



*The*  
**PALIMPSEST**

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Mary K. Fredericksen, Editor

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Cover: Women working at the McFadden Coffee and Spice Company in Dubuque in 1912. In this issue of the Palimpsest, Mary Allison Farley draws upon a remarkable collection of photographs to examine Iowa women in the workplace shortly after the turn of the century. (photograph courtesy the William J. Klauer Collection, Research Center for Dubuque Area History, Loras College)



*The Meaning of the 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.







# Iowa Women in the Workplace

by Mary Allison Farley

These photographs, taken by an unknown photographer in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1912, are part of an extraordinary collection housed at the Research Center for Dubuque Area History, Loras College. Grouped together as the William J. Klauer Collection, the more than four hundred photographs serve as an exceptional record of workers in a variety of settings shortly after the turn of the century. The all-inclusive camera angle captured men and women as part of their total work environment, while the photographer's large view camera produced sharp and detail-filled images. Much valuable information can be gleaned from the photographs about daily work patterns and working conditions.

The twenty-four photographs selected for this presentation document some of the employment opportunities available to women in urban or small-town communities. The images of Dubuque women ironing in laundries, sitting at typewriters in small business offices, and serving customers in millinery shops represent typical work settings that could have been photographed equally well in other parts of Iowa and the Midwest. The employment opportunities for women in industrial settings varied with the nature of the industries that thrived in particular communities, but in general, women worked in light industry. Thus, in Dubuque, women worked

at the mattress factory, the candy factories, the paper box factory, and the garment factories. In Muscatine, women made up a large proportion of the labor force at the button factory. Des Moines women found employment at a hosiery mill. Sioux City women were employed by a biscuit company.

The women wage earners in these photographs were part of the growing number of women who worked outside their homes at the turn of the century. Nationally, the number of women workers increased dramatically in the twenty years between 1890 and 1910. One million women had been counted as part of the labor force in 1890, but by 1910 eight million wage-earning women were included in the work force count. More and more women — and particularly young, single women — began to work for wages away from their homes. They followed traditional, domestic jobs like baking and sewing from their homes into new industrial settings. Further, increasing numbers of women graduated from high school during the 1890 to 1910 period (25,182 in 1890 and 92,753 in 1910) and filled newly-created office positions in business and industry. Some women acquired additional job skills through business school training.

Men and women shared considerable ambivalence about the increased movement of women from the home into the wage-earning work force. Almost everyone agreed that the home roles of wife and mother should be the most important roles for a woman. They believed, further, that if a woman had to work

*Clerking in a grocery store attached to her home allowed a woman to tend both to the customers and to her children. In 1912, a woman generally gave up her wage-earning activities when she married unless she helped run the family store or took boarders into her home.*



for wages before marriage she should select a job that would prepare her for her future domestic responsibilities. Jobs thought appropriate for women, therefore, were those that emphasized cleanliness, neatness, gentility, and the skills of the homemaker. Yet many women had to take jobs that did not meet these standards. And employers were quick to recruit women into a variety of workplaces because women cost less to employ than men

and women were less likely to organize into unions.

*Editor's note: All but one of the photographs in this article have been drawn from the William J. Klauer Collection, Research Center for Dubuque Area History, Loras College. It is with the center's kind permission and cooperation that the photographs have been reproduced in this issue of the Palimpsest.*



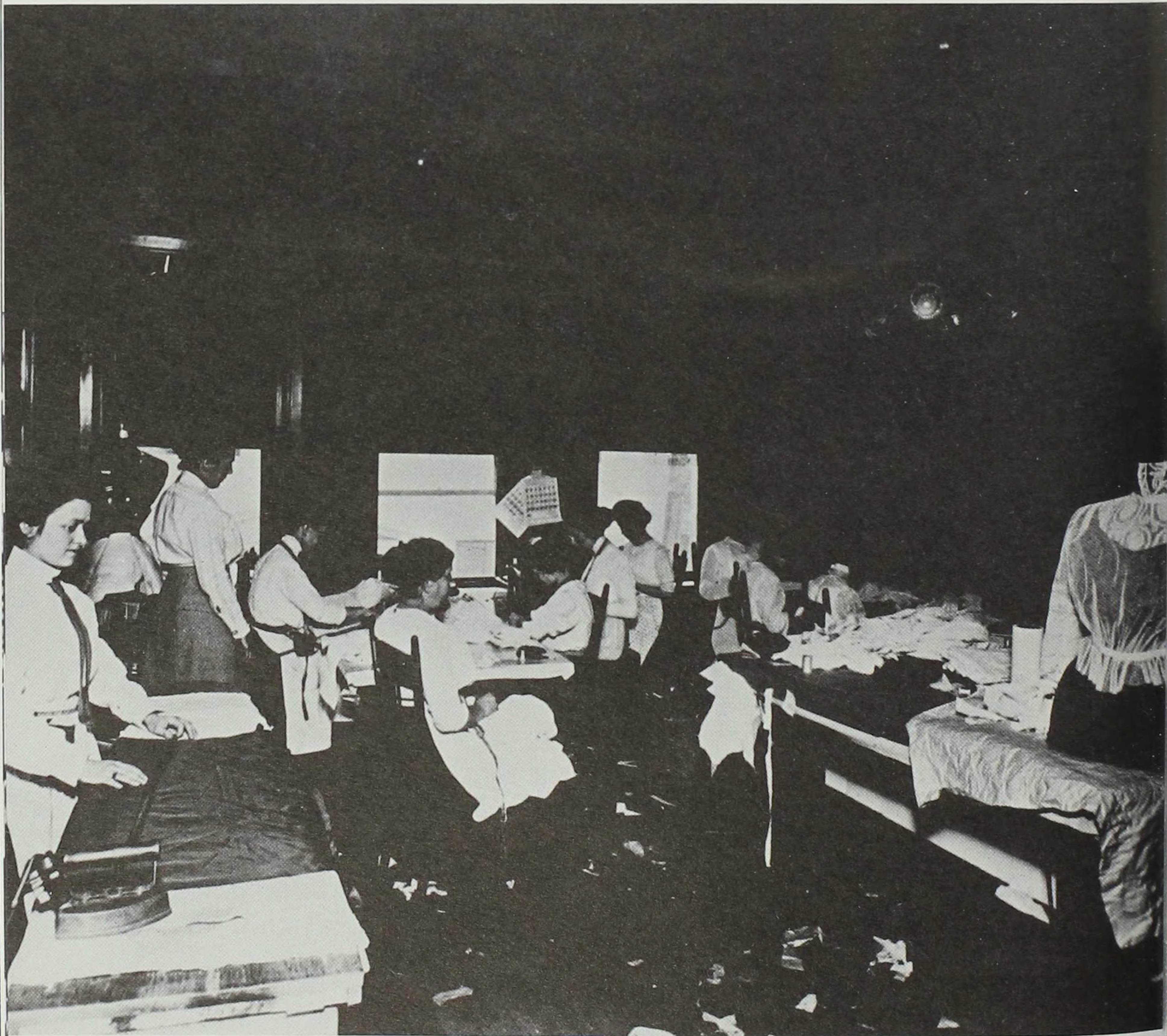
*Women sought out millinery shops for employment because of the attractive working environment. (Ruprecht Brothers Company)*



*Women controlled the intimate world of the beauty shop. They might occasionally allow a man to enter this clean and orderly environment if he needed a toupee. (O'Donnell Sisters)*



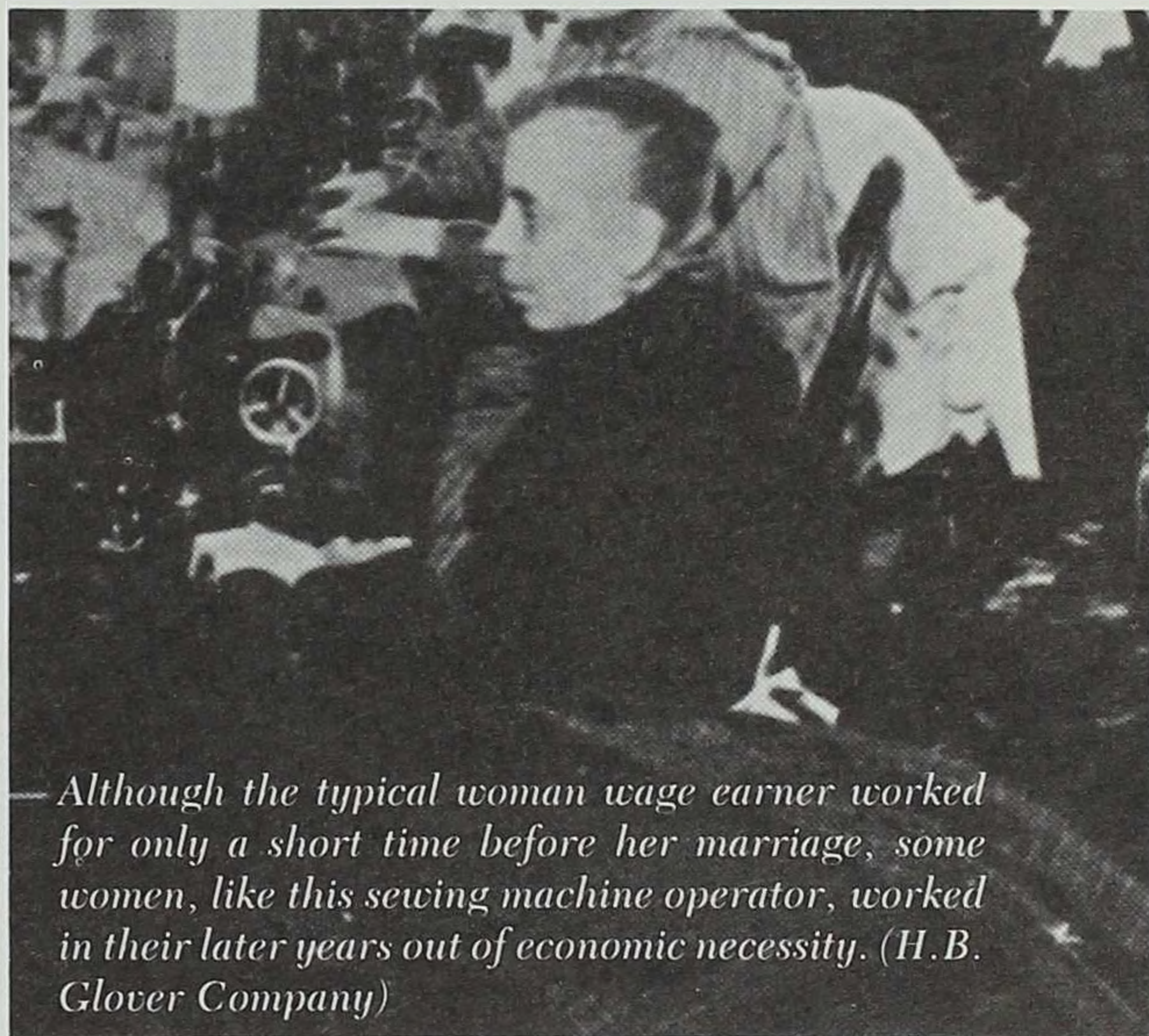




*Skilled seamstresses made women's clothing in a variety of settings. Many of them continued to work out of their homes but some set up their own businesses. Workers in some of these shops faced cramped, hazardous working conditions, typical of the sweatshops of the time. (Mrs. Tomlinson's custom dress shop)*



*The overalls factory paid women sewing machine operators by the piece. Experienced seamstresses could make a good wage of \$10 to \$15 per week as long as orders had to be filled. Yet no orders for the factory meant no income for sewing machine operators. (H.B. Glover Company; Bissell Collection, Research Center for Dubuque Area History, Loras College)*



*Although the typical woman wage earner worked for only a short time before her marriage, some women, like this sewing machine operator, worked in their later years out of economic necessity. (H.B. Glover Company)*



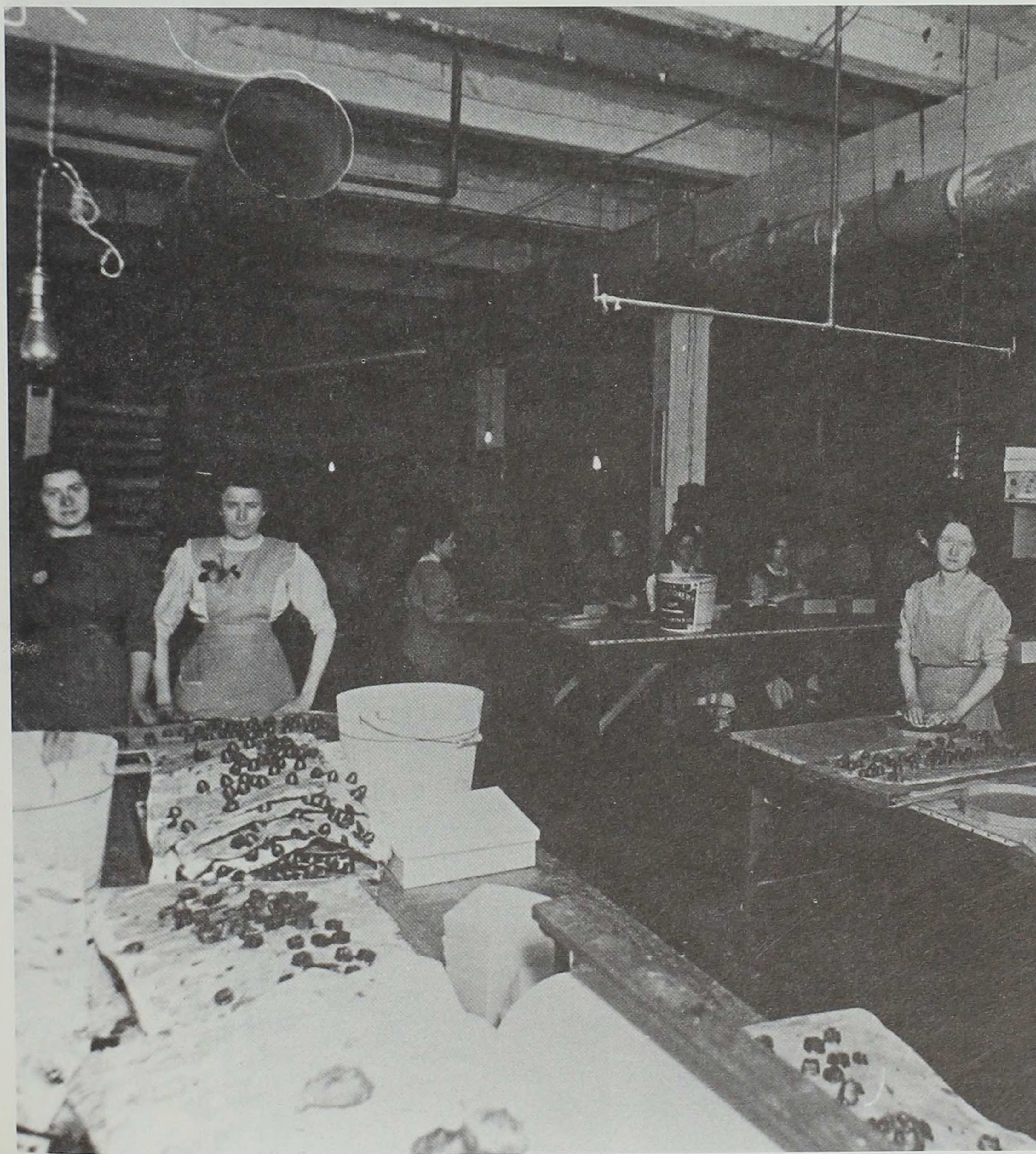




*As production moved from the home to the factory, employers hired women to inspect, label, package, and tend machines. Even in light industry, women often faced poor working conditions. One worker in a paper box factory remembered "the awful noise and confusion, the terrific heat, the foul smell of the glue, and the agony of . . . blistered hands." (paper box factory)*



*Candymaking operations employed women only to dip the candies in chocolate and to package them. The highly-paid men who mixed up the batches of candy worked on a separate floor. The long, regular hours of candy factory employees grew even longer during holiday seasons. (William Lawther Company)*





*The elegant image of calendar ladies clashed with the day-to-day reality of work in a print shop and a creamery. (bottom: Beatrice Creamery Company)*







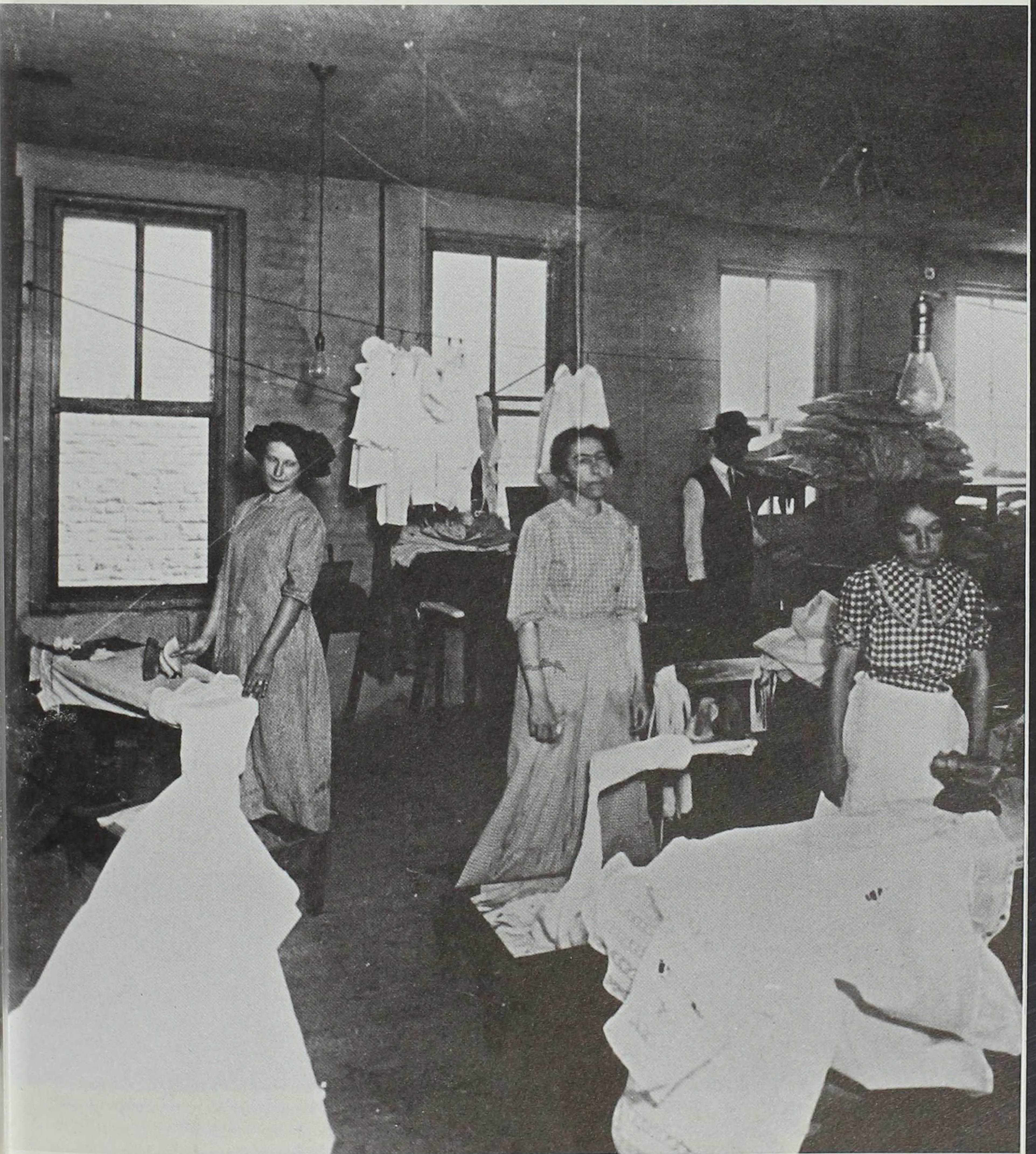
*For the most part, women worked at jobs with other women. Although men and women might work in the same shipping room, they held different jobs and received different wages. Wage surveys confirmed that "a woman wasn't worth as much as a man." In 1913, for example, the great majority of women in Iowa industry earned less than \$10 a week while the earnings of only 10% of the male wage earners dropped below that figure. This sex typing of occupations and wages stemmed from perceptions about the proper roles for men and women in society. (shipping room)*



*Based on her investigation of laundries in 1915, Iowa's woman factory inspector reported that the constant standing and continual use of the arm, combined with the heat and steam, made hand ironing one of the heavy jobs of laundry work. In one Dubuque laundry, however, the female ironers earned only half as much as the male drivers who brought home \$12 per week. (bottom: Lorenz Laundry)*











*At the mattress factory, women cut and sewed the mattress ticking under the watchful eyes of the male owner. The women earned from \$4 to \$6 per week. In a separate part of the factory, men filled the mattresses and stitched them together, and earned from \$6 to \$15 per week. (Dubuque Mattress Factory)*



At the time when people had started to realize that more women needed to earn wages to support themselves, the "family wage concept" hindered women's efforts to secure a living wage. Many people believed that only men needed to earn a living wage since men were responsible for the support of their families. People assumed that women were economically dependent on fathers or husbands

and did not require a full wage. However, in reality, the unemployment, injuries, and low wages that plagued male wage earners often caused them to depend on the economic contributions of women in their families. The increasing number of women who headed their own households also contradicted the assumptions behind the family wage concept.



*The breakdown of clerical work into routine, specialized jobs accompanied the movement of women and machines into the office. Male clericals left the offices as these changes occurred, leaving behind the problems of job segregation and low pay.*





*At one time most clerical workers were men. In 1870, men filled almost 98% of the clerical jobs available. As recently as 1910 men still held 66% of these jobs though women were steadily moving into the clerical labor force. Today people generally think of clerical work as women's work since women dominate the field (women today hold 82% of the clerical jobs available).*

*A number of events combined to redefine the makeup of the clerical work force. When business expanded tremendously in the late nineteenth century, increasing numbers of young women were graduating from high school. Employers actively recruited these educated women into their newly-created office jobs, knowing that they could pay the women less than they would have to pay male office workers. (wholesale grocer)*





Office of the State Historical Society

REMEMBER, THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA'S ANNUAL BANQUET WILL BE HELD IN IOWA CITY ON SATURDAY, JUNE 28. IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE BANQUET, PLEASE CONTACT US.

**"It's A Woman's War Too" is Available for Purchase or Loan**

The Iowa State Historical Department would like to announce the completion of a one-hour video program, "It's A Woman's War Too: Iowa in the Second World War." This video program documents the home front experiences of four Iowa women during World War II. The four women tell how the war changed family and community life. A group of World War II posters, newspaper headlines, and still photographs augment the interviews. The program focuses on the stories of Elizabeth Cloyed (Glenwood, Iowa), Dorothy Moeller (Waverly, Iowa), Ida Belle Sands (Terril, Iowa), and Iona Dinsmore (Hillsboro, Iowa). Videotapes of the program are available for purchase or through interlibrary loan. If you would like to purchase a copy of "It's A Woman's War Too," please complete the order form below and send it to: Home Front Project, Iowa State Historical Department, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

ORDER FORM

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\_\_\_\_\_ U-Matic (3/4") \$75.00

Please make your check payable to: Iowa State Historical Department

ORDER FORM

**The Farm Crisis Addressed**

*The Future of the North American Granary: Politics, Economics, and Resource Constraints in North American Agriculture*, just published by the Iowa State University Press, addresses the future of the grain sector of North America — the great breadbasket of the world. Drawing on the essays of experts from a variety of backgrounds, this volume appraises farm instability due to the rapid growth of international markets, the loss of American export competitiveness, the impact of climate change, and the underlying soil and water resources of the North American granary.

C. Ford Runge edits this volume of political, economic, and ecological perspectives on the farm crisis and the changes needed to guarantee the survival of the farm sector. Trends affecting agriculture for the next several decades include the broadening impacts of fiscal, monetary, and trade policies; chronic surpluses causing trade frictions with other exporters; the prospects for drought and soil and water conservation; and the higher demands on farm managers as they deal with biotechnology, computerized information systems, and increasingly sophisticated financial management.

For more information about *The Future of the North American Granary*, contact: Iowa State University Press, 2121 South State Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010.



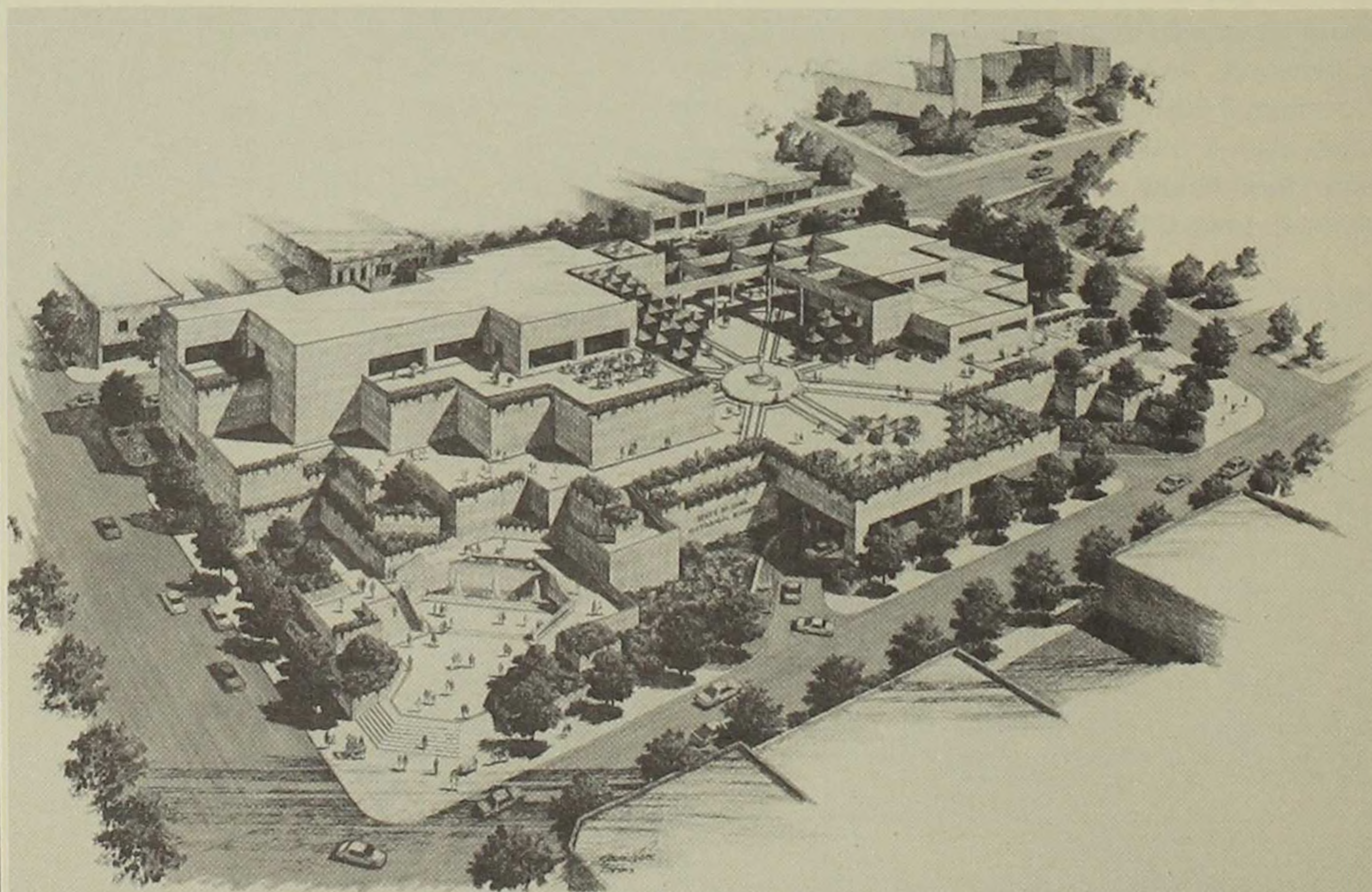
## Tenth "Golden Age of Radio" Reunion, June 27-29

The National Radio Heritage Association, an organization founded for the perpetuation and preservation of "live" radio broadcasting, will sponsor its tenth annual "Golden Age of Radio" reunion at Shenandoah, Iowa, June 27-29, 1986. The three-day tribute to radio's heydays features stars of "live" broadcasting who will present continuous music programs throughout the weekend. Included are singing cowboys and gals, the big band sound, radio personalities of comedy, announcing, and homemaking, and more. Tours will be given of Radio KMA and places of interest in Shenandoah. For more information, contact: Nadine Dreager, 8 Gayland Drive, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501. Or call (712)366-1983.

## Salem State College to Offer Local History Institute

The Department of History and the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education, Salem State College, will offer a three-day "Institute on the Study of Local History," August 4 to August 6, 1986. The institute is open to educators, museum personnel, librarians, and all others who are working in the field of local/community history, serving as a volunteer, or who have an interest in the field. For more information, contact: Professor John J. Fox, Director, Institute on the Study of Local History, Department of History, Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts 01970. Or call (617)745-0556, extension 2369.

## The Iowa Historical Museum Foundation Needs Your Support — Today



### HISTORICAL MUSEUM/LIBRARY FOR THE STATE OF IOWA

*The architect's rendering of the new Iowa State Historical Building as it will look upon completion.*

Raising funds for the state's new historical museum has been a long and sometimes frustrating process, but in early January 1986, Jay E. Tone, Jr., chairman of the Iowa Historical Museum Foundation, proudly declared, "We are on our way to our \$12 million goal." Tone's comments accompanied the announcement that December 1985 was one of the best fund-raising months in the history of the Iowa Historical Museum Foundation. Tone was especially pleased with the variety of contributors to the museum fund: "Individuals, corporations, foundations, schoolchildren — from central Iowa, all around Iowa, and outside of Iowa — contributions came from all those people and locations."

Through its vigorous fund-raising campaign, the Iowa Historical Museum Foundation has raised \$8,700,000 of its \$12,000,000 campaign goal, which is the public's share of the new \$27,000,000 cost of the new Iowa State Historical Building. It has sponsored a variety of activities since 1984 to boost the public's awareness of Iowa history and the urgent need for a new historical building. And the



Foundation has worked to attract financial support from individuals, foundations, and corporations—inside and outside of Iowa — that recognize the importance of preserving Iowa's human heritage.

The new four-level, 220,000-square-foot historical building will provide not only increased museum exhibit space but will also house the State Archives, provide public meeting rooms (and a 250-seat auditorium), create facilities for the construction and conservation of historical materials, and allow for a more effective overall operation of the Iowa State Historical Department.

The Iowa State Historical Museum Foundation still needs your support. As Foundation Chairman Jay E. Tone, Jr., recently put it, "We have had generous support from many individuals and groups . . . Yet there are many corporations, foundations, and individuals who have not yet had the opportunity to support the IHMF." For those people who might be interested in contributing to this most worthy cause, we are printing below the Foundation's enrollment form for their Trustees for Tomorrow.



Taken in late 1985, the above photograph shows the progress being made on the new Iowa State Historical Building (the photograph also shows the new building's location relative to state capitol and the current museum building—the domed structure to the left of the capitol). The new museum will be completed in the summer of 1987.



### Iowa Historical Museum Foundation

300 East Maple Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Phone 515-244-4939

Commitment . . . Showcase for Iowa History . . . Trustee for Tomorrow

I want to enroll as a Trustee for Tomorrow, to assist the Iowa Historical Museum Foundation in its commitment to the new Iowa State Historical Building.

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- \$1,000 - Governor's Circle
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- 100 - Associate
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- 25 - Friend
- Donor

Credit Card Users:  Visa  MasterCard

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Make checks payable to the Iowa Historical Museum Foundation. All gifts are deductible for tax purposes.



## Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Series

The History Committee of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Commission and the University of Illinois Press announce a new series in immigrant and ethnic history. Manuscripts treating any aspect of the American immigration experience will be eligible, including the history of immigration to and immigrant and ethnic groups in the United States, comparative studies of immigration as an international phenomenon, the nature of American pluralism, the legislative and administrative history of immigration and its regulation, and works dealing specifically with the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

Two manuscripts will be selected for publication in each year of the Centennial celebration, 1986-1992. Submitted works will be evaluated by appropriate scholars and the final selections will be made by a board of editors appointed by the History Committee, the initial members of which are Roger Daniels of the University of Cincinnati (chair), Jay P. Dolan of the University of Notre Dame, and Rudolph J. Vecoli of the University of Minnesota. For more information, contact: Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Series, University of Illinois Press, 54 E. Gregory Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

## Recent Donations to the ISHD's Photograph Collection

World War I. 9 original photos of unidentified World War I soldier and family, removed from 1913 Hawkeye yearbook at University of Iowa Archives. Also 1 pamphlet, "Information regarding Christmas parcels for Men with the AEF," 1918. Donor: Earl Rogers, University Archives.

Iowa views. 6 original postcards including 1 view of high school, Riceville, Iowa, c. 1910; 1 view of Coe college, Cedar Rapids, 1912; 1 view of Grundy Center, Iowa, business street, c. 1910; and 3 views of Denison, Iowa, including railroad depot, houses, and bird's eye view, 1910-1912. Donor: Mrs. Wesley Heckt.

Iowa views. 12 items transferred from Nebraska State Historical Society, including 11 photos or postcards and one booklet, *Our Sons at Camp Dodge*. Includes photos relating to Sioux City, Woodbine, Hawarden, Des Moines, Cedar Falls, Waterloo, and LeMars. Donor: John E. Carter, Curator of Photographs, Nebraska State Historical Society.

Winfield, Iowa. 2 exterior views of Methodist Church, Winfield, Iowa, one view shows church under construction, c. 1907. Donor: Frederick Crane.

Iowa City, Iowa. 24 original photographs of Iowa City business streets, Old Capitol, and University of Iowa, taken by donor as part of journalism class project. Donor: Anne Schlatter.

## Selected New Manuscript Acquisitions

Modern Mixers Club. Minutes, 1953-1983. Iowa City, Iowa. 4 vols. holograph. Minutes of meetings of a women's club formed from among the women employed as cooks in the University of Iowa fraternities and sororities. At times the membership also included a few women who were cooks in dormitories and other campus locations. Donor: Wilma Brown.

Pearson, Richard. Abstracts of land, 1876. Clayton County, Iowa. Three abstracts for land in Clayton County, Iowa, which were first entered by Richard Pearson in 1847 and 1852. One of the abstracts is dated 1 February 1876 but the dates that the other two were prepared are not given. Donor: Prof. Ralph D. Gray.

University Club of Iowa City. Records, 1975-1985. Addition to collection. Five issues of the University Club's newsletter, *The Clarion*, 1984-1985, two copies of the Club's *Yearbook*, 1983-84, and c. 114 newspaper clippings compiled in a scrapbook concerning the Club's activities, 1974-1984. Donor: Mrs. Jackie Stokes.

Grace Evangelical and Reformed Church, Lone Tree, Iowa. Scrapbook, c. 1966. 100p. holograph, printed, mimeographed, and photographs. Scrapbook compiled by Mrs. Art Schuessler of Lone Tree traces the history of Grace Evangelical and Reformed Church from its beginnings in 1864 to about 1966 and includes photographs of the ministers and the achievements of the church during the period of each minister's tenure, newspaper clippings about the church and its ministers, also photographs of church leaders and members, and copies of church bulletins, programs, and annual reports. Donor: Iowa City Genealogical Society.

Beckman, Richard R. Memoir, 1943-1984. 159p. photocopy of typescript. Memoir entitled "Accounting of Time" recounts the World War II experiences of Richard R. Beckman, a native of Burlington, Iowa. Trained as a lawyer, Beckman served in the Army's Criminal Investigation Division and took part in the invasion of Normandy. He was among the early Allied soldiers to enter Paris and later was with the first American soldiers to enter Germany and Berlin. He attended the Potsdam Conference as one of the security officers assigned to President Truman and was allowed to photograph Truman, Atlee, and Stalin at the meeting. Account also includes descriptions of London, Paris, Versailles, and Potsdam and the English, French, and German countrysides. Also photographs and newspaper clippings concerning Beckman's army service. Donor: Richard R. Beckman





*Women moved into the male world of the business office as clerical work was broken down into routine, specialized tasks. Women were considered perfect office workers. They had nimble fingers to work typewriters and other office machines, yet they were docile enough to be content with boring tasks and to accept the low-wage jobs. In this new workplace for women, a strict formality between men and women was often maintained, especially since they were required to work in proximity to each other.*





*Women entered the office in numbers at the same time that new technology was introduced. The Remington Company advertised its typewriters with a "Miss Remington" rather than a "Mr. Remington" in order to help recruit women into the office. The typewriter, the dictating machine, the adding machine, and the mimeograph machine required trained workers to operate them. Generally, office workers had received some business training in high school or had gone on to business school after high school.*





*Although the pay was usually less, women often chose sales jobs over factory jobs. They selected the cleaner work environment of the store and the greater independence that clerking offered them. Because customers were present in stores, employees and managers maintained a sense of decorum rarely found in factories. In this more formal setting, salesclerks dressed up. "You always looked nice," remembered one former clerk. Above all, the salesclerks took pride in developing their selling skills. (5 and 10¢ store)*





*Clerks wanted seats behind the counters so that they could get off their feet occasionally. Before they convinced the store management to provide seats for the clerks, a cashier remembered that "women were quitting because it was so hard." A law passed in Iowa required that employers provide seats for salesclerks whenever possible, but it allowed employers to decide where the seats would be provided and when they could be used. Typically, employers located the seats behind the counters but did not allow the clerks to use them. (Becker-Hazelton Company)*





*Women with few other employment options filled the service jobs at soda fountains and restaurants. (Adam Zillig's Drug Store)*





*(ice cream parlor)*





*In family-owned businesses, the boundary between the kinds of work that men and women could do was less distinct. The protective structure of the family gave women the opportunity to work at jobs usually associated with men and to expand popular ideas about what constituted appropriate work for women. (Buechle's Meat Market)*

#### Note on Sources

The author's research for her master's thesis, "Wage-Earning Women in Dubuque, Iowa, 1910-1917: Their Position in the Labor Force and How They Remember That Experience" (University of Iowa, 1985), provided a great amount of valuable information for this article. A copy of this thesis has been added to the Iowa State Historical Department's Iowa City library collection. As part of her thesis research, Farley interviewed twenty-four women who had been wage earners in Dubuque in the 1910-1917 period. Their accounts of work situations added to an understanding and appreciation of the Klauer Collection photographs. Iowa State Bureau of Labor reports provided the specific wage information cited in this article. These reports included the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth *Reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the State of Iowa* for 1908-1909, 1910-1911, 1912-1913, and 1914-1915. Margaret W. Davies' *Women's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982) contained valuable information about the changing makeup of the clerical work force. The photographs included in this article and some others have been made into a traveling photograph exhibit, generously funded by the Iowa Humanities Board and the National Endowment for the Humanities. If you are interested in exhibiting *Iowa Women in the Workplace* please contact the Research Center for Dubuque Area History, Wahlert Library, Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa 52001. Or call (319) 588-7100.



# Portias of the Prairie

## Early Women Graduates of the University Law Department

by Teresa Opheim

*It is not to be understood that the advantages of the Law Department are limited to men. The University of Iowa from the first has admitted to all its Departments women on equal footing with men, obeying in this the growing sentiment for equality which has abolished distinctions between the sexes as to property rights, and has admitted women to practice at the bar. No objection whatever has appeared to the admission of women to the Department; they have made excellent students. But there seem to be obstacles to the practice of the profession by women, inherent in the nature of the occupation, which have discouraged the study of law by them, so that few have availed themselves of the advantages of the Department.*

In 1872 the United States Supreme Court denied an Illinois woman the right to practice law, one justice explaining that "[t]he paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfil the noble and benign offices of wife and mother." The next year the first woman was graduated from the University of Iowa's law college and promptly was admitted to the practice of law. Between 1873 and 1910 twenty-six other women joined Mary Hickey Wilkinson, LL.B., 1873, as graduates of the University of Iowa's law department.

The University of Iowa's law college produced only a handful of women who made a career out of the law in the nineteenth century. Many of the other women law graduates served their Iowa communities briefly as lawyers, and then became involved in educational, community, and philanthropic enterprises. A majority had husbands, fathers, and brothers who were

attorneys.

The Iowa law department, the oldest law school west of the Mississippi, was established as a private law school in 1865 by Judges George G. Wright and Chester C. Cole. Classes were initially held in a private Des Moines law office. The Iowa Code of that time specified that any white male could be admitted to the bar if he "possesse[d] the requisite learning" and if "he [was] of good moral character." The 1886 Iowa Code required two years of law preparation, either by school or office training. (Belle Mansfield, the first woman to be admitted to the bar in the United States, received her legal training in her brother's Mount Pleasant law office.)

In 1868 the law school was attached to the State University of Iowa. Classes for the sixteen students were held in two upper rooms of Old Capitol in Iowa City. That same year the Iowa Code was changed to allow women to be admitted to the bar. William G. Hammond,

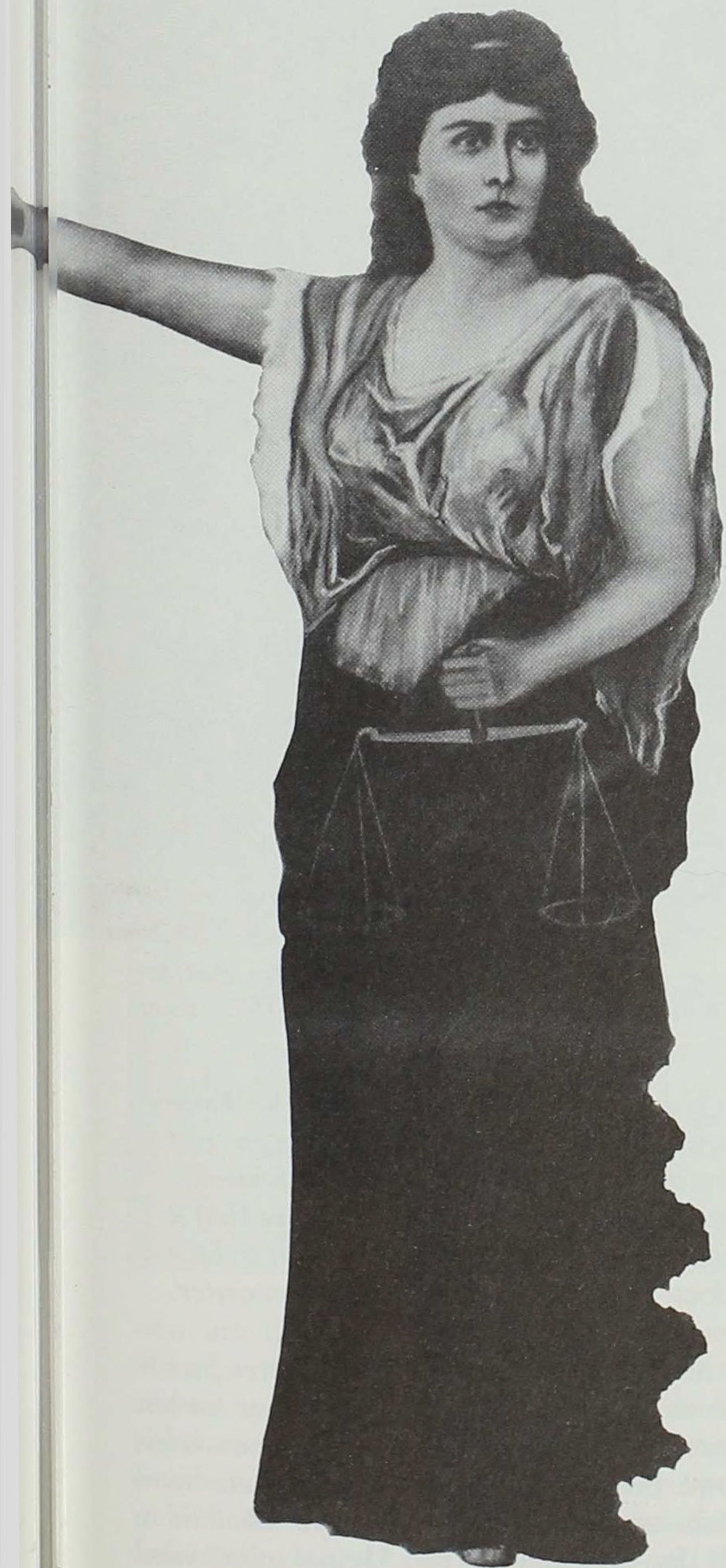


longtime chancellor of the law department, remarked about the change, "What a new zest it will give to the dull routine of practice, to have a pretty girl for associate counsel, — or to measure one's strength before a jury, with a lady that has learned to rule mankind by long matrimonial experience." The law department became an internal part of the university in the 1871-1872 school year, and Mary Hickey was graduated from the then one-year law program in 1873.

Two years later, Mary Humphrey Haddock of Iowa City and Anna Nowlin Savery of Des Moines became the next women to graduate from the law college. Both Haddock and Savery were honored with commencement appointments. Haddock gave a speech entitled the "Genii of the Law," in which she posited that the role of legislators is only to reflect and serve the sentiments of the people; "The people are in fact the masters of the legislatures." Haddock, originally of Tipton, was the first woman attorney ever admitted to practice in the United States circuit and district courts. Her husband, William G. Haddock, was a judge of the circuit court of the Eighth Judicial District and also served thirty-eight years as secretary of the board of trustees and regents of the State University of Iowa. Mrs. Haddock served as assistant secretary of the board of regents under her husband for a number of years, first as an unpaid worker and later as a salaried assistant.

Haddock was a founder of the Nineteenth Century Club, the first women's literary club in Iowa City. She was the first president of the club, the club members deciding that perhaps "a lawyer could best start our infant on its way." As a club member, Haddock gave numerous lectures. The Nineteenth Century Club held open meetings for two of Mrs. Haddock's pre-

*With her sword drawn and pointing to the words "My Defenders," Justice graced the picture of the State University of Iowa's 1897 law class. (SHSI)*





# Portias of the Prairie

## Early Women Graduates of the University Law Department

by Teresa Opheim

*It is not to be understood that the advantages of the Law Department are limited to men. The University of Iowa from the first has admitted to all its Departments women on equal footing with men, obeying in this the growing sentiment for equality which has abolished distinctions between the sexes as to property rights, and has admitted women to practice at the bar. No objection whatever has appeared to the admission of women to the Department; they have made excellent students. But there seem to be obstacles to the practice of the profession by women, inherent in the nature of the occupation, which have discouraged the study of law by them, so that few have availed themselves of the advantages of the Department.*

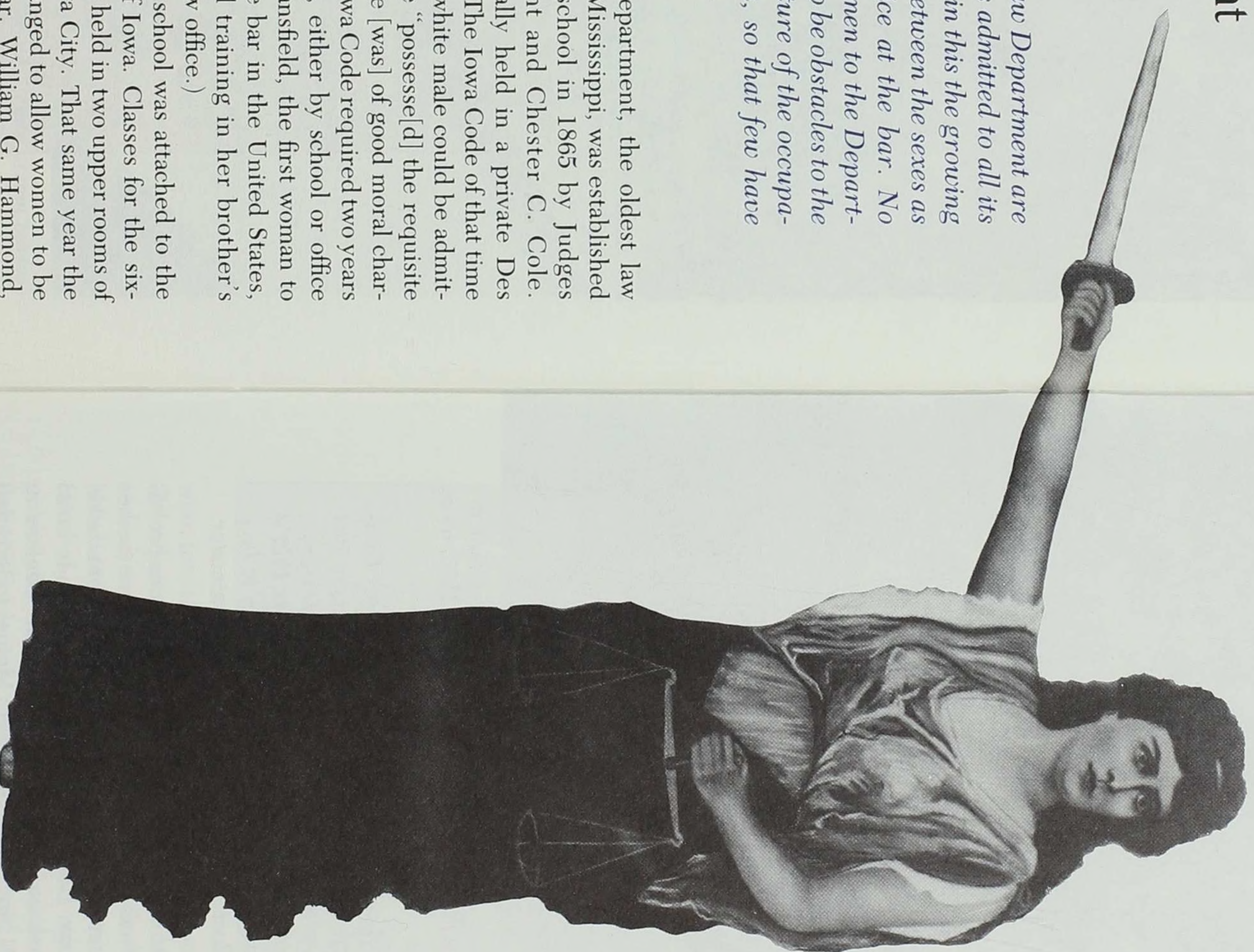
In 1872 the United States Supreme Court denied an Illinois woman the right to practice law, one justice explaining that "[t]he paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfil the noble and benign offices of wife and mother." The next year the first woman was graduated from the University of Iowa's law college and promptly was admitted to the practice of law. Between 1873 and 1910 twenty-six other women joined Mary Hickey Wilkinson, LL.B., 1873, as graduates of the University of Iowa's law department.

The University of Iowa's law college produced only a handful of women who made a career out of the law in the nineteenth century. Many of the other women law graduates served their Iowa communities briefly as lawyers, and then became involved in educational, community, and philanthropic enterprises. A majority had husbands, fathers, and brothers who were

attorneys.

The Iowa law department, the oldest law school west of the Mississippi, was established as a private law school in 1865 by Judges George G. Wright and Chester C. Cole. Classes were initially held in a private Des Moines law office. The Iowa Code of that time specified that any white male could be admitted to the bar if he "possess[ed] the requisite learning" and if "he [was] of good moral character." The 1886 Iowa Code required two years of law preparation, either by school or office training. (Belle Mansfield, the first woman to be admitted to the bar in the United States, received her legal training in her brother's Mount Pleasant law office.)

In 1868 the law school was attached to the State University of Iowa. Classes for the sixteen students were held in two upper rooms of Old Capitol in Iowa City. That same year the Iowa Code was changed to allow women to be admitted to the bar. William G. Hammond,



longtime chancellor of the law department, remarked about the change, "What a new zest it will give to the dull routine of practice, to have a pretty girl for associate counsel, — or to measure one's strength before a jury, with a lady that has learned to rule mankind by long matrimonial experience." The law department became an internal part of the university in the 1871-1872 school year, and Mary Hickey was graduated from the then one-year law program in 1873.

Two years later, Mary Humphrey Haddock of Iowa City and Anna Nowlin Savery of Des Moines became the next women to graduate from the law college. Both Haddock and Savery were honored with commencement appointments. Haddock gave a speech entitled the "Genii of the Law," in which she posited that the role of legislators is only to reflect and serve the sentiments of the people; "The people are in fact the masters of the legislatures." Haddock, originally of Tipton, was the first woman attorney ever admitted to practice in the United States circuit and district courts. Her husband, William G. Haddock, was a judge of the circuit court of the Eighth Judicial District and also served thirty-eight years as secretary of the board of trustees and regents of the State University of Iowa. Mrs. Haddock served as assistant secretary of the board of regents under her husband for a number of years, first as an unpaid worker and later as a salaried assistant.

Haddock was a founder of the Nineteenth Century Club, the first women's literary club in Iowa City. She was the first president of the club, the club members deciding that perhaps "a lawyer could best start our infant on its way." As a club member, Haddock gave numerous lectures. The Nineteenth Century Club held open meetings for two of Mrs. Haddock's pre-

*With her sword drawn and pointing to the words "My Defenders," Justice graced the picture of the State University of Iowa's 1897 law class. (SHSI)*





*An 1870s law department class photograph. The presence of the woman in front indicates that the photograph dates from either 1873, when Mary Hickey Wilkinson received her degree, or 1877, when Mary Terrell Sanders received her degree. (SHSI)*

sentations, "The Property Rights of Married Women in Iowa" and "Women as Landholders in the West." One club member, reflecting from her vantage point in 1908 back to 1875 when Haddock was attending law school and being admitted to the bar, commented that:

*Women's Clubs as we know them now were just appearing above the horizon . . . "Votes for Women" were still a long way off. A League of Women Voters was unthinkable; unthinkable, also, that in less than fifty years we should be holding*

*office, sitting on juries, running for Congress — and getting there. We were just breaking into the learned professions, and most of us were not quite sure that it was really the thing for a woman to be a doctor, or a lawyer, or even a minister.*

Annie Nowlin Savery of Des Moines probably was known best during her lifetime for her key role in the Iowa suffrage movement and is known best today for the Des Moines hotel which carries her name. Born in London in 1831, Savery moved to Des Moines in 1854 and



## Graduates of the S. U. I. Law Department, 1873-1910\*

Year	Class Size	Women in Class	Year	Class Size	Women in Class	Year	Class Size	Women in Class
1873	56	1	1886	40	0	1899	86	5
1874	64	0	1887	46	0	1900	95	3
1875	72	2	1888	51	0	1901	137	1
1876	55	0	1889	39	0	1902	9	0
1877	75	1	1890	63	1	1903	70	1
1878	84	0	1891	52	2	1904	53	0
1879	100	0	1892	73	0	1905	53	0
1880	111	0	1893	65	1	1906	58	0
1881	88	0	1894	97	2	1907	45	0
1882	137	0	1895	71	0	1908	50	1
1883	93	1	1896	105	1	1909	49	1
1884	103	0	1897	103	1	1910	64	1
1885	22	0	1898	84	1			

The twenty-seven early women law graduates were: Bernice Baer (1900), Keota Williams Bannister (1899), Emma Louise Brayton (1883), Fannie Ainsworth Dykins (1899), Imogene Benson Emery (1910), Louise Eversmeyer (1898), Carrie Grosenbaugh (1903), Mary Humphrey Haddock (1875), Margaret Irving Hamilton (1901), Cora Hansell (1894), Fannie Parker Anderson Himes (1899), Alice Hubbard (1900), Myrtle Lloyd Kennedy (1890), Kalita Leighton (1896), Clara McCullough (1908), Hilda MacDonald (1900), Eleanor Kraiger Meacham (1894), Mina Grant Talbot Stanton Mitchell (1899), Ida Ashcraft Mosseau (1897), Nelly Peery Price (1893), Edith Prouty Prichard (1891), Anna Harvat Holbert Reiss (1899), Mary Terrell Sanders (1877), Anna Nowlin Savery (1875), Mabel Eggert Waggoner (1909), Mary Hickey Wilkinson (1873), and Jennie L. Wilson (1891).

*Fifteen of the twenty-seven women had relatives who were lawyers or law graduates. These included: Keota Williams Bannister (father, brother), Emma Brayton (father), Fannie Ainsworth Dykins (husband, assorted other relatives), Louise Eversmeyer (brother), Mary Humphrey Haddock (husband), Cora Hansell (husband), Alice Hubbard (father), Myrtle Lloyd Kennedy (husband), Eleanor Kraiger Meacham (husband), Nelly Peery Price (husband, son), Edith Prouty Prichard (father), Anna Harvat Holbert Reiss (husband), Mary Terrell Sanders (husband), Mabel Eggert Waggoner (father), and Jennie L. Wilson (husband).*

\*Source: *Alumni Directory of the Iowa Law School, State University of Iowa, 1866-1961, (Iowa City, 1961).*

went into the hotel business with her husband. She educated herself, ordering books of all the courses taught in the Des Moines schools. She hired a tutor to "coach her in subjects usually covered in higher education." Savery spoke publicly for woman's suffrage in 1868 when she delivered a lecture entitled, "Angels and Pol-

iticians." Elected corresponding secretary of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association in 1870, she was active in the campaign that led to the passage of the suffrage amendment in the 1870 Iowa legislature and also in the 1872 suffrage campaign during which the amendment failed to pass the required second time.



Savery entered law school at a time when there were no conditions governing admission. Although a fellow classmate later described her as "quite an elderly woman" in 1875, she was actually only forty-four at the time. A friend of Savery's, Judge Hubbard, said that Savery had never intended to practice law but instead wanted to "fully understand the origin of the rights of persons and property and particularly to understand and trace the history of the rights of married women."

Savery was graduated with high honors from the law department. Chosen as a commencement speaker, her graduation thesis was entitled "Women's Relations to Civil Government." Her thesis posited that women's subordination to men in primitive cultures when physical force was the lawmaking power resulted from a law of necessity and not because of an unjust discrimination against the sex. She then invoked history to show that modern day rulers had not emancipated themselves from the "old superstitions and barbarous customs" that at one time had been the rule of necessity. She asserted that "the horizon of woman's duties" had extended more in the years between 1855 and 1875 than it had since "the historian made her a scape-goat for Adam's transgressions," but that the emancipation of women was far from complete:

*Henceforth no woman need marry the pure and base for the sake of a protector and home. The disciples of the past — the followers of those who compelled Galileo to abjure and cure the doctrines of the movement of the earth — will still continue to fix a limit to woman's powers, until she soars above systems and creeds to where sex is forgotten in the realms of intellect, remembering always that "ignorance is the curse of God. Knowledge the wind wherewith we fly to heaven!"*

*The men who have led the way to freedom are those who have prepared them-*

*selves by a life study of its principles. It is the self-made men who give lustre to free government! The midnight oil has lighted up the whole world, and woman has commenced to burn it. She has come to understand what Cassius said to Brutus, "It is not in our stars, dear Brutus, but in ourselves, that we are underlings."*

*A traveler who had looked upon the midnight sun in the north of Sweden, when describing his feelings, said "I felt that I had climbed so high up the ridge of the round world that I could look over into the secret chambers, where the king of day retires to his golden rest."*

*So it is with woman. She has climbed up out of the shade into the sunlight, and the added light reveals work and duties which through all these revolving years have awaited her coming.*

Savery had many other causes and pursuits along with her suffrage activities. After discovering the lack of ventilation and cleanliness in the Des Moines jail, she became instrumental in bringing about changes in prison conditions. She unsuccessfully sought appointment as United States Consul to LeHavre, France. She ardently supported public education and the Des Moines Library Association. In 1876 she spearheaded a fund-raising campaign to establish the first Des Moines hospital. Savery also traveled extensively, lectured often, and had scholarly interests in religion, history, and literature.

In 1877 Mary Terrell Sanders of Iowa City became the next woman to graduate from the law department. Sanders' father owned and operated Terrell's Mill, a mill on the Iowa River north of Iowa City. She received her preliminary education from her father and then attended the State University of Iowa, graduating in 1874, before entering law school. Because of her father's failing health, Sanders took over his extensive business interests. She



worked for ten years with the business problems involved in mill operations, waterpower, and quarries and then married Euclid Sanders, a fellow department of law graduate. Mary Terrell Sanders and her husband sold to Iowa City for a nominal consideration the land that is now Iowa City's City Park. They also donated dam rights to the University of Iowa, enabling the university to build the present Burlington Street dam and power plant.

By the time the next female graduated from the law department, the faculty had raised the law college admission standards. While previously there had not been conditions governing admissions, beginning in 1880 the faculty

*The 1883 S.U.I. law class on the steps of Old Capitol. Emma Louise Brayton was the sole woman law graduate in this year. (SHSI)*



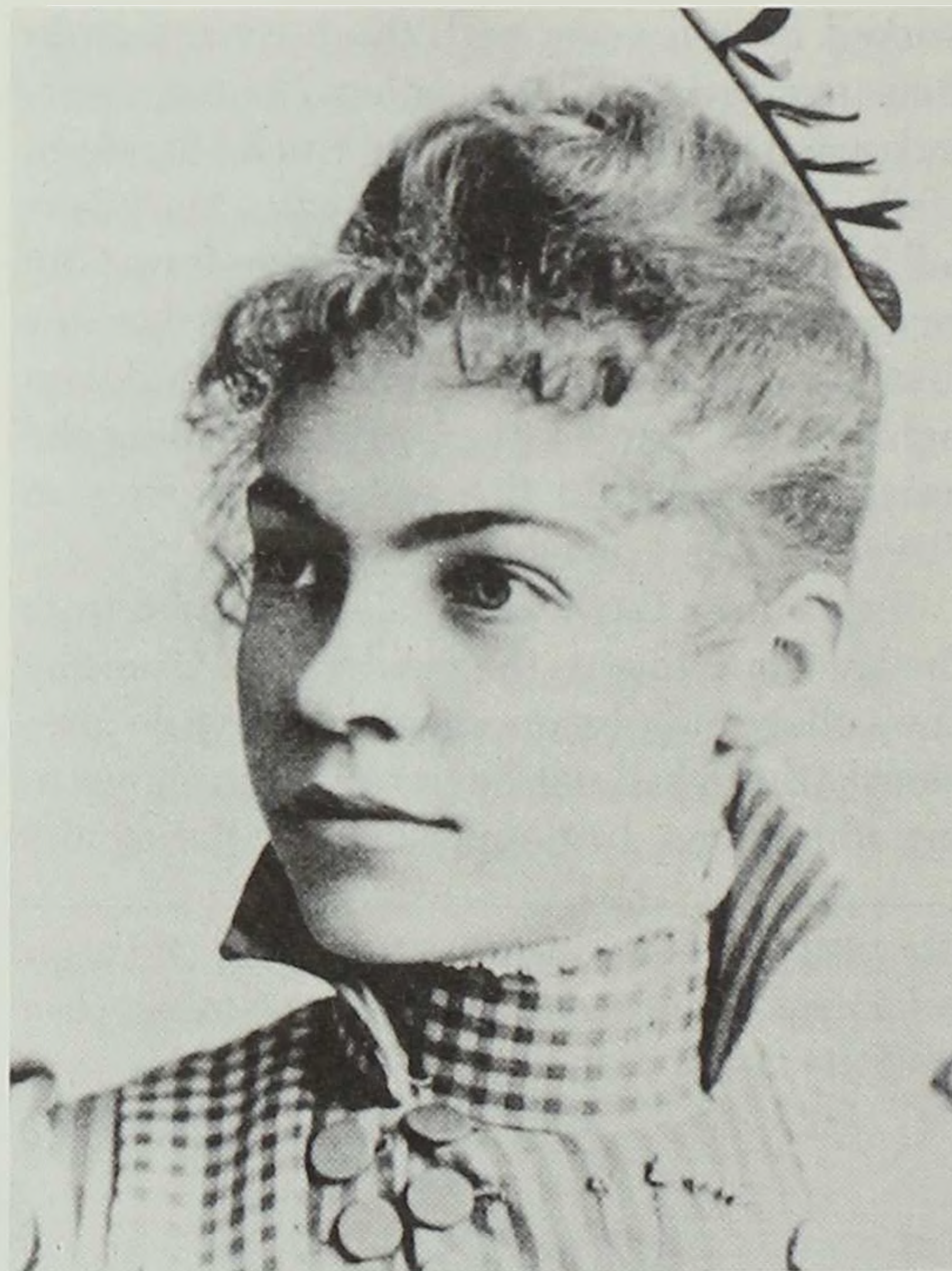


could reject "all candidates who [were] deficient in any branch of a common English education." In 1884, moreover, the law school switched from a one-year to a two-year course of study.

In 1883 a law class poll on woman's suffrage was taken. Fifty-two opposed and forty favored votes for women. That same year, Emma Brayton of Delhi was graduated from the law department. Brayton's father was an attorney, a former judge of the Ninth Circuit District Court, a state senator from 1864 to 1868, and "one of the largest land owners in Delaware County." Emma Brayton practiced law only in connection with her own legal matters and those arising from her father's estate. She started the first library in Delhi, the Emma Brayton Free Public Library, in a building that had been her father's office. She left the library, now called the Delhi Free Public Library, to Delhi upon her death.

The law department was using the entire second floor of Old Capitol when Jennie Wilson of Cedar Rapids graduated from the law school in 1891. The admission standards had been further raised to require a high school education or passage of an entrance examination in English and American history and the English language. Wilson served as law librarian from 1891 to 1893. She never practiced law although she did assist her attorney-husband, George W. Wilson, in his legal practice. She authored two books, one on the legal and political status of women in the United States and one on the legal status of women in Iowa. Wilson also was active in the suffrage movement, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Linn County Humane Society.

Edith Prouty Prichard of Humboldt was a classmate of Jennie Wilson. After her graduation from the law department in 1891, Prichard went into practice with her father, James Nathaniel Prouty, the first lawyer in Humboldt. She presented oral argument before the



*Nelly Peery Price, the 1893 woman law graduate. (SHSI)*

Iowa Supreme Court and was the local attorney for the Chicago and North Western Railroad. She also had charge of the firm's collection and abstract of title business. Prichard taught a law class at the now-defunct Humboldt College. In 1909 she was appointed to the State Board of Bar Examiners (another woman law graduate, Myrtle Lloyd Kennedy of Sioux City, had been the first woman honored by such an appointment the year before). As a student of the woman's suffrage movement, Prichard visited all the states where suffrage had been granted to women to observe conditions in those states. She was a supreme president and state president of P.E.O. Humboldt friends described her as having a keen, analytical mind and said she stressed "the literal law." In 1920, Prichard married a book salesman, discontinued her law practice, and moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where she worked strenuously on the board of



Cottey College, a Missouri junior college for girls.

In 1899, one year before the law department initiated a three-year course of study, five women were among the eighty-six law graduates, the largest number of women graduates in the 1873-1910 period. Among those women was Fanny Ainsworth Dykins, a West Union woman who was married to a lawyer and related to numerous Ainsworth attorneys in West Union. Keota Williams Bannister also was among the 1899 graduates. Bannister was the daughter of Judge Morris J. Williams and his wife, Mary, of Wapello County. After teaching in the small country school near her home, she enrolled in the law school with her brother, Burn. Burn bred and dealt in horses, an occupation that often took him on trips to Kentucky and Tennessee. During his absence,



*Ida Jessup Ashcraft, the only woman to receive a law degree in 1897. (SHSI)*

Keota would take class notes for both of them, and brief Burn on his return. After graduation Burn and Keota hung a "Williams and Williams" shingle and practiced law on the north side of Main Street in Ottumwa. Keota discontinued the practice of law in 1903 when she married Dr. Murdoch Bannister. She later used her law acumen to prepare insurance, contracts, and abstracts of title for her own property. She was an active fund-raiser for the Ottumwa Hospital Association and also was a persuasive public speaker.

Louise Eversmeyer of Muscatine was one of the few early women law graduates who made the law a lifetime career. Upon graduation in 1898, Eversmeyer entered her father's insurance, real estate, and loan office in Muscatine. She later entered legal practice with her brother, F. W. Contracts and wills were a large part of her practice. Undoubtedly, she provided stability to the office during the years her brother was a justice of the peace (1901-1906) and member of the Iowa state senate (1915-1919). Eversmeyer spoke German fluently, a result of being the daughter of German immigrants, and many of the German-speaking people in Muscatine came to her for legal assistance. She was a school board member and one-time president of the Muscatine Ethics Club, a federated women's study club.

Imogene Benson Emery, a 1910 law graduate from Cedar Rapids and Mount Vernon, was the only married woman law graduate during the 1873-1910 period who made the law a lifetime career. Emery worked part-time in the registrar's office during her three-year law program. After passing her bar examination in 1910, she worked three years as the secretary for two University of Iowa presidents, George MacLean and John Bowman. She married Irving Cass Emery in 1913 and for fifteen years worked as a secretary for a law firm. From 1927 to 1933 she served as first deputy clerk of Linn County. She opened her own law office in the Cedar Rapids Higley Building, and also ran an



employment agency during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Later she worked in a Cedar Rapids law firm, specializing in tax and probate work. She served as the national chairperson of the D.A.R. National Defense Committee, as president of Quota International, a service club of business and professional women, and also wrote her family history. Emery once described being sworn into practice before the United States Supreme Court by Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes in 1940 as one of her proudest memories.

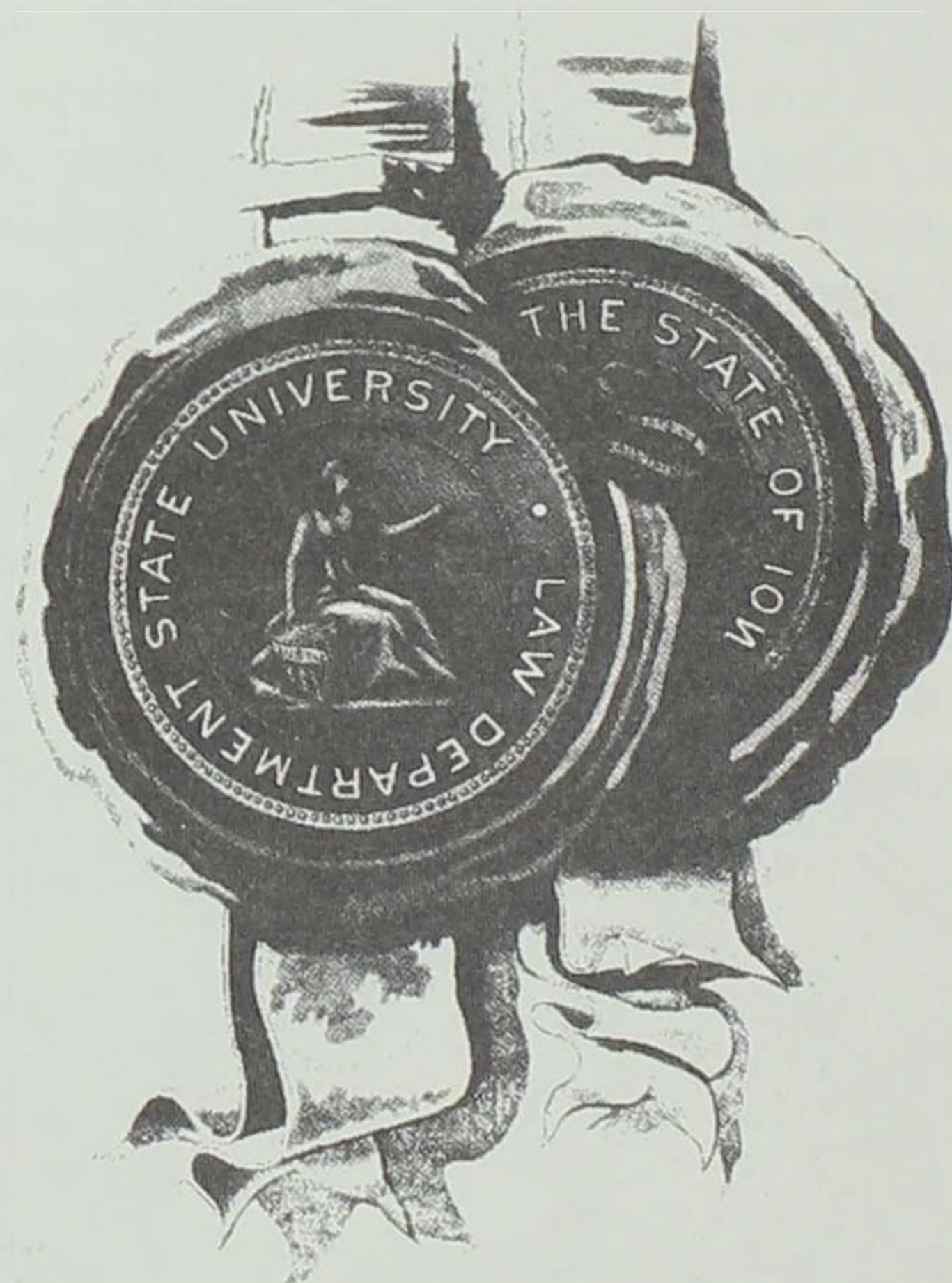
Mabel Eggert Waggoner is the only female law graduate before 1910 still living. Waggoner went to law school because of her father, Robert Eggert, an 1877 graduate of the law department. As a teenager, she spent a lot of time in her father's Charles City law office familiarizing herself with legal practice. Because her father had eye problems, she would read law reports to him which they then would discuss and analyze. Waggoner practiced law for a year while her father was in Europe but did not practice law after marrying. She reported:

*To have had this early experience, training and study and having been admitted to the bar so many years ago, has always been a deep satisfaction as well as a personal and business help throughout the years. Looking back to the couple years being the only female . . . climbing the stairway in Old Capitol Building and again being alone taking the bar examination means that it all was more than worthwhile.*

\* \* \*

The women law graduates from 1873 to 1910 were courageous in entering that most established of male professions, the law. A majority of the twenty-seven women had lawyers in their families, suggesting that familial

exposure to the legal profession may have been the impetus for their decisions to obtain law degrees. Few of the women law graduates implemented their legal education by practicing law. Many instead used their legal talents in their own legal affairs and in political and philanthropic projects. □



#### Note on Sources

A variety of excellent source materials were used in preparing this article. Contemporary issues of the State University of Iowa's *University Reporter*, the *Green Bag*, and the *Daily Iowan*, and news items in papers such as the *Daily Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), the *Iowa City Citizen*, the *Anamosa Eureka*, and the *Muscatine Journal* contained valuable information. Three articles published in the *Iowa Law Review* were helpful: Millard Hansen, "The Early History of the College of Law, State University of Iowa: 1865-1884," 30 (1944-45); Rollin Perkins, "The Story of the Iowa Law School," 15 (1930); and Kenneth R. Rossman, "History of the College of Law of the State University of Iowa: 1881-1922," 32 (1947). Other sources of note included: Celia Moore Currier's *The First Twenty-five Years of the Nineteenth Century Club of Iowa City, Iowa, 1883-1908* (SHSI manuscript collection); Ruth Gallaher's *Legal and Political Status of Women in Iowa* (Iowa City: SHSI, 1918); Louise Noun's *Strong-Minded Women: The Emergence of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in Iowa* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969); and a variety of family, club, and county histories in manuscript and book form. An annotated copy of this manuscript is on file at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.



### CONTRIBUTORS

MARY ALLISON FARLEY received her M.A. degree in American Studies at the University of Iowa in 1985. She served as project director for "Iowa Women in the Workplace," a project funded by the Iowa Humanities Board and the National Endowment for the Humanities which resulted in an unusual traveling exhibit of historical photographs. She also served as a researcher and interviewer for a recent oral history project sponsored by the Iowa State Historical Department, "It's A Woman's War Too: Iowa in the

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