

English, Scotch, and Irish

Many came to Iowa from countries where English was the native tongue. Customs and language of the native Americans were for the most part familiar. Therefore, adjustments in a new home were easier to make for the Irish, English, Scotch, Welsh and Canadians.

The "Poor British Emigrant's Farewell" illustrates the feeling of many nineteenth century emigrants who had made the decision that it was to their best interests to emigrate.

From Albion's verdant vallies,
From Scotia's barren moors,
From Erin's flowing rivers
And her bold and rocky shores:
From the dark and crowded city —
From the hardness of the times —
(We ask not for your pity,)
But hie to other climes.

From want and from starvation,
From penury and pain,
We thus relieve our nation,
Nor will again complain.
We enter on our voyage,
And bid a glad adieu
To the factory and the forge,
As Britain fades from view.

As might be expected, the Irish have been the most numerous of these. The peak of Irish immigration to Iowa was reached earlier than the Germans, for instance, but still not until 1880, thirty years later than was true of the United States as a whole. Many had stopped in other states before finally reaching Iowa. In 1870 the Irish were the predominant element in twenty-one counties. This was to undergo a very definite change. By 1920 the Sons of Erin could not claim a single county in which they were the largest foreign born group. In 1958 only eleven Irishmen indicated that they wanted to go to Iowa when they arrived at their ports of entry into the United States.

As early as 1850 the *Boston Pilot*, an Irish-American newspaper, was urging, "Let all emigrants go to the West." It pointed out that the great numbers joining the California Gold Rush made the Midwest a better place to go. Many additional appeals and inducements were necessary, however, before the Irish came in large numbers.

The English

The third largest group in Iowa in 1860 were the English. In that year there were approximately 11,500, increasing to more than 26,000 by 1890. They were the most numerous nationality group in six scattered counties in 1870 and in five, but not the same, counties in the year 1950. In 1958,

fully 154 Englishmen were planning to go to the Hawkeye State where they could establish permanent homes.

A common practice among the English was to inquire extensively about conditions in the area to which people were wanting to immigrate. For example, Morris Phillips of Pembrokehire, England, wrote to Percival, Hatten & Company, real estate agents in Des Moines in 1869. Phillips wanted to know about the price of unimproved and improved land, the description of various kinds of soil, the availability of flour and saw mills, the amount of timber grown, climate, fruit trees, schools, wages, and weather.

He was agent for the Liverpool, New York and Philadelphia Steam Ship Company and sent many thousands to America. For himself, Phillips declared, "Iowa is spoken of as a very thriving state, and I would like to come on there." The reply to Phillips stated that Iowa was believed to "be the best adapted to English immigrants of any part of the United States."

Public lecturers from the United States also told of the attractions to be found in America. In 1879 England was in a "distressed condition." A minister of the gospel from the Midwest went to England to tell the people of the advantages to working men, and especially small farmers and farm laborers to be found in Iowa and the other agricultural states.

Canadians

The Canadians accounted for another large segment of English speaking citizens. In 1880 there were more than 21,000 who had left the more rigorous Canadian winters for the fertile farms of Iowa. French-Canadians formed about five percent of this total.

As early as 1838 emigration from Canada to Iowa had become a general thing. At that time it was suggested that the administration of governmental affairs in Canada was responsible for many seeking new homes. Unless a change should take place in a short time, Lord Durham "will have but few subjects left to rule over; they will be found in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, &c."

The interest of Canadians in the Midwest in 1838 was so great that the Mississippi Emigration Company was formed. Delegates came to examine the Iowa country and published their findings in the Toronto and Kingston newspapers. The report stated that Iowa citizens were "almost without exception, exceedingly kind, hospitable, intelligent, sober and unassuming, but firm to maintain their rights."

The report also said there had been many reports that, "in order to prevent emigration from Canada to Iowa," some people in Upper Canada "have been constantly representing all the Indian wars in Florida and at Red River as being in Iowa." The report covered such topics as the

soil, crops, the countryside, wild animals, the Indians and means of traveling from Canada.

A contemporary editorial in a Burlington newspaper said that Iowa was described to the Canadians "as very desirable for those who wish to emigrate." Therefore, "if their plans are carried into effect the result will materially affect the interests of the young territory of Iowa and of Upper Canada. Many of those enlisted in the enterprise are men of character and worth, who would be valuable citizens in any country."

Thirty years later the interest of Canadians in Iowa was still very much in evidence. J. Spear of Malcolm, Iowa, wrote in 1869 that he had been taken with the "Iowa Fever" two years earlier while living in Stanstead, Canada. "I tried at first every way to break up the fever but every effort failed to do any good." After he came to Poweshiek County, the fever left him.

"I am willing to do all I can," Spear wrote, "to induce those that are grubbing away among the hills and stone to get a little corn and perhaps a few bushels of wheat, to come to Iowa and cultivate these broad and extensive prairies."

In reply to a request from Canada regarding the best area in which to settle, the editor of the *Iowa State Register* of Des Moines wrote: "Iowa is the best place on God's green earth for any colony to locate." The editor continued:

We have room and land for all. . . . Come on and

bring all Canada with you. You fellows make good settlers; and we'll make you good neighbors. . . . Canadians are a good class of people; intelligent, law-abiding and frugal. Iowa has enough unoccupied land for ten times ten thousand such colonies, and is anxious to have them.

Scotch and Welsh

The Scotch and the Welsh completed the bulk of those who did not have to learn a new language when they arrived in Iowa. Both were more numerous in 1890 than at any other census taking, either before or since. In no county has either ever been the predominant foreign born group. However, there were 302 Scots in Boone County in 1890 with Keokuk, Linn, Polk, Pottawattamie, Tama, and Woodbury counties each having more than two hundred. The Welsh were to be found in considerable numbers in Iowa, Lucas, Wapello and Mahaska counties with the latter having the largest number — 487 in 1890.

The Scottish newspapers did much to aid emigration. The *Edinburgh Scotland Daily Review* in 1869 gave glowing accounts. "Perhaps," the paper stated, "of all the western States in the Union the best to take as an instance of present and prospective prosperity is that of Iowa." The vast prairie and the inexhaustible soil which was available for a very small sum of money were big inducements.

"Who should go?" queried the editor. To which he replied,

One of the most worthy and the most deserving of pity among all our classes, the educated man with a large family and limited income, who wishes his sons to start in life . . . where he left off. . . . Twenty pounds would clear a young emigrant to Iowa City, with some pounds to spare; and if he went in the spring, and unless all accounts of the land are false, he might save and send back money enough in six months to have his sweetheart or his young wife beside him.

John Tasker, a Scotchman living in Jones County, was another who was trying to bring his countrymen to Iowa. He had been in the United States thirty-two years and a citizen for the past twenty. In 1874 he returned to Scotland for six months. It was reported:

While on his visit he will endeavor to lay the advantages which our unequalled State presents as an emigration field before enterprising Scotchmen who may desire a new and wider field of operation. . . . It is to be hoped that he will be able to induce many of his countrymen to come to Iowa and make their homes in the grandest and most fertile portion of this habitable globe.

As early as 1852 Joshua Jones had come from Wales to become a blacksmith on Flint Creek, Des Moines County. Jones wrote his relatives who had remained at home:

We understand that a great number of our fellow countrymen are suffering in poverty, while we, the few Welshmen in this state, are well off. . . . There is plenty of wheatland, easy to farm, in this state which would take all the people of Wales and many more but there are fewer Welsh in this state than in any other free state.

There are only three small Welsh settlements in the whole of the state but they are better off than the largest settlements in Wisconsin and the other states. . . . The agricultural advantages are the best corn land, easy to work and very beautiful. . . . There is nothing to do but break the soil in lovely meadows and throw the seed in to get bountiful crops of Indian corn, wheat, oats, potatoes, buckwheat, melons, rye, etc. etc.

Four years later another Welshman, William ——— of Llewellyn, Iowa, wrote to his parents, "If this were populated by good men it would be a second Canaan. . . . My adopted country is better than the land of my birth." Instead of returning home he preferred to "say like the Yankees":

Come along, come along, make no delay.
Come from every nation and come from every way,
Our lands they are broad enough, don't feel alarm
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

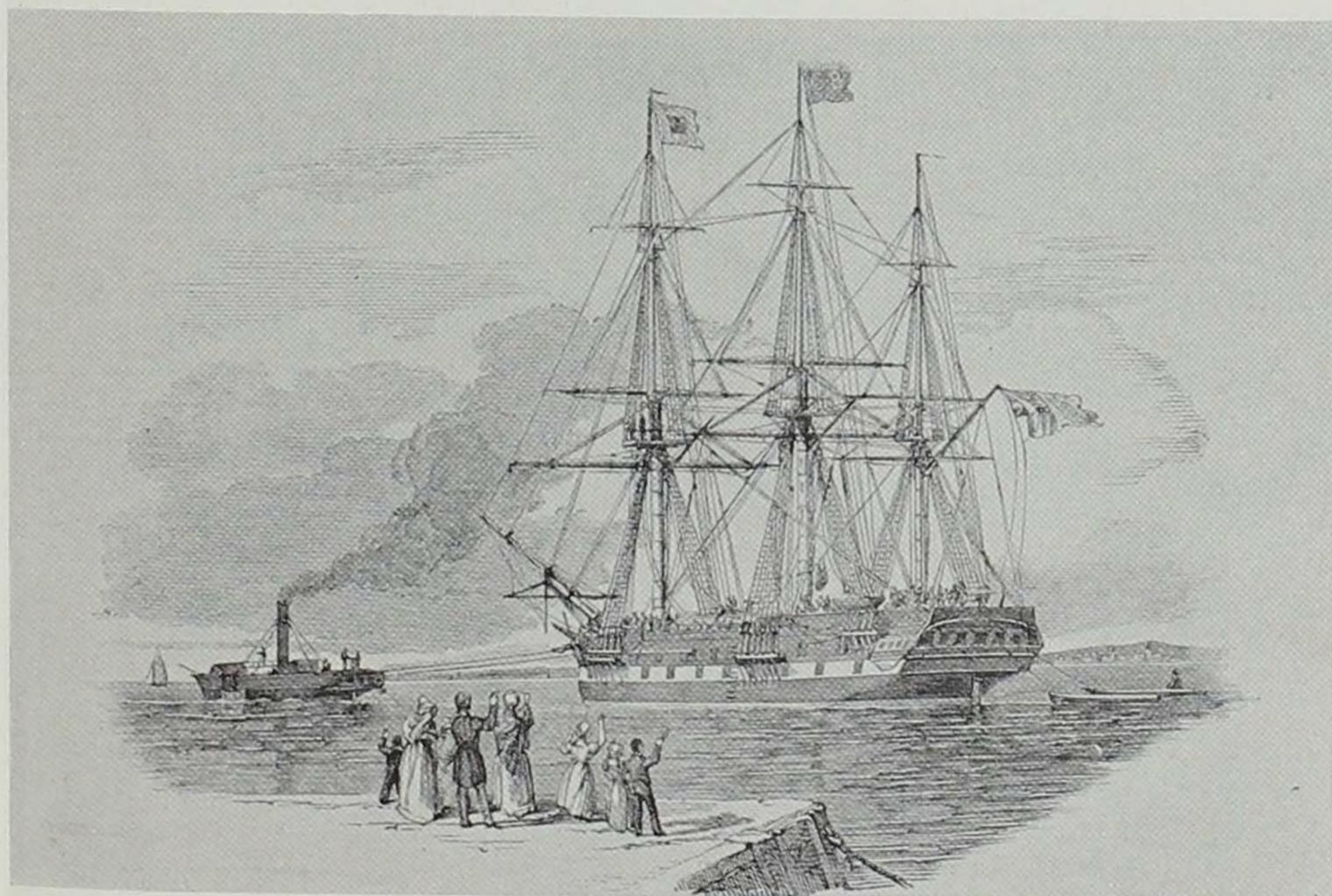
The largest proportion of these English speaking Iowans were farmers or farm laborers. They ranged from the many who worked for little more than room and board to prosperous land owners such as Thomas Meredith, an Englishman in Cass County, worth \$50,950 in 1870, or C. A. Marshall of Howard County, who had acquired property valued at \$27,300 since coming from Ireland.

Traditionally, the Irish have worked on Iowa's railroads. However, the Irish and others contributed much to other kinds of labor so essential in a young state. For instance, Iowa had numerous

WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY!

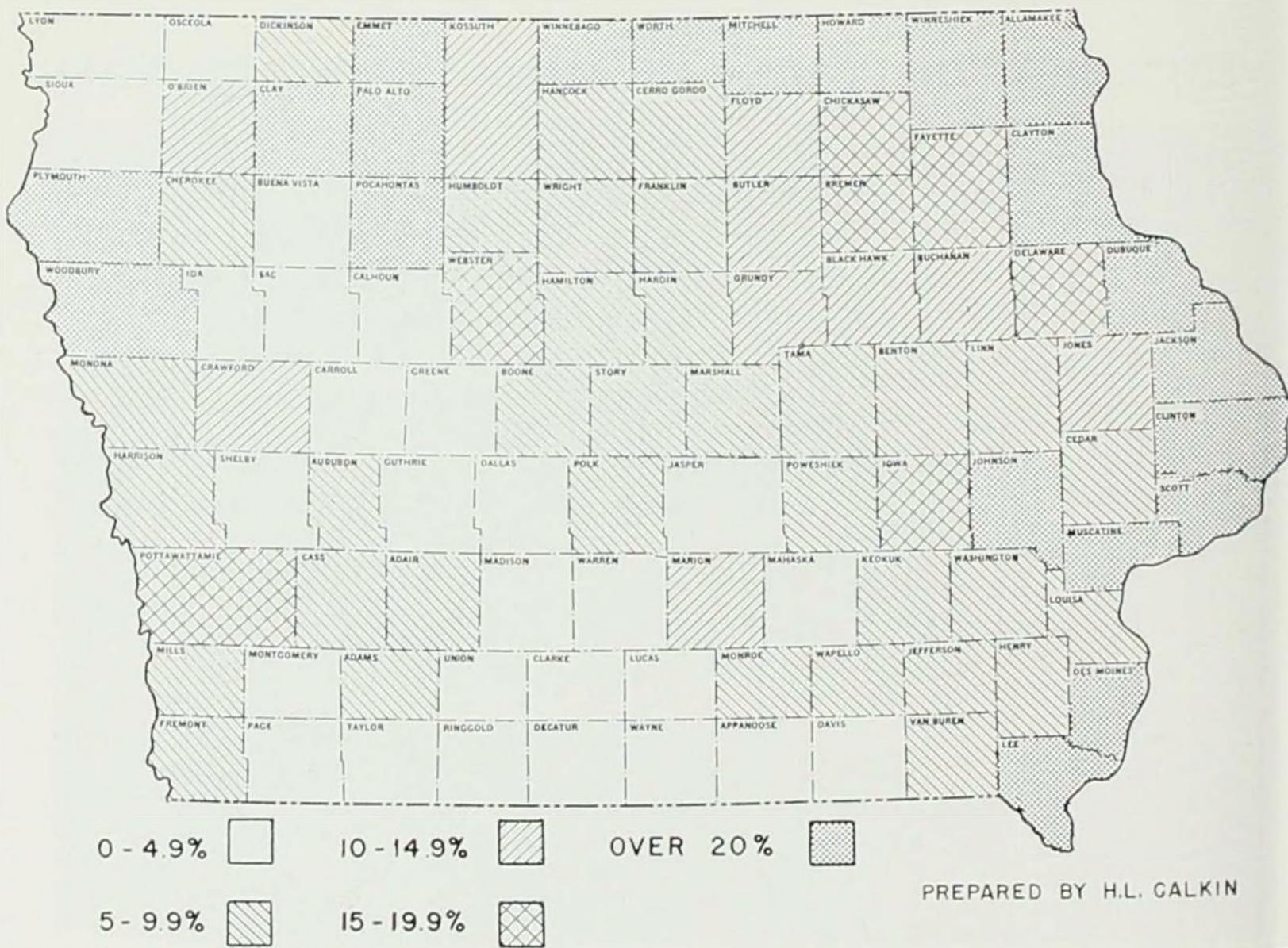


Emigrants Departing from the Homeland

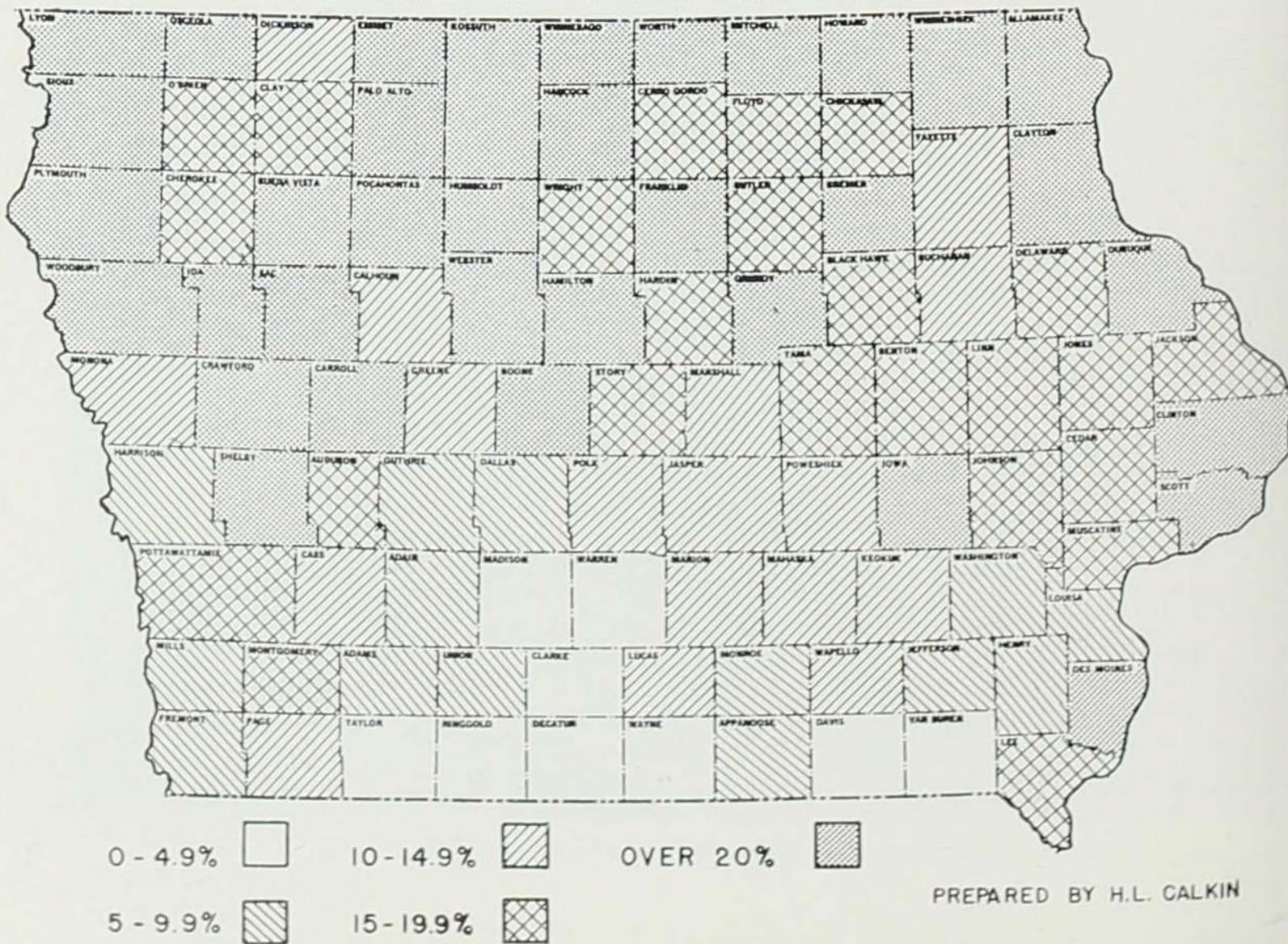


Emigrant Ship Being Towed to Sea

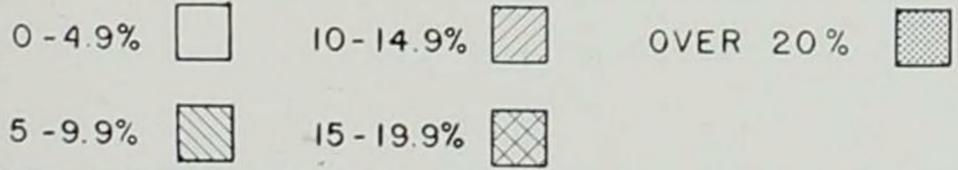
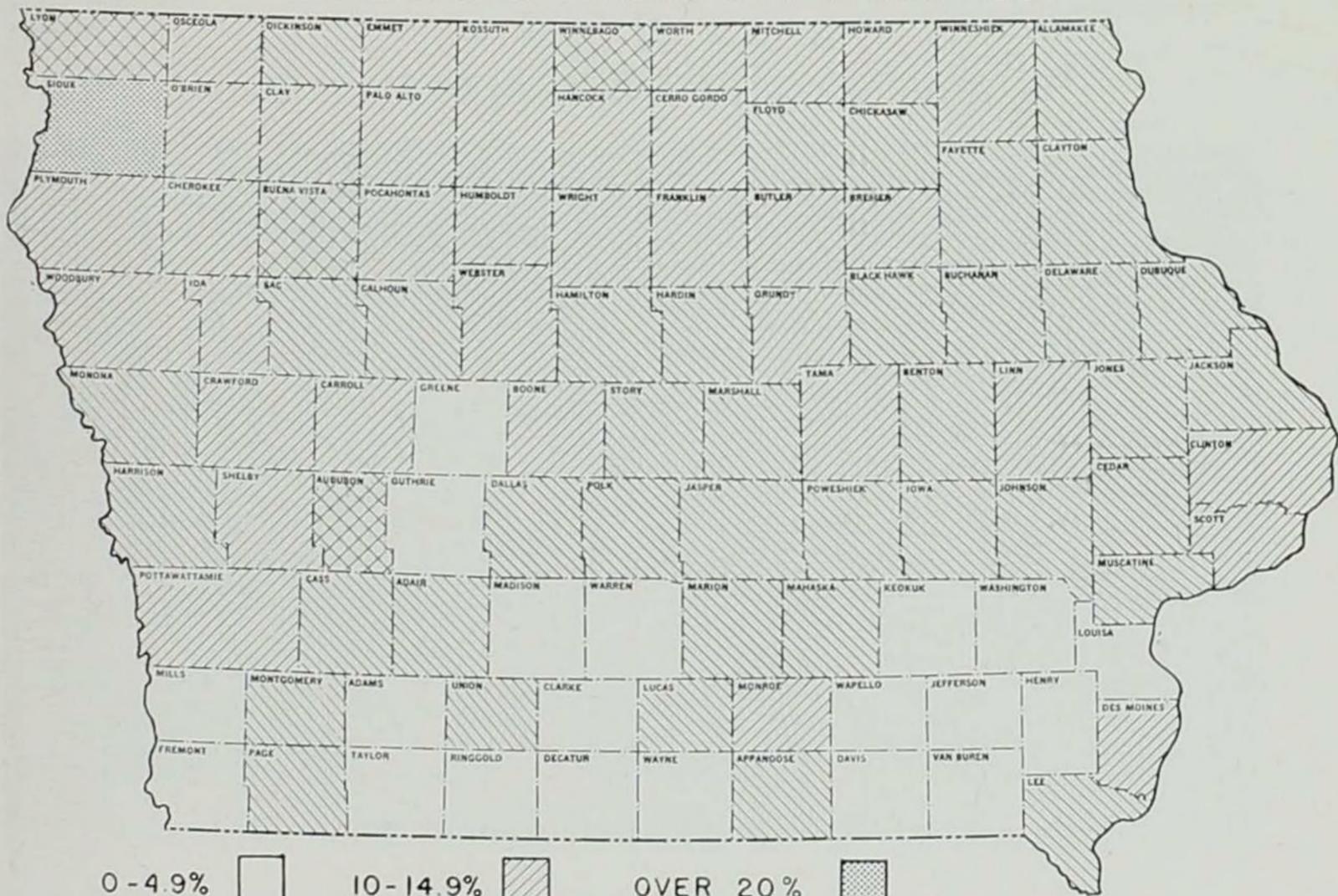
PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN BORN IN IOWA - 1860



PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN BORN IN IOWA - 1890

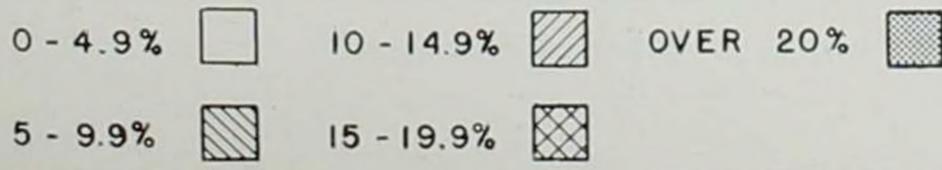
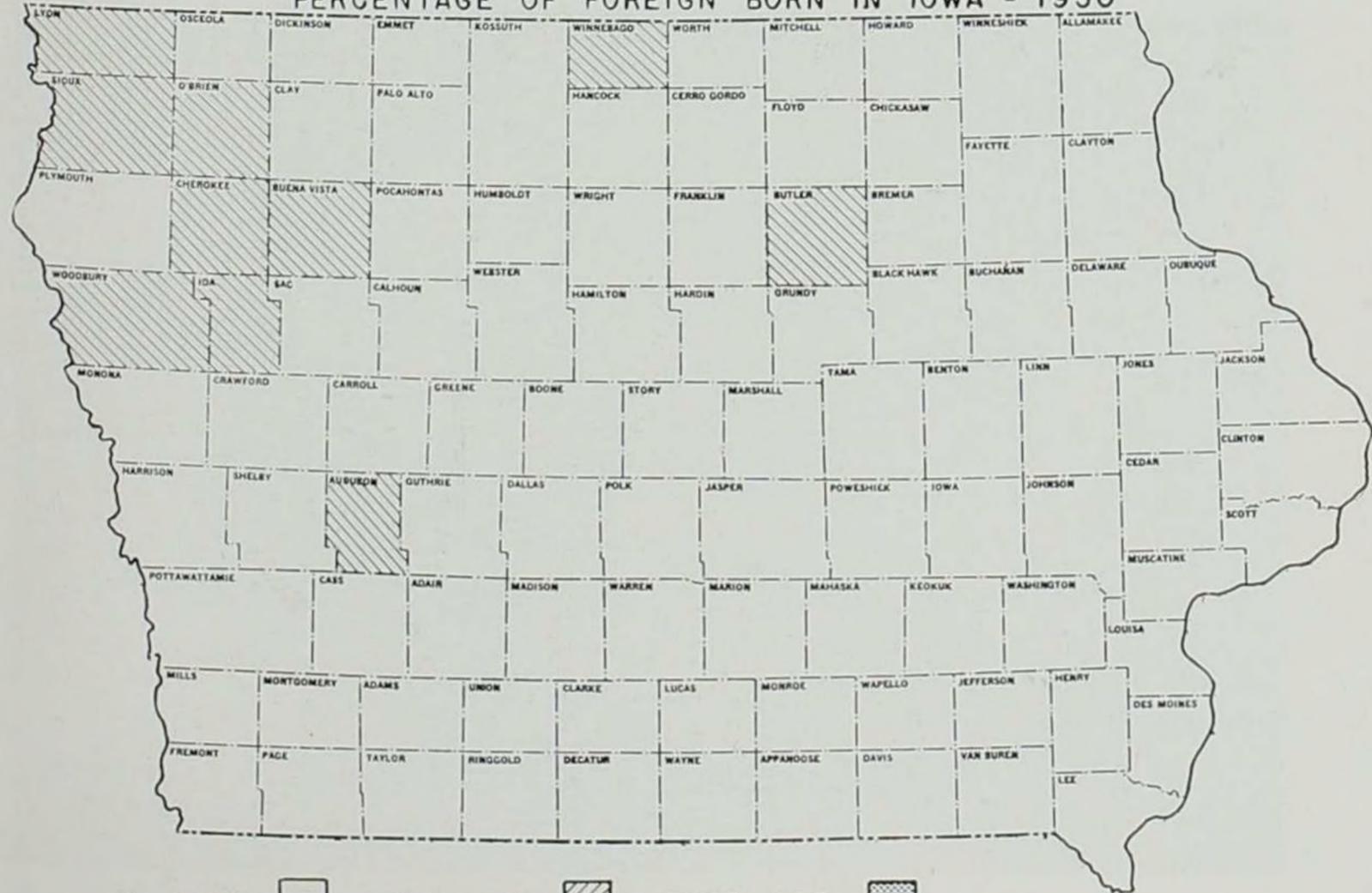


PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN BORN IN IOWA - 1920



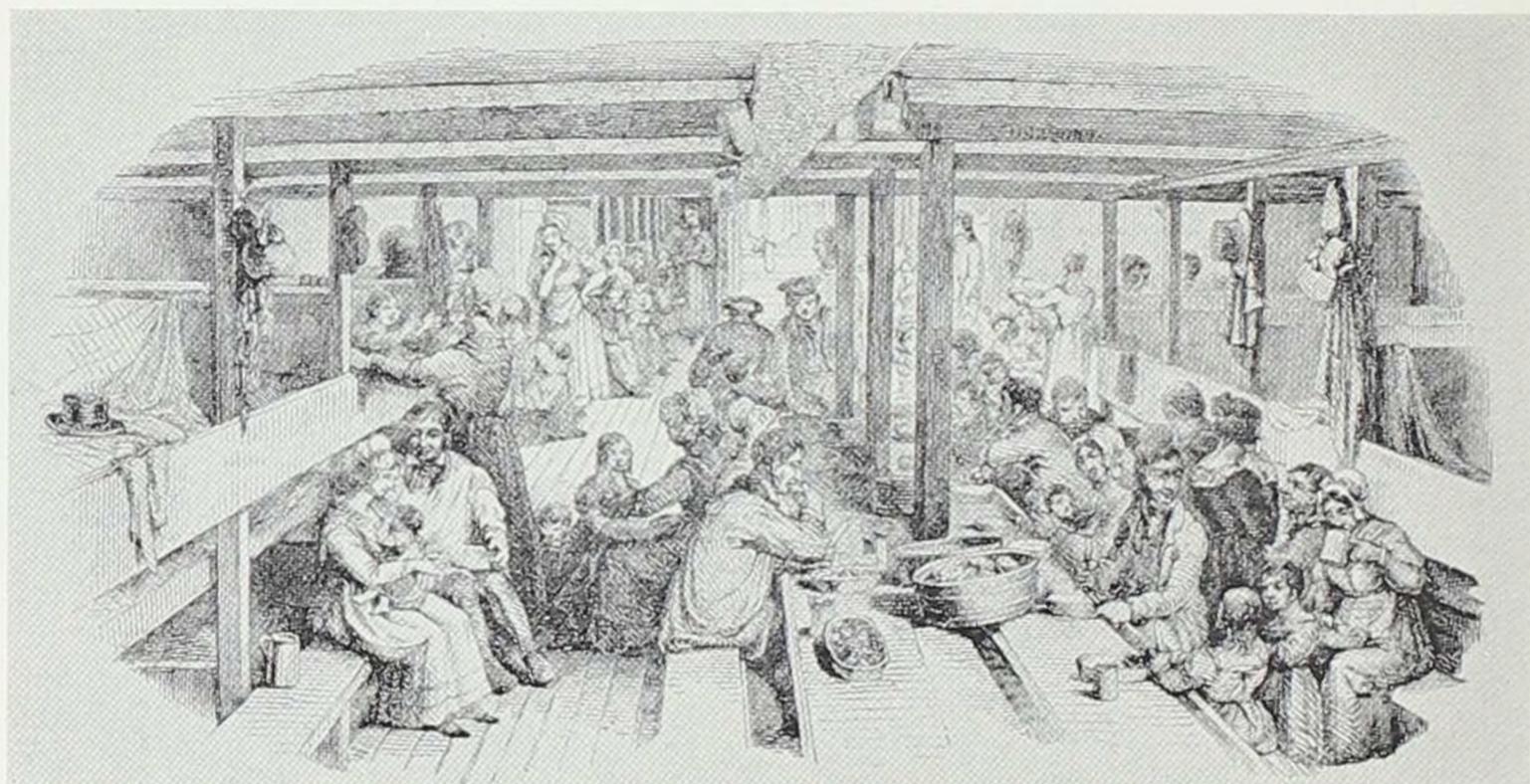
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PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN BORN IN IOWA - 1950

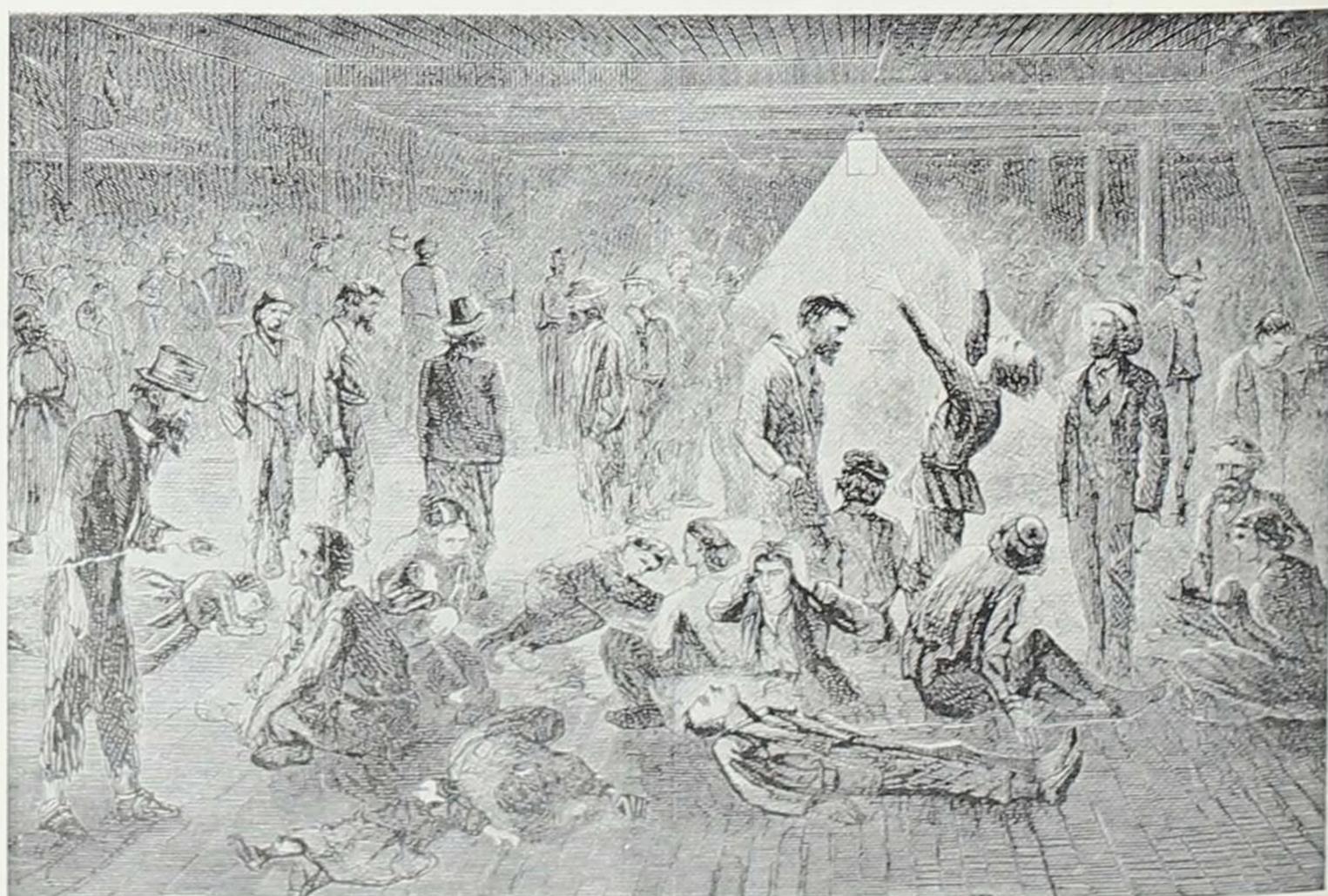


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LIFE AMONG THE STEERAGE PASSENGERS

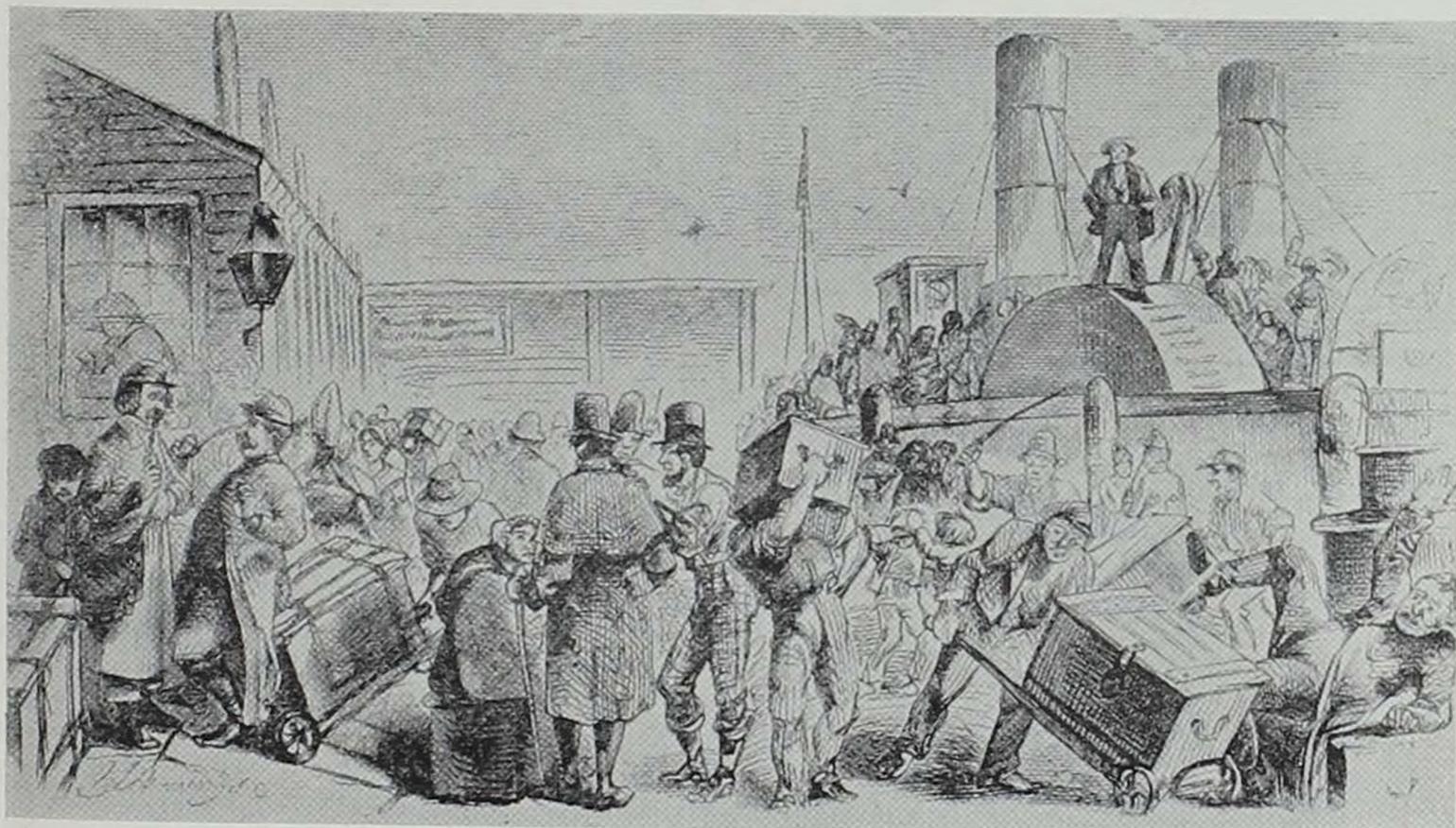


Emigrants at Dinner in Hold of Ship

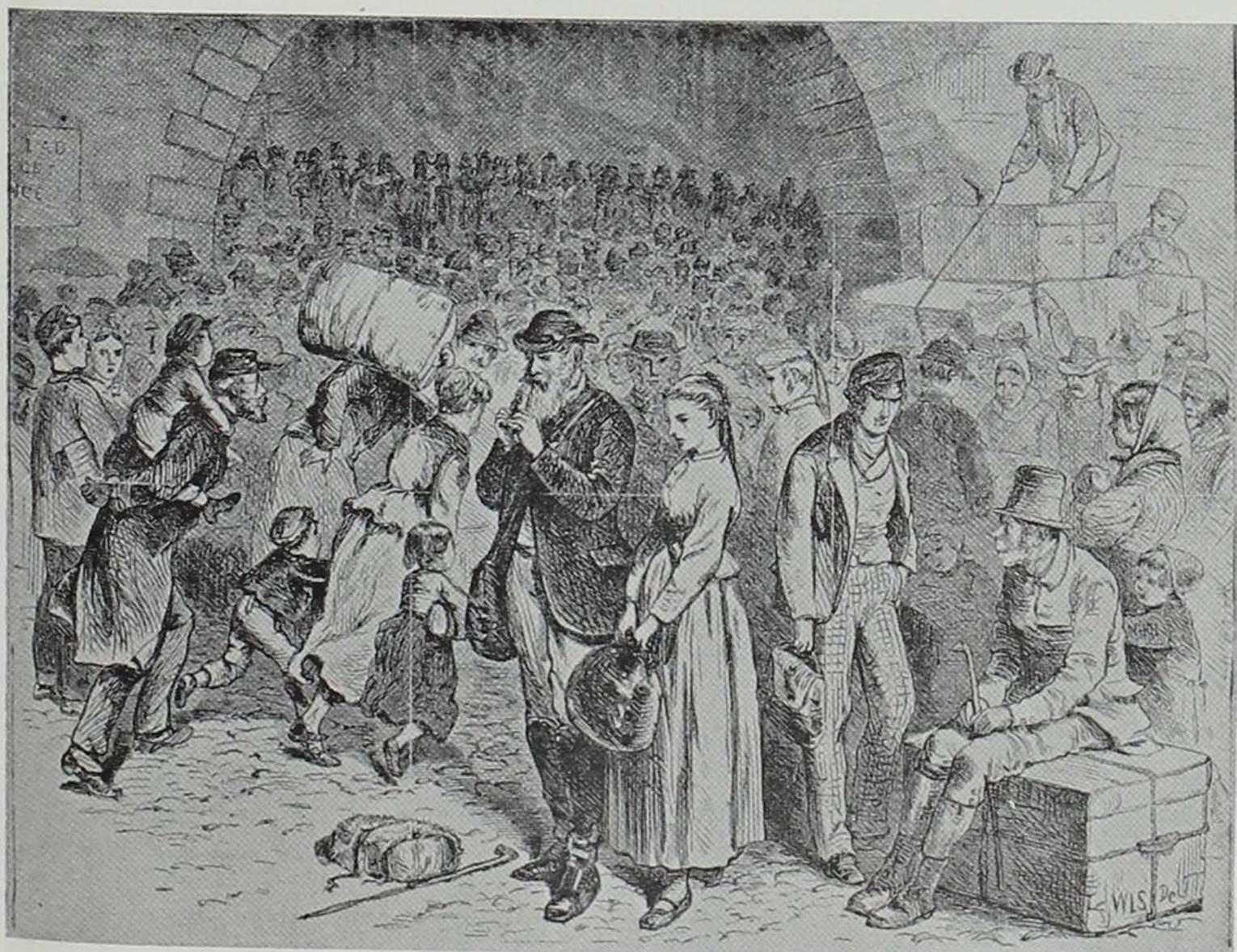


Horrors of the Emigrant Ship

STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND

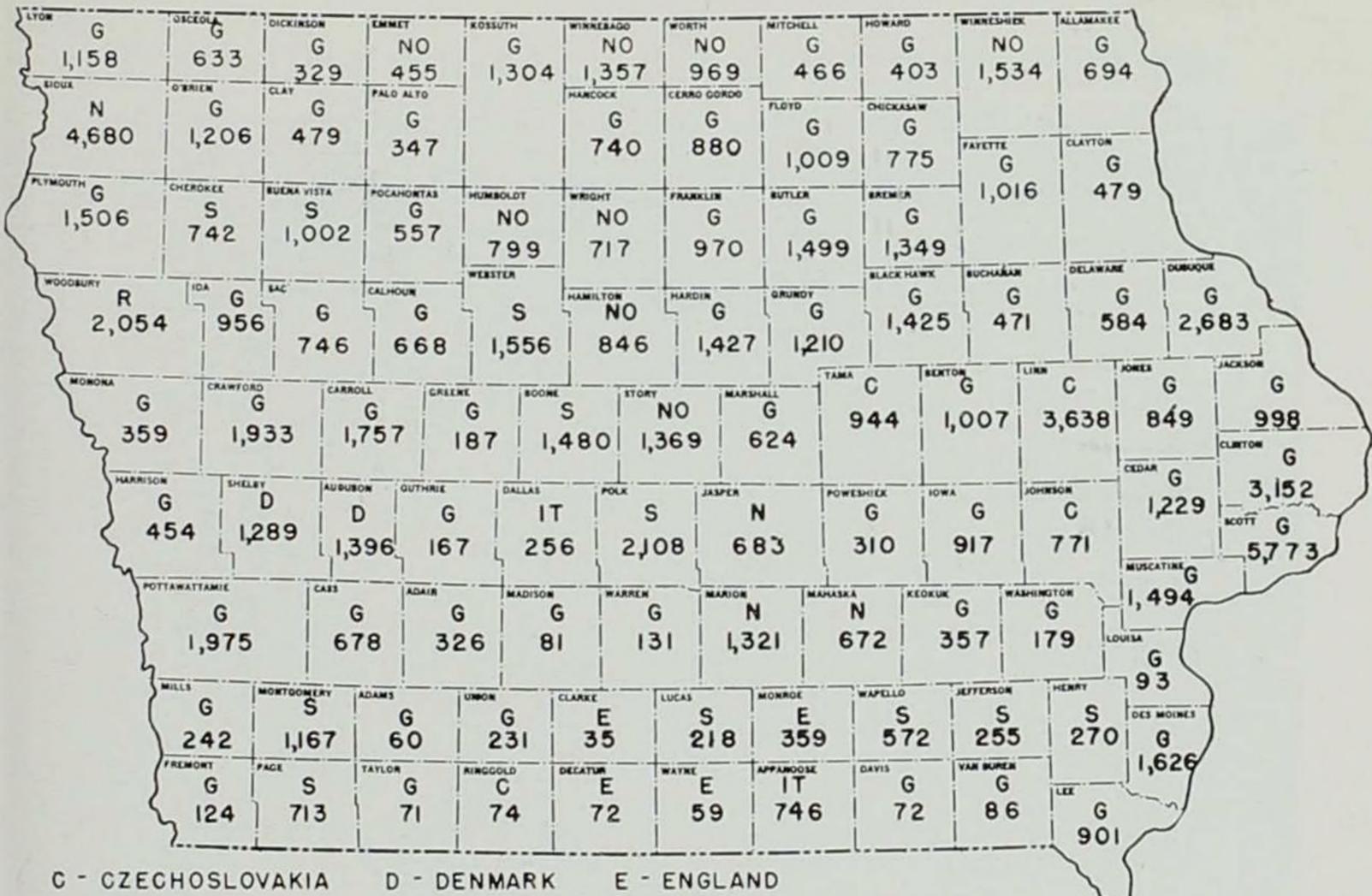


Emigrants Landing in New York



Emigrants Departing for the West

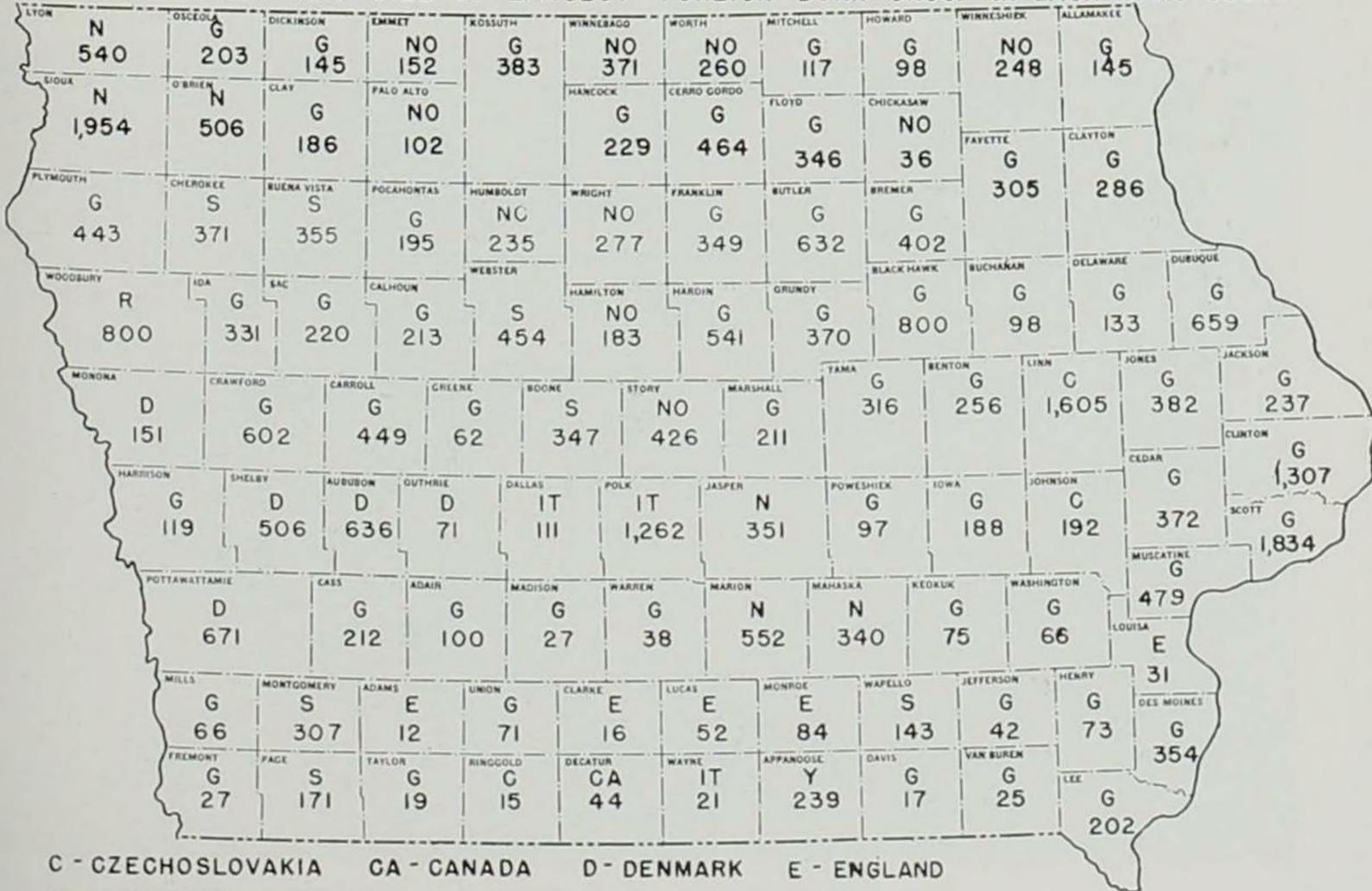
1920 - ORIGIN AND SIZE OF LARGEST FOREIGN BORN GROUP IN EACH IOWA COUNTY



C - CZECHOSLOVAKIA D - DENMARK E - ENGLAND
 G - GERMANY IT - ITALY N - NETHERLANDS
 NO - NORWAY R - RUSSIA S - SWEDEN

PREPARED BY H.L. CALKIN

1950 - ORIGIN AND SIZE OF LARGEST FOREIGN BORN GROUP IN EACH IOWA COUNTY



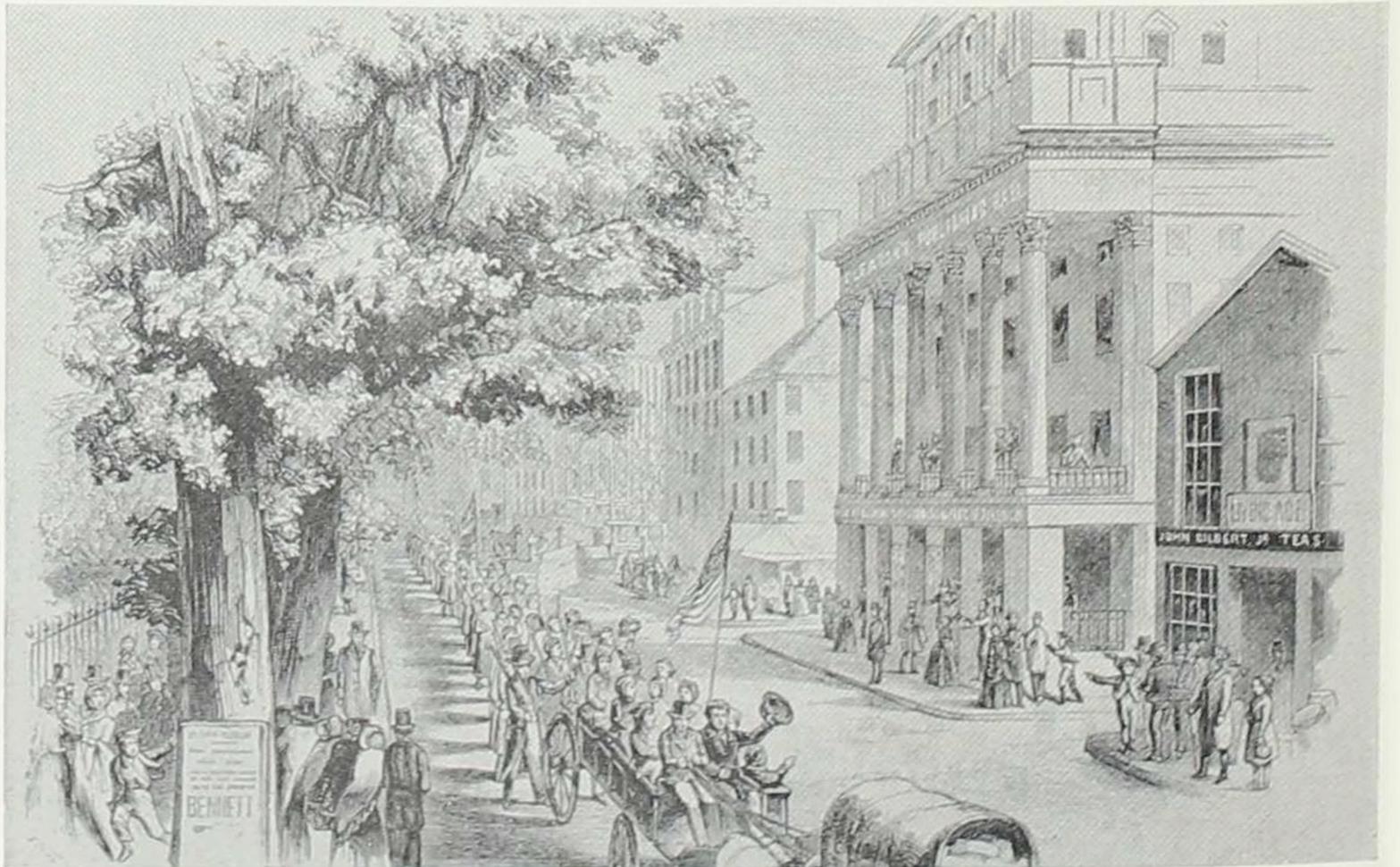
C - CZECHOSLOVAKIA CA - CANADA D - DENMARK E - ENGLAND
 G - GERMANY IT - ITALY N - NETHERLANDS NO - NORWAY
 R - RUSSIA S - SWEDEN Y - YUGOSLAVIA

PREPARED BY H.L. CALKIN

HEADING FOR THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY



Emigrant Wagon on Way to Railroad Station



Swedish Emigrants Bound for the West

mines that must be worked. The Webster County coal miners were from Ireland, England, and Canada. In the coal mines of Scott and Jefferson counties, the miners came from Scotland. There were eighteen Englishmen, five Welsh, five Swedes, two Scots and one Dane working in the mines in Des Moines Township, Boone County, in 1870.

J. A. Green, an Irishman, owned a stone quarry at Anamosa in 1870. His laborers were mostly Irish — seventeen in number. He also had two Scotchmen, two Englishmen, and one Canadian.

Many manufacturers came from England and Canada. In Burlington an Englishman named Henry Jarvis made concrete bricks while Harvey Ray, Jr., another Englishman, manufactured agricultural implements. In Dubuque, Joseph Trudell, a Canadian, was a prosperous manufacturer of carriages and wagons. William Bokirk operated a woolen factory in Guthrie County. His entire labor force consisted of I. C. Fox, finisher, Henry Chessel, wool sorter, William Anderson, dyer, and John Story, weaver, all from England.

In the nineteenth century numerous public offices and local government jobs were held by immigrants. For instance, James Wood, an Englishman, was Mayor of Vinton in 1870. Ten years earlier he had been the postmaster.

Among those who held county office was the sheriff of Bremer County in 1860, J. G. Elliss, an

Englishman. In 1870 the county judge of Linn County was Daniel Lothian, Scotchman. The county treasurer of Dubuque was an Irishman, Arthur McCann.

Those who were elected to Congress from Iowa included three from Scotland and one from Ireland. The Scotchmen were Daniel Kerr of Grundy Center, David B. Henderson of Fayette County and James Wilson of Tama County. The Irishman was William Smythe of Linn County. Henderson and Wilson were both Speakers of the House, and Wilson became Secretary of Agriculture under President William McKinley.

In addition to those occupations mentioned, Scotchmen were often coopers, and merchants, while Englishmen were frequently bankers, lawyers, engineers, millers, speculators, and merchants. In addition to being laborers of various types, those with an Irish background were bricklayers, lime burners, locomotive engineers, switchmen, and land surveyors.