

# Jones County

## Historical Review

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# Railroad history dates back to 1859 in county

The following article has been submitted by Paul Adams of Monticello, and is the result of research on his part, concerning early attempts to construct rail lines through Jones county.

Immediately after gold was discovered in California the interest in a trans-continental railroad rose to fever pitch. At that time (1848) there were only two different means of getting to California. One was to cross the great plains by horse, oxen or other animal drawn conveyance; the other to go by ship and either sail all the way around South America, then up the western coast to California, or to disembark at Cristobal, New Granada (now Panama) and walk across the isthmus, to reboard on the western coast. To cross at the isthmus was dangerous in many ways, for this was a jungle and swamp area most of its way.

A railroad was definitely needed to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In 1852 the Iowa Central Airline Railroad was organized. This was two years before any railroad was to be built in Iowa and seven years before any trackage would be laid in Jones county.

### BEGIN AT LYONS

Since railroad construction was already underway in Illinois, the Iowa Central Airline would start at Lyons, near Clinton, and the railroads being constructed in Illinois would connect with the Iowa Central at Lyons. The Iowa Central immediately put survey crews to work out a route for the line.

The survey began at Lyons, running through Maquoketa, Anamosa, Stone City, Marion, Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown, but here it stopped while management tried to determine whether to route the line to cross the Missouri at Onawa or Council Bluffs. Arguments developed, with one proposal to follow the Mormon trail

through Fort Kearney, Neb., then to Fort Larmie, to Fort Bridger, Utah, to Salt Lake, then to California.

Those not favoring this route argued for it to be built through the southern part of Nebraska territory (now the State of Kansas), on to Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory, then to El Paso, San Diego, and northward up the coast to California to Sacramento.

### HESITATE TOO LONG

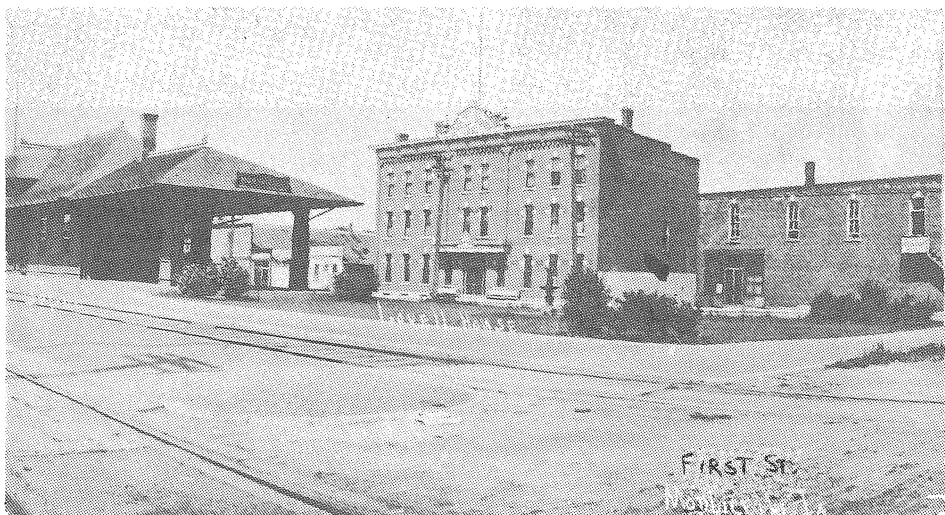
In 1853 the United States Government purchased over 45,000 square miles of land from Mexico known as the Gadsen purchase. This purchase was intended to make it more easily handled should the railroads ever decide to take the southern route to the west coast. Management of

the Iowa Central lagged in their decisions, and the Gadsen purchase was of no avail to them. Other rail companies jumped in, and were given the options on rights of way through this vast tract of ground.

Yet another proposal was advanced by the Iowa Central in the hopes management could agree. This was to build the right of way along the Missouri river, cross the Rocky mountains in Oregon Territory and then build on to Portland. This it was decided was not practical.

There is an old maxim that "He who hesitates is lost" and this held with the management of Iowa Central in their time spent arguing.

Another rail line sprang up, survey completed and railbed laid in record time. The line was only about 50 miles long, yet it



THE MONTICELLO depot (left) was once a busy place with many passenger trains stopping here each week. During the hey-day of the railroad here, The Lovell House (center) was a thriving hotel. It also served as social center of the community with meals and dances being offered. (Photos of Monticello appearing in this issue of the Review are through the courtesy of Lester Dirks, Monticello. They were taken between 1890 and 1910.)

# Towns no longer railroad centers as passenger trains fade out

connected the two oceans. It crossed New Granada (now Panama), but not without setbacks.

The Panama Railroad was organized in 1849 by a group of financiers from New York. The same year this group signed a contract with the New Granada government, and with \$1,000,000.00 in capital surveyed, cleared the route, and laid eight miles of track. Then the money ran out.

## GOLD SAVES LINE

Hope was lost, and those with the investment resigned themselves to suffering the loss, but the quest for gold by the tens of thousands so intent on striking it rich, saved the day. By the thousands, men would disembark from ships putting into Cristobol, ride the train to the end of the line which was eight miles, then pay the rail company an extra five dollars to walk on the roadbed to the western shore. This income enabled the company to finish the line by importing Chinese and Irish laborers, and by January of 1855 the entire line was completed.

By this time many of the ships were paddle steamers, and it became almost a luxury trip for the gold seekers to reach California from the east coast of the United States.

The United States Government at this time had more critical matters to cope with than helping the rail companies. The issue of slavery, and the impending rebellion took priority over all other matters, and this spelled doom for the Iowa Central Railway, as it did for many other lines.

## LARGE INVESTMENT

Jones county stockholders had over \$50,000.00 invested in the rail company up to this time, and the state of Iowa had made large land grants to benefit the corporation. In 1859 the Iowa Central Airline Railroad folded, without one foot of track having been put down, and only a few miles of roadbed had been graded west of Lyons.

This was disaster to the stockholders, but the county acquired all of the land which had originally been granted to the Iowa Central within Jones county. In total acres this amounted to 4,590, which county officials eventually sold, with the proceeds going into the tax coffers to the benefit of the taxpayers.

The mapping and surveying done by the Iowa Central were beneficial to those railroads that were more successful, among them the Midland-Dubuque-and Southwestern, the Chicago and North-western, the Union Pacific, Central Pacific, the Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, Northern Pacific, the Great Northern, Milwaukee Road, and the Western Pacific.

Their dreams now shattered, most of the principal figures moved into oblivion.

## COUNTY GETS RAILROAD

HOWEVER -- Jones county was to have a railroad, and the first trackage laid was by the Dubuque and Southwestern. Residents and Governmental figures wanted a rail line to connect Dubuque and Cedar Rapids, and as early as 1856 a line had been started running west from Dubuque to Sioux City.

This was called the Dubuque-Sioux City railroad. An agreement was reached to connect with this line and run tracks from Farley to Worthington to Sand Springs, Monticello, Langworthy, Anamosa, Stone City, and the Linn county towns of Viola, Springville, Marion and terminating at Cedar Rapids.

The line immediately became one of the most heavily traveled in the new state, hauling thousands of passengers, and millions of pounds of dry goods and staples, along with hundreds of thousands of board feet of choice lumber milled at Dubuque from Chippewa pine floated down from Wisconsin. Early records indicate that as many as 20 different trains would traverse this route to and from in a 24 hour period.

Traffic slowed some when the Illinois Central (formerly Dubuque and Sioux City) constructed a branch line southward from Manchester to Cedar Rapids routing through Ryan, Coggon and Central City. This decline in traffic eventually resulted in the Dubuque-Farley-and Southwestern selling out to the Milwaukee railroad.

Immediately after acquiring the D-S-& SW, the Milwaukee line built a spur from Springville to Paralta and junctioned with

the Sabula-Ackley and Dakota railroad. The S-D & A eventually became the mainline of the Milwaukee running from Savanna, Illinois to Council Bluffs. At this time then the original Dubuque Southwestern tracks from Springville to Marion were abandoned.

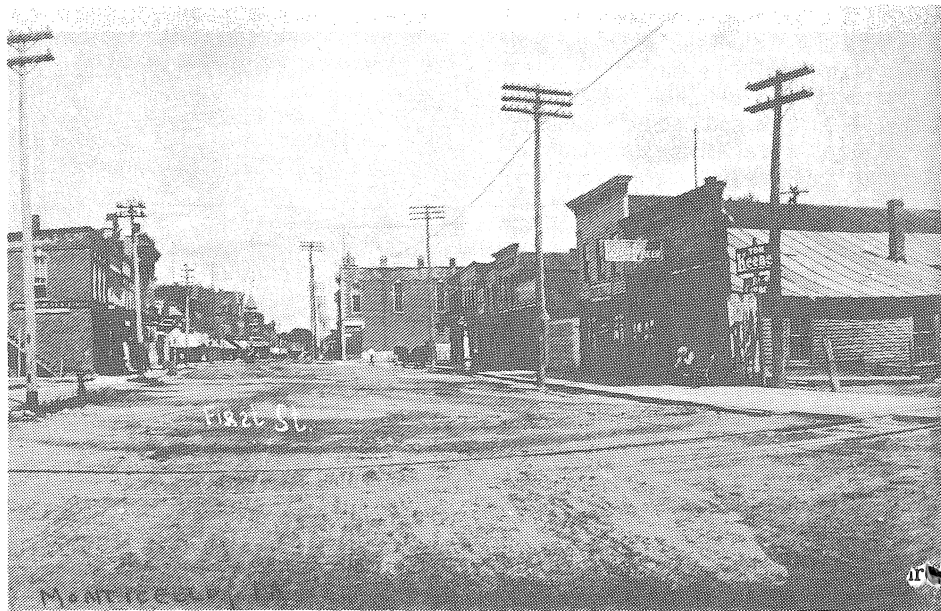
## OTHER EARLY LINES

During the mid 1930s, the Milwaukee took up its tracks between Farley and Worthington, and switched their scheduled trains from Dubuque to Bellevue, connecting with the old Sabula-Ackley and Dakota tracks. This then took them through the Jones county towns of Oxford Junction, Hale, Olin, Morley and Martelle.

In the early 1870s, the Davenport and St. Paul railroad, eventually acquired by the Milwaukee, built a line from Oxford Junction to Wyoming, Center Junction, Scotch Grove, and Monticello. North of Monticello they installed a junction for routing to Worthington and this became known as Junction Switch. (see Volume One, Issue Two, Historical Review). The switch went out of service when the line to Sand Springs and Worthington was abandoned and removed in 1972.

Gone now and probably forever is the wail of the old steam whistle. No more the vast crowds alighting from the passenger cars at the depots, no more the heavy cars of coal and lumber. No more the express -- only faint lines, and an occasional butment where the fire belching monsters crossed a stream or gully.

Paul Adams, Monticello



*HORSE AND BUGGYS were still the mode of transportation and streets still had just dirt surfaces when this early day photo of Monticello's business district was taken. The view looks east on First street and was taken from a spot just west of the railroad tracks.*

# More vignettes of "The Hired Man" --characters from the rural past

## TROUBADOUR OR TRAMP

It was a blustery, cold night, misting rain driving almost straight across the north hills and past the east dining room window and door. The Mrs. was alone with little boys No. 2 and No. 3, as Big Brother, aged about 8, had gone with his Daddy to Uncle Jim's to help milk the cows -- we being "out of" cows and "into" feeding steers, and the helping out at Jim's furnished milk for the The Boss' family. The year was 1936 and The Depression was in full sway in most of the nation.

Suddenly there came a rap at the dining room door. The Mrs., thinking the wild March wind was playing tricks on her imagination, hesitated a second, then opened the door just as an outstretched hand was reaching up for a second try.

There stood a tramp -- no other word for it! Small, dark and dripping wet, with a raffish smile in spite of his drowning-rat appearance, and with a bundle of all his worldly goods -- well, nearly all -- tied up in a big red bandanna on a stick over his shoulder.

"Good evening, Ma'am, is this the Charles Gray place?" in such a deferential tone as he might have used addressing No. 10 Downing Street, or Windsor Castle. The Mrs. said "Yes", and opening the door wider, "but come on in -- don't just stand there letting all this weather inside."

He looked a little taken aback at her harsh tone, but hastened to step inside, dragging his wet Derby hat ("of all things," she thought, "a Derby hat on this?"). "Now, tell me what your business is, and what do you want?"

He had walked the 10 miles from town, where he had spent the night before at the American Legion hall. The adjutant had allowed him to sleep on the pool table, and had staked him to a roll and a cup of coffee in the morning. He had been in the Navy, and had the credentials to prove it.

The adjutant, whom we knew, had told him, "C.W." would likely give him a job if he could find his own way out there. It had taken him nearly all day!

He had to leave his ukelele with the Post for security on his lodging and breakfast, which he promised to redeem. And he did, the very next day when The Boss took him to town, dried off and full of pancakes. He borrowed the dollar -- advance on his wages from The Boss -- to get his precious "Baby", as he called it, "out of hock".

His first two names were Robert Dewey -- his last name doesn't matter -- and he was as proud of those two as if he had been at least a great-nephew of the Admiral himself. I never knew his nationality, but he could roll the "Rrrobert" off his tongue

with a real Scotch br'r'r! Had folks in Ohio, and said he had attended Western Reserve university; but he never wrote or had a letter in all the time he worked for us.

We never pried into any of his past, as we never had any of the other "characters" through those years. He had had some farming experience, so did fairly well in haying time.

He told The Mrs. one day, much later, "You had more nerve than any woman I ever saw, that night - you didn't act a bit afraid of me!" To which she replied, "I didn't act, I wasn't afraid. I never saw the size or the shape of the man I was afraid of."

Which was true, and still is, but Bob was so conceitedly sure his 5 ft. 3 in. and some 130 or 135 lbs. would cause ladies to "swoon", he could not see how "comic-opera" he really was!

But he could make "Baby" talk, and today would have no trouble making the rock concert circuit, though his "Ain't gonna rain no more", and "Oh, Susannah" would be quite out of date.

He and The Boss got into a real rhubarb one day in the barnyard, while The Mrs. was staying a few weeks with a very sick little Boy No. 3, and "bringing forth 'Little Sister'". By the time she got back to the farm, Bob was long gone, carrying with him not only "Baby" and his insufferable conceit, but quite a lot more money in his pocket than he had that stormy night in March!

I never knew what the quarrel was really all about, but he was the only one of "The Long 'Gray' Line" of hired hands that The Boss ever had that sort of trouble with. We didn't miss him, or even "Baby", at all!

## "ANY TSUGAR IN DESE?"

"Slick" -- no one knows how he came by that nickname -- was an older brother of Little Buck, one of the 10 offspring of the French Canadian parents who had finally settled in Iowa, from Nova Scotia; no "Gabrielles" or "Evangelines" among them, just good, honest, but mostly unlettered middle-class folk.

"Slick" was one of the five The Boss had to send, at Uncle Sam's beck and call, to the Army in the summer of 1918. He never got beyond Camp Grant, Illinois, but at least he did get out of the State; he, too, was inordinately proud of his uniform, "doughboy hat", and puttees.

In after years, he could always be counted on to march in any parade, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, or Labor Day! He had the Manual of Arms letter-

perfect, 'tho he could never have read it, and how he understood the "bark" of the average sergeant giving them out, is a mystery!

In later years, the children would read "the funnies" with him, not to him, with never a hint that they knew he couldn't read them himself - little diplomats!

"Slick" was what we called our "perennial" hired man -- we could count on him showing up for a few months every year. "Needin' any help, C.W.?" -- and C.W., knowing he had come because he was hungry, and hadn't more than a little change for a can of "Prince Albert" in his pocket, would tell him, "Why, yes, Slick, guess I can use you to do chores for awhile - go on up to the house - have you had breakfast?" - or dinner, or supper, as the case might be.

Usually he hadn't, and could drink more coffee in a day than all the rest of us together; (I don't know what he would ever do now, with the price of coffee soaring like the thermometer on a July afternoon!)

But it was not July, but an icy day in late February, when a cold rain had turned to sleet, and covered everything with a sheet of ice as smooth as glass. One of the young shoats had somehow wriggled his way through the fence by the hog house, and had slid to the bottom of the steep little hill which was part of the hog pasture in summer, but was now nothing but an unbroken mound of crystal-clear ice.

"Porky" was squealing madly at the bottom of it next to the woven wire fence; so "Slick" volunteered to "get 'em back up dere", when The Boss was pondering "ways and means", knowing full well that "Slick's" ego would come to his rescue!

Slick edged his way most carefully along the hog house fence, clinging with one hand to the fence, and reached for Porky with the other, letting go of the fence in order to get a better hold on Porky's tail now they were both between the devil and the deep blue sea!

Slick evidently twisted the tail the wrong way, because the pig made a dash straight up the steepest part of the icy hill. They got nearly half way up, slipped, and both rolled to the bottom again.

So they tried again; by this time Porky's cries had aroused the entire herd inside the hog house, and the din could be heard all over the farm, pigs squealing, Slick cursing him in language he would never use ordinarily, and The Boss bent double with laughter but trying to tell him to "Get him over by the fence!"

# Didn't like tables turned in joke playing . . .

But Slick's contrariness would have it otherwise, so for six times he and Porky would get just so near, and back they would go, squealing, and "cursing a blue streak", to the bottom!

But the force of gravity finally persuaded Slick to do what The Boss told him to, and by the near exhaustion of both Porky and the "Nemesis" on his tail, they made it up by the fence where The Boss could get hold of an ear, and so help them both over the fence.

The "chore" had taken most of the forenoon, but The Boss, in telling The Mrs. about it later, said it "was well worth the price of the show!"

Slick was not particularly 'colorful', but a couple of incidents come to mind that paint a little picture of what efforts one would make to have a little "fun" on April Fool's Day. He liked to "fool" the young fry with "Looka dere! Who's comin'?" They all jumped up and ran to see "Who?" and Slick would have his "Ha Ha! April Fool!"

So, The Mrs. thought turnabout was fair play; she cut a "round" of clean, thin, white cloth from a dish towel, and putting a spoonful of batter on the griddle, placed the cloth-center on it, and putting another little larger spoonful on top of that, had a nice, hot, well-browned-on-both-sides pancake to put on Slick's plate.

Having forewarned the little "victims" so they could enjoy their revenge, The Mrs. -- and I might add, The Boss -- watched intently while Slick "battered and syruiped" the steaming tidbit, and taking knife and fork began to saw, and saw, and saw, with no results that would insure him a bite. He tore it open just as the Young Fry shouted "April Fool, Slick!"

The Mrs. had fried him another -- a real one this time, but Slick was furious, and got up from the table and went to the barn much faster than his usual slow pace to get at the chores. He could "dish it out" but he "couldn't take it!"

He had a few idiosyncrasies about food that The Mrs. had indulged him in, rather than having him refuse to eat what would be good food for him. One day her patience wore a little thin. She would never put sugar in stewed tomatoes because he wouldn't touch them if she did; the rest of the family all wanted a little sugar.

One day, in her haste she did forget and added the little sugar to them, while on the stove. Slick always asked "Any tsugar in dese?" and The Mrs. would always tell him "No, Slick, you know I don't sugar them".

He would then take his bowlful, and nothing more was said; but he would never try to like anything he hadn't even tasted, and was so stubborn about it that it was setting an example for her impressionable Young Fry that she regretted.

So, this time -- "Any tsugar in dese?";

"Now, Slick, you know I never sugar the tomatoes". Whereupon he filled his bowl, ate them all, and -- unusual for him -- took a second helping. "Dese are extra good today!"

The Mrs. never disillusioned him; he went to The Heavenly Tomato Patch years later not knowing "dey was tsugared". The Mrs.? -- she hopes she has been forgiven for the only lie she can ever remember telling a "hired-man"!

## THAT'S STAVING' GOOD PIE!

This Bob was one of three brothers whose family had moved into Iowa from Southwest Kansas, far enough south to have had an "accent" all their own, not quite a Texas drawl, a little quicker of speech than that, but interestingly "South-west".

Bob was one of the most honest workers in all the lot of "hired men"; he gave full measure of time paid for, and a little more, uncomplainingly; with the exception of a chore which he considered "women's work" - he never carried a pail of water or chopped a stick of wood for The Mrs. that I can ever remember!

"Kansas women did their own chores" was his comment. But Bob was a kindly man; most of "the hands" took The Mrs.' cooking very much for granted, even as The Boss himself did!

One day she served a "home-baked-from-scratch" (there was no other kind in 1915!) chocolate pie, with meringue at least 1½ inches high; Bob, swinging his fork around with a flourish after his first huge bite, remarked in his Kansas twang, "Mrs., that's stavin' good pie!" -- which compliment, of course, got him the widest of the remaining wedges on the plate!

She had never heard "staving" used in any connection except in regard to work, or "rushing headlong into something". Come to think of it, "staving" was quite appropriate, the way Bob used it.

He was also the one who had saved his wages, month after month, until he had enough for a big down-payment on a new Harley-Davidson motorcycle. That long ago there were few, if any, "frills" on one; they started hard and noisily, and stopped mostly at will -- theirs!

I don't know how or when he had learned to ride, but both The Boss and The Mrs. were petrified everytime he "took off", and "landed" -- reminding one of pictures from "The Sketch-book"; Ichabod Crane's coattails could fly no farther out than Bob's.

Once shortly after he brought it home, he came right up to the big wooden gate that enclosed the pasture where cattle and horses were kept, and yelled "Whoa!" and, luckily for him, his "steed" and the gate, killed the engine just in time! He told us about it himself, which showed another admirable trait of his character -- he was

not afraid to laugh with us, at himself.

And, if a discussion came up it always had two sides, and then it was an argument, not a discussion. He was always fair, and would say, "Well, I'll 'omit' that point" -- which would retire The Mrs. from the scene; she had to laugh at his "omit" for "admit", but would not have hurt his feelings for the world.

The day was sultry, hot and still, as only a late June day can be, and Bob was "laying some corn by," that is, cultivating the weeds out of it for the third time, in one of the hottest valleys in the "West Forty"; not a breath of air could reach him or his team -- the corn was "withers-high" on old Fly, and she was a tall horse!

Lady, her team-mate, also a Clydesdale, was shorter and blockier built, and shorter-winded. It was nearly noon, and Bob wanted to finish that last bit of plowing for the season, so Bob wasn't stopping to "breathe 'em", or himself. But Lady stopped him, and took her last breather -- dropped dead in her tracks of a heat-stroke.

Poor Bob unhooked Fly from the plow, and from poor Lady, and came on the run for the barn, where he broke down and wept, telling The Boss what had happened; not one alibi, blaming himself alone.

The Boss calmed him down, telling him it could have happened to anyone, to put Fly in the barn to cool off, and come in and eat his dinner; "then we'll go and skin her - her hide will bring a little". So they skinned her and "snaked" her carcass back to a ditch, and covered her over. About \$200 lost, just like that!

But, instead of selling the hide, The Mrs. suggested having it tanned for a "lap-robe" or a rug; that way they would still hve a part of Lady for years and years. So that was done, and Lady kept The Mrs. and The Small Fry who were still to come along, warm on many a cold buggy-ride, and later in the old "Model T" which needed "lap-robos" in the wintertime. But Bob took things a little slower after that -- no more "stavin", except for chocolate pie!

## "GARRETT, THE GOOD"

This is by way of a "tribute" only, and concludes the series on "The Hired Men":

Garrett was a little older than the usual run of "hands", he might have been nearing 50 at the time he came to work for The Boss -- the time was in the late '30s; came from the good old German stock in Cass and Wayne townships and had few folks of his own; had never married -- some woman thereby missing a life with one of the finest, kindest men I have ever known -- she would never have been good enough for him!

Tall, and a little stooped, he was nevertheless strong and willing and being

## Hired men--

arm-oriented was capable in field or at chores"; in his own unobtrusive way, a help, to The Mrs., too. She never had to ask him. He saw the small amount of wood ready for the kitchen range or the low-water level in the pail on the bench in the kitchen, and quietly replenished both anytime he was near the house.

He was kind to all the livestock; the horses loved him - no rearing back in fear of being jerked around into harness. So did the Young Fry love him; Garrett was a "born teacher" --(they are, you know, the good ones, like poets and ball players and good spellers) born, not made! He delighted in teaching them to ask for their food in German, and they became pretty adept at it, until Mother calmly served them what they asked for -- she had been listening, too!

In the calm before bedtime, and after supper, Garrett's favorite spot to "see the stars come out" was an old stump beside a huge old oak tree, near the barn, where he would puff on his pipe, and regale the Young Fry, who had followed him like children did "The Pied Piper", and who were never turned away.

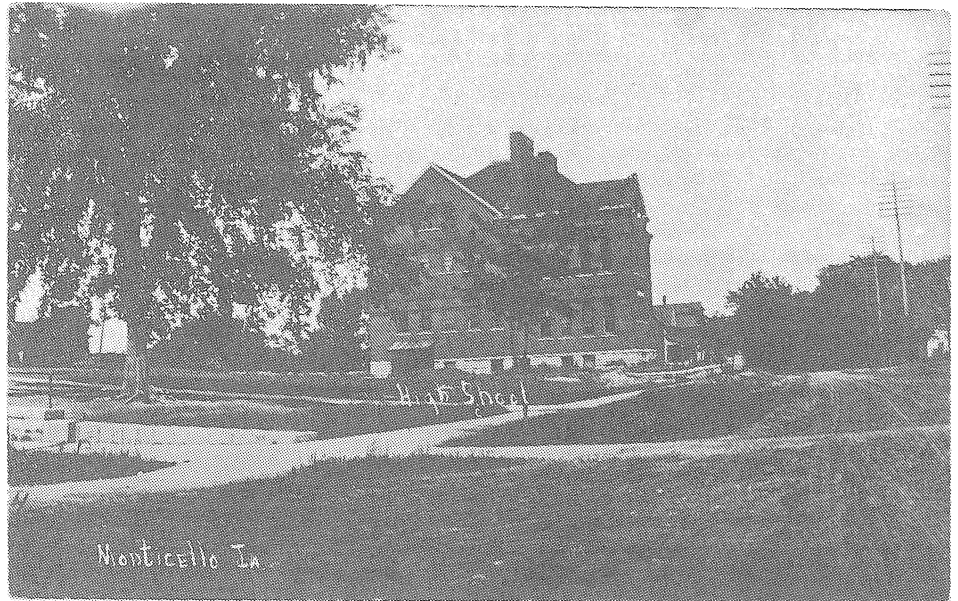
Taking the littlest one on one knee, he would teach them which star was which. See that bright one? that's the buckle on old Orion's belt! and Big Bear -- Ursa Major, and Little Bear -- Ursa Minor, and The Pleiades or 'Seven Sisters', only you can only see six of them - one was a naughty little girl one time and hid her face behind the others!" I never knew where he got his knowledge; partly from "The Farmer's Almanac" possibly, and the rest "poetic license"?

But when Mother called from the South Porch, "Garrett, time to send the children in now, it's their bedtime", he didn't send them, he brought them; Littlest One perched on his shoulder, with the others tagging along behind without a murmur, even though 8 o'clock bedtime was barely after dark.

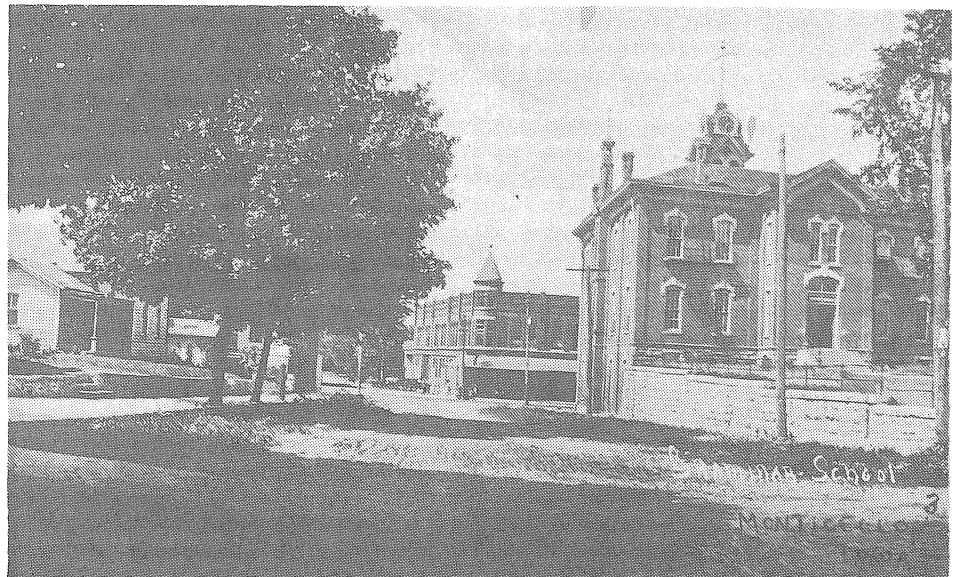
I met him once, many years later at the Jones County Home, where he had gone to live when he was no longer able to work. I had gone with our local pastor and a Youth Choir to play the piano for a Sunday afternoon service, and glancing up from my hymnal at an open door into the wide hall, I saw him leaning slightly against the wall, as though he were a little tired, but with the same friendly smile he always had for everyone.

After the service I had a chance to shake hands and visit a moment; I had not known he was there. "I heard the piano and it sounded so much like you used to play it on The Farm, I had to come out and see for myself!"

He was delighted to hear that Small Fry



*NOW THE HOME of the Masonic temple, this building housed Monticello high school during the 1890-1910 period of this photo.*



*JUST AROUND the corner was the grammar school. Better known as the opera house, this building made way for the present Monticello Community building in the 1930s.*

were all well; Big Brother into high school now, and Son No. 2 about ready to enter; all three others happy and doing well at Black Oak school.

I never saw him again, but when I close my eyes I can see, not a man on a stump in an Iowa barnyard with a few Small Fry around him, but a Heavenly Helper on a hillside, away off in Time, doing the same thing Garrett did on the Earth, taking the little children, all colors, and all beautiful, on his knees, and saying even as his Master had said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not". Don't you expect the Lover of little children was delighted to get such a "Helper" as "Garrett, the Good" turned out to be? I'm sure of it!

--by Mrs. Charles Gray, Sr.  
Anamosa, Ia.

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# Farmer Bill expounded barnyard philosophy on chautauqua circuit

## FARMER BILL'S BARNYARD PHILOSOPHY

We knew him as "Colonel" Bill - that title being given to all auctioneers of farm sales especially; and he was a good one! But we knew him best as neighbor and friend, a most delightful Irishman; something pixie-like about him, like he may have been known by the leprechauns, or "little people" who danced in fairy-rings on moonlit nights! No one could come under his influence for long and remain morose or gloomy.

I never did know exactly how he was contacted and booked into the Keith Vauter Chautauqua circuit that played in most of our countryside towns in the late '20s and early '30s. This was the five-day circuit, and always was in Anamosa and Monticello in the last week of July or the first week in August, but I do know that he, and his brother Phillip were the "moving spirits" that got the committee signed up to have Chautauqua come to Amber one year.

The committee had to guarantee a certain sum, and underwrite it, beforehand, so it was quite a gamble; but they did, and Amber was the only small town that had it.

So it was perhaps through this channel that "Colonel" Bill went on the circuit, not that first year, but later; once the culture-starved people in the country saw what it could do to bring lectures, music, plays, and recreation right to their doors, the raising the guarantee was easy -- it paid for itself after the first tent was put up. And the year "Farmer Bill" was booked for our town, the tent would hardly hold them the day he was to speak.

Of course, it would be nice to say he was welcomed like a hero returning from the Punic wars -- but while laughter and applause rippled constantly through the tent, afterwards the reaction would be something like this: "Where did he ever learn so much about farming -- he's always the last one in the field in the morning, and the first one out at night!" Or, "I don't see how he can farm, and be gadding around the country all the time." Or, "What does he think he can tell us about plowing" or "worms", or whatever it was that they had gotten out of his lecture!

This was by no means a consensus of opinion, and was only voiced by certain ethnic groups other than Irish, who were envious of his well-recognized ability to do something other than "plough-deep", in season, and to look up and beyond the furrow they were buried in while so doing. And when "Cinninnatus" left his plough

for awhile, they were jealous of the good money he was making!

Only a few were like that, and their descendants now, even unto the third and fourth generation, are not like that; they and their children are college-trained and know what "Farmer Bill's" philosophy was all about, and I am glad that it is so.

Well, his tent-filling ability was soon recognized by the Vauter people, and he was urged to go on their seven-day circuit, a great honor, because the "seven-day" took in a much wider range of cities, and went into several states in the North and Northwest; the Dakotas, Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Travel was all by train then; bus service was unheard of as yet, so it meant longer separations from the family and the farm.

Will and Margaret debated a long time, but she was so determined that he would not give up this chance at greater opportunities to exercise his talent, that he gave in, and the newspaper clippings in city after city justified her faith in his ability; she and the two boys "took care of things at home". The girls were too small for more than "egg-gathering chores" at that time.

I don't know whether he had more than two seasons on the "seven-day" or not, but he gave it up and came home as the strain was beginning to tell on his health, and being separated from his family was not at all to his liking.

I haven't been able to tell much of his actual lecturing, having heard just the one so many years ago, but one or two things come back to me. He said in one place, "To watch your step, tho', in taking a tour through the barnyard with him, - not to step in too much 'philosophy', or you would have a real boot-blackening job to do when you get to the house!"

And in regard to his reference to "worms", he gave most of that tentfull their first inkling that earthworms had any function other than dangling from a fisherman's hook; that they had digestive systems which were the real function of their lives, to aerate the soil and keep it loose! And his ideas of "cut and cover" versus "deep plowing" were years ahead of his time -- agriculturists know just of late years, the many advantages of shallow ploughing!

He was an "ecumenist" when no one as yet had ever heard the word; a devout Catholic, he nevertheless belonged to a Congregational "Men's Club", and attended and always livened up their monthly meetings held in the homes,

though, of course, he did not attend their Sunday Morning Bible class. He and Margaret entertained the group in their home, where I furnished the piano solo for part of the entertainment. It was on that occasion that he informed the group that their old cat had just recently had kittens in Margaret's oven!

As she had just served some lovely cake, he watched with glee the different expressions on the ladies' faces -- they were "guests" at this particular meeting -- and then he finished his announcement: "Of course, we didn't call them Biscuits just because they were born in the oven!" and went on to say he forgot to tell them the oven in question was on an old unused stove, minus an oven door, that stood in a back utility room!

Just one more "memory": the last time we saw him, he had only a short time left to live, and he even then could not keep the "fun" from bubbling up. He had been a janitor at the Children's hospital for some time -- this was years after they had left the farm and its "philosophy", and moved to Iowa City -- and he he told us that he had informed the head of the hospital that he expected them to give him a banquet, as they did always for any of their group who were "leaving the staff", and that was what he was doing -- "Leaving the Staff" for another "assignment" - up higher! In two weeks he was gone.

--by Mrs. Charles W. Gray, Sr.  
Anamosa, Iowa





# SCHOOL DAZE

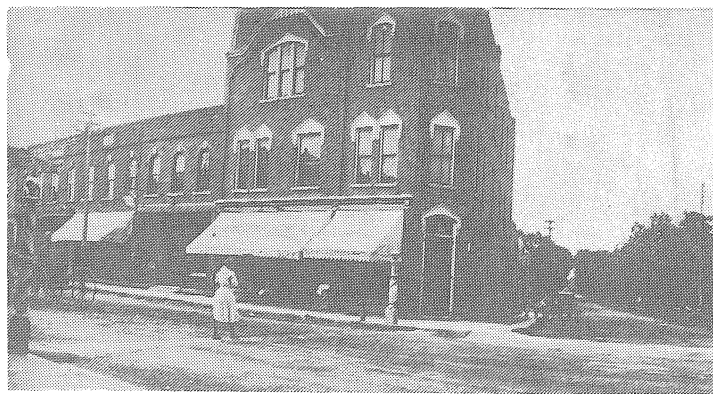
Sunday, Sept. 11, 1977

1-5 p.m.

Rural school memories    Contest prizes galore

Old-fashioned ice cream social

Sponsored by Jones County Historical Society



DOES THIS building look familiar? Today it is known as the Locher building, but way back when it housed Doutrick Dry Goods.



THIS EARLY DAY view of Monticello's First street depicts the corner now occupied by the Schultz Bros. store.

## President's message: bits of this 'n that from C. L. Norlin

Dear Reader:

This issue of the "Historical Review" is a perfect example of what we have hoped to attain in reader-member participation in the submitting of material for the publication.

While there have been other stories and research submitted in prior issues, it had fallen pretty much to the staff of the Historical Society to see that there was sufficient material to make up an issue. Almost every issue has encouraged the reader to help the Society out by submitting material, and this encouragement is beginning to bear fruit.

Some will ask "What bearing does a story about an old threshing crew or meet have with Jones county history", or "What interest is it to history that my great-grandfather settled here after pushing a hand cart all the way from Ohio", or any number of other incidents or episodes.

These are human interest stories, and bear heavily on Jones county history. They need not be "hand me down" stories from the 1800s or early 1900s. They can be stories (factual, of course) from any period of time in this area.

They may be a broad range of subjects, from homesteading to hired men, from railroading to the first concrete paving in Jones county. From a particular bad blizzard to stories of the "Dust Bowl" days. From an old country school picnic to the burning of the "Parish Mortgage".

All stories, of course, are given added interest if they are accompanied by pictures that relate to the subject, and all stories published in the "Review" should be factual. If legend persists on a particular subject, this is also acceptable, but should be noted as "legend".

Many people have pictures only, which they can identify as relating to a particular subject or event. There need not necessarily be a story accompanying these pictures, only an explanation so the picture may be captioned. Whenever pictures are submitted, they are returned to the owner unless specifically donated to the Historical Society Museum.

In upcoming issues, we hope to give you stories on material submitted by a lady living in Bettendorf, Iowa, who's grandfather was an early settler of Clay Mills, and who kept a running diary from the time he was 22 years old in 1877 until the time of his death in 1908.

Material submitted by a reader from Beloit, Wis., a descendant of an early Jones county resident, includes an original official document; - an official survey of the road from Anamosa to Garnavillo, by way of Delhi. One reader has submitted a number of early pictures of Monticello. I might inject here that we need pictures and material from ALL the towns in Jones county.

We are unable to pay for any material submitted. The Jones county Historical Society is a non-profit organization, and exists solely through the efforts of the people to maintain it.

We have printed, only enough issues of the "Review" to supply subscribers, with a few extras in case some are lost in the mail.

All of our mail goes "Non-profit organization" rate, which means that if we do not have your CORRECT address, you will not receive your paper, nor other correspondence. Non-profit rate mail is not forwarded. It is not returned to us if not deliverable. It is simply destroyed by the post office department.

On Sept. 11 the Historical Society plans

to have an old fashioned "School Daze" celebration at the museum grounds.

Bring the family. Tour the museum and grounds. Enjoy the program and refreshments, without paying an admission. The Society will ask only for a free will offering.

If you are a new subscriber, or wish to subscribe to the "Review" it will not be necessary that you clip the coupon from an issue. Simply drop your \$5.00 for a year's membership and subscription in an envelope, and mail it to the Jones County Historical Society, Box 124, Monticello, Iowa 52310. As mentioned be sure your address is correct and complete.

You members are doing a beautiful job with your society and the museum. We need more members, and especially we need more names on our "volunteer" list. While we seldom ask for any volunteer help, and then only for a few hours, the curators need help on Sunday afternoons while the museum is open.

Remember there is a picnic shelter and outdoor fireplace on the grounds for those of you wishing to hold family picnics or reunions or for any occasion. The gates to the grounds are locked at sunset or shortly thereafter, but you are invited and encouraged to use the facilities. This is a beautiful wooded area, and those of you who have not been there are missing something delightful.

Jones County Historical Review  
Monticello, Iowa 52310

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