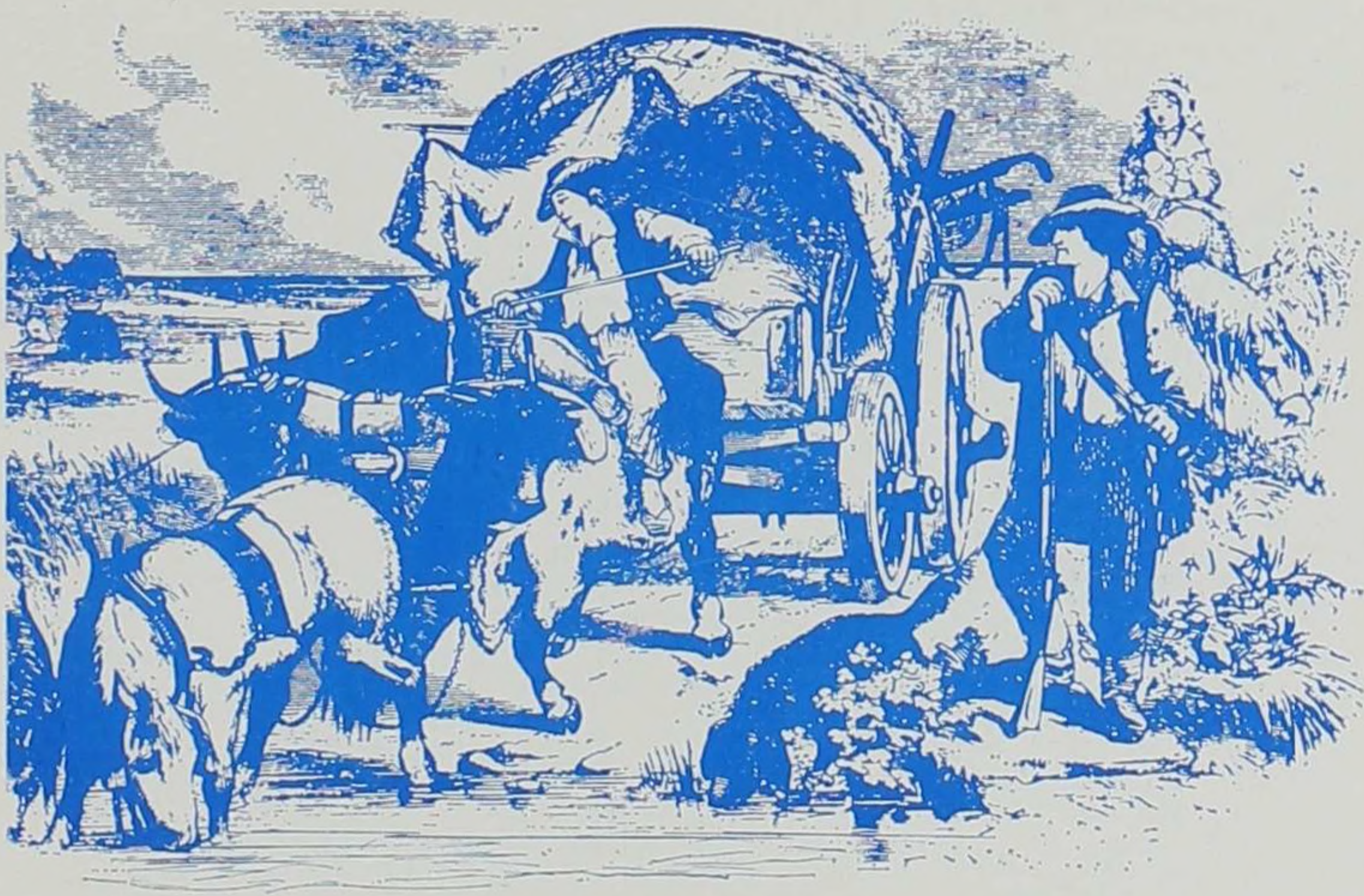


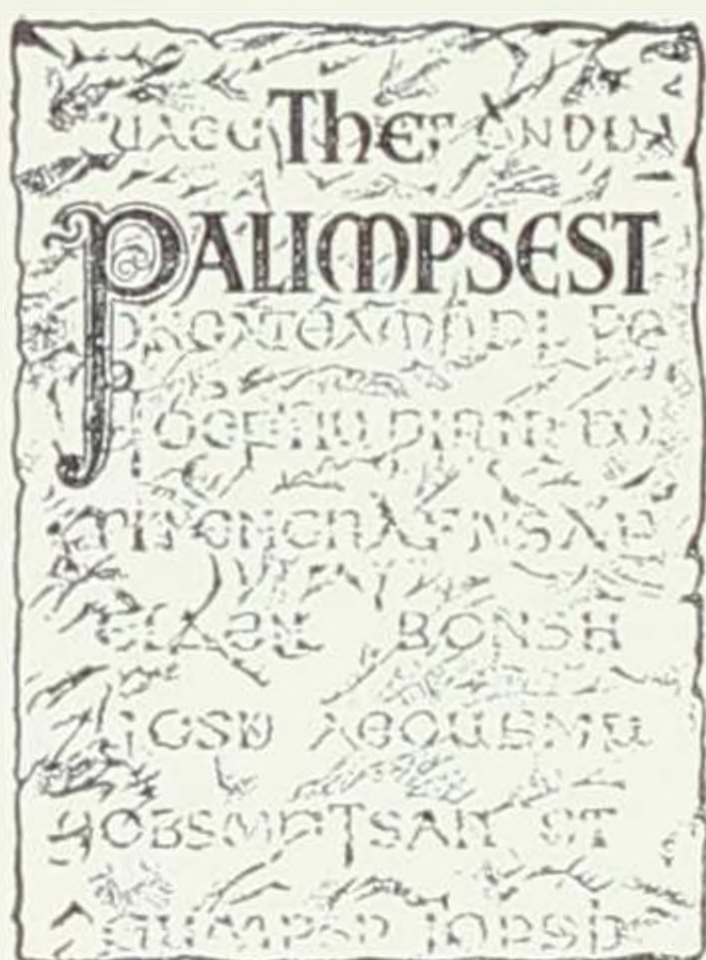
The **PALIMPSEST**



Immigrants Reaching the Upper Mississippi
SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT IN IOWA

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

MARCH 1956



The Meaning of Palimpsest

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

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the 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.

Contents

SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT IN IOWA

LEOLA NELSON BERGMANN

A Century of Immigration	129
Immigrants in Iowa	134
The Scandinavians Come to Iowa	145
Population Statistics, 1856-1950	156
Explanation of Statistics	160

Cover

Front — Drawing from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XVI (March, 1858), 439.

Back—Inside: Map from Thirteenth Census of the United States, I, *Population, 1910* (Washington, 1913).

Outside: Title page of the book prepared by A. R. Fulton for the Iowa Board of Immigration in 1870.

Author

Leola Nelson Bergmann is the author of books dealing with immigrant groups. Her publications include *Americans from Norway* (J. P. Lippincott, N. Y., 1950), and *Music Masters of the Middle West* (Univ. of Minnesota, Mpls., 1944). The present article is the first in a series on the Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes in Iowa.

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT
IOWA CITY IOWA UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

PRICE — 25 cents per copy; \$2.50 per year; free to Members

MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$3.00

ADDRESS — The State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa

THE PALIMPSEST

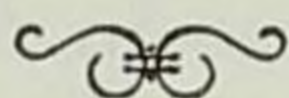
EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XXXVII

ISSUED IN MARCH 1956

No. 3

Copyright 1956 by The State Historical Society of Iowa



A Century of Immigration

The mid-twentieth century is a vantage point for the social historian concerned mainly with American immigrant history for the reason that he is already distant enough to see the pattern of the movement and close enough still to hear the accent of the individual. A quarter century has passed since the bars of the quota system were lowered across the wide archway into this country. This stopped immigration as a mass movement. The immigrants settled down. In some communities they set the pattern of social behavior. In others they mixed their customs with those of the culture that had preceded them. The changes they wrought and the contributions they made to America, as pioneer immigrants, belong to the past and thus to the historian, who can now study them as a group. On the other hand, there are still a few individuals who came in the waning tide of the movement. They are the primary sources of the record, giving it authenticity by adding the freshness of personal memory.

Thirty-five million people came into America during the century of immigration, 1820-1920. The Germans, six million of them, were the most numerous; close behind them were the Italians and the Irish, those from Austria-Hungary and Russia next. Following these in numerical order were peoples from England, Sweden, Norway, Scotland, and France. Broadly speaking, the immigrants from northern Europe, with the exception of the Irish, sought the land; those from southern and eastern Europe went to urban centers. The former, known as the "old immigration," were dominant up to 1890. The latter, or the "new immigration," formed the largest groups from 1890 until the adoption of the quota system.

The period of "old immigration" coincided with the opening of the Middle West. This region, where land was cheap and plentiful, where timber, streams, and meadowlands abounded, naturally became the destination of hundreds of thousands of these newcomers from northern Europe. This was evident as early as 1850, when the Swedish writer, Fredrika Bremer, traveled through America. "That great central valley of the continent of North America," she wrote, "already invites to its large bosom those masses of people who are pouring out from the overstocked communities of the Old World."

More interesting still, Miss Bremer noted the double culture, which was then in its early stages

but was to become a marked feature of Middle Western society. She observed that "although two-thirds of the population of the Mississippi Valley consists of Scandinavians, Germans, Irish, and French, yet there too is the legislative and formative spirit of the Anglo-Norman." To put it in another way: the superstructure or frame was certainly Anglo-Saxon, but below and within there was a strong immigrant subculture. Over fifty per cent of the population in many states of the Middle West in 1910 were first- and second-generation Americans. This fact cannot be disregarded if one is to understand the region and its place in the economic, social, and political scheme of the nation as a whole.

Did the immigrants, for example, contribute to the reputation the Middle West has for religious orthodoxy and political conservatism? Answering affirmatively one must remember first that the westward movement was a Protestant movement. The early settlers were farmers from New England and the middle states, many of whom "had drunk deep from the springs of Calvinism," as one historian of the West wrote, and Wesleyism, as we may add. Nowhere was "the revival" as widespread and flamboyant as in the Middle Border. (Hamlin Garland and Ed Howe are good witnesses.) Then came the sterner-voiced fundamentalism of thousands of vigorous, not to say pietistic, Protestant immigrants. The combination

left an indelible stamp on the character of the region.

Certain political traits, too, have been ascribed to the Middle Border. Almost unfailingly these states appear in the Republican column on election night. The causes are complex, but for our purpose only the major ones need to be mentioned. The West was opened primarily by people, both Americans and European-born, who disliked slavery. Protestant, they also believed in the fundamental equality of all human souls. Lincoln, a product of this frontier, a man of the people, drew them into and held them, even after his lifetime, in the Republican party. He was the personal symbol of the morality they lived by, of the ideals that inspired them. Even more important, in the Homestead Act of 1862 Lincoln and the Republican party promised the western settlers land. This cemented them more firmly in the party groove than anything else. Only during periods of economic depression and agrarian discontent did the voters of this region protest against their party, but after each excursion they returned.

The political sentiments in an immigrant community in the seventies and eighties have been well described in *The Log Book of a Young Immigrant* by Laurence M. Larson, a Norwegian-American who became president of the American Historical Association. Looking back on his boyhood in Winnebago County, Larson remembers

how the reading of Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Epes Sargent's *Peculiar Institution* "intensified an inborn and implacable hostility toward slavery" and how it "strengthened the bonds that held good men and women to the Republican party." As installments of Sargent's novel came week after week these immigrant men and women "learned to hate the Democratic party, which, they were told, had tried so hard to stem the wave of righteousness that had swept the party of freedom into power in 1860." In the two decades following the Civil War, wrote Larson, "the Democratic party, at least in northern Iowa, was not regarded as respectable." When the voters of the community showed some interest in Cleveland in the 1884 campaign an eloquent spokesman for the Republican cause, a Norwegian-American lawyer, rhetorically asked his audience, "Can you go to the Lord's table on Sunday and vote for Cleveland on Tuesday?"

For many immigrant families the Republican cloak was as unchangeable as their Lutheranism, Methodism, or Presbyterianism, a cloak which descended to their sons and daughters, many of whom remained either on the land or in a rural village of the region, thereby maintaining almost unbroken the pattern of living and thinking established by their parents.

LEOLA NELSON BERGMANN

Immigrants in Iowa

Iowa received a goodly share of these immigrants from northern Europe. Before the Civil War most of them came from Britain, Ireland, and Germany. Added to this stream after the war were the Scandinavians. These were the main groups. Colonies of Dutch and Bohemians were also attracted to the state, but at the turn of the century the Germans, with 40.4 per cent, and the Scandinavians, with 23.7 per cent, constituted almost two-thirds of Iowa's foreign-born population. Today these two national segments account for 50.8 per cent of the state's relatively small group of Iowans from other lands.

The main additions to the foreign-born population of Iowa in the last half century have been the Italians and Russians, Greeks and Mexicans, many of whom were drawn to the meatpacking centers. In Sioux City, for example, the Russians constitute the largest group of foreign-born today; then come the Swedes, the Germans, and the Norwegians. However, the total Scandinavian group still exceeds the Russian. Mason City, too, has a mixture of nationalities, the Germans in the lead, followed by Greeks, Russians, Norwegians, Mexicans, Danes, and Swedes. Once again the

total Scandinavian number forms the largest group, though only slightly more than that of the German.

In Des Moines the largest single group is the Italian, with Swedes second. Again the total Scandinavian count makes it the dominant foreign-born group. Davenport is heavily German in its foreign population. This group also ranks first in Dubuque, Waterloo, Clinton, and Burlington. It should be noted that all these cities, except Waterloo, are Mississippi River towns, the oldest in the state and therefore the natural settling points for the earlier bands of immigrants. What is more significant is that these centers continued to attract later generations of German immigrants as well. The largest groups of Scandinavians are found in Des Moines, Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Fort Dodge, and Mason City; except the latter, all are central and western Iowa cities. This is an indication of the Scandinavian's arrival at a later stage in the development of the state.

However much one says about Iowa's foreign-born population, one must not lose sight of the basic fact that Iowa began and remained a state whose roots were in New England and the Middle Atlantic states, though thousands of her pioneer families had paused a generation or two in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri in their trek to Iowa. Over the span of a century the proportion of foreign-born in Iowa's

total population never rose to even a fifth, as shown by the following percentages.

1850 — 10.9	1890 — 16.9	1930 — 6.8
1860 — 15.7	1900 — 13.7	1940 — 4.6
1870 — 17.3	1910 — 12.3	1950 — 3.2
1880 — 16.1	1920 — 9.4	

More attractive to immigrants than Iowa were other states in the Middle West. In 1880, Iowa ranked tenth among the states in the Union both in total and foreign-born populations. At this time Illinois and Missouri among adjoining states were the only ones that exceeded Iowa in population, but in terms of the foreign-born Illinois and the less populated states of Wisconsin and Minnesota already outranked Iowa. The population in each of the latter two states remained slightly under and did not rise above that of Iowa until after 1910 (Wisconsin) and 1930 (Minnesota); the percentage of foreign-born in each, however, was considerably higher, reaching 35.6 per cent in Minnesota in 1890. The most obvious reason for this is, of course, that these states developed a more diversified economy — mining, lumbering, shipping — which made them industrial as well as agricultural areas, thus providing more opportunities for the foreign-born. Iowa remained primarily an agricultural state, and, once settled, attracted no substantial new immigration.

But between the 1840's and 1880's when the immigrants were landseekers, why did they prefer

other states? Among the many factors involved, the first, or earliest, was simply geography. Iowa was too far west for the immigrants who came to the Middle West during the forties and fifties. Many of them arrived, after landing in New York or at a Canadian port, by way of the Great Lakes. After spending several weeks in a crowded, unsanitary, immigrant vessel, then being herded again into a Lake boat, the newcomer reached Milwaukee or Chicago weary of traveling, often ill from bad food. Chances are his savings, too, were completely used up. His one thought was to settle his family as quickly as possible, and this he did in the first available spot, which was usually a few miles inland from Lake Michigan, perhaps on one of the connecting waterways. Until railroads reached the Mississippi River in the mid-1850's the overland journey to Iowa was arduous and expensive. Furthermore, the mighty river itself was an effective barrier.

One of the most determining factors in settlement, particularly of immigrants, was the behavioral law that propelled people to seek their kind. In a strange land they wanted at least to be near or with people who spoke the same language. Once a small settlement was established, immigrants wrote to relatives in the old country urging them to come to the new land. Occasionally an enthusiastic settler, having saved enough for his fare, returned to his home valley to give living

proof of the rewards of emigration. Often he arranged for others to leave and guided them, with his small but effective collection of English words, through the intricacies of customs, boat and railroad transportation to the one-room cabin of old friends in Illinois or Wisconsin. Thus did the older settlements expand while the virgin land to the west waited to be occupied.

By the early fifties, however, wagons were rumbling across southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois on their way to a ferrying point on the Mississippi, for land prices were rising fast in the settled areas. When Fredrika Bremer visited Madison, Wisconsin, she noted that "the land in many parts . . . and in particular around Madison, where it is appropriated by the Federal government for supplying an income to the State University, is already very dear. It has been purchased by speculators at the government price, a dollar and a quarter per acre, and resold by them for not less than ten or twelve dollars per acre. 'And who will give so much for it?' I inquired of Chancellor Lathrop. 'Your countrymen,' he replied quickly. 'Your countrymen, whose sons will be freely educated at our University.'" But few of them had the money, and they, as well as the older settlers who could now sell their farms for a profit, formed caravans to go beyond the Mississippi where \$1.25 covered more ground. Every day during the summer months hundreds waited

in line at the ferries on the east bank of the river.

In the meantime, the new states and territories of the Middle West were struggling to carry on the business of government. Money was needed for roads, public buildings and schools, officials' salaries; these expenditures could be met only if enough people lived there to pay taxes. Furthermore, the states wanted railroads and knew that companies would lay their tracks only where prospects of land settlement were good. Not only money but manpower was needed to carry out the huge task of building a state, and manpower was pouring into the country from the emigrant vessels docking in Quebec, New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. The new states got busy.

By the early fifties a few had established immigration agencies and were working vigorously in New York and in Europe to attract settlers. Compared to her neighbors what Iowa did was "too little and too late." In the first place, the constitutions of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota generously gave the franchise to immigrants, who, after a year or two of residence, declared their intention to become naturalized, while Iowa required full citizenship before granting the right to vote.

In the 1844 and 1846 constitutional conventions in Iowa the right of suffrage for aliens was widely discussed and vigorously demanded by certain members of the convention and some newspapers.

But the proposals were defeated. The fact that they could not vote in Iowa until they had acquired citizenship may not have actually deterred individual emigrants from choosing this state; nevertheless, most of them had a strong feeling of pride that they were going to make their homes in a land where political rights were as freely come by as air and water, and when agents of more liberal states coupled Iowa's deficiency in this respect with the commonly accepted notion of huge areas of desert in the state, the emigrants were influenced.

Not until 1860 did Iowa appoint a commissioner of immigration, who was to reside in New York and distribute pamphlets and other information about the state. Relatively few immigrants were diverted to the state, however. Many had been contacted by agents before leaving their homelands, and upon arrival in New York their destinations — usually Wisconsin, Illinois, or Minnesota — had already been decided upon. Consequently, the commissioner advised that the only way to promote Iowa was in the foreign country itself.

Meanwhile Kansas, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were distributing thousands of handbooks through their agents in England, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. It is known that Minnesota agents in Norway were circulating reports that Iowa was so hot in summer that no Nor-

wegians could stand to live there. What is more important "America letters" from these states, particularly Wisconsin and Minnesota, were silently spreading over northern Europe and were even more potent than agents in determining the choice of the emigrant's future American home.

The Civil War halted all promotional activity and, of course, caused a sharp drop in immigration. Not until 1870 did Iowa resume her efforts to attract immigrants, and then with a burst of energy. The Thirteenth General Assembly passed an act to encourage immigration to the state, appropriating for that purpose the sum of \$5,000 and establishing a Board of Immigration with six commissioners. The Governor appointed men whose backgrounds — New England, New York, Germany, Holland, and Scandinavia — qualified them to give special attention to the areas from which Iowa wished to draw settlers. The Scandinavian member of the board was C. L. Clausen, a Lutheran minister from St. Ansgar who had already served a term in the Iowa legislature and whose name is writ large in the annals of Norwegian-American history in the Middle West.

The board issued a handbook, *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants*, authorizing the printing of 35,000 copies in English, 15,000 in German, 5,000 in Dutch, 6,000 in Danish (which was understood in Norway where Dano-Norwegian was the official language), and 4,000 in Swedish. Distribution

of the booklet was successfully reported by agents sent to the British Isles, Germany, and Holland. Ill fortune dogged the publication of the Scandinavian editions. After a long delay they were finally ready, only to be caught by the great Chicago fire in October, 1871, which destroyed all but a few hundred copies. Consequently, the two agents sent to the Scandinavian countries — Martin N. Clausen, son of the commissioner, and Theodore K. Hunby of Worth County — were hampered in their work. Clausen translated portions of the pamphlet and published them in the leading Scandinavian journals, reporting that he had "awakened much interest in regard to Iowa." From Norway Hunby wrote to the board giving "assurances of the increasing favor of Iowa with the people of that country."

Meanwhile, Governor Samuel Merrill of Iowa was instrumental in getting the governors of the Midwestern states to call for a national immigration convention to consider ways to increase "facilities for emigrants coming to the West, as well as to protect them from the impositions so constantly practiced upon them at the seaports." The Governor and several members of the Board of Immigration were among the delegates from twenty-two states, two territories, and the District of Columbia who met at Indianapolis in November, 1870.

For three years money and energy were ex-

pended, then interest again slumped. The legislature failed to provide funds for promotion of immigration, and Iowa, bedeviled in the mid-seventies by wet years, poor crops, grasshoppers, and low prices witnessed a sizable exodus of settlers who headed for "warmer Kansas and cheaper Nebraska," or for the Dakotas. The first settlers in Traill County, North Dakota, in the early seventies were dissatisfied Norwegians who had originally settled in Mitchell County, Iowa. The writer's own Norwegian grandparents, after a short stay in their first American home in northern Iowa, caught the Dakota fever during this period and joined the oxcart caravans.

The Iowa legislature, unable because of the hard times to appropriate funds for a board of immigration, gave agents of land and railroad companies the authority to use the name of Iowa in their efforts to attract settlers to the state. These "honorary" commissioners worked for the mutual benefit of the state and their companies until in 1880 a commissioner of immigration was again appointed. His policy met with opposition from some quarters. Then, unfortunately, immigration and temperance issues got into the same political pot, bringing about a head-on clash between the leaders of the foreign-born groups and the advocates of prohibition. A wave of antiforeign sentiment swept over the state; measures to continue immigration promotion found no support in the

1882 legislature and were never again revived. Thus did Iowa's lack of a consistent policy and her fluctuating interest in securing immigrants partly succeed in directing the immigrant tide elsewhere.

Railroad companies were probably even more important than the states (although they frequently worked together) in spreading propaganda for certain areas and actually bringing immigrants from Europe to the American West to buy and settle on their lands. The Illinois Central's program of colonization was one of the first and most successful, and certainly it was a factor in making Illinois the stronghold of Swedish life and culture in the Middle West. The amazing Jim Hill was responsible in large measure for settling his Great Northern Empire in Minnesota and the Dakotas with Norwegian and Swedish farmers. Settlement in Iowa, except for the western part of the state, had preceded the railroads, and the efforts of the companies were not as intense. The Burlington Railroad, however, through agents in England and Germany brought a few immigrant groups to southwestern Iowa. A string of Swedish colonies, too, were founded along the Burlington route in the southern counties through the efforts of Swedish-American land agents.

LEOLA NELSON BERGMANN

The Scandinavians Come to Iowa

The Dane, Norwegian, and Swede each has a character distinctly his own, and, furthermore, he cherishes the differences that set him apart from his fellow-Scandinavian. But in the aggregate they do form a unit. Their histories have been intertwined for centuries; they have shared rulers; they have spoken virtually the same language and observed similar traditions. They were reared in the Lutheran faith, and the unifying force of a similar church background and organization is not to be underestimated. It may not always make people act together, but it frequently makes them act alike. In spite of some traditional animosity among the Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes, they have been in some sense in America a cohesive and nationally-conscious group, forming "Scandinavian" political and cultural organizations. They can thus justifiably be approached as a homogeneous group.

Scandinavians have figured in the history of America since the days of the Vikings when, it is alleged by some historians, a colony of Norsemen spent three winters on our eastern shores. In the seventeenth century the Swedes had thriving settlements in Delaware, while Danes and Norwe-

gians were sprinkled among the Dutch in New York.

Our present story, however, picks up the threads of history in the nineteenth century, when emigration from Scandinavia became a mass movement, reaching deep into the lower levels of the social structure. Economic conditions in these countries had long been unsatisfactory for these people, particularly in Norway where an incredibly small amount of tillable land was the major source of support for a large proportion of the population, which at mid-century was about a million and a half. Though land conditions in Sweden were far better, the population was far greater, close to four and a half million. Reports of vast areas of cheap land in America sounded like promise of salvation to the disenchanted Norwegian and Swedish peasants, and by the hundreds of thousands they gathered up their families and belongings and sailed off to the new land. Because of relatively favorable economic conditions in Denmark, emigration from that country was always considerably less than in the other two.

Norway was the first of these countries to see the spectacle of hundreds of families, sometimes a whole valley of people, setting off for America. The first boatload left in 1825, but steady emigration did not begin until the 1840's. From Sweden the exodus began in the 1850's. Until 1875 more Norwegians than Swedes came; after that, al-

though there was a sharp increase in the numbers of both, the Swedes exceeded the Norwegians. Both reached their peak in 1882. In that year alone, almost 65,000 Swedes and nearly 30,000 Norwegians entered the United States. In the 1860's the Danes succumbed to the "America fever," precipitated then by the war with Germany over Schleswig-Holstein. The Schleswig Danes preferred America to German rule. The curve of Danish migration, like that of Norway and Sweden, reached its high point in 1882 but in numbers was far smaller, only about 12,000 entering the United States.

Until the last two decades of the nineteenth century the emigrants' journey to America was a pause between tilling the soil of Scandinavia and tilling the soil of America. The Middle West was their destination, and although they spread over the entire region, each group seemed to favor certain states. The Norwegians settled most heavily in Wisconsin and Minnesota, later in the Dakotas, particularly North Dakota. The Swedes concentrated in Illinois and southern Minnesota. The Danes, spreading more evenly over the Midwestern states, showed a slight preference for Iowa, fanning from here into Nebraska, where neither the Swedes nor the Norwegians settled in very large numbers.

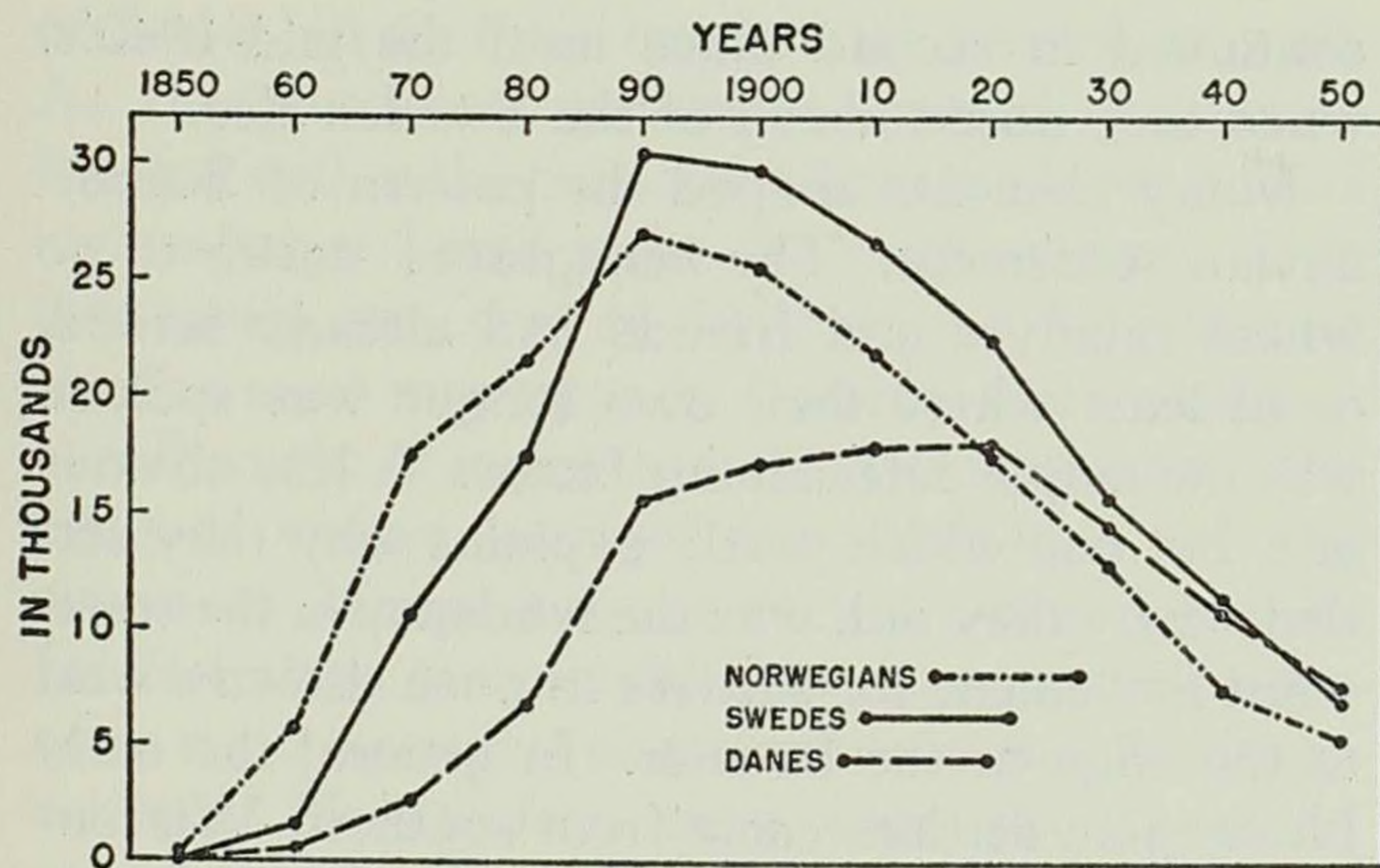
Toward the end of the nineteenth century the character of emigration changed from the rural

family type of movement to that of the individual laborer and professional emigrant whose training and interests propelled him to urban centers. Emigration for him was an extension of the general drift within his own country from soil to city, but cities were few and opportunities limited. America, short on skilled labor and professionally trained people, gladly took all the bricklayers, toolmakers, mechanics, engineers, and tailors Europe could spare. Her cities soon bulged with immigrants. Thus while the foreign-born population of the agricultural states reached a plateau, then declined as the twentieth century progressed, that of states with large metropolitan centers rapidly rose. The Scandinavian immigrant became part of the American cityscape. Today the picture is still the same. Urban areas are the reservoirs of the remaining immigrant population, as is evident from the following figures of Scandinavian-born in 1950.

<i>Sweden</i>		<i>Norway</i>		<i>Denmark</i>	
Illinois	56,128	Minn.	33,477	Calif.	18,053
Minn.	43,933	N. Y.	33,073	N. Y.	11,627
N. Y.	36,747	Wash.	23,304	Illinois	10,425
Calif.	31,067	Calif.	15,780	Iowa	7,625
Mass.	21,333	Illinois	15,684	Minn.	7,374
Wash.	20,906	Wisc.	14,663	Wisc.	6,537

In many respects the shape of the curve for Iowa parallels the national picture. First to enter the country, the Norwegians were also the

THE SCANDINAVIANS COME TO IOWA 149



Iowa's Scandinavian-born Population, 1850-1950

first of the three to come into Iowa and until the 1880's were the most numerous. The Swedes then gained the lead to hold it for some time. The census of 1890, ending a decade of enormous yearly arrivals, is the high point for both Norwegians and Swedes. After 1900, in spite of the continuing influx, newcomers did not replace the fast-disappearing generation of pioneers of the fifties and sixties; consequently, the decline in numbers was steady and rather rapid. For the Danes the picture is somewhat different. After a late and slow start, they began to increase noticeably only in the eighties, rising in numbers as the other two fell. At their peak in 1920, they outnumbered the Norwegians by a few hundred and

continued in second place until the mid-1940's, when they nosed ahead of the Swedes also.

Many elements shaped the pattern of Scandinavian settlement. The immigrants' desire to go where relatives and friends had already settled, or at least where their own tongue was spoken, was the major determining factor. A less obvious one, but one which partly explains why they settled where they did, was the tendency in the westward movement for settlers to push directly west to the edge of the frontier. In general the early Norwegian settlers came from southern Wisconsin and settled in northern Iowa; the Swedes came from northern Illinois and settled in southern Iowa. Each started in the eastern part of the state and moved in a westerly direction. When the Danes arrived the frontier had reached the Missouri River, and in communities along its borders one most frequently sees the Dannebrog.

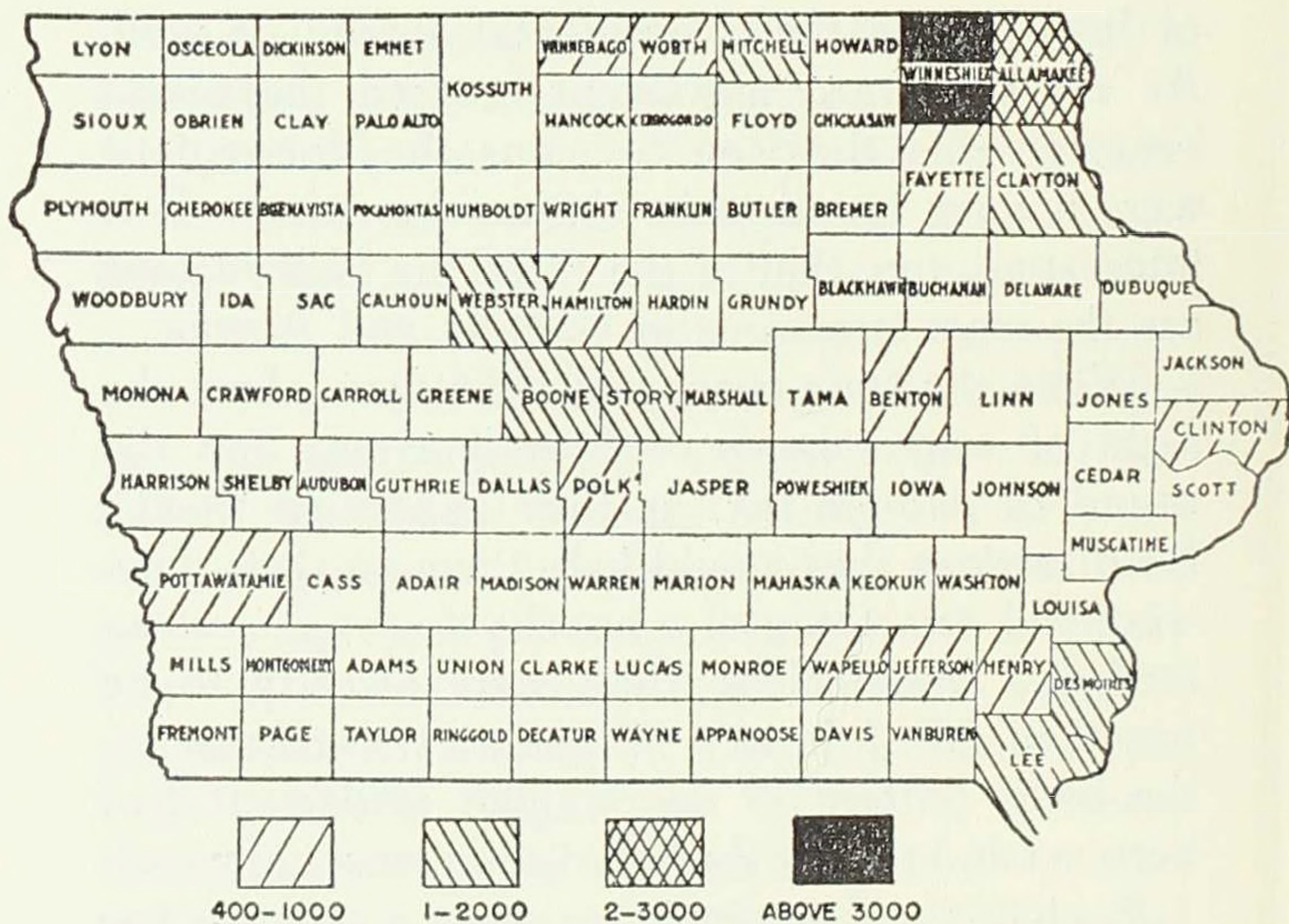
Topography and climate, too, seem to have played a part in their choice of homes. The Norwegians, coming from a mountainous terrain, preferred the cooler, wooded hill country of northern Iowa. The Swedes and Danes, on the other hand, accustomed to rolling meadowlands, chose the flatter areas of southern and western Iowa where the weather is somewhat more benign. Unwittingly, the three groups maintained in the new world the same geographical relationship they had had to each other in the old world, not only in the state

of Iowa but in their continental spread as well. As the westward movement crossed the plains bearing with it the Scandinavians, the Norwegians were always found to be the northernmost. It is interesting, too, that of the three the Norwegians are the most numerous in Canada and Alaska.

When the state census of 1856 was taken, the sight of wagon loads of Scandinavians and the sound of *Mange tak*, as they expressed thanks for directions that would help them on their way, were still something of a novelty to the American settlers. Nonetheless, they were already to be found in 56 of Iowa's 97 counties; furthermore, the basic pattern of Norwegian settlement had been set and that of the Swedish at least indicated.

Each of the Scandinavians made a separate entrance into Iowa. Coming from older colonies in southern Wisconsin, the first large contingents of Norwegians entered Iowa at a northeastern point and established settlements in the northern corner in Allamakee, Clayton, Winneshiek, and Fayette counties. Another settlement was founded farther to the west in Mitchell County. A third group, coming from northern Illinois, established themselves in Story County in central Iowa.

The Swedes, with parent colonies mostly in northern Illinois, entered Iowa at Burlington and founded their first settlements in Jefferson and Des Moines counties, betokening the more southern pattern of their colonization. The 1856 figures

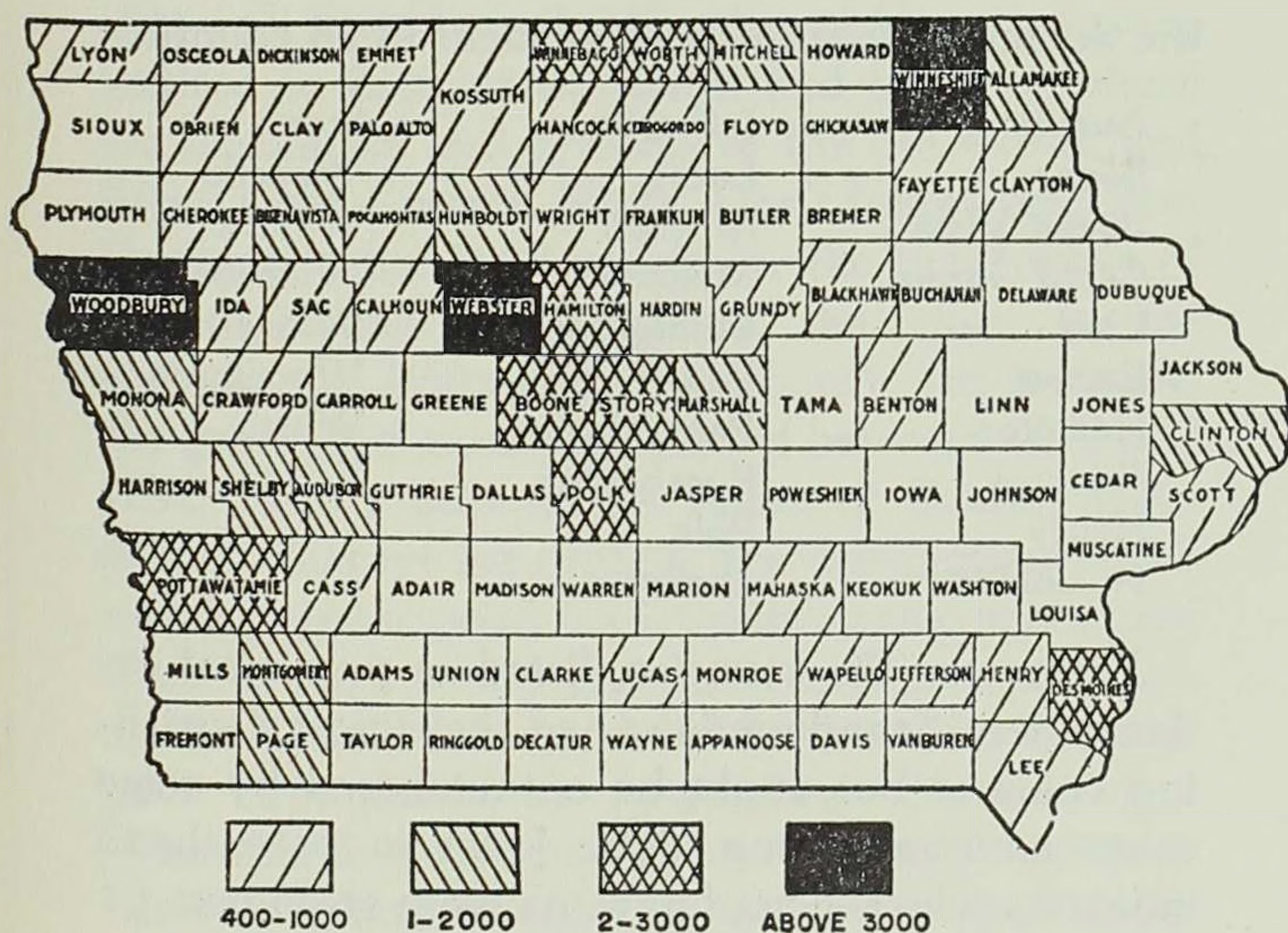


Scandinavian-born in Iowa, 1870

also give a hint of the later Webster-Boone-Polk concentration.

So few Danes had come to the state at this time that there is no discernible pattern. However, by 1870, although they numbered less than three thousand, three small clusters had formed: the Clinton-Scott and Benton-Black Hawk-Grundy areas in the east and in the west the Pottawattamie-Shelby sector, which was to develop so extensively in years to come. Meanwhile, the Norwegians in the northeast, the Swedes in the southeast, and both in central Iowa were consolidating

THE SCANDINAVIANS COME TO IOWA 153



Scandinavian-born in Iowa, 1890

their older settlements. The largest Scandinavian populations were still in three northeastern counties where Norwegians first had settled.

By 1890, when the Scandinavians reached their peak, Iowa's foreign stock (the immigrants and their children) represented a little over 40 per cent of the total population, then somewhat under two million. Within that segment the Germans comprised slightly over a third, the Scandinavians slightly under a third, and the rest of the foreign groups the other third. The Scandinavians and their children numbered 210,105. They formed

the dominant foreign-born element in 28 counties:

Audubon	Jefferson	Story
Boone	Lucas	Wapello
Buena Vista	Mitchell	Webster
Cerro Gordo	Monona	Winnebago
Clay	Montgomery	Winneshiek
Emmet	Page	Woodbury
Hamilton	Palo Alto	Worth
Hancock	Pocahontas	Wright
Henry	Polk	
Humboldt	Shelby	

Below are the counties, listed in numerical order, where Scandinavians had their most flourishing colonies but might be outnumbered by some other national group. The letter in parenthesis indicates which Scandinavians were strongest.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Woodbury (S) | 14. Shelby (D) |
| 2. Winneshiek (N) | 15. Montgomery (S) |
| 3. Webster (S) | 16. Allamakee (N) |
| 4. Polk (S) | 17. Humboldt (N) |
| 5. Boone (S) | 18. Page (S) |
| 6. Pottawattamie (D) | 19. Marshall (N) |
| 7. Hamilton (N) | 20. Audubon (D) |
| 8. Story (N) | 21. Monona (N) |
| 9. Winnebago (N) | 22. Mitchell (N) |
| 10. Des Moines (S) | 23. Kossuth (S) |
| 11. Worth (N) | 24. Wapello (S) |
| 12. Buena Vista (S) | 25. Pocahontas (D) |
| 13. Clinton (D) | |

The over-all shift in strength from the east to the central and western part of the state is notice-

able (cf. maps), with Woodbury County having vaulted to first place. Cities had begun to draw the mechanics and artisans of the old world, and Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, and Fort Dodge became focal points for the great wave of Scandinavians who entered the state in the eighties. In Pottawattamie County, for example, the group had more than tripled between 1870 and 1890, mainly through the influx of Danish immigrants. Except for centers like Burlington, which was a popular point for Swedish newcomers, and Clinton, particularly attractive to Danes, the eastern areas had lost ground. In the older Norwegian strongholds in Allamakee, Clayton, and Winneshiek counties this is especially marked. Many a pioneer settler of the fifties and sixties had moved west to Emmet, Buena Vista, or Lyon County in the seventies or eighties, and certainly the majority of the nearly 20,000 new immigrants in these two decades settled closer to the Missouri than to the Mississippi River. By 1890, however, the pattern of settlement was set.

In this general outline of the Scandinavian people and their settlement in Iowa no attention has been paid to the social structure of the groups, their special talents and contributions, or their absorption into the American pattern of living. These larger subjects will be treated later in separate and more detailed studies of each group.

LEOLA NELSON BERGMANN

SCANDINAVIAN-BORN IN IOWA: 1856-1900*

County	NORWAY†				SWEDEN†				DENMARK				TOTALS			
	1856	1870	1880	1890	1900	1856	1870	1880	1890	1900	1856	1870	1880	1890	1900	
Adair	—	14†	36†	17	9	—	†	†	14	51	—	15	50	137	126	
Adams	—	9	110	96	63	—	—	—	36	23	—	9	146	168	140	
Allamakee	505	2180	1720	1283	950	—	—	—	7	14	595	2187	1727	1477	1117	
Appanoose	—	4	46	4	4	6	—	—	5	20	—	6	51	253	351	
Audubon	—	4	20	19	13	—	—	—	187	1268	—	4	207	1127	1324	
Benton	10	396	307	336	251	—	—	—	91	62	—	736	398	483	387	
Black Hawk	3	37	22	19	33	1	340	84	645	801	11	284	385	711	883	
Boone	19	1230	1764	126	115	—	16	56	90	97	89	1246	1820	2601	2394	
Bremer	2	15	8	3	4	—	4	10	22	34	6	19	18	38	55	
Buchanan	—	14	52	48	74	—	1	64	207	191	15	15	116	313	321	
Buena Vista	—	194	684	580	544	—	247	134	512	585	23	196	818	1991	2187	
Butler	21	15	31	8	16	—	20	50	114	128	—	35	81	136	169	
Calhoun	—	51	176	75	96	—	6	24	104	91	—	57	200	561	594	
Carroll	—	189	41	28	15	—	1	11	31	30	—	190	52	123	87	
Cass	—	142	224	68	64	—	77	116	291	323	—	219	340	504	513	
Cedar	—	14	36	21	9	—	7	44	124	126	—	21	80	166	167	
Cerro Gordo	—	197	818	306	418	—	16	38	178	248	1	213	356	652	848	
Cherokee	—	99	325	111	74	—	4	49	79	73	—	103	374	719	731	
Chickasaw	24	333	390	284	242	—	19	46	34	29	24	352	436	327	286	
Clarke	—	9	28	3	6	—	5	2	7	8	—	14	30	16	28	
Clay	—	32	33	140	141	—	19	116	341	429	—	51	149	689	818	
Clayton	274	1327	937	633	490	—	39	4	7	3	287	1366	941	787	615	
Clinton	14	564	638	331	226	21	195	485	951	810	59	759	1123	1778	1494	
Crawford	—	187	437	14	21	—	5	56	105	92	—	192	493	636	550	
Dallas	—	177	132	33	21	—	4	23	30	17	—	181	155	178	154	
Davis	1	11	9	—	1	—	—	4	6	5	1	11	13	22	29	
Decatur	3	5	33	20	19	—	1	15	5	12	3	6	48	40	51	
Delaware	1	23	22	8	5	—	3	2	—	2	15	26	24	131	147	
Des Moines	2	1039	1146	12	15	39	65	127	177	173	268	1104	1273	2162	1829	
Dickinson	—	60	65	146	178	—	1	9	31	79	—	61	74	211	296	
Dubuque	—	61	65	18	19	1	2	23	17	23	35	63	88	120	181	
Emmet	—	285	300	533	548	—	—	2	188	399	—	285	302	785	1105	
Fayette	139	512	527	389	399	—	—	13	21	67	140	517	540	434	577	
Floyd	—	80	129	62	70	—	5	1	15	16	—	86	130	124	121	
Franklin	—	172	268	215	170	—	6	130	367	405	—	174	398	672	673	
Fremont	—	14	55	4	4	—	2	12	42	32	1	19	67	119	124	
Greene	—	21	89	21	25	—	3	26	91	95	—	24	115	235	279	
Grundy	—	7	48	5	11	—	82	264	379	331	—	89	312	407	376	
Guthrie	—	26	16	5	3	—	64	37	38	51	—	90	53	101	103	
Hamilton	—	596	1455	1613	1501	—	28	178	298	285	—	624	1633	2460	2331	
Hancock	—	30	209	236	279	—	17	94	333	366	—	47	303	791	898	
Hardin	1	83	165	298	412	—	11	80	59	88	3	94	195	390	552	
Harrison	—	39	82	42	39	1	17	39	157	285	—	56	121	321	469	
Henry	10	429	568	9	14	—	33	13	24	25	49	436	581	616	499	
Howard	—	140	288	258	298	—	1	38	49	54	—	173	326	330	371	
Humboldt	—	114	496	1031	1067	—	30	28	115	164	—	115	515	1366	1439	
Ida	—	—	109	152	76	—	3	25	21	16	—	3	137	631	619	
Iowa	10	88	139	95	59	—	30	25	215	145	10	118	164	132	107	
Jackson	—	24	27	9	4	17	19	200	215	145	24	43	227	254	173	
Jasper	1	53	102	15	32	—	34	80	74	55	1	87	189	251	200	

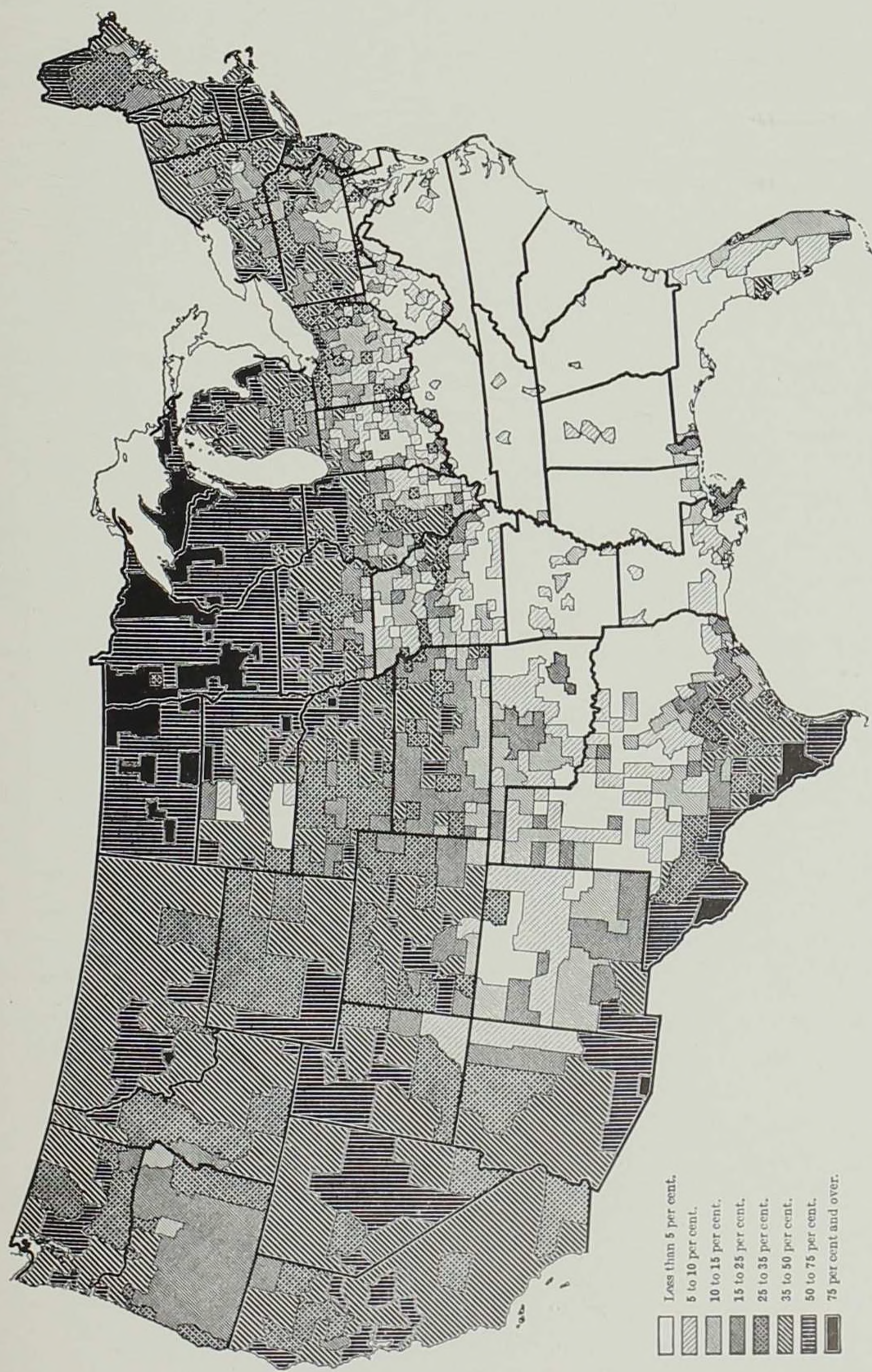
SCANDINAVIAN-BORN IN IOWA: 1910-1950

County	NORWAY					SWEDEN					DENMARK					TOTALS				
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
Adair	6	5	3	2	1	44	31	29	24	7	88	84	73	70	40	138	120	105	96	48
Adams	56	24	19	8	4	23	26	16	7	4	34	29	22	9	9	113	79	57	24	17
Allamakee	711	469	313	186	76	97	77	53	31	21	12	5	7	3	1	820	551	373	220	98
Appanoose	1	5	4	2	4	327	226	132	80	42	21	17	15	12	8	349	248	151	94	54
Audubon	17	6	8	5	5	35	38	28	17	7	1650	1396	1194	932	636	1702	1440	1230	954	648
Benton	190	108	63	37	25	76	120	98	82	59	37	38	40	25	20	303	266	201	144	104
Black Hawk	74	52	77	86	75	118	115	120	102	96	954	1113	993	785	606	1146	1280	1190	973	777
Boone	99	90	69	58	29	1832	1480	1006	652	347	73	81	72	45	33	2004	1651	1147	755	409
Bremer	7	4	4	6	5	22	10	14	8	6	41	41	43	41	32	70	55	61	55	43
Buchanan	33	24	20	20	12	49	64	45	34	13	168	129	96	74	34	250	217	161	128	59
Buena Vista	391	303	195	136	89	1040	1002	730	508	355	597	611	452	355	270	2028	1916	1377	999	714
Butler	9	13	13	8	6	23	22	13	7	9	126	115	53	47	36	158	150	79	62	51
Calhoun	81	64	41	25	19	845	276	215	148	83	60	83	67	49	28	486	423	323	222	130
Carroll	12	9	9	7	4	31	40	30	21	12	43	81	99	54	48	86	130	138	78	64
Cass	44	26	14	7	6	14	92	58	34	22	304	364	318	228	160	445	482	390	269	185
Cedar	15	7	5	5	6	14	14	10	7	6	179	176	169	139	104	208	197	184	151	116
Cerro Gordo	384	350	346	285	192	197	220	176	144	97	385	470	391	338	247	966	1040	913	767	536
Cherokee	132	116	86	68	41	739	742	681	497	371	132	151	131	113	83	1003	1009	898	678	495
Chickasaw	174	130	87	57	36	5	11	5	6	6	25	37	25	24	12	204	178	117	87	54
Clarke	5	3	5	3	3	24	17	12	9	7	8	7	6	3	2	37	27	23	15	12
Clay	153	104	86	68	34	295	286	213	134	87	360	390	306	215	160	808	780	605	417	281
Clayton	336	192	143	74	40	82	67	48	24	14	9	17	22	9	8	427	276	213	107	62
Clinton	182	123	97	66	50	375	294	213	136	94	716	820	620	383	255	1273	1237	930	585	399
Crawford	42	34	26	14	10	366	285	195	120	52	91	105	69	60	37	499	424	290	194	99
Dallas	20	23	23	17	13	118	135	69	50	25	21	30	29	20	17	159	188	121	87	55
Davis	3	2	3	1	—	16	12	8	6	6	6	7	6	3	3	25	21	17	10	9
Decatur	19	25	12	4	3	17	17	13	6	6	15	16	9	7	3	51	58	34	17	12
Delaware	5	3	2	2	1	123	103	92	60	30	2	9	11	5	3	130	115	105	67	34
Des Moines	25	23	11	11	15	1363	996	731	430	221	153	118	98	57	30	1541	1137	840	498	266
Dickinson	137	95	89	64	49	54	48	57	34	26	74	82	74	61	63	265	225	220	159	138
Dubuque	23	26	25	16	10	121	58	44	33	30	27	18	26	18	17	171	102	95	67	57
Emmet	497	455	338	258	152	86	109	72	51	30	438	390	312	241	150	1021	954	722	550	332
Fayette	323	254	182	90	65	67	66	53	40	22	56	53	50	41	28	446	373	285	171	115
Floyd	79	45	37	28	17	37	23	24	20	16	56	76	49	37	36	172	144	110	85	69
Franklin	133	90	38	33	14	73	56	38	24	14	455	457	350	266	170	661	603	426	323	206
Fremont	2	2	2	4	2	54	36	39	28	14	28	31	22	16	11	84	69	63	48	27
Greene	18	11	10	6	8	130	117	78	58	39	130	106	71	51	34	278	234	159	115	81
Grundy	10	12	7	4	10	20	26	23	9	9	313	297	224	157	91	343	335	254	170	110
Guthrie	3	6	5	6	6	55	37	28	23	11	111	139	136	107	75	169	182	169	136	92
Hamilton	1183	846	526	318	183	484	382	254	151	94	272	235	173	115	62	1939	1463	953	584	339
Hancock	254	232	179	107	59	235	184	148	101	57	333	292	204	138	87	822	708	531	346	203
Hardin	436	359	271	186	109	64	57	25	23	12	86	79	67	61	43	586	495	363	270	164
Harrison	30	39	37	26	10	94	91	93	49	30	237	246	202	130	73	361	376	332	205	113
Henry	4	4	5	5	6	839	270	176	121	67	15	13	14	9	3	358	287	195	135	76
Howard	173	148	117	66	40	22	25	15	8	23	61	62	35	34	24	256	235	167	108	67
Humboldt	965	799	602	414	235	53	69	48	32	23	379	425	349	258	182	1397	1293	999	704	440
Ida	44	26	21	16	6	832	259	197	133	73	193	201	169	110	87	569	486	387	259	166
Iowa	40	30	23	8	5	9	13	14	11	9	11	9	10	3	2	60	52	47	22	17
Jackson	6	7	8	7	5	12	18	8	7	2	100	117	80	30	0	100	52	47	22	17

Ida	44	26	21	10	0	832	259	197	139	73	193	201	169	110	110	87	105	102	104	92
Johnson	5	9	11	13	18	39	41	45	37	37	43	55	46	54	54	37	105	102	104	92
Jones	19	13	10	12	4	36	22	21	13	10	11	16	14	9	9	6	51	45	34	20
Keokuk	1	5	5	127	8	19	13	23	176	8	268	265	196	147	2	—	24	37	15	11
Kossuth	292	241	201	127	94	490	389	252	176	102	268	265	196	147	81	1050	895	649	450	277
Lee	23	27	19	19	6	370	265	165	95	53	31	31	29	23	14	424	323	213	137	73
Linn	60	84	111	95	87	230	268	225	173	102	186	213	215	169	143	476	565	551	437	332
Louisa	4	1	1	4	2	40	31	28	18	12	4	2	3	4	2	48	35	32	26	16
Lucas	1	3	—	—	—	275	218	159	92	47	5	4	3	—	3	281	225	162	93	50
Lyon	504	375	266	181	103	72	61	45	45	18	81	56	45	43	29	657	492	356	254	150
Madison	1	3	8	3	2	39	21	18	30	9	22	85	24	18	5	62	59	45	33	16
Mahaska	50	30	28	16	12	189	125	89	65	36	7	9	10	10	6	246	164	127	91	54
Marion	9	2	11	14	17	24	40	72	58	31	109	96	82	58	21	36	47	96	88	69
Marshall	450	380	283	205	148	304	226	199	125	69	35	41	30	22	10	171	160	114	76	35
Mills	12	15	7	6	2	124	104	77	48	23	147	126	84	73	48	777	588	389	262	147
Mitchell	549	400	265	162	87	81	57	40	27	12	443	357	308	244	151	1101	865	656	482	276
Monona	425	317	209	137	80	233	191	139	101	45	4	3	2	3	2	515	309	159	100	51
Monroe	7	5	—	—	7	504	301	157	97	42	15	23	15	10	8	1406	1202	841	538	318
Montgomery	19	12	9	8	3	1372	1167	817	520	307	46	46	32	38	33	105	83	66	67	57
Muscatine	9	10	6	6	3	147	164	110	23	21	55	84	58	49	28	369	356	250	179	110
O'Brien	167	108	82	51	36	46	33	18	79	46	28	18	16	9	8	97	66	47	27	20
Oseola	23	15	13	7	7	994	713	496	313	171	52	49	51	47	30	1077	780	562	369	207
Page	31	18	15	9	6	129	153	119	71	58	300	276	205	129	88	895	746	542	344	248
Palo Alto	466	317	218	144	102	174	158	141	108	57	189	125	104	81	49	412	334	290	221	130
Plymouth	49	51	45	32	24	434	285	210	140	79	184	154	115	79	37	767	556	430	282	161
Pocahontas	149	117	105	63	45	2362	2108	1700	1207	832	393	573	468	409	336	3291	3181	2610	1965	1413
Polk	536	500	442	349	245	436	380	301	208	155	1898	1667	1421	1040	671	2453	2173	1828	1322	890
Pottawattamie	119	126	106	74	64	75	71	48	28	19	15	12	3	13	11	188	168	108	87	58
Poweshiek	98	85	58	46	28	23	18	10	6	6	3	11	10	9	5	27	30	20	15	11
Ringgold	1	—	—	—	—	507	451	310	223	165	89	89	68	56	29	671	596	415	298	208
Sac	75	56	37	19	14	444	443	351	261	187	228	371	240	176	129	731	904	670	497	376
Scott	59	90	79	60	60	39	22	14	22	7	1427	1289	1044	731	506	1614	1439	1139	805	553
Shelby	148	128	81	52	40	88	100	64	39	29	46	44	33	28	22	234	215	141	100	73
Sioux	90	71	44	33	22	98	83	74	69	53	287	269	195	140	107	2120	1721	1295	829	586
Story	1745	1369	1026	620	426	88	83	74	15	6	73	58	61	38	21	206	139	114	87	52
Tama	98	54	41	34	25	35	27	12	19	14	2	2	5	8	10	58	45	35	28	24
Taylor	4	5	3	1	—	52	38	27	19	41	12	30	20	21	14	262	243	153	106	55
Union	7	6	2	1	—	243	207	131	84	10	1	4	2	—	4	42	36	24	14	14
Van Buren	1	1	2	—	—	40	31	20	14	10	12	14	17	11	6	779	598	464	301	154
Wapello	13	12	11	6	5	754	572	436	284	143	11	8	13	10	8	39	30	38	29	18
Warren	8	3	4	7	4	20	19	21	12	6	2	7	3	8	6	63	50	55	28	24
Washington	1	1	2	—	—	60	42	50	20	18	19	9	7	4	2	59	38	23	12	7
Wayne	4	3	2	—	1	36	26	14	7	4	19	195	197	145	96	2897	2330	1775	1181	742
Webster	767	579	464	281	192	1938	1556	1114	755	454	192	195	96	66	37	1989	1644	1171	752	455
Winnebago	1656	1357	966	608	371	210	182	109	78	47	123	105	16	14	32	2142	1590	1015	574	296
Winneshiek	2087	1534	974	543	248	36	37	25	17	16	19	19	725	536	352	4094	3957	3228	2353	1534
Woodbury	1404	1274	1072	789	541	1867	1735	1431	1028	641	823	948	82	53	47	1465	1118	789	494	330
Worth	1286	969	655	402	260	79	61	52	39	23	100	88	152	98	70	1108	1028	847	619	388
Wright	789	717	604	448	277	145	119	91	73	41	174	192	152	98	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	21924	17344	12932	8642	5531	26763	22493	16810	11406	7080	17961	18020	14698	10977	7625	66648	57857	44440	31025	20236

Explanation of the Statistics

Immigration figures (cf. p. 147) are hazardous tools to use. There are wide discrepancies between the United States statistics and those of the emigration reports of a foreign country. This is particularly true from 1850 to 1865 for the Scandinavians whose destination was the Middle West. Thousands landed at Quebec and continued their journey on the Great Lakes. United States immigration regulations at the Canadian border were very lax, consequently no record of these arrivals in the United States was kept. For the decades 1860-1890, the most significant ones for watching the expansion of specific settlements, namely by counties, the task of tracing the three groups is difficult. The federal census for 1860 does not give the specific nativity of foreign-born by county. The 1870 and 1880 federal censuses combine the figures for Swedes and Norwegians. The Iowa state census for the same period, that of 1875, gives the native country of the *voters* in each county. Since large numbers of foreigners had not been naturalized, these figures are of little value in determining the strength of the Scandinavian colonies. The manuscript schedules, therefore, are the only source for an accurate picture. For the Norwegians this source has been used by Carlton Qualey who compiled tables for the decades 1850, 1860, and 1870 and published them in his volume, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*. The fact that care must be exercised in using census figures is well illustrated in the following set of figures for 1870 for Clayton County. In the Qualey count from the manuscript report he finds 1,363 Norwegian-born residents; the official federal census figures for *both* Norwegians and Swedes is 1,327! Before the days of adding machines and adequate proofreading this sort of presumable error could easily occur. Since, however, the official federal census returns are more readily accessible, these are the figures that have been used in the tables.



Distribution by counties of the foreign-born and natives of foreign parentage in the United States in 1910.

IOWA:
THE HOME FOR IMMIGRANTS

BEING A

TREATISE ON THE RESOURCES OF IOWA,

AND

GIVING USEFUL INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO
THE STATE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF
IMMIGRANTS AND OTHERS.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE

IOWA BOARD OF IMMIGRATION.

DES MOINES:

MILLS & CO., PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.

1870.