reference to the United States as embodying the hopes of freedom loving people."

Claussen's life upon retirement from politics belonged to honored old age: honored at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Schleswig-Holstein revolt; honored on his golden wedding anniversary in 1882 by the Turners hoisting

the flag over their hall; honored on that day, too, by a large party, speeches, telegrams, a poem recited in German by his granddaughter, and the gift of a painting of Heide in Schleswig-Holstein, where the Claussens had married. A newspaper account of the occasion said: "The Doctor [Claussen] was very much touched by these many evidences of kind regard, and addressed the company, giving expression to the feelings of himself and his wife."

With the advancing years, Claussen showed his legal mind was as keen as ever. In 1882, a state constitutional amendment of prohibition was passed. Yet Claussen's fellow Forty-eighter, Theodor Gülich, now a Burlington editor and lawyer, alerted the governor that "it is the opinion of able jurists that the amendment will not stand a legal test." Claussen—who shared Gülich's hatred of prohibition—was undoubtedly one of these "able jurists." A fine constitutional lawyer with a keen eye, Claussen had noticed a key difference in language between the resolutions of prohibition in the House and the Senate of the Eighteenth General Assembly. The Nineteenth General Assembly agreed to the amendment passed by the previous House, but *not* that of the Senate. Because of this technicality—and to the great glee of the German Americans—the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that the prohibition amendment was unconstitutional.

The last years of Claussen's life were marked by bereavement. His daughter, Elfriede Mueller, died in 1883, and she was followed by his wife, Annina, in 1889. Three years later he lost his son, Ernst—himself a successful lawyer and seven times mayor of Davenport. Claussen

The Society for German-American Studies is sponsoring a Claussen biography and the Claussen Centennial Celebration and Conference, Sept. 30–Oct. 3, in Davenport, Iowa. Claussen's legacy, as well as music, literature, language, genealogy, and German-American relations, will be explored. Contact William Roba, Scott Community College, 500 Belmont Road, Bettendorf, Iowa, 52722 (319-359-7531).

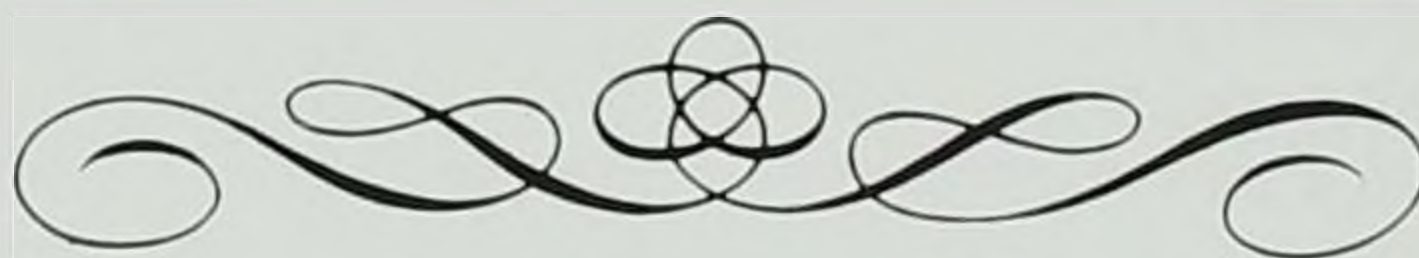
lived on another two years. In 1894 he died—aged ninety—at the home of his son-in-law, Christian Mueller.

Claussen had always had a Turner's attitude to life. He exercised regularly and had an iron constitution. One obituary described how "the remarkable manner in which he preserved his youthful vigor [had] enabled him to be about and greet his acquaintances upon the streets until recently." Claussen showed a streak of radicalism to the last: he had taken the unusual step of arranging to have his body cremated.

Perhaps the finest memorial to Claussen—demonstrating the pride Davenport felt in him—appeared the year after his death. The 1895 history of Scott County contained the King of Denmark's entire writ banishing

Claussen and the other leaders of the Schleswig-Holstein revolt. The writ printed in German took up three pages of the book.

Few immigrants, within two decades of arriving in a new country and learning a new language, could play a leading part in drafting the legal code of an American state. But Hans Reimer Claussen was an exceptional man. In Europe, Claussen had fought for Schleswig-Holstein and united Germany. In Iowa, as a prominent lawyer, legislator, and civic leader, he fought for the rights of individual clients and of an entire immigrant group. On his death, the *Davenport Democrat* saluted Claussen with the title bestowed on him by the local German-American community—"the patriarch of Davenport." □



NOTE ON SOURCES

I should like to thank Dr. Joachim Reppmann, German representative of the Society for German-American Studies, Susan Kuecker of the Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids, and as always, my wife, Patricia, for their invaluable advice.

General sources include: contemporary Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, and Schleswig-Holstein newspapers, and Scott County histories; *Des Moines Bulletin Legislative Supplement*, 1870; *Iowa Senate Journal*, 1870, 1872, 1873; biographical sketches of Claussen in: *The Western Life-Boat* (1873); *The United States Biographical Dictionary Iowa Volume* (Chicago, 1878); Edward H. Stiles, *Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa* (Des Moines, 1916); Hildegard Binder Johnson, "Hans Reimer Claussen," *The American-German Review* (June 1944); Thomas P. Christensen, "A German Forty-Eighter in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 26 (1945).

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Annotations for this article are held in *Palimpsest* files, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

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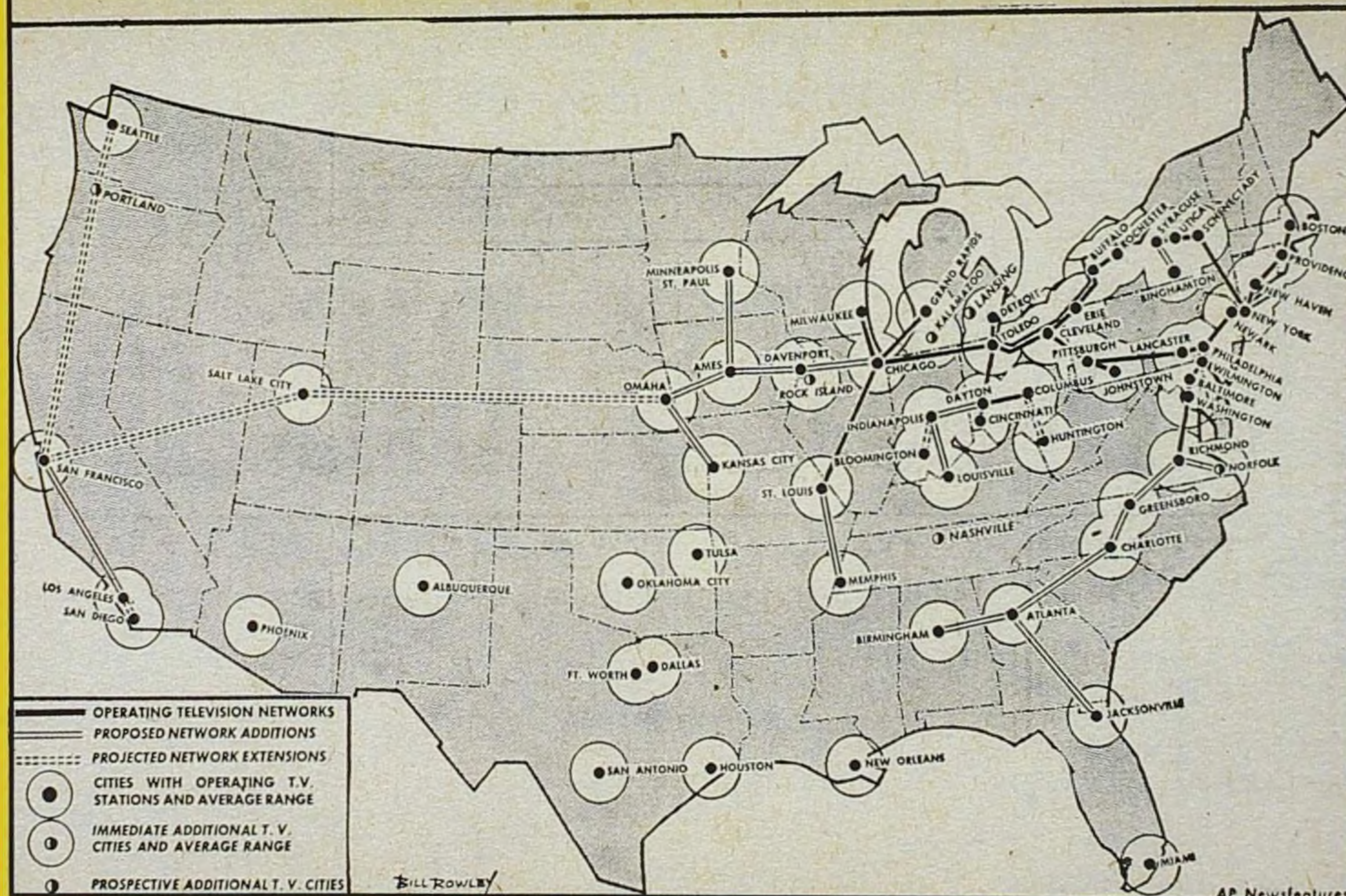
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Television Traces New Pattern Over America



Circles show the nation's "television cities" where, by February 26, 1950, about a hundred television stations were already in operation, serving areas sixty to a hundred miles wide. Applications for another 350 stations were on the waiting list. According to the accompanying news story, the number of "receivers" (television sets) was "increasing about as fast as manufacturers can turn them out." This *Palimpsest* traces the arrival of television in Iowa, and the development here of locally produced children's shows.