

## The Web of Life

Crowded schools, narrow highways, low hog prices, high taxes — these were but a few of the vexious problems facing Iowans in 1955. There was, however, a lighter side to life in Iowa during 1955. In February a buxom television personality, Dagmar, was brought into the House and Senate chambers while the legislature was in session, where she kissed distinguished members of both houses. Dagmar then invaded the Governor's office, kissed the state's chief executive and ran her hand through his butch haircut, remarking that it "feels like mink." Many legislators were indignant, but the incident emphasized the fact that Dagmar was appearing at the Des Moines Automobile Show.

In April television station KGTV of Des Moines shut down because of the difficulties which have forced many other ultra-high-frequency stations out of business. Lightning knocked down the transmitting tower of KQTV in Fort Dodge, forcing that station off the air for months. In July KRNT-TV of Des Moines began telecasting, and in October Iowa's thirteenth television station, KTVO of Ottumwa, went on the air.

On the night of March 1, a special state tele-

vision network enabled basketball fans to watch Iowa's Hawkeyes defeat Minnesota's Gophers, 72-70, at Minneapolis. A week later Iowa was officially crowned Big Ten champions and went on to finish fourth in the NCAA championships at Kansas City. The team's triumph over Minnesota, however, was the high point of the year for Hawkeye fans.

Comparable to this great team performance was the individual achievement of Jack Fleck, a professional golfer from Davenport who won the National Open Golf championship at San Francisco in June. A workmanlike performer who had traveled the golf circuit for several years without success, Fleck suddenly found his game and became the first Iowan ever to win golf's most coveted honor. What made his victory even greater, however, was that he and Ben Hogan were tied at the end of the regular 72 holes, but in the play-off Fleck defeated the man rated the greatest golfer of his era. The Associated Press poll of sports writers rated this the biggest sports upset of the year.

Young Art Andrews of Iowa City was named the number one junior tennis player in the United States after his performances during the year. He reached the finals of the National Junior Tennis championships in July before losing to Mexico's Esteban Reyes. Andrews and his doubles partner, Crawford Henry of Atlanta, Georgia,

were rated the top American junior doubles team.

For the third year Calvin Jones, guard and captain of the Iowa Hawkeyes, received All-American recognition. He also won the Outland Award presented annually to the guard or tackle judged to be the best in the nation. Iowa Quarterback Jerry Reichow of Decorah, a tower of strength all season, was unanimously voted the most valuable player at the annual East-West Shrine game in San Francisco on December 31 as he brilliantly directed the East squad to victory.

Although none of the state's major college football teams had outstanding records, the performance of the small college elevens was unusually good. Coe College finished its season unbeaten and untied, defeating previously unbeaten St. Olaf, 28-14, to win the Midwest Conference title. Coach Dick Clausen was named the small college coach of 1955, and at the end of the year was appointed head coach at the University of New Mexico. Parsons College marched to its first undefeated and untied season in history and its first Iowa Conference football championship since 1936. The 1954 champions of the same conference, Luther College, stretched its unbeaten string to nineteen straight games, but its record included a tie with Iowa Wesleyan. On Thanksgiving Day Luther defeated favored Western Illinois State College in the annual Corn Bowl game at Macomb, Illinois.

Other sports highlights of the year included Goldfield's victory over Holstein for the girls' basketball title and Ames' defeat of Iowa City in the boys' final. Both tournaments were held in the new Veterans Memorial Auditorium at Des Moines. Rod Bliss of Des Moines, a 42-year-old former title-holder, defeated 19-year-old Tom Davis of Cedar Rapids to win the Iowa Amateur golf title. Iowa State College's team won the annual Big Seven Conference basketball tournament during the Christmas holidays. Drake University once again became a member of the Missouri Valley Conference.

The hot summer weather helped to bring record-breaking crowds to Iowa state parks. Through November some 5,695,000 people had visited the parks compared with 4,898,000 for all of 1954. Most popular of these recreational areas was Lake Manawa with 674,236 visitors. Clear Lake Park, Lake Ahquabi, Ledges Park, Lake Keomah, McIntosh Woods Park, Backbone Park, Rock Creek Lake, Pine Lake, and Blackhawk Lake Park were other favorite spots. July was the top month with 1,840,000 people jamming the parks in quest of relief from the heat. This was more than the total summer attendance at Yellowstone National Park.

Deer hunters agreed that hunting was the poorest since Iowa began open deer seasons in 1953. The kill was estimated at between 2,000 and 2,500

compared to 4,000 in 1953. The deer were more scattered as a result of two previous seasons of hunting, while weather conditions were also unfavorable for the hunter.

Figures from the State Tax Commission indicated that despite the blistering temperatures, Iowans spent \$4,830,600 on movies during July, August, and September, a drop of \$458,400 from the same period in 1954. However, they spent \$6,297,360 to attend athletic events and similar amusements during the summer, which was over \$2,000,000 more than in the previous year.

A notable motion picture event was the world premiere in Des Moines in July of *The Night of the Hunter*. This was the first movie produced by Paul Gregory, a 34-year-old theatrical producer from Des Moines who had achieved remarkable critical and popular success with his stage productions of *Don Juan in Hell*, *John Brown's Body*, *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*, and *Three for Tonight*. Drake University, which he had attended, honored him in the morning, while preceding the premiere in the evening 550 persons attended a banquet sponsored by the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce.

Neil and Caroline Schaffner, who for thirty-one years had delighted their tent-show audiences in Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri with their portrayals of "Toby and Susie," were featured in an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, adding to the na-

tional recognition they had received earlier on the national television program, "Omnibus." Wapello, which the Schaffners call home, honored them with a "Toby and Susie Day."

The University of Iowa's Fieldhouse, which but a short time before had echoed to the roars of basketball fans, was the scene of the year's most unusual musical event in May with the performance of the Berlioz *Requiem*. The work is rarely presented because of the large and unusual chorus and orchestra required, but university students and musicians from all over eastern Iowa assembled at Iowa City to perform it under the direction of the conductor of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, Dimitri Mitropoulos. Preliminary rehearsals had been directed by James Dixon, a protégé of Mitropoulos, and director of the University Symphony Orchestra.

In the fall of 1955 MacKinlay Kantor's *Andersonville* became one of the most publicized best sellers of the year. It was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and even before it was published the movie rights had been purchased for \$250,000. Other books by Iowans included Phil Stong's novel, *Blizzard*, and a collection of Harlan Miller's columns, *There's A Man in the House*.

The Iowa State Fair attracted 505,050 people, the lowest attendance figure since 1950. Thirteen-year-old Bobby Kidney of Scranton won the grand champion baby beef award with his Here-

ford calf, Shorty. An Omaha brewing company bought the calf for a record price of \$2.20 per pound and then presented it to Governor Hoegh who turned it over to the Iowa Junior Chamber of Commerce. Temperance forces criticized the Governor for being a party to what they charged was simply a beer company's publicity stunt.

Early in January a bartender at a Polk County tavern explained that he could not sell liquor by the drink because "we've got to wait until this Countryman gets off his high horse." Attorney General Dayton Countryman had stated that he intended to make the state "cracker dry." He sent county law enforcement officers lists of places which had purchased federal retail liquor dealer stamps, observing that no club or tavern needed such a stamp unless it intended to sell liquor by the drink. Threats of periodic raids on such establishments led to many taverns surrendering their stamps. As a result of Countryman's vigorous efforts the state was, if not "cracker dry," at least less moist, the *Des Moines Register* observed.

In November, after a thirteen-week trial, Polk County District Judge C. Edwin Moore ruled that hospitals which employed medical specialists, such as pathologists and radiologists, and charged patients for their services were practicing medicine and thus violating state law. Judge Moore thereby upheld the 1954 ruling of Attorney Gen-

eral Leo Hoegh which the Iowa Hospital Association had sought to overturn in the courts. The decision was a victory for the Iowa Medical Society which had supported the contention of some medical specialists that they, not the hospital, should bill hospital patients for their services. The case was closely watched by medical and hospital officials throughout the country as an important test of many issues relating to the development of group medical care and insurance plans.

In December some 69 Iowa hospitals were granted a total of \$2,387,100 by the Ford Foundation. Largest beneficiary of the award, which could be used for any purpose except day-to-day operating expenses, was Iowa Methodist Hospital in Des Moines, which received \$205,100. Every voluntary, non-profit hospital in the state listed by the American Hospital Association received at least \$10,000. Federal aid totaling \$1,242,822 was announced the same month to help pay for eight hospital construction projects.

In April came the announcement that tests made in 1954 indicated that the Salk polio vaccine was an effective immunization agent. Of the 6,400 Iowa school children who were given the vaccine in 1954 only one was reported to have contracted polio. Under a mass inoculation program more than 113,000 Iowa children between the ages of 5 and 9 received free polio shots in 1955 and of



these only three later contracted paralytic polio.

As a result of a gift made by Howard Hall, Cedar Rapids would have Iowa's first radioactive cobalt-beam unit for the treatment of cancer. To be housed in the Margaret and Howard Hall Radiation Center, the "cobalt bomb" would enable doctors in the area to treat deep cancers more effectively than with existing x-ray facilities.

The year saw 629 people die on Iowa's highways, four less than in the peak year of 1954, making it the second worst year for traffic fatalities in the state's history. Total reported accidents numbered 54,877, over 4,000 more than in 1954, with a financial loss of \$28,924,605. The State Highway Patrol, celebrating its twentieth year of service, instituted airborne patrols, patrolmen riding in National Guard airplanes and helicopters in an effort to spot traffic violators and congested areas quickly. After thirteen persons were killed on July 3, Chief David Herrick declared a two-day emergency during which time temporary speed limits were imposed on the state's highways. The same action was taken during later holiday periods in an effort to hold down highway deaths.

Miss Dora Lee Martin of Houston, Texas, was elected by male students of the State University of Iowa as Miss S. U. I. It was the first time a Negro had ever been so chosen at the university. In a year in which segregation became an increasingly bitter issue of debate, this event at Iowa City

received considerable attention in the country.

Earlier in the year Air Force Captain Virgil A. Daniels, stationed at a radar installation near Waverly, was advised by the manager of an apartment house in that city not to move into the apartment which he had rented because several tenants had declared they would move out if Daniels, a Negro, and his family moved in. When news of this action got out most of the tenants of the apartment house quickly signed a petition apologizing for the attitude of the minority. City officials, the Chamber of Commerce, and many other townspeople welcomed the Daniels family to Waverly, a representative of the apartment house tenants presenting the Captain with the keys to his apartment. Overwhelmed by the demonstration, Daniels said happily, "Aren't the people of Waverly wonderful?" The Fund for the Republic awarded the city \$10,000 for its neighborly action. City officials decided to use the money for a scholarship to be awarded each year to a Waverly high school senior for the study of civil liberties and human rights.

In June, another Air Force Captain, Harold E. Fischer, Jr., of Swea City, returned to Iowa. Two years before the Korean War jet ace had been captured by the Chinese Communists. In the spring of 1955 he was released. His parents were flown to Honolulu, along with parents of other released fliers, where they met their son. Together

they flew back to Iowa where Captain Fischer saw his young son for the first time in three years and was greeted by thousands of Iowans.

In the summer, Asa Johnson, operator of a gravel pit at Turin in western Iowa, was loading earth for delivery as construction fill at Onawa. Suddenly he came upon a human skeleton. He called in Monona County Coroner S. N. Anderson, and the two men decided to keep their hands off the bones, which were obviously of pre-historic nature, until experts could examine them. Weldon D. Frankfurter, director of the Tiel Sanford Museum at Cherokee, and Reynold Ruppé, anthropologist at the State University of Iowa, soon arrived to direct the careful uncovering of the skeleton. Three other human skeletons, along with the bones of many animals, were found. It would be some time before tests and other studies determined the age of the human skeletons, but indications were that they might be as much as 10,000 years old. Anthropologists from all over the country came to Turin. They agreed that this was potentially a very important discovery for an understanding of early man in North America.

In October John E. Mulroney of Fort Dodge was named by President Eisenhower to the United States Tax Court in Washington, D. C. To take his place on the Iowa Supreme Court, Governor Hoegh named Henry K. Peterson of Council Bluffs. Earlier in the year the President named

Allen Whitfield of Des Moines to the Atomic Energy Commission, but the latter subsequently asked that his name be withdrawn when strong opposition to the appointment developed. Governor Hoegh also appointed Oliver P. Bennett of Mapleton to be the State Insurance Commissioner, succeeding Charles Fischer, who died in September.

Kenneth MacDonald, editor of the Des Moines *Register and Tribune*, was elected president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April. The same month the Iowa Press Association presented Master Editor-Publisher awards to Kenneth H. Sidey, publisher of the Adair County *Free Press*, L. B. Watt, publisher of the Grinnell *Herald-Register*, and L. O. Brewer, publisher of the Newton *Daily News*.

Among the many notable Iowans who died in 1955 were men who had made their mark in industry, such as Glenn L. Martin, a native of Macksburg, the airplane manufacturer, and J. Carl Bode of Keokuk, president of the National Carbide Company. Edward A. Kreger of Keota, former Judge Advocate General of the Army, Major General Philip B. Fleming of Burlington, and retired Vice Admiral Frank J. Lowry of Cresco were prominent figures from the armed services. Frank F. Merriam, born near Hopkinton, was State Auditor from 1899 to 1903 before moving to California where he was Governor from 1935

to 1939. George W. Landers was famous as the "Dean of American Bandmasters." The famous Christian leader, John R. Mott, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946, had been raised in Postville.

Among those who died who had been prominent in Iowa were publishers Robert R. O'Brien of the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* and Dante M. Pierce of *Wallaces' Farmer and Iowa Homestead*. State officials who died included Lucius A. Andrew, former Banking Superintendent, Fred R. Woodruff, former Railroad Commissioner, Ora Williams, former Curator of the Department of History and Archives, and Clifford L. Niles, former member of both the Conservation and Highway commissions. Educators included Jay W. Merrill, district agricultural extension supervisor at Iowa State College and John T. McClintock, member of the S.U.I. medical faculty since 1897. Edwards M. Myers of Boone and Christine E. Hill of Council Bluffs were well-known figures in state medical circles. Robert M. Gunn, Black Hawk County farmer, had been an organizer of the Farm Bureau. William S. Jacobsen was the Democratic Congressman from the Second District from 1937 to 1943. Pauline L. Devitt had been a leader of the woman's suffrage movement and a former member of the State Board of Education.

Former state legislators who died included

Samuel H. Bauman, A. S. Bloedel, Charles F. Clark, John A. Graham, Elmer A. Johnson, William M. Judd, Frank D. Martin, John W. Moore, Julius A. Nelson, Ed L. Newton, George B. Perkins, Ray P. Scott, and Lorenzo D. Teter.

Each of these individuals had served his state and country to the best of his abilities. The passing of each meant to a certain extent the end of an era. So too another year had ended — another year which future scholars would seek to fit into patterns which would make the decade and the century understandable. But for Iowa there was always another year ahead — another twelve months in history's unending drama.

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