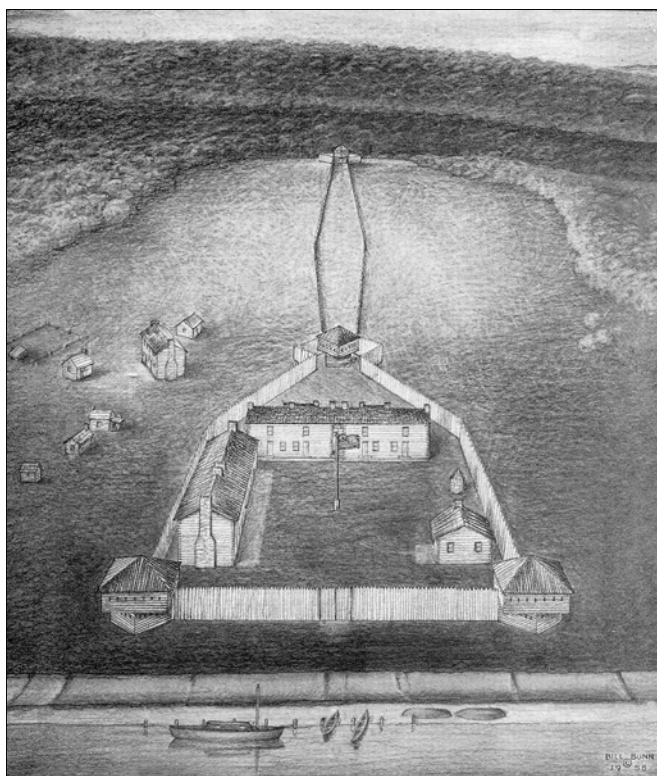


# The Annals of Iowa

Volume 75 Number 3  
Summer 2016



A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY

## In This Issue

PATRICK J. JUNG, professor of history and anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, relates the history of Fort Madison before and during the War of 1812. He assesses the decisions made by federal officials and military officers about the post's purpose and location, examines military readiness and morale at the fort, and explores the cultural forces that led Indian tribes in the vicinity to repeatedly attack the fort. All of these factors help explain why Fort Madison was generally ineffective as a military fortification during the War of 1812.

BILL R. DOUGLAS, an independent historian, recounts the efforts of the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio—Jewish rabbi Eugene Mannheimer, Protestant minister Stoddard Lane, and Catholic priest Robert Walsh—as they barnstormed the state of Iowa in the late 1930s and early 1940s to promote religious tolerance and mutual respect. He also sets their efforts in the context of earlier efforts in Iowa to promote pluralism, tolerance, ecumenism, and interfaith cooperation.

## Front Cover

Old Fort Madison, as sketched by Wm. E. L. Brum, from *Palimpsest* 39 (January 1958), back cover. For a military history of Old Fort Madison, see Patrick Jung's article in this issue.

## Editorial Consultants

Rebecca Conard, Middle Tennessee State  
University

Kathleen Neils Conzen, University of  
Chicago

William Cronon, University of Wisconsin-  
Madison

Robert R. Dykstra, State University of  
New York at Albany

R. David Edmunds, University of Texas  
at Dallas

H. Roger Grant, Clemson University  
William C. Pratt, University of Nebraska  
at Omaha

Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, Iowa State  
University

Malcolm J. Rohrbough, University of Iowa

# The Annals of Iowa

Third Series, Vol. 75, No. 3

Summer 2016

Marvin Bergman, editor

---

## Contents

- 201      Lonely Sentinel:  
            A Military History of Fort Madison, 1808–1813  
            *Patrick J. Jung*
- 234      Making Iowa Safe for Differences:  
            Barnstorming Iowa on Behalf of  
            Religious Tolerance, 1936–1943  
            *Bill R. Douglas*
- 260      Book Reviews and Notices

---

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY FOUNDED IN 1863  
Copyright 2016 by the State Historical Society of Iowa  
ISSN 0003-4827

## Book Reviews and Notices

- 260 MICHAEL A. McDONNELL, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America*, by John P. Bowes
- 262 ROBERT MICHAEL MORRISSEY, *Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country*, by Stephen Warren
- 264 LUCY ELDERSVELD MURPHY, *Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie Du Chien, 1750–1860*, by Robert Michael Morrissey
- 266 GILLUM FERGUSON, *Illinois in the War of 1812*, by Patrick J. Jung
- 268 KATHLEEN ERNST, *A Settler's Year: Pioneer Life Through the Seasons*, by Jeff Bremer
- 269 JERRY APPS, *Wisconsin Agriculture: A History*, by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg
- 270 TODD NATHAN THOMPSON, *The National Joker: Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Satire*, by Mark Wahlgren Summers
- 272 JODI O'DONNELL, ED., *Campus Beautiful: Shaping the Aesthetic Identity of Iowa State University*, by Jerome L. Thompson
- 274 JUDITH FLANDERS, *The Making of Home: The 500-Year Story of How Our Houses Became Our Homes*, by Shirley Wajda
- 276 ROY SUCHOLEIKI, *The Sand Art Bottles of Andrew Clemens*, by Barbara Ching
- 277 ROBERT A. BIRMINGHAM, *Skunk Hill: A Native Ceremonial Community in Wisconsin*, Eric Steven Zimmer
- 278 STEPHEN H. TABER, ED., *A Rainbow Division Lieutenant in France: The World War I Diary of John H. Taber*, by Matthew J. Margis
- 279 ROBIN O'SULLIVAN, *American Organic: A Cultural History of Farming, Gardening, Shopping, and Eating*, by Barbara J. Dilly
- 281 MIKE CHAPMAN, *Iowa's Record Setting Governor: The Terry Branstad Story*, by Timothy Walch
- 283 ZACHARY MICHAEL JACK, *Corn Poll: A Novel of the Iowa Caucuses*, by Matthew Schaefer

# Lonely Sentinel: A Military History of Fort Madison, 1808–1813

PATRICK J. JUNG

FORT MADISON was the first American fort in Iowa and the site of the westernmost battles of the War of 1812. Significantly, it was the only army post in Iowa ever to be attacked by Indians. Scholars who have studied Fort Madison generally agree that its location was its greatest liability.<sup>1</sup> However, those scholars have

---

I would like to thank the State Historical Society of Iowa for the generous research grant that allowed me to acquire the documents needed for this article. I would also like to thank the staffs of the Missouri History Museum, the Jefferson Library at the United States Military Academy, and the National Archives for their assistance. Finally, the editor of the *Annals of Iowa* and the anonymous reviewers who read this article provided invaluable suggestions that have made this essay a stronger piece of scholarship.

1. The most significant works on Fort Madison are Charles Aldrich, ed., "Fort Madison," *Annals of Iowa* 3 (1897), 97–110; Jacob Van der Zee, ed., "Old Fort Madison: Some Source Materials," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 11 (1913), 517–45; and Donald Jackson, "Old Fort Madison—1808–1813," *Palimpsest* 39 (1958), 1–65. Most recent is a three-part article in the *Journal of the War of 1812* 12, available at <http://journal.thewarof1812.info/>: David Bennett, "A New Perspective on the Last Days of Fort Madison," Part I, "The Fort at 'Belle Vue,'" (Spring 2009), 17–23; Part II, "Defense under Siege" (Summer 2009), 7–15; Part III, "Abandonment and Result" (Fall 2009), 14–20. An online source with valuable information is Eugene Watkins, "U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison: Biographical Sketches," [www.fortmadison-ia.com/DocumentCenter/View/502](http://www.fortmadison-ia.com/DocumentCenter/View/502). Archaeological work done at the site since the 1960s provides insights into the layout and geography of Fort Madison. See Marshall McKusick, "Exploring Old Fort Madison," *The Iowan* 15 (Fall 1966), 12–13, 50–51; John Hansman, "An Archaeological Problem at Old Fort Madison," *Plains Anthropologist* 32 (1987), 217–31; Marshall McKusick, "Fort Madison, 1808–1813," in *Frontier Forts of Iowa: Indians,*

THE ANNALS OF IOWA 75 (Summer 2016). © State Historical Society of Iowa, 2016.

overlooked other factors that rendered Fort Madison inadequate, particularly for defending the region north of St. Louis. Military officers suggested establishing additional posts farther north on the Mississippi River, but the parsimony of the federal government meant that no other fortifications were built, and the vast area north of Fort Madison was left undefended. Moreover, because the War Department established Fort Madison only to provide local defense for an Indian trading establishment, it never had enough soldiers to defend the entire upper Mississippi valley, or even for local defense because of its poor location. As a result, it was susceptible to attacks by the Sauk and Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), two powerful Indian tribes who perceived Fort Madison's presence as an alien and threatening military occupation of their country. Thus, Fort Madison—small, undermanned, poorly located, and dangerously situated—was vulnerable upon the commencement of hostilities in 1812.

To fully grasp why Fort Madison was generally ineffective as a military fortification during the War of 1812, one must understand the post's history prior to the conflict. This requires an assessment of the decisions made by various federal officials and military officers about the post's purpose and location. Equally important is an examination of the U.S. Army in the period before the War of 1812, particularly those institutional characteristics that undermined military readiness and morale at isolated frontier installations. Earlier studies of Fort Madison have generally neglected these factors, and none have examined the cultural forces that led the Indian tribes in the post's vicinity to repeatedly attack Fort Madison during its short existence. The story of Fort Madison during the War of 1812 becomes much clearer once these elements are considered.

WITH THE ACQUISITION of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the United States gained possession of both banks of the Mississippi River. Spain had received Louisiana from France in 1762, and Napoleon Bonaparte reacquired it for France in 1800. When the United States took possession of New Orleans in 1803 and

---

*Traders, and Soldiers*, ed. William Whittaker (Iowa City, 2009), 55–74; and John Doershuk et al., "Defining Battlefield Archaeological Context at Fort Madison, Iowa," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 37 (2012), 219–42.

St. Louis in 1804, the Louisiana Purchase had a mixed French and Spanish population as well as slaves of African ancestry, Métis of European and Native American descent, and many populous and powerful Indian tribes. The American occupation caused little concern among the French and Spanish residents, but the Sauk Indians who lived north of St. Louis expressed considerable apprehension.

Unlike other colonial powers, such as France, Great Britain, and Spain, all of whom had allowed Indian communities to retain their tribal domains and autonomy in exchange for alliance and trade, the United States aggressively sought to dispossess the Indians of their lands. Shortly after taking possession of St. Louis, the United States in 1804 negotiated a fraudulent treaty with the Sauk and their close confederates, the Meskwaki (Fox) that eventually forced them to cede 15 million acres of land east of the Mississippi. The Sauk war leader Black Hawk, who at the time was in his mid-30s, noted that the Spanish, who still occupied St. Louis at the time of the transfer, “appeared to us like brothers—and always gave us good advice. . . . We had always heard bad accounts of the Americans from Indians who had lived near them!”<sup>2</sup>

Initially, the small garrison of 57 American soldiers at St. Louis posed little threat to the Sauk, but the great expanse of undefended territory north of the settlement unnerved federal officials who wanted a more robust military presence in the region. In 1805 President Thomas Jefferson appointed James Wilkinson as the territorial governor of Louisiana Territory, which consisted of the part of the Louisiana Purchase north of the present-day Louisiana-Arkansas border. Wilkinson believed that the upper Mississippi valley was exposed and vulnerable. Of even greater concern to Wilkinson were British traders from Canada who purchased furs from the Indians. Jay’s Treaty of 1794 allowed British traders from Canada (many of whom were actually of French Canadian ancestry) to operate south of the border. Wilkinson

---

2. Francis Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783–1846* (London, 1969), 1–6, 63–72; Patrick Jung, “Toward the Black Hawk War: The Sauk and Fox Indians and the War of 1812,” *Michigan Historical Review* 38 (2012), 29–31; Black Hawk, *Black Hawk: An Autobiography*, ed. Donald Jackson (Urbana, IL, 1955), 56–60 (quote).



Portrait of Black Hawk by Charles Bird King (1837), from The McKenney-Hall Portrait Gallery of American Indians, by James D. Horan (1972).

and other American officials feared that these men would turn the native communities against the United States. Wilkinson wrote, "If We admit the British trader to a free intercourse with them [the Indians] . . . he will oppose himself to our plans. . . . By a Single whisper he may destroy our present good understanding with the natives."<sup>3</sup>

Wilkinson developed an expansive plan for additional forts farther north on the Mississippi. In 1805 he ordered Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike to ascend the Mississippi and select

---

3. Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, 73-76; Francis Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834* (Lincoln, NE, 1962), 76-77; James Wilkinson to James Madison, 8/24/1805, in *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, ed. Clarence Carter and John Bloom, 28 vols. (Washington, DC, 1934-1975), 13:189-91 (quote; hereafter cited as *TPUS*).



possible sites for military posts. Pike identified sites at the mouth of the Wisconsin River at Prairie du Chien, the mouth of the St. Croix River, and the Falls of St. Anthony on the Mississippi River about seven miles north of the mouth of the Minnesota River. He stopped at the location where Fort Madison later stood, but he did not recommend it as a location for a fort; instead, he proposed two other sites roughly 20 and 30 miles to the north of that location. When he met with a group of local Sauk, he only discussed establishing a trading house in the area, and he left before identifying a site for such an establishment. The War Department did not share Wilkinson's belief that extensive and costly fortifications were necessary on the western frontiers. Thus, Wilkinson's plans never came to fruition, and the sites Pike identified would not see any fortifications, at least not before the War of 1812.<sup>4</sup>

Wilkinson settled for establishing a fortification at St. Louis. He selected the site for Fort Belle Fontaine along the Missouri River about four miles upstream from its confluence with the Mississippi. He also selected a site close by for a government trading house. Federal policy makers believed that private traders were a dangerous element among the tribes. British traders might undermine the influence of the United States, but American traders, many of whom defrauded the Indians and, worse yet, introduced alcohol into native communities, often were little better. Thus, in 1795, Congress approved plans for government trading houses, or factories, as they were known. By 1810 twelve factories operated in the Great Lakes, the Mississippi valley, and the South. The network of factories was never large enough to drive private traders from the field, however, so by 1822 the system was abandoned. During the time they existed, though, the fac-

---

4. Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, 76-79; Wilkinson to Henry Dearborn, 9/22/1805, *TPUS*, 13:230; Wilkinson to Zebulon Montgomery Pike, 7/30/1805, *TPUS*, 13:185-86; Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, With Letters and Related Documents*, ed. Donald Jackson, 2 vols. (Norman, OK, 1966), 1:14-15, 14n20, 15n22, 22, 37-38, 232, 235-36, 237n1, 245-46; Dearborn to Wilkinson, 6/28/1805, *TPUS*, 13:239. An article published in 1897 asserts that the first site identified by Pike for a fort was the location of Fort Madison, but Pike's description places his site farther north near present-day Oquakwa, Illinois. See Aldrich, "Fort Madison," 98; Pike, *Expeditions*, 1:235, 237n1.

tories often stood alongside forts; in fact, protecting them was the principal mission of many army posts.<sup>5</sup>

Advocates believed that the factories were vital for maintaining friendly relations with the Indians. Among these supporters was Meriwether Lewis, who, fresh from his journey on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, was appointed as governor of Louisiana Territory in 1807. Lewis believed that the factory at Fort Belle Fontaine was inconvenient for the tribes farther north, particularly the Sauk and Meskwaki, so he petitioned the War Department to establish a new factory in the heart of their country. Secretary of War Henry Dearborn acquiesced and in May 1808 ordered that a trade factory and fort be built. Upon learning of Dearborn's order, Lewis met with Sauk and Meskwaki leaders in St. Louis and secured three square miles of land about a mile above the mouth of the Des Moines River (present-day Keokuk, Iowa). Dearborn also ordered the construction of another factory and military post (Fort Osage) on the Missouri River roughly 250 miles west of St. Louis. Colonel Thomas Hunt was to oversee the construction at the two sites. Dearborn confidently stated that both forts would be "a guard at each of these trading houses."<sup>6</sup> He apparently did not believe that either post would serve any significant military function; if he had, he would have followed the advice of Wilkinson and Pike and had the fort on the Mississippi built farther upriver at a more strategic location.<sup>7</sup>

---

5. Wilkinson to Dearborn, 7/27/1805, *TPUS*, 13:167; Francis Prucha, *A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States, 1789-1895* (Madison, WI, 1964), 60; Francis Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln, NE, 1984), 1:115-34; John Mason to Joseph Anderson, 4/12/1810, in *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1832-1834), 1:768 (hereafter cited as *ASP:IA*).

6. Treaty with Sauk and Foxes, 11/3/1804, in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, ed. Charles Kappler, vol. 2 (Washington, DC, 1904), 76; Meriwether Lewis to Dearborn, 7/1/1808, *TPUS*, 14:202-3; Lewis to Thomas Hunt, 8/8/1809, Letter 21, Daniel Bissell Papers, 1800-1820, St. Louis Mercantile Library, University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri (hereafter cited as Bissell MSS, SLML); *Missouri Gazette* (St. Louis), 6/28/1809; Dearborn to Hunt, 5/17/1808, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, 1800-1889, Microfilm Publication M-6, reel 3, vol. 3., p. 347, Record Group 107, National Archives, Washington, DC (quote; hereafter cited as M-6, with references to reel, volume, and page numbers).

7. Documents written by contemporaneous observers support this conclusion. For examples, see Alpha Kingsley to Dearborn, 4/19/1809, Fort Madison Res-

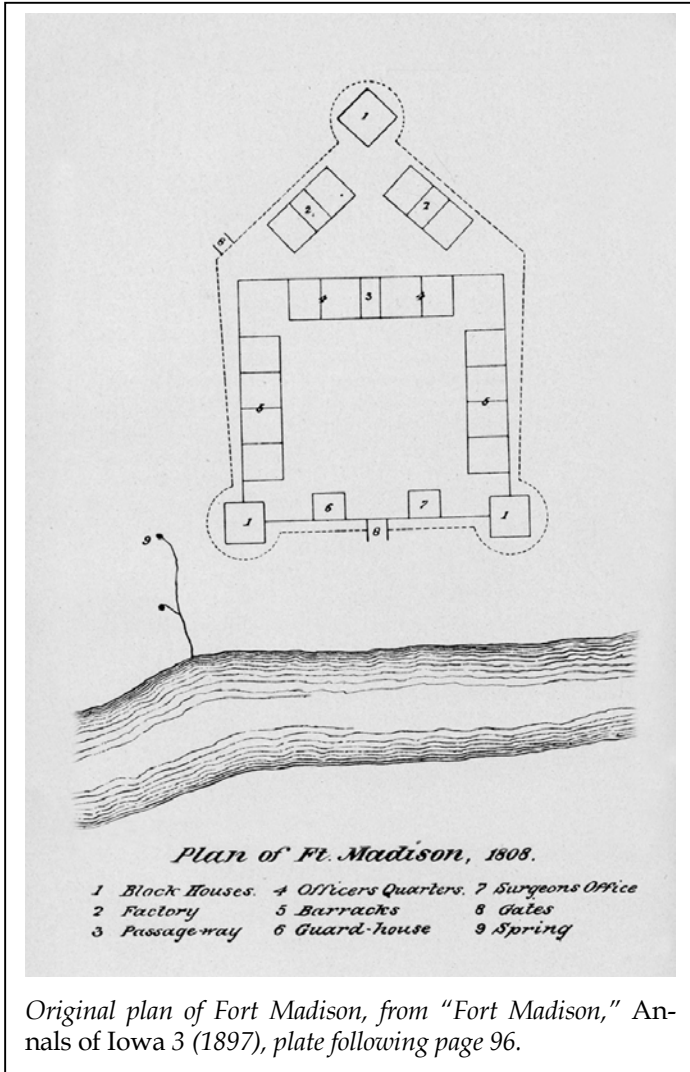
Hunt's sudden death meant that the task of establishing Fort Madison fell upon a less experienced junior officer, First Lieutenant Alpha Kingsley. Along with John Johnson, the government factor appointed to run the factory, and Nicolas Boilvin, the assistant Indian agent to the tribes of the upper Mississippi valley, Kingsley departed Fort Belle Fontaine on August 24, 1808, with about 60 men of the First Infantry Regiment. On or about September 11, the little squadron of flatboats arrived at the mouth of the Des Moines River as per Dearborn's orders, but Kingsley and Johnson believed it was a poor site since it was subject to flooding. The location selected earlier by Lewis was also inadequate as it had few trees for lumber, no clean water, and was a half-mile from the river. Kingsley and Johnson apparently had no knowledge of the sites upriver suggested by Pike three years earlier. They finally chose a location, which the War Department subsequently approved, about 25 miles north of the Des Moines River on the western bank of the Mississippi (the location of the present-day town of Fort Madison, Iowa). They arrived there on September 26, 1808. The site had plenty of timber, a good view of the river, and "an excellent spring of water" that Kingsley believed was vital for the soldiers' health. Because of the spring and its "extensive view of the [Mississippi] River," Kingsley named the site Belle Vue (Beautiful View).<sup>8</sup>

KINGSLEY'S MEN erected a temporary camp surrounded by a low picket stockade only five or six feet high. The permanent fort, as designed by Kingsley, would have two blockhouses fronting the Mississippi River with a third in the rear, thus creating a

---

ervation File, entry 464, folder 4, box 68, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as FMRF); Thomas Hamilton to Daniel Bissell, 9/10/1812, in *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States during the War with Great Britain*, ed. John Brannan (Washington, DC, 1823), 65 (hereafter cited as *Official Letters*).

8. William Clark to Dearborn, 8/18/1808, *TPUS*, 14:208; Pike, *Expeditions*, 1:15n22; James House to Dearborn, 8/26/1808, FMRF; Bennett, "Fort Madison," Part I, 21-22; Watkins, "U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison," 1; John Johnson to Mason, 9/19/1808, FMRF; Mason to Johnson, 11/11/1808, Letters Sent by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Microfilm Publication M-16, reel 1, vol. A, p. 259, Record Group 75, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as M-16, with references to reel, volume, and page numbers); Kingsley to Dearborn, 11/22/1808, FMRF (quote).



five-cornered fort that measured 160 feet wide by 210 feet long. The soldiers labored throughout the winter cutting lumber for the fort, which would have a much stronger stockade with oak pickets 14 feet tall and between 12 and 18 inches in diameter. During the first two weeks of April 1809, Kingsley's men completed work on the permanent fortification, christened Fort

Madison in honor of the new president, James Madison. They moved in on April 14, 1809.<sup>9</sup>

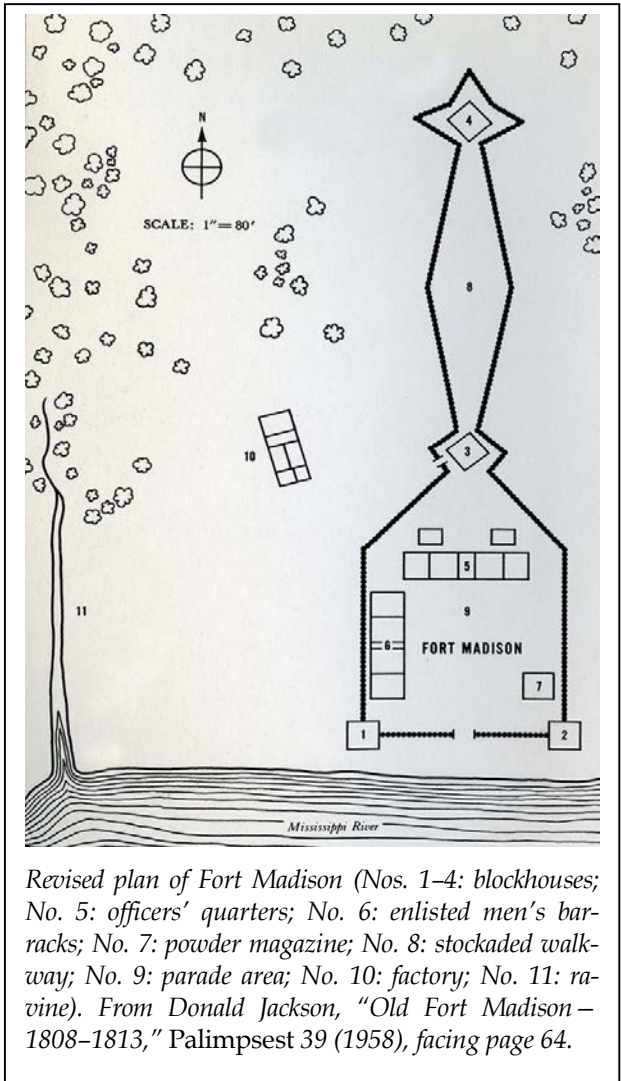
The site had several handicaps. First, a ravine about 100 yards from the western wall of the stockade could afford an enemy 60 yards of shelter. Second, a ridge of high ground about 250 yards beyond the north end of the fort could allow an enemy to fire down inside the walls of the stockade. Third, the bank along the shore of the Mississippi, like the ravine, afforded cover to a potential enemy. During the construction, Kingsley addressed only the second shortcoming. He built a fourth blockhouse on the ridge to the north and created a long, stockaded passageway to the main fort. The officers and soldiers of Fort Madison derisively referred to this appendage as the "Tail."<sup>10</sup>

Kingsley originally wanted the factory within the stockade, but an event during the final phases of construction changed his mind. Kingsley and Johnson met with Sauk and Meskwaki leaders and received their permission to occupy the site. During the course of their earlier meetings with Pike and Lewis, the Sauk had raised no objections to a factory; however, they were never told that a fort with soldiers would be built alongside it. The Sauk perceived the presence of American soldiers in their country as unnecessary and provocative. News of the expedition under Kingsley spread among the members of the tribe throughout the autumn of 1808, and the garrison's presence caused them great concern. Black Hawk noted, "The news of their arrival was soon carried to all the villages. . . . [We] were told that they were a party of soldiers, who had brought *great guns* with them – and looked like a *war party* of whites!" Kingsley assured the Sauk that his purpose was to construct a factory, and that the soldiers were only there "to keep him [Johnson] company!" As

---

9. Kingsley to Dearborn, 11/22/1808, FMRF; [George Hunt], "A Personal Narrative," in Van der Zee, "Old Fort Madison," 517–18; Kingsley to Dearborn, 4/19/1809, FMRF; Jackson, "Old Fort Madison," 15.

10. Hamilton to Bissell, 7/18/1813, Letters Received by the Secretary of War Registered Series, 1801–1860, Microfilm Publication M-221, reel 53, document H232, Record Group 107, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as M-221, with references to reel and document numbers); House to William Eustis, 5/9/1809, FMRF; *Missouri Gazette*, 9/11/1813; Doershuk, "Battlefield Archaeological Context," 223–24, 228, 237; McKusick, "Fort Madison," 57; Bissell to Eustis, 9/26/1812, *TPUS*, 14:595.



*Revised plan of Fort Madison (Nos. 1-4: blockhouses; No. 5: officers' quarters; No. 6: enlisted men's barracks; No. 7: powder magazine; No. 8: stockaded walkway; No. 9: parade area; No. 10: factory; No. 11: ravine). From Donald Jackson, "Old Fort Madison - 1808-1813," Palimpsest 39 (1958), facing page 64.*

the soldiers completed their work, a few Sauk warriors would sneak up on the men, take their guns as they worked, give a yell to startle them, and then return the weapons as they laughed at the frightened soldiers.<sup>11</sup>

11. Jackson, "Old Fort Madison," 13-14; Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 59-60, 63-64 (quote).

Kingsley took these pranks seriously. He requested another meeting with the Sauk leaders, although the council did not end as he had hoped. In early April 1809, as his men were busy finishing the fort's construction, Kingsley held the council within the confines of the temporary camp. Many Sauk stood on barrels and blocks of wood to watch the proceedings over the short stockade. Worried about the presence of about 400 Indians, Kingsley had his soldiers load their individual weapons and had several men ready an artillery piece. A group of warriors outside the stockade began to dance, proceeded to the gate, and indicated their intention to dance for the soldiers within the enclosure. Upon their arrival at the gate, the council abruptly ended. Kingsley ordered his men to their arms and wheeled the artillery into place, with a soldier holding a lit match ready to fire a blast into the Indians if they forced their way through the entrance. The Sauk leaders ordered the dancers back, and the tense situation was defused. Nonetheless, the incident led Kingsley to decide, during the final phases of construction, to place the factory 30 yards outside the stockade so the Indians could conduct their transactions without having to enter the confines of Fort Madison.<sup>12</sup>

Black Hawk later asserted that there had been no premeditated intent to assault the fort. Yet it appears that the Sauk had assembled at Fort Madison with the intention of destroying it. Black Hawk subsequently acknowledged that "had our party got into the fort, all the whites would have been killed."<sup>13</sup>

It also appears that Kingsley had been alerted to the plot. George Hunt, the post sutler who ran the soldiers' commissary – which provided sundry items such as tobacco, sugar, and shoe polish – had received word about an intended attack from a friendly Ioway Indian. Nicholas Jarrot, a local trader, had heard of a plan to infiltrate the fort and slaughter its inhabitants from other traders who worked among the Sauk. Both men passed their intelligence on to Kingsley.<sup>14</sup>

---

12. Jackson, "Old Fort Madison," 16–19; Kingsley to Dearborn, 4/19/1809, FMRF.

13. Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 65.

14. Kingsley to Dearborn, 4/19/1809, FMRF; [Hunt], "Personal Narrative," 520–24; Affidavit of Nicholas Jarrot, 5/23/1809, FMRF; Affidavit of John Johnson, 11/18/1809, FMRF.

Prior to receiving that information, Kingsley had sent one of his subordinates, Second Lieutenant Nathaniel Pryor, to St. Louis to acquire additional building materials. By the time Pryor arrived in St. Louis, William Clark, Meriwether Lewis's former co-commander and the government's chief Indian agent at St. Louis, had received similar intelligence from his "spies" among the Indians, and he learned from Pryor of the unfinished state of the fort. In response, Captain James House, Kingsley's superior at Fort Belle Fontaine, took two artillery pieces and 30 men on flatboats to reinforce Fort Madison. Lewis also sent a detachment of militia northward by land. Neither House nor the militia arrived in time to be of assistance.<sup>15</sup>

THE THREAT of Indian attacks was not limited to Fort Madison in the spring of 1809. Army officers, Indian agents, and territorial officials noted a significant amount of Indian unrest throughout the Old Northwest. They placed the blame for this discontent squarely upon the shoulders of British traders from Canada.<sup>16</sup> The reality was more complex, however. From the late 1730s onward, native communities developed a newfound sense of racial solidarity that emerged from increased contacts among the tribes. From this invigorated sense of pan-tribal identity, powerful religious movements arose that mixed traditional beliefs with elements of Christianity learned from missionaries. Religious leaders known as "prophets" preached a brand of militant nativism that advocated Indian unity in the face of white encroachment. According to this theology, an all-powerful deity, known as the Master of Life, had created Indians, while Euro-Americans were

---

15. House to Dearborn, 5/9/1809, FMRF; Clark to Dearborn, 4/5/1809, *TPUS*, 14:260; House to Eustis, 4/10/1809, M-221, 23:H392; *Missouri Gazette*, 4/26/1809. Several earlier scholars have asserted that Kingsley sent Pryor to St. Louis to request reinforcements, but Kingsley's letter of April 19, 1809, cited in n. 14, does not support that conclusion. See Jackson, "Old Fort Madison," 16-17; Aldrich, "Fort Madison," 101; and Bennett, "Fort Madison," Part I, 23.

16. For examples, see William Wells to William Henry Harrison, 4/8/1809, in *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, ed. Logan Esarey, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, 1922), 1:239-43 (hereafter cited as *WHHL*); Harrison to Eustis, 4/18/1809, *WHHL*, 1:340-42; Boilvin to Clark, 4/21/1809, *TPUS*, 14:272-73; Clark to Dearborn, 4/30/1809, *TPUS*, 14:271; Mason, Circular Letter, 4/16/1811, M-16, 2:B:289-90; Kingsley to Dearborn, 4/19/1809, FMRF.



a manifestation of malevolent forces that had to be effaced from North America in order for native communities to regain their lands and autonomy.<sup>17</sup>

Indian political leaders tapped into these sentiments and built military alliances that warred against the colonial powers. For example, Pontiac, with the assistance of Neolin, or the Delaware Prophet, crafted a pan-tribal movement in the 1760s and launched a series of assaults against British posts in the Great Lakes region. As white settlers poured into the trans-Appalachian West in the early nineteenth century, the nativist movement became decidedly anti-American. During this period, Tenskwatawa, better known as the Shawnee Prophet, claimed to have received a vision from the Master of Life and encouraged his followers to resist white culture and its expansion. Soon, his teachings were carried to Indian communities throughout the region.<sup>18</sup>

Tenskwatawa's brother Tecumseh used this message to forge a pan-tribal confederacy that sought to turn back the tide of white settlement. The Ho-Chunk were among the strongest supporters of the Shawnee Prophet and Tecumseh; some Sauk also followed them. Yet the Shawnee brothers' movement was just one component of a larger ideology of resisting American expansion that pervaded the Indian communities in the region.

The deceit exhibited by the federal government in its negotiation of the 1804 treaty with the Sauk as well as the military occupation of their homeland with the establishment of Fort Madison drove many Sauk warriors to embrace this ideology. Black Hawk in particular adopted much of the rhetoric of the greater nativist movement. In one speech he asserted that all Indians "form but one body, to preserve our lands, and to make war against the Big Knives [Americans]. . . . If the Master of Life favors us, you shall again find your lands as they formerly were."<sup>19</sup>

---

17. Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore, 1992), 23-201; Alfred Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit: Native American Revitalization Movements in Eastern North America* (Lincoln, NE, 2006), 1-139.

18. Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 33-36; R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln, NE, 1983), 28-78.

19. R. David Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, 1984), 32-44, 94-95; idem, "Tecumseh's Native Allies: Warriors Who Fought for the Crown," in *War on the Great Lakes: Essays Commemorating the 175th An-*

Thus, despite the pronouncements of American officials that the British in Canada were the cause of Indian unrest, tribes such as the Sauk and Ho-Chunk developed an ideology of resistance against the United States independent of any British machinations. Instead, the various native communities and the British in Canada became allies because they pursued a common policy: protecting their lands from the rapacious American republic and its land-hungry population.<sup>20</sup> The soldiers of Fort Madison had the misfortune of being situated in the midst of two tribes that zealously sought to prevent the American occupation of their homelands.

THE UNFINISHED STATE of Fort Madison had made it an inviting target for the Sauk in April 1809. The completion of the fort and its sturdy stockade delayed further Indian attacks until conditions became more favorable with the creation of a renewed British alliance and the initiation of hostilities in late 1811. Thus, in the three years that followed the attempted Sauk assault, the garrison experienced peace and the routine of a frontier post.

That routine and order were undermined, however, by a chronic shortage of soldiers. Never in the first four years of its existence did Fort Madison have more than 80 men. Discharges, desertions, and sickness continually drained the garrison of its manpower until periodic replacements and reinforcements arrived. A report in March 1811 recorded a total of 74 officers and men at the fort. However, since some soldiers were absent from the post on furloughs or assorted duties, the number present was only 59, and 11 of those men were sick or in confinement for various infractions. A report from October 1811 tells a similar

---

*niversary of the Battle of Lake Erie*, ed. William Welsh and David Skaggs (Kent, OH, 1991), 60–63; Timothy Willig, *Restoring the Chain of Friendship: British Policy and the Indians of the Great Lakes, 1783–1815* (Lincoln, NE, 2008), 229–34; Jung, “Toward the Black Hawk War,” 33–37; Black Hawk, *Speech*, 4/18/1815, in *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, ed. Lyman Draper, 20 vols. (Madison, WI, 1882), 9:278 (quote).

20. Willig, *Chain of Friendship*, 5, 205–63; Colin Calloway, *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783–1815* (Norman, OK, 1987), 193–222; Robert Allen, *His Majesty’s Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defence of Canada, 1774–1815* (Toronto, ON, 1992), 110–22.

story: of the 56 officers and men assigned to Fort Madison, only 38 were present, and 9 were sick or in confinement. In fact, illness frequently had the most negative impact on manpower. Frontier areas swarmed with disease, and army posts, where men lived in close quarters in drafty, log barracks, were particularly susceptible. At one point in 1811, the post surgeon at Fort Madison noted that two-thirds of the garrison was ill.<sup>21</sup>

Other factors also undermined military readiness, particularly low morale among the enlisted men, who, even by the standards of the day, were poorly paid. Privates earned only \$5 per month, while non-commissioned officers—corporals and sergeants—earned \$7 and \$8, respectively. Considering that unskilled civilian laborers at that time earned between \$10 and \$20 per month, the army's pay scale was relatively low. Of course, Congress also mandated seemingly generous daily rations that included 1¼ pounds of beef or ¾ pounds of pork; 18 ounces of bread or flour; and a gill (about half a cup) of whiskey, brandy, or rum. However, the army depended on private contractors to supply these provisions, which, if they arrived at all, were often spoiled and inedible. Not surprisingly, desertion from frontier posts was common, and often epidemic. Fort Madison was not immune from this phenomenon; in fact, three of Kingsley's men attempted to desert as he made his way up the Mississippi to establish the post. Enlisted men also spent much of their time engaged in toilsome and dreary pursuits, particularly the building and maintenance of their forts. Since army units constituted a concentrated force of manpower, particularly in frontier areas, soldiers spent much of their time engaged in construction projects such as building roads. At Fort Madison, Johnson had the soldiers construct his factory and process the furs he collected,

---

21. Willig, *Chain of Friendship*, 219–25, 251–55; Watkins, "U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison," 1–2, 71; Number of troops in service on the Peace Establishment, 6/6/1812, in *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 7 vols. (Washington, DC, 1832–1861), 1:320 (hereafter cited as *ASP:MA*); Aldrich, "Fort Madison," 103; Quarterly Return of the Troops belonging to the First Infantry Regiment, February–March 1811, Bissell MSS, SLML; Monthly Return of the United States Troops stationed in the District of Louisiana, October 1811, M-221, 42:B146; Norman Caldwell, "The Frontier Army Officer, 1794–1814," *Mid-America* 37 (1955), 120–22; Robert Simpson to Eustis, 10/31/1811, M-221, 48:S50.

tasks for which they received an additional ten cents per day and an extra ration of liquor.<sup>22</sup>

Fort Madison also had problems peculiar to it that stemmed from its leadership. In September 1809, Captain Horatio Stark replaced Kingsley as the fort's senior officer. Stark's superior was Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Bissell, who commanded Fort Belle Fontaine. Stark's immediate subordinate was First Lieutenant Thomas Hamilton. Stark was frequently absent from the post, citing the difficult winters as a reason for spending many months away from his command while recuperating at Fort Belle Fontaine and enjoying the more cosmopolitan atmosphere of nearby St. Louis. Stark was a stern disciplinarian and liberally meted out punishment, particularly flogging. He regularly sentenced soldiers to as many as 50 lashes for minor offenses such as sitting down while on guard duty. Fort Madison, like all frontier posts, had a variety of civilian personnel, and Stark often had stormy relations with them as well. He dismissed George Hunt as the post sutler so he could appoint a local favorite, Denis Julien. In one case, Stark had a civilian employed by Julien sentenced to 50 lashes for selling whiskey to a soldier without permission. Hunt did not record whether he harbored ill will against Stark as a result of his ouster, but the post surgeon, Robert Simpson, wrote a scathing letter to the War Department complaining about Stark's capricious leadership. After Stark arrested him on "a frivolous charge," Simpson requested a furlough so he could travel to Washington to lodge a formal complaint. Secretary of War William Eustis took the accusations seriously and forwarded a copy of Simpson's charges to Bissell, noting that Fort Madison appeared to be "the scene of many irregularities."<sup>23</sup>

---

22. Edward Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York, 1986), 15-16, 20-21; Donald Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana, IL, 2012), 31, 70-73; Norman Caldwell, "The Enlisted Soldier at the Frontier Post, 1790-1814," *Mid-America* 26 (1955), 195-204; *U.S. Statutes at Large* 2:133; Causes of the Failure of the Expedition against the Indians, 5/8/1792, ASP:MA, 1:38; Kingsley to Dearborn, 11/22/1808, FMRF; Francis Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860* (Lincoln, NE, 1953), 34-36; Mason to Johnson, 5/16/1809, M-16, 1:A:375-76; Mason to Johnson, 7/14/1809, M-16, 2:B:23.

23. Fort Madison Garrison Orders and Belle Fontaine with Copies of Belle Fontaine Letters, 2/20/1812, 2/25/1812, Special Collections, Jefferson Library, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York (hereafter this volume cited as

Eustis almost certainly referred at least indirectly to another letter his office received. Who wrote that letter is unknown; the writer identified himself only as "A Democrat." The contents leveled serious allegations against Stark, asserting that he was partial to British traders and that he once even uttered the scandalous statement, "A *limited Monarchy* would suit the *American people best!!!*" The anonymous letter writer's most severe indictment concerned the lack of preparedness at Fort Madison. As the unknown author caustically noted, "The Garrison looks as if it was ready to be given up at the first Summons. No fixed ammunition—no appointed places for her officers and soldiers in case of an alarm."<sup>24</sup> Of course, one must take these accusations with a grain of salt, coming as they do from an anonymous source. Yet the author, whether a soldier or a civilian, echoed many of Simpson's complaints. Bissell, for his part, noted in a letter to the War Department that while there may have been a "Relaxation of Duty and some want to Propriety in Capt. Starke's [*sic*] conduct," Fort Madison, as far as he knew, was "in Good Repair, and Judiciously Commanded."<sup>25</sup>

Bissell did not believe that his subordinate exhibited sympathies toward British traders. In fact, after Stark seized goods belonging to three British traders in October 1809, he wrote to Bissell, "Should those persons still have any sinister designs against the United States the means of future mischief is thus withheld from them until they can clear up their characters." While Stark's action may have demonstrated his loyalty to the United States and undermined the idea that he sympathized with the British and their traders, it was nevertheless characteristic of his injudicious nature. Bissell, seeing no justifiable grounds for the seizure, ordered the goods returned.<sup>26</sup>

---

FMGO); Norman Caldwell, "Civilian Personnel at the Frontier Military Post (1790–1814)," *Mid-America* 38 (1956), 101–19; Jackson, "Old Fort Madison," 22, 29–30, 53; [Hunt], "Personal Narrative," 525; Caldwell, "Frontier Army Officer," 119–25; Robert Simpson to Eustis, 10/31/1811, M-221, 48:S50 (quote); Eustis to Bissell, 11/4/1811, M-6, 5:5:230; Eustis to Bissell, 2/25/1812, M-6, 5:5:283 (quote).

24. The full text of this letter is reprinted in Donald Jackson, "A Critic Views Iowa's First Military Post," *Iowa Journal of History* 58 (1960), 33–36, 33n6.

25. Bissell to Eustis, 1/20/1812, M-221, 42:B165.

26. Horatio Stark to Eustis, 11/10/1809, FMRF; Stark to Bissell, 10/4/1809, M-221, 18:B631 (quote); Bissell to Stark, 10/25/1809, M-221, 18:B631.

If Stark did not endear himself to traders or civilians, his men thought even less of him, and his leadership negatively affected morale and manpower. When soldiers' terms of service ended, few reenlisted at Fort Madison. In the summer of 1811, 25 men were discharged, and Stark could convince only a few "drunken vagabonds" to reenlist. The next year was no better. He lamented to Bissell, "I have not men sufficient to post the proper number of Sentries, three being the extent of our force. — The aggregate present is forty Six . . . from which are to be deducted three Privates that can do no Duty. . . . Besides I have lost all Confidence in the men who have . . . been discharged; and who are liable to leave me every Day."<sup>27</sup>

In addition to highlighting Stark's flaws, the author of the anonymous letter cited above also mentioned the poor location of the post and the chronic shortage of soldiers. "The Garrison is in such a rascally situation and so badly calculated for defence, that at least 300 men could be hidden around it and could not be hurt by either Cannon or small arms. . . . There is 1290 feet of the Garrison to be defended, and at present but 50 men to do it — which makes 64½ feet for each man."<sup>28</sup>

Stark agreed that the fort was poorly situated and expressed misgivings about its defensibility, but he could not be blamed for that failure; that had been Kingsley's doing. Kingsley, though, was simply following the orders of Dearborn and Lewis, both of whom had decided to place the fort and factory near the Des Moines River. Even Kingsley admitted, in the wake of the attempted assault by the Sauk, that building another fort farther north at Prairie du Chien — a location that, unlike Fort Madison, controlled key terrain and water routes — would be necessary to properly defend the upper Mississippi valley. Other military and territorial officials voiced similar sentiments.<sup>29</sup>

---

27. Jackson, "Iowa's First Military Post," 34 (quote); Stark to Bissell, 2/7/1812, *TPUS*, 14:522 (quote).

28. Jackson, "Iowa's First Military Post," 33.

29. Stark to Bissell, 4/22/1812, Letters Received by the Secretary of War Unregistered Series, 1789–1860, Microfilm Publication M-222, reel 6, document S1812, Record Group 107, National Archives, Washington, DC; James Many to Wilkinson, 5/20/1806, *TPUS*, 13:512; Kingsley to Dearborn, 4/19/1809, FMRF; House to Eustis, 5/9/1809, FMRF; Boilvin to Eustis, 3/5/1811, Nicolas Boilvin Letters, 1811–1823, box 3, vol. 1, p. 10, in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Papers,

BY THE TIME the anonymous letter reached Washington, the trans-Appalachian West was already in a state of war. From the time the Shawnee Prophet began to preach in 1805, Indian attacks slowly increased for the next six years. Clark recorded a total of 21 such actions against isolated American settlements in his jurisdiction from April 1805 to November 1811. Most incidents amounted to little more than the theft of livestock and other property, but some were more serious. In 1805 Sauk and Meskwaki warriors killed three white settlers in Missouri; in 1807 a Sauk warrior killed a trader at Portage des Sioux, just north of St. Louis. Fort Madison would have been the scene of another attack in April 1809 had Kingsley not acted promptly. Military commanders, including Stark, remained in a constant state of vigilance as they saw growing numbers of Indians following the Shawnee Prophet and Tecumseh even as the British in Canada aggressively sought alliances with the tribes.<sup>30</sup>

The war with the Indians began on November 7, 1811, when Indiana Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison, fearing the growing power of the Shawnee Prophet, led an army of regulars and militia against the Prophet's village near the Wabash and the Tippecanoe Rivers in present-day Indiana. Harrison claimed victory and dispersed the followers of the Shawnee brothers. Afterward, the frontier witnessed even more Indian attacks as enraged warriors sought revenge for what became known as the Battle of Tippecanoe. Thus, seven months before Congress declared war against Great Britain on June 18, 1812, the United States found itself in an undeclared Indian war on the frontier.<sup>31</sup>

---

University of Wisconsin-Platteville Area Research Center, Platteville, Wisconsin (hereafter cited as Boilvin MSS, with references to page numbers in this volume); Eustis to Benjamin Howard, 4/13/1812, *TPUS*, 14:544.

30. Marsha Rising, ed., "White Claims for Indian Depredations: Illinois-Missouri-Arkansas Frontier, 1804-32," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 84 (1996), 281-304; William Foley, "Different Notions of Justice: The Case of the 1808 St. Louis Murder Trials," *Gateway Heritage* 9 (Winter 1988-1989), 2-13; Wilkinson to Sauk Chiefs, 12/10/1805, *TPUS*, 13:300-302; Boilvin to Dearborn, 6/16/1807, M-221, 4:B256; Lewis to Boilvin, 5/14/1808, Letter 17, Bissell MSS, SLML; Lewis to Dearborn, 7/1/1808, *TPUS*, 14:202; Stark to Bissell, 2/10/1810, FMRF; Clark to Dearborn, 7/20/1810, *WHHL*, 1:449; Harrison to Dearborn, 8/28/1810, *WHHL*, 1:471.

31. Jung, "Toward the Black Hawk War," 36-37; John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (New York, 2005), 205-10.

White observers attributed these attacks to what they believed was the inherent barbarity of native peoples, but the Indians simply possessed a different culture of warfare. They avoided pitched battles that were costly in lives and fought only when they believed they could inflict damage against an enemy with a minimum number of casualties. The loss of a warrior meant one less man for future battles, and because Indian men were also hunters and providers, the death of a husband and father presented an Indian family with a significant burden. Thus, Indian warriors preferred raids and ambushes that depended on the element of surprise (as did the Sauk attempt to attack Fort Madison by subterfuge in April 1809). Indian war parties also avoided fighting enemies that had superior numbers, and they saw no shame in withdrawing from a battle when the tide had turned against them. While Euro-American armies depended on discipline to maneuver and control large bodies of soldiers, the Indian way of war stressed individual initiative in battle. Unlike Euro-American warfare, which sought to neutralize an enemy's ability to make war, Indian warfare served to avenge wrongs, and the mutilation of the bodies of dead enemies as a means of revenge was accepted. Thus, rather than being "massacres" and "depre-dations" as defined by whites, Indian military operations served to punish those who had committed unjust acts and force enemies to practice what was perceived as proper behavior.<sup>32</sup>

Indian war parties in the upper Mississippi valley skillfully demonstrated these cultural practices both before and after the Battle of Tippecanoe. Once war between Britain and the United States commenced seven months later, the Indian confederacy, more so than British soldiers and militia in Canada, carried out several of the first spectacular victories. A combined force of about 50 British regulars, 200 Canadian militia, and almost 400 Indians conquered the post on Mackinac Island on July 17, 1812, before the American soldiers even knew that war had been declared. On August 15, about 400 Potawatomi ambushed and killed most of the soldiers, militia, and civilians from the garrison of Fort Dearborn as they attempted to make their way from

---

32. Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675-1815* (Norman, OK, 1998), 17-56, 127; R. David Edmunds, "Indian-White Warfare: A Look at Both Sides." *Northwest Ohio Quarterly* 61 (1989), 35-45.



Chicago to Fort Wayne. The next day brought another American defeat, when General William Hull, with a force of 1,100 men, surrendered Detroit – without firing a shot – to a British force of 1,800, including 400 Indians under Tecumseh’s command.<sup>33</sup>

On January 1, 1812, a war party of about 100 Ho-Chunk warriors, seeking revenge for Tippecanoe, killed two American lead miners at Dubuque’s Mines (present-day Dubuque, Iowa), about 200 miles north of Fort Madison. George Hunt, the former sutler who was in charge of the mining party, only saved his life by telling the Ho-Chunk that he was English. Hunt traveled to Fort Madison to deliver the news, which had a devastating impact on morale there. Stark again had trouble convincing soldiers to reenlist. He wrote to Bissell, “My force is diminishing so fast that it will be necessary to have a reinforcement. The Soldiers who have been discharged . . . [have been] much opposed to remaining, which was very much against my expectation.”<sup>34</sup>

THE FIRST FATALITY at Fort Madison came on March 3, 1812, when Corporal James Leonard was killed by a Ho-Chunk war party while he was hunting about two miles from the post. Several days later, friendly Indians found his body and returned it to the fort in a horrific state; his head was severed from the body, as were his arms, and his heart had been removed. The killing created a sense of panic among the soldiers and civilians at Fort Madison. “We are now so surrounded by [Indian] enemies,” John Johnson wrote, that “we dare not venture to the limits of the public ground, or with safety, two hundred yards from the garrison. . . . I learn from all Indians visiting the Factory . . . we are to be attacked. . . . I believe every man of us will perish, as there are not sufficient men here to defend the garrison.”<sup>35</sup>

---

33. Brian Dunnigan, *The British Army at Mackinac, 1812–1815* (Mackinac Island, 1980), 11–12; Hickey, *War of 1812*, 81–84; Louise Kellogg, *The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison, WI, 1935), 285–87; Edmunds, *Tecumseh*, 179–81.

34. Stark to Bissell, 1/6/1812, FMRF; [Hunt], “Personal Narrative,” 527–38, 526n11; Johnson to Howard, ASP:IA, 1:805; Niles’ *Weekly Register* (Baltimore), 3/7/1812; Stark to Bissell, 1/22/1812, FMRF (quote).

35. Jackson, “Old Fort Madison,” 32; *Louisiana Gazette* (St. Louis), 3/21/1812; Stark to Bissell, 3/8/1812, M-221, 42:B208; Johnson to Eustis, 3/9/1812, TPUS, 14:535 (quote).

Small Ho-Chunk war parties lingered in the vicinity of the post. On March 29 a Ho-Chunk warrior shot a soldier on sentry duty who died of his wounds two weeks later. On April 3, a guard killed a Ho-Chunk Indian near the gate. If the constant harassment of the Ho-Chunk was not enough, the summer of 1812 brought further depressing news.<sup>36</sup>

In July 1812, during another of Stark's absences, Bissell informed Hamilton of the declaration of war. Soon after, Hamilton learned of the disasters that had befallen Fort Mackinac, Fort Dearborn, and Detroit.<sup>37</sup> The loss of Forts Mackinac and Dearborn in particular meant that Fort Madison truly stood as a lonely sentinel in the region.

In August 1812 Hamilton only had about 40 men. He asked Bissell for more, but Bissell was already stretched thin. He commanded Forts Belle Fontaine, Madison, Osage, and Massac (near present-day Metropolis, Illinois). In addition, Territorial Governor Benjamin Howard had him establish yet another post, Fort Mason (near present-day Saverton, Missouri). Bissell complied, although by spring he had only 29 privates at Fort Belle Fontaine.<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, Bissell well understood Fort Madison's vulnerability, so he acceded to Hamilton's request, ordering Stark to depart Fort Belle Fontaine on September 3 with 19 soldiers, 14 of whom were artillerymen who brought an additional artillery piece. Along the way, Stark was to rendezvous with 17 U.S. Rangers who would accompany him. Those reinforcements would have increased Hamilton's force to almost 80 men and officers.<sup>39</sup> However, they did not arrive on time.

---

36. Clark to Eustis, 4/12/1812, *ASP:IA*, 1:807; *Louisiana Gazette*, 4/25/1812; Watkins, "U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison," 35; Howard to Bissell, 2/13/1812, *TPUS*, 14:522; Bissell to Eustis, 5/28/1812, *TPUS*, 14:551; *FMGO*, 5/4/1812.

37. Bissell, Circular Letter, 7/28/1812, Letterbook vol. 5, Daniel Bissell Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (hereafter this letterbook is cited as Bissell MSS, MHM); Hamilton to Bissell, 8/24/1812, *FMRF*.

38. Bissell to Stark, 9/2/1812, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Howard, 9/6/1812, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Eustis, 9/6/1812, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Howard, 9/11/1812, Bissell MSS, MHM. Fort Mason was later garrisoned by the U.S. Rangers, a new, mounted military force.

39. Bissell to Stark, 9/11/1812, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Eustis, 9/19/1812, *FMRF*.

By early September 1812, the majority of the Ho-Chunk—including the chiefs—were committed to the confederacy of the Shawnee Prophet and Tecumseh as well as to the British alliance. The Ho-Chunk had a more hierarchical tribal structure than most other tribes in the region, including the Sauk, whose leadership took a more cautious approach and did not commit to war. However, Sauk chiefs, like those of other tribes in the Old Northwest (and unlike those among the Ho-Chunk), had little coercive power over their young men and could only employ persuasion to try to convince them to adhere to tribal policies. In the end, the decision to go to war rested with individual warriors. Thus, while the Sauk leadership openly professed neutrality, that did not stop many young Sauk warriors from acting on their own volition and joining war parties that attacked American settlements and military targets. This became clear when a party of Ho-Chunk stopped by the main Sauk village of Saukenuk at the mouth of the Rock River and convinced many Sauk warriors, including Black Hawk, to attack Fort Madison.<sup>40</sup>

As the warriors set out, Hamilton had one small stroke of luck. On September 4, 1812, a private trader named Graham and 16 of his hired men arrived in two boats. These men were the only reinforcement Hamilton received. Along with them were Emile Vasquez and her baby daughter. Emile was the wife of Second Lieutenant Antonio “Baronet” Vasquez, a man of Spanish ancestry who hailed from a prominent St. Louis family. His ability to speak Spanish, French, and English had made him indispensable to Pike on his expeditions, and upon his return, Vasquez had accepted an army commission. He arrived at Fort Madison in February 1812 along with 12 enlisted men as part of Bissell’s efforts to increase the garrison’s manpower.

Vasquez proved to be a valuable officer; the same could not be said of the other junior officer at the post, Second Lieutenant Robert Page. Stark had earlier brought up Page on three charges: drunkenness on duty (eight offenses), disobedience of orders (two offenses), and disorderly conduct (two offenses). Page loathed Stark and tendered his resignation from the army in

---

40. Willig, *Chain of Friendship*, 232–42; Jung, “Toward the Black Hawk War,” 36–38; Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 34; Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 67–68.

May 1812, but his original letter was lost on its way to Washington. Hamilton, in turn, despised Page, describing him as a "Cowardly pittiful *Wretch*."<sup>41</sup> Luckily for Hamilton, Bissell transferred Page to another post while he awaited his separation from the army, so he was not present when the Indians attacked Fort Madison.<sup>42</sup>

In response to the attack at Dubuque's Mines, Stark had developed, and Hamilton later refined, detailed plans in the event of an attack. Hamilton was to command the two front blockhouses (blockhouses 1 and 2) and another eight men were assigned to the front stockade. Page, while he remained at Fort Madison, was to command blockhouse 3 and the western side of the stockade; Vasquez would command the soldiers on the eastern side. A sergeant had charge of blockhouse 4, which stood at the end of the notorious "tail." Each artillery piece had a dedicated, well-drilled crew. By August 1812, Hamilton took the additional step of having all settlers in the vicinity remain inside the safety of the stockade at night. Hamilton even motivated the soldiers with stirring oratory, urging them to "*Sell that life* (which we only value for the *Glory* of our Country) as dear as possible."<sup>43</sup>

THUS, when the Indian war party arrived on the night of September 4 and quietly took positions, the men and officers of Fort Madison were as ready as they could be given the fort's limitations. The various terrain features, particularly the bank along the Mississippi and the ravine, provided cover for the Indians. Black Hawk noted that he was so close to the fort he could hear the sentinels walking.<sup>44</sup>

---

41. *Niles' Weekly Register*, 10/31/1812; Janet Lecompte, "Antonio Francois ('Baronet') Vasquez," in *French Fur Traders and Voyageurs in the American West*, ed. LeRoy Hafen (Lincoln, NE, 1993), 302-8; Baronet Vasquez to Benito Vasquez, 9/16/1812, Vasquez Family Collection, 1774-1925, folder 4, box 1, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (hereafter cited as Vasquez MSS, with references to folder and box numbers); Bissell to Eustis, 2/19/1812, *TPUS*, 14:521; Bissell to Eustis, 9/4/1812, M-221, 42:B454½; Stark, Charges & Specifications exhibited against Lieut. Robt. C. Page, 4/24/1812, M-221, 42:B454½; Hamilton to Bissell, 5/8/1812, M-221, 42:B454½ (quote).

42. FMGO, 5/5/1812.

43. FMGO, 1/12/1812, 4/11/1812, 8/26/1812 (quote).

44. Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 67-68.

Shortly after daybreak, several soldiers left by the front gate. A Ho-Chunk warrior opened fire, killing Private John Cox, who was a mere 25 paces from the gate. A sentinel in one of the blockhouses returned fire, and soon shooting commenced on all sides. Hamilton and his men remained inside the fort for the remainder of the siege, much to the disappointment of the Indians, who had hoped that the soldiers would emerge from the stockade and engage in open combat. The Indians withdrew at nightfall but resumed the battle the next morning. On the second day, after shooting about 400 rounds, they struck the halyard of the flagpole and gave a great yell of victory upon seeing the American flag flutter to the ground. At nightfall, they withdrew again, taking Cox's body, which had remained where it had fallen.<sup>45</sup>

The third day proved to be the most dramatic. At dawn, the soldiers of Fort Madison woke to the grisly scene of Cox's head and heart impaled on sticks by the river bank. The Indians attempted a new tactic, hurtling flaming arrows at the fort so as to burn it down. Hamilton responded with an ingenious solution: he had eight old gun barrels made into syringes, or "squirts" as he called them, and used them to extinguish the fires. Outside the stockade, the Indians plundered and burned Graham's boats as well as nearby cabins. Warriors on the ridge to the north made it dangerous to move from one blockhouse to another; the "tail" and blockhouse 4 had failed to fully neutralize the danger of that treacherous piece of terrain. That night, Hamilton had the factory set ablaze to prevent the Indians burning it at a time when it could pose a risk to the fort.<sup>46</sup>

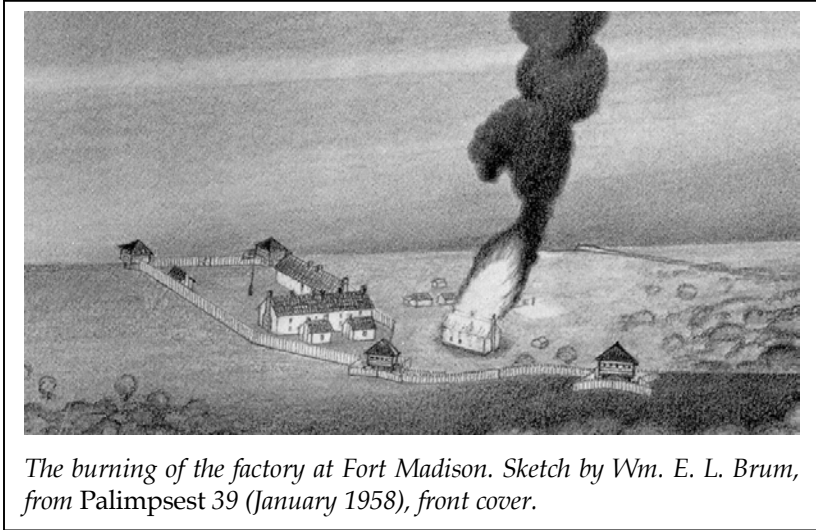
On the fourth day, September 8, the Indians fortified a nearby stable. Vasquez dispersed them with two well-aimed shots from an artillery piece. The Indians continued to fire on the fort until about 10:00 p.m., when their ammunition and powder ran low. By the morning of September 9, the Indians had withdrawn. In the end, Cox and a Ho-Chunk warrior were the only fatalities.<sup>47</sup>

---

45. Hamilton to Bissell, 9/10/1812, *Official Letters*, 63-64; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 10/31/1812; Watkins, "U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison," 10-11.

46. Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 68; Hamilton to Bissell, 9/10/1812, *Official Letters*, 64-65.

47. Baronet Vasquez to Benito Vasquez, 9/16/1812, Vasquez MSS, 4:1; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 10/31/1812; Watkins, "U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison," 10-11.



*The burning of the factory at Fort Madison. Sketch by Wm. E. L. Brum, from Palimpsest 39 (January 1958), front cover.*

IN THE WAKE of the siege, military officials began to question the wisdom of maintaining Fort Madison. Hamilton asserted that "this garrison is in the most ineligible place that ever could have been chosen by any man even if he would try."<sup>48</sup> Bissell had long believed that Fort Madison's perimeter was too large for such a small number of soldiers to defend. After reading Hamilton's report, he noted, "The extraordinary *Tail*, as it is Called, might be taken entirely from the Works, which was not thought by the Commanding Officer adviseable, as it is a covered way to the only Block House, which commands the ground back of the Fort. . . . I am fully of the opinion the Site chosen for that Post, is a very improper one."<sup>49</sup> Bissell, who believed that neither Fort Madison nor Fort Osage had any military value, suggested that new posts be established at more strategically significant locations such as Peoria on the Illinois River and Rock Island at the mouth of the Rock River.<sup>50</sup>

Secretary of War Eustis gave Bissell permission to evacuate both posts if the territorial governor approved. However, Terri-

48. Hamilton to Bissell, 9/10/1812, *Official Letters*, 64.

49. Bissell to Stark, 9/2/1812, Bissell MSS, MHS; Bissell to Eustis, 9/26/1812, *TPUS*, 14:595 (quote).

50. Bissell to Eustis, 12/28/1812, *TPUS*, 14:612-14.

torial Governor Howard was absent from St. Louis and did not return until March 31, 1813. Upon his return, Bissell immediately laid before him the reasons to abandon Fort Madison. Howard objected, arguing that it was vital to retain this lone outpost. He wanted to establish a fort at Prairie du Chien and believed that Fort Madison could serve as a staging area for such an endeavor. Despite his decision, Howard acknowledged Fort Madison's flaws. "I never considered it a happy selection of Scite [*sic*]," he wrote. "Had my Opinion been taken before we were in Hostility with the Indians, it certainly would have been in favor of its evacuation." Now, however, "I deem the abandonment of it unadvisable. . . . Our inability to maintain it . . . would embolden those who are now hostile."<sup>51</sup>

Thus, Fort Madison remained, and as long as it remained, Bissell believed it needed more men. He dispatched a sergeant and 12 privates in early March 1813; later that month he ordered Stark to take 40 enlisted men and a lieutenant from the recently arrived Twenty-Fourth Infantry Regiment northward to Fort Madison. By early April 1813, Fort Madison had four officers and more than 100 enlisted men. The army underwent a reorganization that year, and Howard became a brigadier general within the newly created Ninth Military District, constituting the territories of Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri (formerly Louisiana Territory); Clark became governor of Missouri Territory. That summer Fort Madison reached the zenith of its strength after Howard ordered 40 members of another unit, the U.S. Riflemen, to join Stark's company there, and Bissell dispatched an additional detachment of artillerymen. By then, as many as 150 soldiers from various regiments may have been stationed at Fort Madison. Stark received a promotion in April 1813 and soon after departed Fort Madison, leaving Hamilton once again in command. Exhibiting his usual bold leadership, Hamilton had the soldiers cut away the bank along the river so that it could be raked by fire from the forward blockhouses.<sup>52</sup>

---

51. Eustis to Bissell, 10/7/1812, M-6, 6:6:186; Bissell to John Armstrong Jr., 3/30/1813, FMRF; Bissell to Eustis, 4/12/1813, FMRF; Howard to Bissell, 4/4/1813, *TPUS*, 14:663-64 (quote).

52. Bissell to T. H. Cushing, 12/26/1812, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Stark, 3/27/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Armstrong, 3/30/1813, *TPUS*, 14:646-48;

There were other seemingly positive developments as well. In August 1812 President Madison hosted a delegation of 33 chiefs from the Sauk, Meskwaki, Dakota (Santee Sioux), Ho-Chunk, Osage, Ioway, and Shawnee tribes in Washington and convinced them to remain neutral in the war between the United States and Great Britain. Nicolas Boilvin, who led the diplomatic offensive in the West in early 1813, had a young subagent, Maurice Blondeau—who was of French and Meskwaki ancestry and fluent in the Sauk and Meskwaki language—meet with the Sauk chiefs in several councils, three of which took place inside the walls of Fort Madison. Once again, the Sauk leaders professed neutrality. The recruiting efforts of the British Indian agent Robert Dickson at Prairie du Chien did much to undermine Boilvin's diplomacy, however. By the summer of 1813, Boilvin reported that, despite his efforts and despite the Sauk leaders' professed neutrality, many Sauk warriors, particularly those at Saukenuk, remained hostile to the United States, as did a large number of Ho-Chunk.<sup>53</sup>

BOILVIN'S FEARS were confirmed during the next attack on Fort Madison on July 8, 1813, when a 100-man Ho-Chunk and Sauk war party (which possibly also included Menominee warriors) attacked a wood-cutting detail outside Fort Madison's stockade, killing two soldiers. The remaining men fled for the safety of the fort. A short exchange of gunfire followed before the warriors decamped. No prolonged siege occurred as in September 1812, but, as in the earlier action, the Indians used the ravine for cover. Hamilton decided further changes were re-

---

Gillum Ferguson, *Illinois in the War of 1812* (Urbana, IL, 2012), 129, 147; Bennett, "Fort Madison," Part III, 16-17; Bissell to Stark, 4/16/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; FMGO, 6/29/1813, 7/28/1813, 10/25/1813; *Missouri Gazette*, 9/11/1813.

53. Herman Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskin: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Washington, DC, 1981), 22-23; Jung, "Toward the Black Hawk War," 39-42; Council Held with Sacs, 1/22/1813, Boilvin MSS, 30-32; Maurice Blondeau to Howard, 4/3/1813, *TPUS*, 14:658-61; Boilvin to Eustis, 2/6/1813, Boilvin MSS, 34a-35a; Vasquez to Boilvin, 2/27/1813, Boilvin MSS, 39a-40a; Council held at Fort Madison, 3/27/1813, *TPUS*, 14:661-62; Boilvin to Clark, 7/25/1813, William Clark Papers, 2:13-17, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas (hereafter cited as Clark MSS, with references to volume and page numbers); Johnson to Clark, 7/25/1813, Clark MSS, 2:17-18.



quired. The ravine was too large to be cut away in the same manner as the riverbank, so he erected a blockhouse near its mouth along the banks of the Mississippi. He even built a “subterranean passage” – probably a trench rather than a tunnel – from the fort to the new blockhouse so his soldiers had cover as they traversed the open ground between the two.<sup>54</sup>

Hamilton gave the men strict orders to keep the door closed and barred until the new guard arrived. However, on the morning of July 16, 1813, a corporal failed to follow that order. When Indians hiding in the thick brush of the ravine opened fire at about 7:00 a.m., the corporal tried to close and bar the door, but an Indian warrior attempted to force it open; that Indian was immediately gunned down. Then, suddenly, another warrior rushed to the blockhouse and thrust a long spear into a loophole, impaling and killing the four men inside. The entire action, according to Hamilton, occurred in a mere ten minutes.<sup>55</sup>

The Indians attempted to gain entry into the blockhouse by removing the stones of the foundation. By that time, the garrison was alerted to their presence. Hamilton’s artillery crews fired shots and severed the arm of one warrior above the elbow and broke another’s above the wrist. The Indians and the soldiers spent most the day exchanging fire until the war party departed at about 5:00 p.m. Six soldiers died at Fort Madison in July 1813, more than during the siege ten months earlier. Many years later, the warrior who killed the four soldiers in the blockhouse, the Sauk chief Weesheet, posed for a sketch by George Catlin, the great chronicler of American Indians; at the time, he still possessed the spear and related with pride how he had killed four men with it.<sup>56</sup>

DESPITE THESE ATTACKS, the soldiers of Fort Madison continued to defend the post. In May 1813 Bissell ordered Fort Osage evacuated. The demands of the war created a constant

---

54. Watkins, “U.S. Regulars at Fort Madison,” 46, 61–62, 71; *Missouri Gazette*, 9/11/1813 (quote).

55. *Missouri Gazette*, 9/11/1813; Bennett, “Fort Madison,” Part III, 18.

56. *Missouri Gazette*, 9/11/1813; Bennett, “Fort Madison,” Part III, 18; George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2 vols. (London, 1841), 2:211, plate 286; Hamilton to Bissell, 7/18/1813, FMRF.

need for men and officers, and a post so far west served little purpose. Reports of Indian hostilities in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien and Saukenuk and Dickson's success in recruiting native allies the previous year made Bissell and Howard reluctant to abandon Fort Madison. Moreover, it was one of only three forts, along with Forts Wayne and Harrison in Indiana Territory, that had been successfully defended during the first year of the war.<sup>57</sup>

While the threat remained in the upper Mississippi valley, it would not be hostile Indians or the British that ultimately caused Fort Madison's demise. After the attacks in July 1813, it was never attacked again. The problem was more mundane, but equally as serious: the lack of adequate provisions. The system of private contractors upon which the army relied had been inefficient before 1812, and the war's burdens exposed its weaknesses, particularly in frontier areas where transportation was difficult and expensive. The contractor who supplied the posts under Bissell's command was particularly lax in his duties. Bissell castigated him, noting, "I never have seen so much neglect in 25 years Service. . . . [Fort] Madison is now on allowance [i.e., rationing its food], and [Fort] Mason has long since been out of Flour, [Fort] Osage had a scanty supply the first of January, your boat having never reached that."<sup>58</sup>

After the evacuation of Fort Osage, some of its men and officers were transferred to Fort Madison. While that increased the number of soldiers, it also increased the number of mouths to feed. In October 1813 Hamilton discovered that the supplies of flour and pork at Fort Madison were spoiled and unfit for consumption. Soon, winter would come, making resupply from St. Louis impossible. The specter of starvation presented a far greater danger than the Indians ever had.<sup>59</sup>

---

57. Bissell to E. B. Clemson, 5/13/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Stark, 5/5/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Jonathan Campbell, 3/10/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; Stark to Howard, 4/24/1813, *TPUS*, 14:670; Howard to Armstrong, 6/20/1813, *TPUS*, 14:680.

58. Hickey, *War of 1812*, 72-73, 83; Bissell to Hamilton, 1/16/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; Bissell to Decius Wadsworth, 1/25/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM; FMGO, 7/6/1813; Bissell to William Morrison, 2/7/1813, Bissell MSS, MHM (quote).

59. FMGO, 7/28/1813, 10/25/1813.

Thus, on October 25, 1813, Hamilton ordered the evacuation of the post. He had six vessels to transport the soldiers and equipment to Fort Belle Fontaine. On November 3, he ordered his men to assemble the fort's property on the parade (the open area within the stockade) so it could be loaded on the boats. That order was the last entry made in the garrison orderly book. When exactly the small fleet departed Fort Madison is unknown, but Hamilton recorded an entry as officer of the day at Fort Belle Fontaine on November 21. Presumably, the garrison departed within a few days of the November 3 order. All the buildings of Fort Madison—the stockade, barracks, officers' quarters, block-houses, and other structures—were burned. For many years afterward—indeed, until the 1830s, when white settlers began to enter the region—several of the stone chimneys and fireplaces stood like charred ghosts marking the place where Fort Madison once stood.<sup>60</sup>

THE STRUGGLE for the upper Mississippi valley continued after Fort Madison's abandonment. In fact, during the later stages of the war, American victories in other theaters allowed military planners to devote more attention and resources to the region than they had while Fort Madison existed. By the end of 1813, Oliver Hazard Perry's victory on Lake Erie and William Henry Harrison's success at the Battle of the Thames had secured the lower Great Lakes and the transportation routes into the upper Great Lakes. That same year, Benjamin Howard ordered the construction of Fort Clark at Peoria, which closed the Illinois River to Indian war parties and provided security for American settlements in southern Illinois and Missouri.<sup>61</sup>

The situation at St. Louis improved modestly in the spring of 1814, when Major Zachary Taylor (the future president) arrived with two additional companies of regulars from the Seventh Infantry Regiment. William Clark decided that the time had arrived for the United States to reassert its military power in the upper Mississippi valley, so he led an expedition that

---

60. FMGO, 10/25/1813, 11/3/1813, 11/21/1813; Jackson, "Old Fort Madison," 33, 40.

61. Robert Quimby, *The United States Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study* (East Lansing, MI, 1997), 259–94, 733–35.

established Fort Shelby at Prairie du Chien in early June 1814. However, the British commander at Mackinac Island organized a campaign that forced the surrender of that garrison in late July. The United States launched two more attempts to fortify the region north of St. Louis, but Sauk, Meskwaki, Kickapoo, and Dakota warriors thwarted both efforts. In the end, the British and their native allies controlled a wide arc of territory that stretched from Mackinac Island in the north to the mouth of the Rock River in the south.<sup>62</sup>

The British did not retain this vast domain as a potential homeland for their Indian allies, however. Instead, they decided to return it to the United States in exchange for a much desired end to the hostilities. Peace between the United States and Britain finally came on December 24, 1814, with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, which went into effect on February 17, 1815, after both governments ratified the agreement. Great Britain merely demanded that the United States return to the *status quo antebellum* by making peace with the native communities in the Old Northwest. The federal government and the tribes negotiated a series of treaties between 1815 and 1818. Despite those agreements, the Ho-Chunk and Sauk continued to harbor deep distrust toward the Americans and their government. The uneasy relationships between the United States and the two tribes, strained by the continued misdeeds of federal officials in the postwar years, eventually resulted in the 1827 Winnebago Uprising and the 1832 Black Hawk War.<sup>63</sup>

The officers and men who had fought at Fort Madison had nothing to be ashamed of; neither did their Indian adversaries. The soldiers were forced to defend an indefensible site. That they successfully held out against three Indian assaults, and lost

---

62. Clark to Armstrong, 5/4/1814, *TPUS*, 14:762–63; David Grabitske, “The 7th U. States Infantry in the Midwest: A Sketch of the Detachments of Captains Thornton Posey and Zachary Taylor,” undated, <http://umbrigade.tripod.com/articles/midwest7th.html>; Reginald Horsman, “Wisconsin and the War of 1812,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 46 (Autumn 1962), 8–13; Barry Gough, “Michilimackinac and Prairie du Chien: Northern Anchors of British Authority in the War of 1812,” *Michigan Historical Review* 38 (Spring 2012), 98–105.

63. Hickey, *War of 1812*, 199, 228, 284–316; Robert Fisher, “The Treaties of Portage des Sioux,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 19 (1933), 495–503; Jung, “Toward the Black Hawk War,” 46.

nine men in the process, was a testimony to their ability. In retrospect, the Sauk and Ho-Chunk warriors who fought against them cannot be held culpable for defending their homelands against what they saw as a foreign invasion by an aggressive colonial power.

In 1913 the Daughters of the American Revolution commemorated the centennial of the burning of Fort Madison by erecting a stone chimney as a memorial to the soldiers who served there. At the time, the exact location of the fort was unclear. Later, the monument was moved to avoid highway construction. When archaeological work began on the site in the 1960s, archaeologists confirmed that the new location of the monument happened to be where blockhouse 1 had once stood.<sup>64</sup> Today, this monument can memorialize all the participants—soldier and civilian, native and white, American and Canadian—whose lives were touched by the War of 1812 in the upper Mississippi valley.

---

64. McKusick, "Old Fort Madison," 51.

# Making Iowa Safe for Differences: Barnstorming Iowa on Behalf of Religious Tolerance, 1936–1943

BILL R. DOUGLAS

A PRIEST, a minister, and a rabbi walk into a high school gymnasium. Is this the beginning of a bad joke? Cultural insensitivity? An attack on religious authority? Three Des Moines clergy known as the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio or the Goodwill Team exploited that discomfort by doing just that—walking into high school gymnasiums (and other settings) throughout Iowa during the late 1930s and early 1940s and confronting potential prejudice with doses of humor and religion, civility and civil religion.

In 1937 in a somewhat different setting, at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the State University of Iowa's School of Religion, Stoddard Lane, the Protestant minister of the trio, expounded on the similarities of Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism, the three religious entities represented in the school. Then, in seeming contradiction, he called for "making America safe for differences."<sup>1</sup> It was that tension—between civility and curiosity, between neighborliness and religious loyalty, between recitations of similarities and celebrations of differences—that made the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio's balancing act so engaging.

The typical scenario for the Brotherhood Trio played out as a skit set in the office of Willard Johnson, who organized the gatherings and acted as straight man for the clergy. Rabbi Eugene

---

1. *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 11/23/1937. "Making America safe for differences" was the 1937 slogan for the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Mannheimer, Father Robert Walsh, and Reverend Stoddard Lane all played to an audience that was eager to be praised for its own tolerance and was naturally curious about how others worshiped and lived — whether it was the Catholics across town or Jews they may never have encountered. Taking the audience into their confidence as they strategized how to persuade Iowans to support diversity, the Brotherhood Trio’s self-deprecating humor and mutual teasing played well among small-town audiences who navigated everyday life in the same ways. The trio’s repertoire resonated with American traditions of religious tolerance, Iowa settlement patterns, and the community ethic of cooperation.

The winding American path toward acceptance of religious pluralism was plotted by colonial dissidents and affirmed by the First Amendment, but was contested nonetheless.<sup>2</sup> Kevin Schultz’s 2011 book *Tri-Faith America* identified a religious tolerance project promoted in the 1930s by the National Conference of Christians and Jews — and, in passing, its Des Moines incarnation — as the foreshadowing of a tri-faith, “Protestant-Catholic-Jew” dominance in mid-century America.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this article, in addition to providing a local perspective on that national project, is to trace the roots of Iowa pluralism in the sometimes contentious, sometimes cooperative, 1910s and 1920s. Des Moines Bishop Gerald Bergan credited the Goodwill Trio with fundamentally changing the culture of the state. Their publicity agent, Willard Johnson (who would later become a prominent staff member of the National Conference of Christians and Jews) dubbed them the Corn-Belt Crusaders.<sup>4</sup> (They did not refer to themselves that way — with a pacifist and a Jew in the mix, it’s clear why not.) What the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio actually did was subtler: they exploited the religious

---

2. Two standard accounts are William R. Hutchison, *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal* (New Haven, CT, 2003); and Charles H. Lippy, *Pluralism Comes of Age: American Religious Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Armonk, NY, 2000). I thank Dr. Lippy for his helpful comments as responder to an earlier version of this paper, presented at the Spring 2015 conference of the American Society of Church History.

3. Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Post-War America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York, 2011); Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT, 2004), 266–67.

4. James E. Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood* (New York, 1955), 58, 62.

diversity of the state to suggest that, in the context of a modern world that could be either monolithic or diverse, diversity was a good idea.

TWO OF THE THREE members of the Brotherhood Trio had known each other for several years before joining more formally in this effort to promote religious tolerance. Reverend Stoddard Lane was minister of the most prominent Protestant congregation in the state, Des Moines's Plymouth Congregational Church. He had established a close friendship with Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer of Temple B'nai Jeshurun. Father Robert Walsh of Dowling Academy was appointed by Bishop Bergan of the Diocese of Des Moines to join the group. Not all Roman Catholic dioceses were willing to cooperate in interfaith efforts in the 1930s, but the Des Moines Round Table, the local affiliate of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), sponsored the first trio appearances in 1936; by 1938, the newly created regional office of the NCCJ began organizing events across Iowa. While the trio played themselves as representatives of their respective traditions, their own backgrounds also shaped their cooperative venture.

The easiest and arguably the best way to examine interfaith efforts in Des Moines after 1905 is to follow the career of Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer. Born in Rochester, New York, he grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, the hotbed of Reform Judaism. Mannheimer was a towering figure in Des Moines's religious ecosystem in the first half of the twentieth century. Founder of the Jewish Federation of Des Moines, civic activist, bold promoter of progressive religion in Reform Judaism, and a representative of the last generation of non-Zionist rabbis to lead prominent congregations, he left behind a 17-volume unpublished memoir.<sup>5</sup> Mannheimer is

---

5. Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines, *100th Anniversary, 1914–2004: Celebrating a Century of Benevolence* [Des Moines, 2014], 13; Michael J. Bell, "True Israelites of America: The Story of the Jews in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 53 (1994), 111–15; Eugene Mannheimer, "Reminiscences of My Three Score Years and Ten," typescript, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines. As invaluable as Mannheimer's memoir is—for example, Frank Rosenthal's *Jews of Des Moines* (1957) is almost entirely based on it—it should be used with care; at times, points made in later volumes contradict things in earlier volumes. On Mannheimer's non-Zionism, rooted deeply in his American Judaism—and his personal lack of contact with anti-Semitism—he states, "The first time . . . that I ever heard any speaker suggest that the Jew is not, never has been, and never can be 'at home'



still remembered by congregation members today for his edgy decisions, such as holding services on Sunday mornings.<sup>6</sup>

Mannheimer was also present at the creation of the School of Religion at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City.<sup>7</sup> That project was unique in its reliance on the state's religious communities for much of its support. Eventually the hybrid decision-making process blending academic and denominational representation would become an administrative headache. Yet at the outset the breadth of the endeavor was impressive. In retrospect, Willard Lampe, the longtime director of the school, later recalled that many of the participants in the first planning meeting at the Old Capitol in Iowa City, on May 12, 1925, "had never met each other before, and none of them had ever been in that kind of meeting. But it was . . . a deeply moving occasion."<sup>8</sup> Mannheimer confirmed the momentousness of the occasion, after citing university president Walter Jessup's extravagant claim: "This is the broadest piece of co-operative work ever undertaken along the lines of religion at a State University." Mannheimer rejoined, "Far more than that, it is,

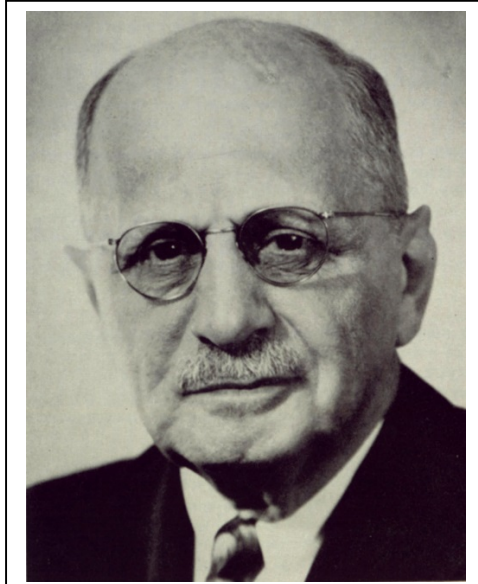
---

in America, was in Des Moines, from the lips of a Zionist speaker, October 13, 1911." Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 1:5. For a current exposition of that view, see Alan Wolfe, *At Home in Exile: Why Diaspora Is Good for the Jews* (Boston, 2014). Mannheimer was also troubled by American expansionism; see *Des Moines Register*, 2/21/1947.

6. Conversation with Temple member Elyse Weiss, Des Moines, 2/28/2015. When Clarence Darrow came to Des Moines in 1928, fresh from his confrontation with William Jennings Bryan and the latter's pyrrhic victory in the Scopes Trial, it was Mannheimer who debated him, on the topic "Is Man a Machine?" – and arguably out-agnosticized him; when Darrow asked rhetorically, "If man is not a machine, what is he?" the rabbi replied, "Nobody knows; but he is not a machine." Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 2:258; *Des Moines Register*, 11/15/1928; *Des Moines Tribune-Capital*, 11/15/1928; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 29.

7. For a fascinating look at earlier attempts at interfaith education at the State University of Iowa, see M. Thomas Starkes, "Glimpses of Greatness: O. D. Foster" (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1967), 69–78.

8. M. Willard Lampe, *The Story of an Idea: The History of the School of Religion of the University of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1951), 4. Marcus Bach, a professor at the School of Religion and popularizer of American religious studies, also wrote about the school's origins in *Of Faith and Learning: The Story of the School of Religion at the State University of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1952). On the school's structural problems, see *The School of Religion at the University of Iowa: The First Seventy Years* (Iowa City, 1997), 11, and folder 32, box 5, William Francis Riley Papers, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.



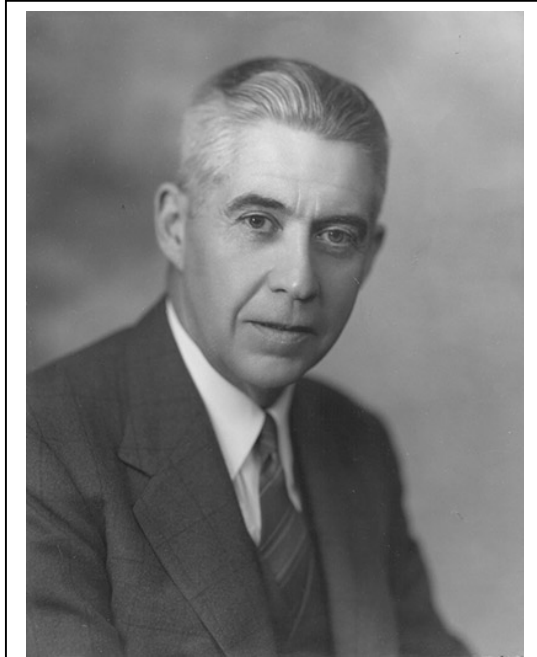
*Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer served Temple B'Nai Jeshurun, Des Moines, 1905–1952. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines (SHSI-DM).*

perhaps, the biggest and broadest piece of cooperative work ever undertaken by Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.”<sup>9</sup>

After that promising beginning, Mannheimer heard nothing of the project for over a year, so he chalked it up to unrealistic expectations. But the university had not been negligent; in August 1926 it announced that it had secured startup funding for its School of Religion from John D. Rockefeller, and planning began in earnest. Mannheimer served on the governing board for several decades, with most of his time spent fundraising in the Iowa Jewish community and supervising the Jewish faculty member, who was also supposed to provide extracurricular support for

---

9. Mannheimer, “Reminiscences,” 2:259, 283–88; folder 1, box 26, Ora Delmar Foster Papers, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa. Interfaith understanding obviously was not complete, for records indicate that Rabbi Mannheimer was selected by his “church” to be an elector for the school’s board of trustees.



*Stoddard Lane was pastor at Plymouth Congregational Church in Des Moines, 1929–1943. Photo courtesy of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Des Moines.*

Jewish students. Professor O. D. Foster, who had the original idea for the school, credited Mannheimer with a “humorous remark” at an early meeting that saved the school from dying even before it was born.<sup>10</sup>

The second member of the trio, Stoddard Lane, arrived in Des Moines in 1929 as pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, the most prestigious Protestant pulpit in the state.<sup>11</sup> He soon struck up a close friendship with Mannheimer.<sup>12</sup> Lane’s New England

---

10. Unfortunately, Mannheimer, in his memoir, admitted that he could not remember what the quip was that saved the day. Mannheimer, “Reminiscences,” 2:296, 3:324–31, 335–64, 370.

11. *Des Moines Tribune*, 12/1/1956, 6/19/1982.

12. A similar friendship is documented in Carl Hermann Voss, *Rabbi and Minister: The Friendship of Stephen S. Wise and John Haynes Holmes* (Buffalo, NY, 1980).

background—he was born in Unionville, Connecticut, in 1887, and was a graduate of Hartford Seminary in 1913—gave him cachet in Iowa Congregationalist circles. It is likely that his pacifism was a consequence of his service as a sergeant in the U.S. Ambulance Corps in France during World War I. “I have seen men, women, and children strangling to death in poison gas,” he told college students in 1932. In his 14 years in Des Moines before his untimely death in 1943, Lane emulated his friend Eugene Mannheimer in steering a progressive course for his ministry. He chaired the Des Moines Ministerial Alliance and was a trustee of Grinnell College. His pacifism continued unswayed after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He advocated on behalf of a colleague who had been fired by the Newton Congregational Church for taking a pro-union stand during the Maytag sit-down strike in Newton, Iowa, in 1938. His two extant sermons exude wisdom and gentleness.<sup>13</sup>

The least prominent member of the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio was Father Robert A. Walsh. An English instructor at the Dowling Academy and editor of the diocesan newspaper, the *Des Moines Messenger* (now the *Catholic Mirror*), in 1940 and 1941, Walsh, originally from Philadelphia, had attended Columbia College (now Loras) in Dubuque, was a graduate of St. Bonaventure College in western New York, and was ordained in 1926.<sup>14</sup> Mannheimer credited him with being the best storyteller in the group.<sup>15</sup> There is in the statement a hint, not of condescension, but of trying to bridge a gap between the prominent and the obscure.

---

13. Stoddard Lane, 1887–1943 [Des Moines, 1943]; *In Memoriam: Stoddard Lane* (Grinnell, 1943); Stoddard Lane, “The Challenge to Disarmament,” Grinnell College] *Tanager* 8, no. 2 (November 1932), 37; *Iowa Fellowship News*, February 1942; Stoddard Lane et al., “Labor Troubles and the Local Church,” *Social Action*, 1/15/1939; Stoddard Lane, “It’s Hard to Believe in Christmas!” 12/22/1940, typescript, Des Moines Public Library Central Library, Des Moines; “There Are Things That Abide Always,” 8/30/1942, in *Stoddard Lane* [no pagination]; Grinnell [College] *Scarlet and Black*, 1/13/1937.

14. St. Bonaventure College and Seminary, *Alumni Directory, 1859–1941; The Aquin* (student monthly for Des Moines Catholic College, ca. 1931), copy in Dowling Catholic High School files, West Des Moines. One of Walsh’s radio addresses is extant: “Making America Safe for Differences,” in Robert A. Walsh personnel file, Archives of the Diocese of Des Moines and in *Des Moines Messenger*, 1/27/1939.

15. Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, 59.



Rev. Robert A. Walsh, ca. 1950. Photo from SHSI-DM.

Walsh was appointed to join the trio by Gerald Bergan, who in 1934 had arrived as the new bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Des Moines. He was fond of relating, at least when the rabbi was present, that the first greeters in his new home were Eugene and Irma Mannheimer.<sup>16</sup> Bergan was bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines until 1948, when he was appointed archbishop of Omaha. With an oratorical style that tended to grandiloquence, he lauded the efforts of the Brotherhood Team:

Inspired with these ideals [of universal brotherhood], and with a love of their fellow man in their hearts, a brave, self-sacrificing little group went forth from Des Moines to preach a gospel of good will: a Rabbi, a Minister, a College Dean [Johnson], a Catholic priest. Like the apostles of old without scrip [scrip] and meagre of purse, they

---

16. "Reminiscences," 9:1281. Mannheimer and Bergan lived in the same neighborhood, the well-off south-of-Grand, and Lane lived nearby in the almost as fashionable Waterbury neighborhood. *Des Moines City Directory*, 1938.

have traversed the highways and byways of Iowa; stopping at colleges, cities large and hamlets small to tell how civilized Americans should live in peace with one another.<sup>17</sup>

In 1942 Walsh was abruptly transferred to Lenox, a tiny parish in southwestern Iowa. The bishop had recruited the Viatorian order to take over teaching at Dowling, and the U.S. entry into World War II was leading to a shortage of priests.<sup>18</sup> Two months later, after the parish priest at Red Oak left to become a chaplain, Walsh was moved there, even farther from Des Moines. Bergan maintained his support for the brotherhood program and assigned other priests to partner with Mannheimer and Lane, but Walsh would fall from the bishop's good graces (if he had not already done so). Walsh seemed exceptionally ill equipped to be a small-town parish priest; he had grown up in Philadelphia, went to school in Dubuque and at St. Bonaventure, and had spent his career as a priest primarily teaching high school English in Des Moines. Complaints that he failed to pay bills on time reached the bishop's desk, and parishioners made unfavorable comparisons to the previous priest. At one point, after what was seen as excessive requests for reimbursement for gasoline, the bishop forbade Walsh from visiting other priests in Des Moines. Walsh turned his attention to supporting the troops; while visiting troops in Reno, Nevada, he suffered a mental breakdown.<sup>19</sup>

Walsh apparently never worked full time as a priest again, although after his recovery he continued to live in Des Moines

---

17. "Jews and Christians—Feb. 15, 1938," in folder 1, box 26, subgroup 1, series 9, Archives of the Archdiocese of Omaha, Omaha; *Des Moines Messenger*, 2/18/1938. For a detailed assessment of Bergan's complex personality, see Stephen Szmezcanyi, *History of the Catholic Church in Northeast Nebraska: Phenomenal Growth from Scannell to Bergan (1891–1969)* (Omaha, 1983), 270–75.

18. E-mail correspondence from Steven Avella, 3/18/2015. Avella is working on the first scholarly history of the Des Moines diocese.

19. Walsh personnel file. Perhaps a contributing factor to his breakdown was the extraordinary impact of the war on Red Oak and Montgomery County. The county had the highest per capita casualty rate of any county in the nation. Richard Lingeman, *The Noir Forties: The American People from Victory to Cold War* (New York, 2012), 22–26; S. M. Senden, *Red Oak* (Charleston, SC, 2008), 91; Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943* (Detroit, 2002), 660–65; Eliot Janeway, "The Midwest's Mood," Part 1, *Life*, 9/13/1943, p. 11; Christopher Cross, *Soldiers of God: True Story of the U. S. Army Chaplains* (New York, 1945), 209; *Des Moines Diocese History* (Des Moines, 1920), 94.

until his death in 1967. He had one more interreligious responsibility related to the Brotherhood Trio: on September 9, 1952, he served as one of two non-Jewish pallbearers for Rabbi Mannheimer, along with Protestant John Nollen, president of Grinnell College.<sup>20</sup>

IOWA has had a reputation for religious tolerance, not always deserved, but with some basis in fact.<sup>21</sup> A look at county-by-county distribution of denominations in the mid-twentieth century reveals that, by that measure, Iowa was the most religiously diverse state: the Methodist surge due westward from the Chesapeake peninsula dominated the southern third of the state; Scandinavian and German Lutheran communities occupied the northern third, with Dutch Reformed settlements in the northwest; Roman Catholics predominated not just in urban counties but in several rural ones; and counties with Presbyterian, Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ), and Congregationalist (now United Church of Christ) enclaves also diversify the picture.<sup>22</sup>

The circumstances of settlement also favored tolerance. In *The Minds of the West* Jon Gjerde argues that in the upper Midwest small groups with ethnic (and religious) affinities typically clustered in rural communities.<sup>23</sup> In practice, this encouraged positive relations with neighboring clusters of disparate ethnicities and religious affiliations. And, paradoxically, in a new setting with a loosening of hierarchical controls, there were often divisions *within* ethnic religious groups, opening up the possibility of reconfigurations beyond ethnic boundaries.

---

20. Walsh personnel file; *Des Moines Register*, 9/10/1952. For another Catholic tribute to Mannheimer, see folder 32, box 5, William Francis Riley Papers.

21. A spectrum of phrases has been used to describe state policy, public attitudes, and facts on the ground in a modern European-American context: religious toleration, liberty of conscience, disestablishment, tolerance, diversity, and pluralism. I use *tolerance* because advocates used that term in the 1930s and 1940s, with the proviso that the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio sought to move "beyond tolerance to respect."

22. Map insert in Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, first ed. (New York, 1951); Edwin S. Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York, 2000), 373.

23. Jon Gjerde, *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997), 107-31.

Iowa's religious diversity depended in part on a variety of dissenting German traditions. Moreover, Iowa's settlement in the 1840s coincided not only with the Transcendentalist moment but also with refugees fleeing repression following the 1848 ferment in Europe.<sup>24</sup>

The Muslim presence in the state, while tiny, was also notable for its longevity and its acceptance by the larger community. Cedar Rapids is home to the Mother Mosque of America (built in 1934); the kinship ties Lebanese and Syrian Christians had already established in the state with Muslim immigrants from the same areas helped smooth the path for early Iowa Muslims — including the first Shi'a immigrants to North America.<sup>25</sup> All these minority influences trended toward tolerance.

Intolerance was not unknown in Iowa, however. Know Nothings gained a foothold in the state in the 1850s, and anti-Catholicism was widespread and long lived.<sup>26</sup> The anti-Catholic American Protective Association was founded in Clinton, Iowa,

---

24. An example of transplanted Transcendentalism is the pantheist Abner Kneeland. See Stephan Papa, *The Last Man Jailed for Blasphemy* (Franklin, NC, 1998); and Margaret Atherton Bonney, "Abner Kneeland," in *Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*, ed. David Hudson, Marvin Bergman, and Loren Horton (Iowa City, 2009), 291–93. On the Forty-Eighter exiles who moved to Davenport and retained freethinker values, see William Roba and Fredrick Anderson, *Joined by a River: The Quad Cities* (Davenport, 1982), 74. Cedar Rapids Bohemians also had a freethinker streak. For a separate colony of Forty-Eighter exiles, see Béla Vassady, "New Buda: A Colony of Hungarian Forty-Eighters in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 51 (1991), 26–52.

25. Hussien Ahmed Sheronick, "A History of the Cedar Rapids Muslim Community: The Search for an American Islamic Identity" (honors thesis, Coe College, 1988). The naming of the town of Elkader for one of the most prominent nineteenth-century Muslims also suggests an early tolerance. "Iowa Town Named for Muslim Hero Forges World Ties," *New York Times*, 5/3/2013. While the story of the Cedar Rapids mosque is relatively well known, Fort Dodge, Iowa, was home to perhaps the first Shi'a community in North America. See Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Became the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York, 2001), 244–45; and *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 10/11/1959. The Brotherhood Trio spoke in Cedar Rapids, but I have not uncovered a connection between the "Tri-Faith" project and the Muslim community.

26. Robert R. Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 129–31. See also the special issue of the *Annals of Iowa* (Winter 1994), with articles by Robert R. Dykstra and Ronald Matthias and a document by William Penn Clarke edited by Tyler Anbinder, all related to the Know Nothing movement in Iowa.



in 1887 and held its first convention in Belle Plaine.<sup>27</sup> Anecdotal stories by Edna Ferber, a Jew who endured seven years as a child in Ottumwa from 1890 to 1897,<sup>28</sup> and Mary Swander, Iowa poet laureate whose Catholic grandparents were victimized by a Ku Klux Klan cross-burning in rural Iowa in the 1920s,<sup>29</sup> suggest reasons that rank-and-file Jews and Catholics would opt for cooperation if Protestants offered it.<sup>30</sup>

The Klan's influence in municipal government in Des Moines, where discrimination in hiring in the police department became a contentious issue, represented a subtler but more insidious anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism.<sup>31</sup> The steady drumbeat of reports of increasing anti-Semitism in Germany and elsewhere hit home for Iowa Jews in Des Moines on October 27, 1933, when congregants leaving worship at Tiffereth Israel Synagogue found pro-Nazi flyers on their car windshields.<sup>32</sup> The WHO and WOC radio broadcasts of the nationally infamous demagogue Father

27. Donald L. Kinzer, *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* (Seattle, 1964). But a close look at Clinton at the time suggests that political and ethnic rather than religious tensions led to the founding of the APA. See JoAnn Manfra, "Hometown Politics and the American Protective Association, 1887-1890," *Annals of Iowa* 55 (1996), 138-66.

28. Edna Ferber, *A Peculiar Treasure* (New York, 1938, 31-33). See also Paul Engle, "'Those Damn Jews . . .,'" *American Heritage* 30:1 (1978), 72-79; and Louise Rosenfield Noun, *Journey to Autonomy: A Memoir* (Ames, 1990), 16, 54. Most histories of Iowa Judaism ignore anti-Semitism; an exception is [Oscar Littlefield], *I Remember When . . . : Personal Recollections and Vignettes of the Sioux City Jewish Community, 1969-1984*, comp. Susan Marks Connor (Sioux City, 1985), chap. 8.

29. Mary Swander, *Out of This World: A Journey of Healing* (New York, 1995), 220-22. See also Dorothy Schwieder, "'A Farmer and the Ku Klux Klan in Northwest Iowa,'" *Annals of Iowa* 61 (2002), 287, 298-304; and Robert J. Neymeyer, "In the Full Light of Day: The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Iowa," *Palimpsest* 76 (1995), 61-62.

30. Des Moines Protestant ministers were prominent in a Democrats for Hoover movement in 1928. Presbyterian minister James Mordy insisted, however, that the issue they had with Catholic Al Smith was Prohibition, not religion. *Des Moines Register*, 9/19/1928; *Des Moines Tribune*, 9/20/1928.

31. Kay Johnson, "The Ku Klux Klan in Iowa: A Study in Intolerance" (M.A. thesis, University of Iowa, 1967), 126, 137-38; Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan and the City* (New York, 1967), 162-63. Alfred L. Severson, professor of sociology at Drake University, reportedly did research on anti-Semitism and job discrimination in Des Moines, following up on his 1934 University of Chicago dissertation on the same topic regarding Chicago, but I have not found anything he published on the subject. *Iowa Jewish News*, 3/7/1941.

32. *Iowa Jewish News*, 11/2/1933.

Charles Coughlin must have made Iowa Jews nervous, and they would have been unsettled as well by the diocesan newspaper, if they had had occasion to read it, with its regular coverage of Coughlin, even though later articles denounced anti-Semitism.<sup>33</sup>

WHILE Jewish and Catholic grievances began to suggest the need for an interreligious detente, making Iowa safe for differences also meant that fractious Protestants would need to learn how to cooperate among themselves. Union services can be traced back as far as the Civil War; county-wide ministerial alliances were common by the 1890s.<sup>34</sup> When in 1952 the Greater Des Moines Council of Churches formed, the women's representative at the occasion could not resist observing, in congratulating the men who were finally catching up with the women, that Church Women United had a head start of 60 years.<sup>35</sup> At the turn of the century, when women's ecumenical activity seemed to be taking over the church, the men reacted, nationwide and in Des Moines, with a call for a more masculine church, articulated in the Men and Religion Forward Movement. That impulse, too, was ecumenical.<sup>36</sup>

---

33. Coughlin made his anti-Semitism explicit only gradually, but the diocesan paper, the *Des Moines Messenger*, continued to cover him even after his Vatican censure. *Aquin*, 5/27/1934, 9/2/1934, 11/4/1934; *Des Moines Messenger*, 1/28/1937, 8/19/1937, 12/3/1937, 2/4/1938.

34. William Windsor, *Justice and Mercy: A Sermon Preached at a United Service Held in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Davenport, Iowa, on the National Fast Day, June 1st. 1865* [Davenport?, 1865?]; *Des Moines Leader*, 6/28/1899, 6/29/1899.

35. *Des Moines Register*, 2/18/1952. Church Women United formed nationally in 1941 as a merger of three national groups, but local groups had existed for decades before that. See Melinda M. Johnson, "Building Bridges: Church Women United and Social Reform Work across the Mid-Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2015), 1-3. The institutional Protestant churches—or at least the men within it—had had an earlier ecumenical framework in Des Moines, in the Federal Council of Churches, but given that the women's organization had not lapsed in six decades, the Church Women United representative's point seems sound.

36. Bill Douglas, "Iowa Protestantism of 1911," in *Trinity United Methodist Church Building Centennial 1911-2011* [Des Moines, 2011], no pagination; *Des Moines Register*, 6/6/1911; Gail Bederman, "The Women Have Had Charge Long Enough: The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism," *American Quarterly* 41 (1989), 432-65. In her novel *The Bonney Family* (New York, 1928), 89-92, Ruth Suckow did a hilarious send-up of the movement by putting its premise in the mouths of adolescent males.

The state of the ecumenical enterprise at the local level in Iowa in the 1920s was limned in Ruth Suckow's novel *The Folks*, when the protagonists, the Fergusons, who are stalwarts in the struggling Presbyterian Church in Belmond, return from visiting their daughter in California to learn, from their Congregationalist neighbor, that the two churches have merged.

"Well, Fred, I know how you feel, but if you look at it in this way – it's pretty nice after all to think that we're all united. For my part," Mr. Viele said boldly, "I'd like to see even the Methodists join in!" He looked triumphantly around the table. . . . Of course, Mr. Viele added quickly, that didn't include the Catholics. The Methodists were as far as he could go.<sup>37</sup>

In Des Moines, opportunities for making the city safe for religious differences, both within Protestantism and beyond it, were more varied than in an Iowa small town, but the difficulties were evident as different religious entities experimented with joint Thanksgiving services. As Mannheimer found out in fact-checking his memoir at the Des Moines Public Library, both interfaith and ecumenical Thanksgiving services preceded his arrival in Des Moines by at least a decade. Thanksgiving, as a unique blend of a secular and religious, but not necessarily Christian, holiday, offered opportunities for interreligious cooperation without compromising doctrinal differences. The tableau of the mythological first Thanksgiving at Plymouth Plantation even offered an interracial and interreligious example. As downtown (white) Protestant churches began holding joint services in Des Moines, Unitarians and Reform Jews also acknowledged their commonalities and began to hold their own joint services.<sup>38</sup>

In 1911 the downtown Protestant and the Unitarian-Reform Jewish Thanksgiving services merged – at least temporarily. But

---

37. Ruth Suckow, *The Folks* (1934, reprint, Iowa City, 1992), 694. Suckow, as the daughter of a Congregationalist minister who grew up in many Iowa towns, was an astute observer of Iowa religion. She also had a habit in her novels of renaming Iowa towns with the names of other Iowa towns; "Belmond" is probably Algona.

38. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 4:444; *Des Moines Leader*, 11/26/1896. On the Unitarian-Reform Jew mutual attraction during the 1890s, see Benny Kraut, "The Ambivalent Relations of American Reform Judaism with Unitarianism in the Last Third of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (1986), 58–68.

the stretch was apparently too much for many of the Protestants – in 1912 they went back to a Protestant-only service.<sup>39</sup> Rabbi Mannheimer protested. In an address to his congregation, reprinted in local newspapers, he proclaimed,

If America stands for any one thing more than for all others, it stands for democracy. More than this, its democracy is not the namby-pamby, condescending sort which condescends to allow the weak to exist through the gracious favor of the stronger and the minority through the grace of the majority. Everyone is guaranteed his full rights as a man as long as he is worthy of such rights. . . .

And Thanksgiving day becomes the most truly American of all of our American holidays simply because, more than any other, it emphasizes this fundamental unity of the American people as children of one God and equally citizens of the same land. It does not appeal to us as Jewish or Christian, orthodox or liberal, coming from north Europe or south Europe. As men, citizens of this United States, 'God-fearing' men and women as the president calls us in his Thanksgiving proclamation, the day would have us unite to give thanks.<sup>40</sup>

The local press subsequently printed a rebuttal letter from five Protestant ministers from downtown churches: Finis Idleman of the Central Church of Christ (Disciples), J. Edward Kirbye (Plymouth Congregational Church), Howland Hanson (First Baptist Church), A. B. Leamer (St. John's Lutheran Church), and John L. Hillman (First Methodist Church).<sup>41</sup> Together with the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians (who came later to Protestant

---

39. *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 11/30/1911, 12/1/1911, 11/29/1912, 12/2/1912, 12/10/1912; *Des Moines Capital*, 12/1/1911, 11/29/1912, 12/6/1912. Interfaith Thanksgiving services would resume in 1938 under the auspices of the NCCJ Des Moines Round Table, when Bishop Bergan preached at the Thanksgiving morning service held at the Masonic Shrine Temple. Such services would continue until the mid-1940s. Eugene Mannheimer, "History of a Jewish Community as Lived and Recorded in Des Moines, Iowa," [1952], typescript, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Book V, 68.

40. *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 12/2/1912. Looking back with the benefit of hindsight and accumulated wisdom, Mannheimer was ruefully amused by his protest to the newspapers about the exclusion – but in his "Reminiscences" he still argued the point. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 4:437.

41. *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 12/2/1912. In the 1920s Howland Hanson served as director of spiritual life at Des Moines University; he would be the first faculty member dismissed when the fundamentalist Baptist Bible Union

ecumenism), these denominations constituted the core of mainline Protestantism in Des Moines.<sup>42</sup> African American Protestant congregations such as Corinthian Baptist Church and St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church were also located downtown but were not included.

Even before Stoddard Lane arrived in 1929, Plymouth Congregational Church was a bridge between mainline Protestants and more liberal outliers. In 1918, with the recently concluded war possibly the catalyst, Plymouth found itself sponsoring two Thanksgiving services: the downtown Protestant service in the afternoon, and an evening service open not only to those of any creed, but also, remarkably, to “those of no creed.”<sup>43</sup> A devout Plymouth member would have had little time for turkey.

As part of its 75th anniversary celebration in 1932, Plymouth held a Sunday afternoon “Fellowship Service,” which featured Rev. George Robinson from an African American congregation, the Corinthian Baptist Church; Father Vitus Stoll, chancellor of the Catholic Des Moines Diocese; Rabbi Mannheimer; and Presbyterian minister James Mordy.<sup>44</sup> Plymouth was developing the seeds of an interracial and interfaith model.

---

took over. George S. May, “Des Moines University and Dr. T. T. Shields,” *Iowa Journal of History* 54 (1956), 198, 202.

42. The Episcopal Iowa diocese at the time leaned toward the Catholic side of its heritage. See Loren N. Horton, *The Beautiful Heritage: A History of the Diocese of Iowa, 1853–2003* (Des Moines, 2003), 63. The term *mainline* has been challenged as anachronistic for this period, but I am convinced that it best describes a force that emphasized denominational institutionalism and ecumenism, rejected the emerging fundamentalist movement, and had continuities with 1960s mainline Protestantism; the terms *liberal* and *modernist* are not inclusive enough. See Elisha J. Coffman, *The Christian Century and the Rise of the Protestant Mainline* (New York, 2013), 4–6, and Gary Dorrien, “The Protestant Mainline Makes a (Literary) Comeback,” Religion Dispatches blog, posted 8/5/2013.

43. *Des Moines Register*, 11/28/1918. There was in a sense a retreat from this position by the late 1930s, when “neo-paganism” was declared the enemy. Of course, that was a code word for Nazism. See “Jews and Christians Vow to Fight Neo-Paganism,” *Des Moines Register*, 2/16/1938. “All religions against no religion” was another slogan of the late 1930s.

44. *The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, 1857–1932, Plymouth Congregational Church* (Des Moines, 1932), [6]. The “fraternal addresses” of the congregation’s 25th anniversary are reprised in episode VI of the historical pageant and represent a much smaller religious universe of Quaker, Methodist, and Presbyterian representatives. *Ibid.*, [10–11.]

Making Iowa safe for differences became more urgent for mainline Protestants in the 1920s. As Stoddard Lane was arriving in Des Moines, a much different Protestant entity was making an unceremonious exit. For two years, Des Moines University had served as the de facto headquarters of the Baptist Bible Union, the ultrafundamentalist faction of the Northern Baptist Convention.<sup>45</sup> For many mainline Protestants, fundamentalists represented both intolerance and irrationality (as well as competition); if the Protestant project was to succeed in its mainline form, tolerance needed to be a central concern.<sup>46</sup>

While cooperation between Protestants and Jews was tentative but increasing, the Catholic-Protestant rivalry was deep-seated, with the quest for dominance in the state preceding statehood. Protestant domination of public schools had provoked the building of a parallel educational system by Catholics in the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Theologically, pre-Vatican II Catholics faced more obstacles to cooperation; while American Protestants and Jews tended to celebrate individual conscience, Catholicism was anchored to a belief in an indivisible True Church. When Father Walsh lectured at the State University of Iowa, he spoke on the topic of papal infallibility, arguing that a standard of authoritative truth was necessary in an academic world beset by relativism.<sup>48</sup>

Catholic isolation was diffused by World War I, as the war brought an infusion of patriotism to Catholics and a consequent new self-confidence after the war. This seemed particularly evident in Iowa: Dubuque had the only Catholic daily in the country,

---

45. May, "Des Moines University and Dr. T. T. Shields," 193–232. On the divergent prejudices of the Baptist Bible Union leaders, see Bill Douglas, "The Culture Wars Get Physical: Des Moines University, 1929," *Wapsipinicon Almanac* 18, 118–22. (The present-day osteopathic college of the same name is not related.) Northern Baptists and Presbyterians were particularly riven by the fundamentalist controversy. When Mannheimer and Darrow debated, the *Register* also devoted space to Des Moines University's guest speaker on the subject, who piously felt pity for Darrow. *Des Moines Register*, 11/15/1928.

46. See Benny Kraut, "A Wary Collaboration: Jews, Catholics, and the Protestant Goodwill Movement," in *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900–1960*, ed. William R. Hutchison (New York, 1989), 198–202.

47. Jon Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. S. Deborah Kang (New York, 2012), 122–23, 168–69.

48. *Des Moines Messenger*, 11/26/1937.

the *Daily American Tribune*, published throughout the 1920s.<sup>49</sup> The indefatigable Monsignor M. M. Hoffmann founded the Iowa Catholic Historical Society, whose journal chronicled the contributions of Catholics to the state.<sup>50</sup> But this new assertiveness also opened up possibilities and signaled a willingness to engage in dialogue from a position of relative strength. A new bishop in Des Moines would provide that opening.<sup>51</sup>

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL-ORIENTED Federal Council of Churches (FCC) also took up the cause of making Iowa safe for differences, sending out a national Brotherhood Trio that served as a model for the Des Moines trio. On May 19, 1925, Des Moines clergy involved in the local affiliate of the FCC set up a Committee on Good Will Between Jews and Christians.<sup>52</sup> National leaders of the FCC felt the need to set up an independent entity to deal with the problem. When Catholics proved responsive to overtures for cooperation, the National Conference of Christians and Jews was established, complete with a nationwide tour by the first Brotherhood Trio: Protestant minister Everett Clinchy, rabbi Morris Lazon, and Catholic religion professor John Elliott Ross.<sup>53</sup> Ross, of Charlottesville, Virginia, had taught at the State University of Iowa's School of Religion during the 1929-30 school year.<sup>54</sup>

---

49. Gallagher, *Seed/Harvest*, 70, 77.

50. Other midwestern Catholics were also founding state journals. For a description of the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, see Theodore J. Karamanski, "A Catholic History of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of *Mid-America: A Historical Review*," *Studies in Midwestern History* 2 (January 2016), 2-5. Msgr. Hoffmann dropped the last letter of his last name during World War II, much to the frustration of library catalogers. He also wrote a historical romance novel, *Young and Fair Is Iowa*, in which all the women are fair, all the Catholics are just and pure, and the hero converts to Catholicism in the end.

51. Because priests needed the local bishop's permission to cross diocesan boundaries to speak, it can be assumed that Bishop Bergan obtained the assent of his fellow Iowa bishops to allow Father Walsh to travel the state. On Catholic reluctance to participate fully in the NCCJ project, see Mary Christine Athans, B.V.M., "Courtesy, Confrontation, Cooperation: Jewish-Christian/Catholic Relations in the United States," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 28 (2010), 113-14.

52. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 3:379-B.

53. Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, 30-54; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 35-38.

54. *Des Moines Register*, 11/17/1933; Lampe, *The Story of an Idea*, 15; Kraut, "Wary Collaboration," 213-14, 216-19; *Iowa Jewish News*, 11/16/1933.

When, on November 16, 1933, the national Brotherhood Trio came to Des Moines, they were “flabberghasted” at the extent of their itinerary on their one-day visit.<sup>55</sup> The well-honed cooperative machinery of the mainline Protestants, their established ties to the Jewish community, and the brand-new interest of the Catholics all contributed to a chock-full day for the three national visitors. At 10:30 a. m., the three spoke to 350 Drake University students on the topic “What Can Young People Do about Racial Prejudice and Intolerance?” At noon they were “warmly received” by 150 men at a Lions Club luncheon. At two they faced 50 clergy members; at 3:30 the three men addressed the Women’s Club on the question “To What Extent Do Women Determine Intercultural Attitudes?” From 5:50 to 6:10 they were on WHO Radio, and at 6:30 they gave their evening address at the Youngers Tea Room in downtown Des Moines. At the evening meeting a person with ties to the Ku Klux Klan was reported present, but he drew little sympathy.<sup>56</sup>

The Drake discussion exposed differences among the three speakers, as their individual reports make clear. Lazaron was impatient with mention of theological beliefs as being unproductive. Ross saw a need for historical grounding to explain differences; Clinchy tried to moderate by maintaining that dialogue was the key to understanding. Lazaron also complained that no Catholic colleges had opened their doors to the Brotherhood Trio, a reminder that while Catholics faced prejudice, they also contributed to it.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the differences, the appearance at Drake turned out to be particularly fruitful for garnering ongoing local support for the cause. One student dominated the question-and-answer period and challenged Ross’s advocacy of tolerance, citing what he had heard about Catholic doctrine and Catholic exclusiveness. In response, a local team promised a follow-up meeting to continue the discussion. That team consisted of friends Stoddard Lane and

---

55. National Council of Christians and Jews Records, “First Trio Tour – Dictated Notes” folder, box 1, Social Welfare Archives, Libraries of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; *Des Moines Diocese History* [Des Moines, 1970], 94.

56. *Ibid*; *Des Moines Register*, 11/16/1933, 11/17/1933; *Des Moines Tribune*, 11/16/1933.

57. NCCJ Records, “First Trio Tour.”



Eugene Mannheimer along with a Catholic priest they met for the first time that day, Rev. Robert Walsh. "All this is an indication of how such movements bring to light characters that have previously been hidden," maintained the national report, foreshadowing the emergence of the Iowa team that adapted the national trio's agenda.<sup>58</sup>

Extant records place Rabbi Mannheimer's first experience as part of a Brotherhood Trio in May 1936, when he substituted for Rabbi Lazon on the national Brotherhood Trio's second visit to Des Moines.<sup>59</sup> The *Des Moines Tribune's* description of the "truth meeting" held at East High School illustrates how the trio operated:

In getting to the truth, they had to stick pins in a lot of rumor bubbles. They joshed and kidded each other — and all to the aim of brotherhood among men. . . .

Father Ahearn explained that he "voted as he darned pleased" and the Pope had nothing to say about it. Besides, the six million Catholic voters in the United States couldn't control an election, he said.

Rabbi Mannheimer explained that only 3 per cent of international capital is controlled by Jews. That the "House of Morgan," in which there are no Jews, controls 32 per cent.

And the Rev. Mr. Clinchy admitted, outright, that there are some things among the Protestants which aren't quite right with the world. Organizations like the Ku Klux Klan, for instance, have set back brotherhood movements.<sup>60</sup>

Such a format proved irresistible to a natural organizer like Willard Johnson, a dean at Drake University and graduate of its divinity school, who was hired in 1936 to a part-time position with the Des Moines Round Table, the local affiliate of the National Council of Christians and Jews. In 1938 he would become full-time regional director of the NCCJ.<sup>61</sup> As impresario for the trio, Johnson brought an organizational intensity and enthusiasm

---

58. Ibid.

59. Correspondence in the NCCJ Records between Mannheimer and Johnson in 1950 suggests that the early records of the Des Moines Trio were tossed out by Johnson's successor as regional director of the NCCJ in St. Louis. Mannheimer's "Reminiscences" also frequently suggest that his records are probably incomplete.

60. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 3:387; *Des Moines Tribune*, 5/25/1936.

61. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 3:386. On Johnson's subsequent career as a national and international leader in interfaith endeavors, see NCCJ Records, box 9.

that would ensure that the Iowa trio's oratorical, preaching, and narrative skills would reach receptive audiences across the state. He was also the only native midwesterner in the group and had the most experience with small-town Iowa life.

MANNHEIMER, WALSH, AND LANE soon replicated and improved on the national format locally, improvising an Iowa version of the national Brotherhood Trio's themes. Their first appearance was on WHO Radio on October 15, 1936, where they argued for moving "Beyond Tolerance to Respect." The first listing in Mannheimer's "Reminiscences" of the trio on the road was in response to an episode of anti-Semitism in the Quad Cities, on April 28, 1938. However, Bishop Bergan's February 1938 speech makes clear that they had been traveling as a team for a considerable time before that, a fact confirmed by the *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, which reported that their 1938 visit was a reprise of their visit the previous year.<sup>62</sup>

While apparently incomplete, Mannheimer's itinerary in his reminiscences lists trio visits to 44 different towns in Iowa (some more than once), trips to several other midwestern states, and 33 appearances in Des Moines — only 8 of those in religious settings. Records in the NCCJ archives claim that the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio logged over 11,000 miles on the road during their campaign.<sup>63</sup> The attendance listed is also impressive: 1,100 in Ottumwa, 1,000 in Marshalltown, 750 in Albia, and 350 in Kimballtown, a Danish Lutheran town with a population of 378. On their second visit to Davenport, a local newspaper reported that 1,500 attended. This being Iowa, their lore could not be complete without tales of "further adventures on the road," struggling their way back to Des Moines from Marshalltown and Boone during blizzards.<sup>64</sup>

---

62. "Jews and Christians — Feb. 15, 1938," in folder 1, box 26, subgroup 1, series 9, Archives of the Archdiocese of Omaha, Omaha; *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, 4/14/1938, 4/30/1938. A local Mason City trio spoke there in 1935; their tone was much more earnest. *Iowa Jewish News*, 2/22/1935, 3/1/1935.

63. Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, 59. Close to half of the Trio's Iowa appearances were in Des Moines, though they were mostly unreported by the local press.

64. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences, 4:425–28, 3:401, 1:106–7, 3:405–6; *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, 4/30/1938.



*Meeting of the interfaith Des Moines Goodwill Team, 1941. Left to right: Rev. Stoddard Lane (Plymouth Congregational Church), Rev. Robert A. Walsh (Dowling Academy), Rev. Willard Johnson (Central Iowa Director, National Conference of Christians and Jews), and Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer (Temple B'nai Jeshurun). Photo from SHSI-DM.*

James Pitt's description of the trio's performance, based on NCCJ files that replicate Mannheimer's account, is worth quoting at length:

The standard opening: Johnson appeared on stage, looked at his watch, remarked that the men were late again — as usual. When the three came in, one by one, quite apologetic, they seated themselves around Johnson's desk, with Father Walsh inevitably seated between Lane and Mannheimer. Walsh would say: "I guess I'm between the devil and the deep blue sea." . . .

If the next program was to be in, say, Oskaloosa, one would ask, "Just where is that place?" "Oh, that's that little suburb of Ottumwa's." "They don't have any prejudices in Oskaloosa, do they?" "No, no prejudice there — except against Ottumwa and the Ottumwa football team" — or whatever team had just beaten the Oskaloosans.

Here, the topic usually turned to a discussion of what prejudice is. . . .

The discussion would [soon] turn to a discussion about whether priests kept their parishioners "right under their thumb,"

and Father Walsh had another story for the occasion about the non-Catholic who attended a Catholic service. He hurried home to tell his wife that at one point the priest had taken his stand, looked the congregation right in the eye, and said: "Dominick, go frisk 'em." And a group of men rushed out to do just that. . . .

Here, Mannheimer would suggest that the group should visit the synagogue, "because we never take up collection at services." When another would ask how the Temple got its money, he would say, "Oh we frisk 'em before they come."

. . . Throughout the fun-filled, seemingly hit-or-miss program, however, ran very basic purposes: 1) To make clear that there was absolutely nothing concerning intergroup problems that the team would not readily discuss freely without arguing doctrine or dogma. 2) To throw light on common, prevailing or historic misconceptions and prejudices entertained by any majority or minority group. 3) To emphasize that there are fundamental differences in beliefs, theologies, institutions and religious practices. 4) To emphasize as strongly as possible that members of the three faiths had things in common as American citizens, even though doctrinal differences remained. 5) To leave no doubt or misunderstanding about the aims of the program and the purpose of the NCCJ.<sup>65</sup>

Local news accounts, unanimously positive, mostly stressed the audience's receptivity to the trio's message.<sup>66</sup> Often, the invitation and the turnout were written up as reflecting well on the town: the *Story City Herald* was particularly proud of the townspeople's reaction to the trio. But such stories played into the Goodwill Team's message that neighborly Iowans were beyond prejudice (or should be).

---

65. Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, 59–61; see also NCCJ Records and Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," vol. 3.

66. Local news accounts I have found (not otherwise cited) include *Indianola Tribune*, 2/16/1938; *Oskaloosa Herald*, 3/2/1938; *Jasper County Record*, 3/3/1938; *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 3/14/1938, 3/16/1938; *Grinnell Scarlet and Black*, 10/5/1938, 10/26/1938; *Osceola Herald*, 11/15/1938; *Albia Union-Republican*, 1/26/1939, 2/2/1939; *Boone Republican*, 2/1/1939; *Mount Vernon Hawkeye Record and Lisbon Herald*, 4/27/1939, 11/14/1940; *Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune*, 1/11/1940, 1/18/1940; *Lake View Resort*, 1/18/1940; *Spencer Reporter*, 1/18/1940; *Audubon Advocate-Republican*, 2/29/1940, 3/7/1940; *Des Moines Messenger*, 4/5/1940; *Osceola Sentinel*, 4/29/1940; *Chariton Herald Patriot*, 5/2/1940, 5/9/1940; *Stuart Herald*, 10/17/1940, 10/24/1940; *Story City Herald*, 2/5/1941; *Creston News Advertiser*, 2/14/1941, 2/15/1941; *Iowa Jewish News*, 2/21/1941; *Pella Chronicle*, 4/24/1941; *Bedford Times Press*, 5/15/1941; *Red Oak Express*, 4/29/1943.

Later, as World War II increasingly preoccupied Americans, international reasons for tolerance became more prominent. Typical of an early 1940s event (except for the absence on this occasion of Stoddard Lane) is this prediction by the *Pella Chronicle*, undoubtedly relying on the press release sent out from Des Moines by Willard Johnson:

The most interesting Open Forum of the season will be heard at the high school auditorium next Monday evening, when Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer, Father Robert A. Walsh and Reverend Willard Johnson will discuss informally the Relation of Religion to Democracy and the Need for Debunking Prejudices About All Groups. The program . . . has interested thousands of people throughout Iowa. . . . The principles underlying their work are: respecting the sincere convictions of others and co-operation without watering down belief. They say: "The enemies of democracy use as their chief weapons — prejudice and intolerance. To save democracy, American groups must mutually respect each other."<sup>67</sup>

By the 1950s it became fashionable, even within the NCCJ, to criticize trio teams for their emotionalism. They were also criticized for their failure to address racial intolerance, a concern the Des Moines Round Table did sometimes address.<sup>68</sup> More trenchantly, there was the absence of a critique of economic inequality; and the very name *Brotherhood Trio* suggests an exclusion that would not be acceptable today, especially given women's presence in leadership in two of the three traditions.

Following the lead of the national NCCJ, by the early 1940s the enemy became not so much the irrational prejudices of American religious traditions as it was the paganism and atheism of totalitarian societies abroad. That retrenchment to a Judeo-Christian core, backing away from "Making America Safe for Differences," positioned religious tolerance as an ally in the looming war against fascist states but opened a potential new argument for religious intolerance against those outside the consensus and would work well, after the war, as an argument in favor of the Cold War, which was accompanied by some intolerance.

---

67. *Pella Chronicle*, 4/17/1941.

68. See, for example, Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 3:393. The Des Moines Round Table attempted scientific surveys to gauge public opinion. *Ibid.*, 3:355.

The fissures among the Iowa Goodwill Team were subtle but, in retrospect, significant. They were not, as was the case with the first national trio, along theological or denominational lines; in fact, the two Protestants represented the polarities. Willard Johnson, with an organizer's eye toward achieving a workable majority, was always seeking the consensus of American civil religion to anoint religious tolerance; Stoddard Lane, the stalwart pacifist, did not see American nationalism as a transcendent good and was unwilling to accede to such expedience as a reason to accept diversity. He argued for shared humanity rather than shared citizenship. Mannheimer leaned toward Lane's side of the equation, Walsh toward Johnson's.

IN A SPEECH to a banquet of the Des Moines Round Table of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1954, Gerald Bergan, by then the archbishop of Omaha, assessed the efforts of the past decade. He asserted that the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio had fundamentally changed the culture of Iowa regarding religious tolerance.<sup>69</sup> We may expect faith statements from bishops and other religious leaders; arguably, religious leaders do not acknowledge social conversion often enough. But historians must deal not with the evidence of things unseen, but with fruits of the spirit that are tangible and have a very long shelf life. Even within those chastened parameters, it is clear that the Des Moines Brotherhood Trio assiduously advocated at the grassroots level for a new level of religious tolerance that was consonant with predominant national trends and favored progressive ideals in an embattled world context. It helped that Iowans generally wanted to be good neighbors, accustomed as they were to dealing with religious diversity.

Jane Addams insisted that "the good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life."<sup>70</sup> Making Iowa safe for differences was, and is, an unfinished project. As Rabbi Mannheimer reviewed his youthful protest at the 1912 exclusion of Jews and

---

69. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 40.

70. Quoted in Eboo Patel, *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America* (Boston, 2012), vii.

Unitarians from union Thanksgiving services, despite the tri-faith entente that existed at mid-century, he still felt the pressures of other historical events when he mused, "I certainly was a bit over-optimistic back in 1912 . . . in maintaining that we could 'look forward to the coming of the time, at no greatly distant future, when the spirit of brotherhood, growing out of a faith in a universal God, shall triumph' on earth. Now, in August 1950, the millennium does appear to be considerably further distant than it appeared to many of us to be in 1912."<sup>71</sup> That receding vision continues to be elusive, but still suggests that another world is possible.

---

71. Mannheimer, "Reminiscences," 4:438.

## Book Reviews and Notices

*Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America*, by Michael A. McDonnell. New York: Hill and Wang, 2015. 402 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer John P. Bowes is professor of history at Eastern Kentucky University. He is the author of *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (2016) and *Exiles and Pioneers: Eastern Indians in the Trans-Mississippi West* (2007).

It is a wonderful time to be involved in studying the history of the Great Lakes region. Twenty-five years ago the publication of Richard White's award-winning *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (1991) altered our perspective on the events and peoples that shaped the history of the *pays d'en haut*. White's exploration and explanation of Native American agency and of a mutually created world instead of one shaped by European desires and demands reconfigured scholars' narratives of the Great Lakes specifically and North America in general. Michael Witgen, one of Richard White's former students, published *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* in 2011, and his study has advanced our understanding of Native agency even further. Witgen's analysis of Anishinaabewaki, the land of the Anishinaabeg in the western Great Lakes, demonstrates the autonomy the Anishinaabe people maintained well into what most historians would call the American era.

Michael A. McDonnell's *Masters of Empire* stands on its own as insightful scholarship even as it can be seen as a partner of those two prominent works. Perhaps most importantly, McDonnell takes the notion of Native autonomy that is so crucial to Witgen's analysis and shifts the geography eastward, locating the axis of influence at Michilimackinac. More specifically, McDonnell argues that "the history of the Odawas at Michilimackinac revealed just how much the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes had shaped early America" (7). Over the course of more than 300 pages he takes what appears familiar and forces readers to reconsider the historical actors and processes that shaped those events. That characteristic alone makes *Masters of Empire* a worthwhile read.

This book has its origins in McDonnell's intention to write a biography of Charles Langlade, an eighteenth-century Michilimackinac fur



trader of mixed descent. What began as a twist on the founding father genre soon became a story about the larger influence of the Odawa community within which Langlade was enmeshed, for the man who became known as one of the "Fathers of Wisconsin" did not function outside of that larger kinship network. In short, Langlade's well-known actions, including his leadership of the infamous raid on Pickawillany in June 1752, reflected the numerous ways the Odawas at the straits "profoundly shaped European imperialism in North America" (17). From the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, the Odawas consistently required French, British, and American outsiders to reckon with the framework they had built to structure trade and diplomacy in the Great Lakes region.

In ten chapters, including the introduction and conclusion, McDonnell's narrative examines the events and peoples most commonly associated with the dynamic colonial era in the region. Readers already knowledgeable about this time and place might be tempted to move quickly through discussions of French diplomatic relations with the Huron and Iroquois, comfortable with the notion that the Odawas were simply middle men in the early fur trade. Yet the opening chapter, titled "Recentring Michilimackinac," makes clear that *Masters of Empire* alters the foundation of those common interpretations. Indeed, while crafting a relationship along the St. Lawrence River, both the French and the Iroquois had to take into account the actions and desires of the Odawas and their Anishinaabeg relatives farther west. From that point forward, French influence in particular rose and fell based on their relationship with the Odawas at the straits.

In positioning Michilimackinac at the center of events in this historical period, McDonnell not only displaces the European narrative but also frames the discussion within the Odawa cultural perspective. Kinship networks, instead of French or British desires, take on heightened importance, and paying attention to the different doodemags, or powerful family lines, forces readers to see the Odawa as more than a generalized tribal entity with a single perspective on events. And the kinship ties, fictive and otherwise, that the Odawas made with the French made the latter's position stronger than it would have been otherwise.

There are moments while McDonnell is examining the warfare of the mid- to late 1700s that the writing gets slightly bogged down in the play-by-play of events and the actors shaping those events. Nevertheless, that writing explains why, from the perspective of the Odawas at Michilimackinac, the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's War are better described as the First and Second Anglo-Indian Wars, respectively. And McDonnell deftly demonstrates how the Odawas managed to

influence British imperial policy in the aftermath of the French defeat in the 1760s. Although the book's final chapter carries the story forward into the nineteenth century and Odawa persistence in Michigan, the strength of the book rests in the earlier chapters. *Masters of Empire* is a strong contribution to an already rich field of study.

*Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country*, by Robert Michael Morrissey. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. x, 326 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Stephen Warren is associate professor of history at the University of Iowa. He is the author of *The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migrations and Violence in Early America* (2014).

Collaboration, continuity, entrepreneurialism, and partnership: these are the watchwords that guide Robert Morrissey's important new book, *Empire by Collaboration*. The Illinois country has been studied by some of the most important historians of early America working today, including Richard White, Susan Sleeper-Smith, Tracy Leavelle, Brett Rushforth, and Kathleen DuVal. Morrissey showcases his command of this abundant historiography while, at the same time, offering the most comprehensive analysis of the Illinois country in the eighteenth century to date.

At least initially, Morrissey understands the Illinois country through the lens of the *longue durée*. That perspective on the past enables Morrissey to describe the Illinois Confederacy as continuously adaptive. Previous histories ascribe declension and decline to the indigenous peoples of the Illinois River valley. On the eve of contact, the Illinois moved westward onto the Prairie Peninsula, where they became full participants in a new bison economy. The protein-rich bounty enabled them to concentrate their settlements into the thousands. In the last decades of the seventeenth century, Grand Village of the Kaskaskia became a large multiethnic village, and the Illinois became a formidable military power.

Illinois women lost power as their people's economy shifted to long-distance expeditions for bison and slaves. The shift from seasonal migrations and intensive agriculture to slaving and hunting concentrated power in the hands of Illinois men, who began to see polygamy and slavery as the means to process the vast amounts of bison they killed throughout the year. The Illinois soon became merchants and middle men in a vast trading system based on collaborative partnerships rather than imperial directives.

The bulk of *Empire by Collaboration* follows from 1698, when the Illinois abandoned the Grand Village of the Kaskaskia and migrated southward to the American Bottom region along the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. That new village, Kaskaskia, was as coalescent and inclusive as Grand Village. Its residents sent slaves, wheat, and furs to the new French colony in Louisiana and beyond, into the French Atlantic. At Kaskaskia, however, Frenchmen played an even more important role in the colony than they had at Grand Village.

Morrissey persuasively blends qualitative evidence and digital history methods in this segment of the book. For example, he uses the documentary record of the marriage between Marie Rouensa and Michel Accault along with social network analysis to illustrate the extent and depth of this interconnected community. This is a subtle argument in which the possibility for what Richard White once described as “creative misunderstandings” becomes less and less likely as godparenthood, intermarriage, and trade fully integrate Native and non-Native Kaskaskians into a shared, vernacular culture. As Morrissey writes, “The texture of contact in Illinois country was no dense weave.” Rather, “a number of distinct patches” were held together by “certain threads” (130). The French empire became particularly threadbare in the Illinois country, and the Creole community that lived there pragmatically resisted metropolitan mandates.

Between 1754 and 1760, French officials reconstructed Fort des Chartres in an attempt to showcase military power in a place where local control was customary. Not surprisingly, the fort’s grandeur did not intimidate either the French or their Native allies. From 1746, when French authorities banned further imports of slaves to Illinois, to earlier disastrous campaigns against the Chickasaws in the 1730s, local residents became familiar with a regime that was often out of step with their own collaborative impulses.

In Morrissey’s telling, both French colonizers and their Illinois allies consciously chose to forge a colony built on compromises between the center and the periphery of empire. Successive generations of French administrators tried to engineer Frenchification in Illinois. Nevertheless, interracial marriages, Catholic sacraments, and a Creole economy remained. The slave trade continued after both French farmers and Illinois warriors refused to end the practice. Jesuit priests continued to baptize the Illinois, comfortable with the uniquely syncretic religious beliefs developing in Illinois villages such as Kaskaskia and Cahokia. Such vernacular innovations became routine elements of the Illinois country.

Some questions remain regarding the extent of both French and Illinois collaboration. Some scholars might disagree with Morrissey's characterization of Jesuit acceptance of Illinois syncretism. Archaeologists might quibble with Morrissey's grouping of the Danner Phase within the Fort Ancient cultural system. Nevertheless, few will doubt Morrissey's meticulous research or his ability to craft a new argument amid such a crowded historical field.

*Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie Du Chien, 1750–1860*, by Lucy Eldersveld Murphy. Studies in North American Indian History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xvi, 313 pp. Maps, tables, graphs, illustrations, notes, index. \$34.99 paperback.

Reviewer Robert Michael Morrissey is assistant professor of history at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of *Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country* (2015).

Founded as a fur trade center on the edge of the French and British empires, Prairie du Chien was one of the many multicultural communities that resulted from the meeting of French traders and Native peoples of the western Great Lakes in the eighteenth century. In this remarkable book, Lucy Eldersveld Murphy follows this community through its nineteenth-century transformations in the face of American settler colonialism. Murphy highlights the agency of the local Creole population as it negotiated new political subjectivity, cultural transformations, and new social practices under the American government. The central premise of the book is that while Creole *habitants* were challenged in this process, many of them preserved land, autonomy, and a distinctive culture, resisting the fate of other incorporated populations—such as the Canadian Métis and Mestizos of the American Southwest—who were marginalized as racialized outsiders in the process of settler colonialism.

In key ways, this book covers the same ground as another recent book, Bethel Saler's prize-winning *The Settlers' Empire* (2015), exploring the ways newly subject populations interacted with and responded to the American state-building project in present-day Wisconsin. What distinguishes Murphy's book is its approach; as a community study, *Great Lakes Creoles* focuses on the ground and from the *habitants'* own perspective. That allows Murphy not only to view large-scale historical transformations from a single place, but also to follow the experiences of several well-documented key families. Beautifully written, the book is both enlightening and entertaining, marrying settler colonialist

theory to a compelling narrative. The result is not only required reading for scholars of early America and the West, but also seems a great candidate for college classroom use.

The book is organized both chronologically and thematically. Beginning with an account of the roots of the Creole community in Prairie du Chien, Murphy shows how a syncretic Creole culture took root on the Mississippi River as French traders and Indian women established families in the 1750s. Largely autonomous, many of the town's residents were nominally loyal to Britain during the American Revolution and faced the prospect of American state building with uncertainty. That said, a special "middle ground" dynamic shaped the early relations between the Creoles and their colonial conquerors when territorial officials began to seriously contemplate incorporating the region into the American polity at the end of the War of 1812. As Murphy explains, the American newcomers needed the cooperation of the Creoles in order to achieve the domination of the much larger indigenous population of the region as well as to make their democratic institutions work. As a result of this dynamic, the Americans had to "imagine the Creoles as white people," as one observer put it, and treat them as insiders, not racialized outsiders. From this basic power dynamic stemmed opportunities for the Creoles. Murphy's book follows the Creoles as they confronted colonialism in many dimensions, from government, to law, to economy, to social life.

For instance, although of course the Creoles were subject to an invading government, Murphy emphasizes how they shaped their new political lives, voting, petitioning, and protesting. She explores their encounter with the new legal system, emphasizing their agency as they interacted with the jury system often to defend community priorities. In the most interesting chapter, Murphy explores how Creoles faced a new social order, especially in the arenas of family and gender. Focusing on the prominent "public mothers" of the Creole community, Murphy shows how they resisted new practices and preserved female ideals of community even as they adapted to new laws about marriage and property. In another richly researched chapter, Murphy explores the economic lives of the Creoles, who preserved autonomy and distinctive foodways under the new regime. In all of these chapters, Murphy shows how the increasing Anglo population limited Creole options but never resulted in the racialization of Creoles or their marginalization as outsiders.

The story of the Creoles' negotiations with American state building is full of fascinating episodes and people, and Murphy argues her thesis clearly and effectively. At times Murphy's strong effort to con-

textualize nearly all *habitants'* actions as a reflection of their resistance to settler colonialism or their distinctive Creole values overwhelms other subtler ways to understand the motives of actors in this story. In a similar vein, some may find certain depictions of the communitarian Creole world romanticized, lacking in complexity. Of course this is a quibble about emphasis, not about substance. *Great Lakes Creoles* is a wonderful book, the best study I have read about a community facing settler colonialism in the nineteenth-century Midwest.

*Illinois in the War of 1812*, by Gillum Ferguson. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012. xvi, 349 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover, \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Patrick J. Jung is a professor of history and anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. He is working on a book on the history of the War of 1812 in the upper Mississippi River valley, and his article on the military history of Fort Madison appears in this issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

The recent bicentennial of the War of 1812 resulted in a spate of books, articles, and historical conferences dedicated to reexamining the legacy of that often forgotten conflict. The region including the western Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi River valley in particular remains probably the most overlooked theater of the war, which makes Gillum Ferguson's book a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarly literature. Nevertheless, this book is not without its defects, particularly its approach to the Indian side of the conflict.

Ferguson begins by examining Illinois Territory on the eve of the war and paints an excellent portrait of the various Anglo-American, French Canadian, and Indian communities in the territory. The early losses of Mackinac Island and Detroit to the British-Indian alliance made the region of southern Illinois, where the majority of the Anglo-Americans and French Canadians resided, vulnerable during the first year of the conflict. Even more significant was the assault by the Potawatomes against the garrison of Fort Dearborn as it attempted to make its way to Fort Wayne in August 1812. Ferguson handles this oft-told tale with great clarity and provides copious citations to the various primary sources, which present a variety of irreconcilable factual differences that must be considered. Equally strong are his assessments of the many secondary works that describe the battle. Indeed, Ferguson's book provides an outstanding bibliography of the Fort Dearborn saga that will be of great value to future scholars who research this topic.

Ferguson also asserts that the war effort in Illinois Territory suffered from a lack of soldiers and resources as well as poor coordination between federal and territorial officials. The failure of Governor Ninian Edwards's campaign in the autumn of 1812 to neutralize the military power of the Indians in the Illinois River valley was symptomatic of those defects. The next year, the construction of an American fortification at Peoria did much to stymie Indian war parties in the Illinois River valley, as did the American victories in other theaters, particularly William Henry Harrison's victory at the Battle of the Thames. The final year of the war demonstrated that neither the British nor the Indians considered themselves defeated as they thwarted several expeditions that sought to extend American military power into the upper Mississippi River valley. Indian attacks against isolated settlements resulted in retaliatory raids by Americans, often against Indian communities that had made peace with the United States. Even after the war ended, Indian communities in Illinois Territory and other parts of the Old Northwest perceived themselves to be undefeated despite the seeming capitulation of their British allies.

This book is well researched, and Ferguson writes with flourish and grace. However, his failure to examine the complex dynamics of the British-Indian alliance is a definite weakness. His statement that the British in Canada "tampered with Indian tribes in U.S. territory" (1) suggests that Ferguson believes the native communities were mere British pawns. He would have done well to absorb the works of Robert S. Allen, Colin G. Calloway, Robert S. Owens, Timothy D. Willig, and John Grenier that have refined our understanding of the British-Indian alliance in the Great Lakes region. The absence of those works in Ferguson's book stands as a significant shortcoming. Moreover, the tone of the book suggests that Ferguson is constantly cheering for the white settlers against their Indian adversaries. It is telling that Ferguson describes the Indian assault against the Fort Dearborn garrison as a "massacre" (61). The destruction of a Kickapoo village later that year by the Illinois territorial militia, on the other hand, is described merely as an "attack" (83) even though twice as many people were killed (many of whom were women and children). The closing paragraph of the book in particular will cause scholars of Indian-white relations in the Old Northwest to wince: "What happened to the Indians was tragic, to be sure, but it was also inevitable, and the heroism of the generation of pioneers that subdued them must not be overshadowed by the darker aspects of the story. . . . It is all too easy, two hundred years later, for those who enjoy the wealth and security of the state they made, to condemn them for doing what they had to do to make it" (207).

Ferguson's meticulous research makes this book useful for students of the War of 1812. In particular, he sheds light on lesser-known events and small battles that characterized this conflict in a region that has been largely ignored by scholars. However, readers will be well advised to supplement this work with those that present a more balanced examination of the Indians' participation in this conflict.

*A Settler's Year: Pioneer Life Through the Seasons*, by Kathleen Ernst; photographs by Loyd Heath. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015. 191 pp. Illustrations (mostly color), notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Jeff Bremer is assistant professor of history at Iowa State University. He is the author of *A Store Almost in Sight: The Economic Transformation of Missouri from the Louisiana Purchase to the Civil War* (2014).

This wonderfully illustrated book brings to life nineteenth-century Wisconsin settlement. Organized around the seasons that dictated farm life, *A Settler's Year* does not provide a romanticized view of the life and work of farm families. It does detail the unceasing work, bitter winters, and other difficulties families faced. Enhanced with descriptive quotes from original sources, most of the book is dedicated to telling the story of pioneer life through pictures. It contains only about 25 pages of text, but has about 150 photos (mostly color) taken at Old World Wisconsin, a 500-acre living history museum with ten working farms and interpreters in period costume. This beautiful book will be of interest to anyone seeking a brief introduction to the frontier experience in the northern Midwest.

The text mostly focuses on the story of European immigrants to Wisconsin, who made up about a third of the population of the state before the Civil War. Germans, Poles, Norwegians, and English came by the thousands each year, pushed out of their homelands by high taxes, military service, religious oppression, or a lack of economic opportunity. Their experience in Wisconsin was much like that of new settlers across the northern United States. They found seemingly endless labor, isolation, and loneliness, made tolerable by rural bonds of cooperation that provided support for farm families.

Each season has a short narrative, describing the work and daily life of pioneers. In spring, families planted crops and everyone completed chores as the days grew longer. Women and girls cared for gardens, while children guarded fields. One girl remembered her father saying that kids were cheaper than fences. In summer, all helped to cut and store hay, suffering from mosquitos, as they battled birds



and gophers who tried to consume plants in their fields. Drought, severe weather, and fires threatened harvests. Some children went to school in the summer, their labor easier to spare than in the autumn.

In the fall, days grew shorter and families rushed to gather their foodstuffs for the long winter that everyone knew was coming. Vegetables such as pumpkin and squash were gathered, wheat was cut, and people completed tasks, often in the company of neighbors. Quilting and shucking bees, as well as house-raising, provided much needed labor and company. Pigs were slaughtered and pork stored away. Men took surplus crops to nearby towns and cut large amounts of wood to burn to keep families warm. During winter, children went to school, and life continued at a slower pace, even as water froze in glasses on tables inside cabins. The arrival of a new spring brought a new year of work.

This brief book will be a useful addition to libraries, but *The Wisconsin Frontier* by Mark Wyman is a far more detailed survey of the topic.

*Wisconsin Agriculture: A History*, by Jerry Apps. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015. xi, 321 pp. Illustrations (many in color), sidebars, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Pamela Riney-Kehrberg is professor of history at Iowa State University. She is the author of *The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America since 1865* (2014) and *Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest* (2005).

In *Wisconsin Agriculture: A History*, Jerry Apps presents a thorough and engaging look at Wisconsin agriculture through the decades. He begins with the geology and climate of Wisconsin, moves on to Native American history, and then into nineteenth-century settlement and development of farms throughout the state. He then proceeds through the development of agriculture over time and among crops. Although dairying gets a considerable number of pages, he also deals with crops such as cranberries, tobacco, honey, mink, and “muck” crops, such as sphagnum moss. Before reading this book, I had no idea that Wisconsin was the only state in the union with a sphagnum moss industry. There are many such nuggets buried in Apps’s narrative.

This is no dry, academic text. Apps tells his story in a number of different ways. The narrative is heavily illustrated with photographs and artwork. There are plenty of facts and figures for those who want that kind of nitty-gritty detail. There are personal stories for people who want their history with a human face. Informational sidebars about various topics have been placed throughout the text, giving

readers a chance to examine interesting topics that might not otherwise have been included. Because of the importance of dairying to Wisconsin, Apps includes a fairly substantial spread on the “oleo wars” of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite the ascendance of margarine after World War II, Wisconsin law requires that butter be served to all of those in state institutions, whether students, patients, or inmates. In another sidebar about World War II, there is a listing of all items rationed during the war and providing the dates during which the rationing took place. Because Apps covers so many topics, no one topic is examined in any significant depth. He has footnotes and a bibliography, however, so readers who want more can easily find the sources from which Apps drew his text.

This is a beautiful book. I suppose it could be called a “coffee table book,” because of its lavish illustrations, heavy, slick paper, and use of color, but that would not appreciate its real usefulness as a fairly encyclopedic piece of history. It is clear that Apps has put a great deal of thought and care into this book, and he has covered a wide array of topics that should engage anyone with an interest in the agricultural history of the upper Midwest. It would make a good model for similar tomes on the topic for other midwestern states. *Wisconsin Agriculture* is gorgeous, interesting, and sure to provide new information even to people who think they already know a lot about this topic. At \$34.95 for a hardcover, this is a bargain book.

*The National Joker: Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Satire*, by Todd Nathan Thompson. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015. xii, 178 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.50 hardcover.

Reviewer Mark Wahlgren Summers is professor of history at the University of Kentucky. His books include *A Dangerous Stir: Fear, Paranoia, and the Making of Reconstruction* (2009) and *The Press Gang: Newspapers and Politics, 1865–1878* (1994).

Humor: it’s no laughing matter. Visitors to the memorial in Washington, D.C., can see in Abraham Lincoln’s image the Great Emancipator and the grave man of sorrows, but it may be his fame as a homespun joke teller that has endeared him to most Americans and made them feel closer to him than to any other president. Now, in *The National Joker*, Todd Nathan Thompson lifts that aspect into the importance it deserves. Arguing that Lincoln’s yarns and quips were not just humor, but satire, he makes a compelling case for their use as a powerful rhetorical weapon on his behalf.

Lincoln’s gift for humor was already well known out west before his election. How feelingly his opponents knew it! The rising politi-

cian was a master of sarcastic slings and deadly zingers at the self-important “little big men” he came up against—always cushioned by self-deprecating humor. During the Civil War, books like *Old Abe’s Jokes, Fresh from Abraham’s Bosom* captured a president able to draw on everything from Aesop’s Fables to Joe Miller’s joke book to give a light touch to a serious matter, always making an apt illustration of the larger point he wanted to make.

Where Thompson advances common knowledge is in noting how much Lincoln consciously used his humor satirically, to mock and expose the pretensions of those ranged against him, and how much his belittling descriptions of himself helped create a public image working to his political advantage and taking the sting out of the potential lines of attack that enemies could use against him: that he was a self-made man who, in his own words, had done a “d—n bad job” of it; that he was ugly, ungainly, tall, rustic, and, by eastern standards, wholly un-presidential. That image became the norm in a burgeoning illustrated press, where for the first time presidential caricatures ranged not in the handfuls but in the hundreds. Only in the South and in England, where rising from the bottom and awkward manners were treated as contemptible and where images of Lincoln as race-mixer, devil, or vampire qualified as inspired art, could his intended image-making fail to take hold. Elsewhere, Democrats could hardly do damage by exposing in their opponent limitations that he so readily satirized himself. Far from denigrating him, caricature only embodied the image that Lincoln had designed for himself.

Thompson’s argument works; his book, richly laden with cartoons—each of them explained perhaps more than necessary—is crammed with insight. He knows his satirists, and the Civil War had them, thick as brevet generals: Sut Lovingood, Orpheus C. Kerr, Petroleum V. Nasby, Bill Arp, and Artemus Ward. He also can fit them into the broader tradition of frontier humor, dating back to Davy Crockett, whose sallies may have inspired a young Mr. Lincoln. If there is any limit, it is as minuscule as the combined jokes of the Great Emancipator’s half-dozen successors: Why did none of them learn from Lincoln? Why did so many later presidents treat humor and satire as if they lessened the dignity of their office? Why, as late as 1952, would Adlai Stevenson’s wit be used as an argument against his fitness to take the highest office in the land? If that is this review’s punch line, it is a punch of the most diluted sort. Thompson’s *National Joker* ought to be taken seriously by all scholars.

*Campus Beautiful: Shaping the Aesthetic Identity of Iowa State University*, edited by Jodi O'Donnell. Ames: University Museums, Iowa State University, 2015. 477 pp. 400 photographs (many in color), maps, sidebars, references, appendix, author and title index. \$100 hardcover.

Reviewer Jerome L. Thompson, an Iowa State University alum, is retired from the State Historical Society of Iowa, where he served in a variety of capacities, most recently as state curator.

*Campus Beautiful* is a history of the Iowa State University (ISU) campus, but even more it is like a fine museum exhibit catalog, with the campus itself as the exhibit. It represents great local history research well presented to give readers an understanding of a specific geographic place and its changes over time.

The book's cost and limited production may limit its audience, but that does not reflect on the quality of the publication and its contents. The book includes historic photographs and maps that have never been included in any other publication on the history of the university. Each image provides strong visual evidence for the essays. The book's large format and the quality of the reproductions make this an important catalog of sources contained in the university archives.

It is clear from the first few chapters that the audience for this publication is anyone who attended ISU or lived in Ames, because most of the references to former buildings and landscapes use current landmarks for reference. Only someone familiar with the campus today can easily make those connections. That does not diminish the quality of this history or the usefulness of this publication for future reference and research.

A team of authors contributed their expertise in architectural history, landscape history, and art history. Some authors have specific connections to ISU while others do not. The articles and essays are not only descriptive but also provide context for understanding why certain developments happened politically, economically, and socially.

The book approaches its subject chronologically, which helps readers see changes in place over time. It spans from the agrarian roots of the college to its status as a world-class university today. In the first pages, authors establish the first president's philosophy on the importance of aesthetics: "It is the useful in the world that sustains us; it is the beautiful that exalts us" (President Adonijah Welch, 1877, quoted on p. 5). As a horticulturalist, Welch was influenced by Andrew Jackson Downing and Fredrick Law Olmsted, and he put their principles into practice in campus landscape design. He saw landscape as "a living laboratory" for students.

As the campus story progresses through time, author Paula Mohr identifies threats to the landscape, ranging from student population growth and the need for new buildings to economic conditions and changes in transportation. This is evidenced by the need to relocate the interurban train tracks to campus, to establish and pave roads in the early twentieth century, and to provide parking for the number of students who possessed or had access to cars in the post-World War II era, furthered by the onslaught of baby boomers in the 1960s and 1970s. Mohr concludes that, with each threat, the university preserved the core landscape features.

The changes in architecture on campus are well documented by Wesley Shank and Jason Alread. They helpfully include sidebar images and definitions of architectural styles found on campus. They also provide context for changes in architectural designs that came to appear on campus over the past 150 years.

The collections of public art on campus are carefully documented by art historian Lea Rosson DeLong and museum director Lynnette Pohlman. After the landscape and the buildings, this is the third leg of the stool that makes a campus beautiful. The works by WPA artist Grant Wood and the appointment of sculptor Christian Petersen as artist-in-residence began a tradition that has continued for 80 years. Both authors note the importance of the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities and the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as influences that were important for the development of this aesthetic effort. Pohlman particularly notes passage of state legislation in 1979 that calls for 0.5 percent of new building construction or major renovation costs to be reserved for commissioning public art in state buildings and at state universities. This helped the “Art on Campus” collection to grow and add aesthetic interest to nearly every place on the campus today.

Finally, the book’s appendixes contain resources that elevate this work over similar undertakings: a collection of keyed university maps from the 1870s to 1979, an illustrated checklist of selected works of public art, a list of artists of all works in the museum collections, a timeline of development events, and an extensive bibliography and index. Each chapter is fully footnoted, with the sources—mostly primary sources from the rich resources of the university archives—cited at the end of each article.

*The Making of Home: The 500-Year Story of How Our Houses Became Our Homes*, by Judith Flanders. New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, 2015. xii, 346 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.99 hardcover, \$16.99 paperback.

Reviewer Shirley Wajda is curator of history at Michigan State University Museum. She is the coeditor, with Helen Sheumaker, of *Material Culture in America: Understanding Everyday Life* (2008).

Judith Flanders's 500-year history of the buildings we call both houses and homes is not—but is—about Iowa. Written in a familiar, lively voice and based on a wealth of transatlantic sources, *The Making of Home* makes one feel at home in the vast and varied history Flanders undertakes. After an introduction that explores through languages and paintings the differences between those European cultures that used *house* and those that used *home*, the book is divided into two parts. The first, consisting of five chapters, explores the history of *home* in north-west Europe and its spread to North America. The second, comprising two chapters, investigates technological innovation in the making of the modern home. The architectural modernism of the early twentieth century and its failure to remake entirely the house because of the enduring idea of home is the subject of a coda.

In chapter one, Flanders traces the modern house and meanings of home to the great changes wrought in northwestern Europe's industrial revolution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Netherlands and England proved to be the "seedbeds of change" (23), establishing new forms of trade as well as a rising demand for goods by the growing middle classes. To this well-known argument Flanders adds the insights of historian Mary Hartman, who notes that northwestern Europe's unique marriage system, in which people worked longer before marriage and thus could afford "going to housekeeping," established—through consumption—the still normative single-family household.

The remaining chapters of part one explore the material changes new attitudes about living brought about from the late eighteenth into the early twentieth century. The shift in domestic privacy according to function and formality, gender and generation, rather than social status, is the focus of the second chapter. The seventeenth-century innovation of the corridor in monasteries, separating each monk's room, replaced the practice of hierarchically connecting rooms (*enfilade*) and was quickly adapted to houses, ensuring discrete, specialized, and private spaces. Curtains and colored glass in sash windows, by the nineteenth century, further distinguished the private home from the public street. "Home and the World," the topic of chapter three, scrutinizes the gendered ideology of "separate spheres" in the nineteenth century as "never more

than an idea, and an idea for the prosperous" (100), and traces the evolution of women's unpaid labor of housework in what was perceived as the noncommercial sphere of the home. Household privacy was increased through technology (from the enclosed stove to the oscillating washing machine to central heating), rendering servants (and men) unnecessary but increasing women's labor and solitude. Chapter four, "Home Furnishings," inventories the world in the home through the concept of informality reflected in the use of storage, seating, dining, and display furniture. These mass-produced goods created a nostalgia for a preindustrial past in the nineteenth century. In turn, historic house museums and collections of domestic life were established to preserve the "authentic" and patriotic material past. Along with discussions of the American "log cabin" myth, spinning wheels, and quilts, chapter five ("Building Myths") explores the "dilemmas of authenticity" (183) the romanticization of the past created. As Flanders writes, "The only permanency has been our belief that there is one unchanging reality, perhaps the strongest and most comforting myth of all" (195).

The infrastructures girding the notion of home through physical buildings form the subject of part two. The technologies providing heat and light are the subject of the sixth chapter ("Hearth and Home"); the labor, construction, government, and financial sectors supporting the household's efficiency, cleanliness, and health, and subsequent suburbanization and home (note: not house) ownership is the subject of the last chapter, "The Home Network." The coda, "Not at Home," examines modernism's embrace of industrial production and standardization in creating in houses streamlined, open-plan "machines for living." Such a threat to privacy and the idea of home horrified Henry James, who despaired that everything was "'visible, visitable, penetrable'" (280). Little wonder, Flanders writes, that modern architecture could not undermine in several decades of its primacy the sense of home it had taken 500 years to achieve.

*The Making of Home* makes sense of our own homes, and does so in admirable ways. Its author teaches by example how we should be wary of evidence. Her exploration of the slippages between texts and images and material things, and between prescriptive literature and actual human behavior, provides many useful and engaging lessons. She reminds us that architectural history still hinges on innovation, not maintenance, renovation, and lived experience, and that a history of home is more (if not entirely) inclusive. One wonders how historic house museums might offer new interpretations based not on the families that once inhabited them but as examples of larger histories in the invention and stewardship of the idea of home.

*The Sand Art Bottles of Andrew Clemens*, by Roy Sucholeiki. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2015. vii, 138 pp. Illustrations (many in color), appendixes, references, index. \$55.00 paperback.

Reviewer Barbara Ching is professor of English at Iowa State University. She is the author of "‘This World Is Ours’: The Bily Clocks and Cosmopolitan Regionalism, 1913–1948" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2009).

In *The Sand Art Bottles of Andrew Clemens*, Roy Sucholeiki has written a wide-ranging, copiously illustrated appreciation of Iowa artist Andrew Clemens’s sand art bottles. Neither a catalogue raisonné nor a biography (critical or otherwise), *Sand Art Bottles* relies on a lengthy 1945 interview with Clemens’s relatives conducted by Marian Rischmueller for information about the life and career of Clemens (1857–1894).

The third son in a family of six boys, Andrew was a self-taught, isolated artist and a highly motivated entrepreneur. The son of German-speaking immigrants who moved several times in search of opportunities in the upper Midwest, Andrew spent most of his life in McGregor, Iowa. After encephalitis left him deaf at the age of six, he attended the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs. Sometime in the early 1870s Clemens began to make sand art bottles to sell in a local shop where the owner also made and sold them. Clemens gathered colored sand from a cave in Pikes Peak State Park; according to Sucholeiki, such collecting was a tradition that may have been started by the native inhabitants of the region. Certainly, the book’s final chapter, a survey of the handful of sand bottle creators Clemens inspired, demonstrates that other white men in the driftless region carried on sand collecting and bottle crafting for several generations. Sucholeiki also discusses at some length Ole Anderson, a bottle creator who worked out of a souvenir shop in Yellowstone.

Packing sand into upside-down apothecary bottles, Clemens quickly distinguished himself by his pictorial skill, particularly the fine delineation he could achieve. He created special tools to enable that precision. He often designed bottles to order; clients requested personalized bottles to commemorate weddings, birthdays, and holidays. An order sheet reproduced in the book offers bouquets, steamboats, marine scenes, and the like as central images. The prices ranged from \$.50 to \$4.50 depending on size and complexity. An appendix lists recent auction prices for the bottles, reaching as high as \$45,000. When he signed the bottles in sand, Clemens did so near the bottom, on the back. In early bottles, Clemens would add that he was “a deaf mute.”

Sucholeiki reads the recurring features of Clemens’s bottles as a blending of regional and American motifs. The bottles’ bases feature



abstract, wavy bands of varying colors, a depiction of the region's geology: the sand itself. The upper segments regularly portray eagles and American flags, situating the artist and his subjects in the United States. Objects or locales are faithfully illustrated at the center of the bottles. Sucholeiki identifies a bottle depicting George Washington as Clemens's masterpiece and devotes a chapter to its development. The book closes with Sucholeiki's brief statement on Clemens as a "fully fledged professional artist" in contrast to his followers and other folk artists. Such distinctions may not be of great interest to most readers; what the book does well is document the possibility for creative, widely applauded creative expression in rural Iowa in the late nineteenth century.

*Skunk Hill: A Native Ceremonial Community in Wisconsin*, by Robert A. Birmingham. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015. xii, 116 pp. Maps, illustrations, census chart, allotment chart, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewer Eric Steven Zimmer is a research fellow at the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. He is the author of "Settlement Sovereignty: The Meskwaki Fight for Self-Governance, 1856-1937" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2014).

In this fascinating and accessible contribution to midwestern history, archaeologist Robert A. Birmingham details the founding and decline of the village at Skunk Hill, a large community of Potawatomi people founded on the bluffs of central Wisconsin in 1905. The Skunk Hill community, he argues, "was the most prominent of several ceremonial communities in Wisconsin based around a cultural and spiritual revival movement known as the Dream Dance," often called the "Drum Dance," which "swept across the Midwest and eastern Great Plains in the late nineteenth century" (2). The U.S. government had forced these Potawatomies onto a reservation in Kansas decades earlier. They fled that place before securing dozens of land allotments around Skunk Hill on which they assembled a cohesive community of about 20 families. The Skunk Hill Potawatomies lived, worked, and worshiped on that land base for more than 20 years. They shared a communal cemetery and a space for harvesting maple sap, as well as areas for ceremonies and dances. Skunk Hill disbanded in the early 1930s after its founders, many of whom were spiritual leaders, died and most community members sold their land.

Birmingham deftly deploys archaeological and archival evidence to piece together the story of Skunk Hill. He also cultivated relation-

ships with many Skunk Hill descendants, whose oral histories molded Birmingham's reverent account of their people. At times, his book seems unshaped by some recent developments in the field of Native American history. This is reflected in the thin bibliography. But engaging in nuanced debates with specialists is not Birmingham's goal; nor is he writing exclusively for a scholarly audience. Quite the opposite—*Skunk Hill* aims squarely at general readers, and its purpose is to wrap that place in a broader historical context. Throughout, Birmingham ably weaves the processes of removal and cultural and spiritual assaults that indigenous peoples endured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into his discussion of Skunk Hill. Accordingly, this book will give novice readers a good sense of the overarching trajectory of Indian policy—not to mention a stellar example of an indigenous survival strategy—during this period.

Driven by a good story and filled with maps, photographs, and two excellent charts of the Skunk Hill census and the many allotments that shaped this community, *Skunk Hill* is a fun, respectful, and relevant contribution to the history of Native peoples in Wisconsin and the Midwest. It will undoubtedly be cited by specialists, prized by Skunk Hill descendants, and enjoyed by regional history enthusiasts.

On a final note, *Skunk Hill* has opened a few leads that Iowa historians could pursue fruitfully. According to the Iowa General Assembly's legislative record from 1858, a cohort of Potawatomes secured permission that March to reside in Iowa. Unlike the Meskwaki Nation—which received a similar authorization in 1856 and still resides on its settlement near Tama—the Potawatomes do not seem to have stuck around the Hawkeye state. Who were these Iowa Potawatomes, and did they have any connection with those who founded Skunk Hill four decades later? Additionally, a religious movement called “the Drum Society” was active on the Meskwaki settlement in the middle of the twentieth century and was discussed at some length by the “Fox Project” anthropologists who spent time there in the 1940s and 1950s. Was this another sect of the Skunk Hill Drum Dance? If so, did it make its way to Iowa from Wisconsin, or vice versa?

*Skunk Hill* offers a great deal to historians of the Midwest. Perhaps best of all, however, between its cracks an essay on Iowa's Potawatomi history lies in wait.

*A Rainbow Division Lieutenant in France: The World War I Diary of John H. Taber*, edited by Stephen H. Taber. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2015. viii, 312 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Matthew J. Margis is a Ph.D. candidate in history at Iowa State University. He is working on a dissertation about the evolution of the National Guard during the Progressive Era.

John H. Taber's edited diary, *A Rainbow Division Lieutenant in France*, recounts his wartime experiences as a reserve officer attached to the 168th Infantry Regiment (Iowa National Guard) of the 42nd Infantry Division, also known as the Rainbow Division. Stephen Taber edited and transcribed his second cousin's wartime diary with few alterations, although he updated some of the antiquated language to appeal to a modern audience. He also chose to eliminate the daily date entries, which creates some confusion, though it does little to hinder the diary's flow. The editor did cross-reference the diary's information to ensure factual accuracy.

Overall, this diary serves as an interesting firsthand account. As a primary source, the book provides valuable insights into the mindset and day-to-day activities of an officer in the French trenches during World War I. Although Taber was not an Iowan, he did serve with an Iowa National Guard regiment, so this account of his experiences will appeal to anyone interested in Iowa's wartime history. In many ways, the book complements Hugh H. Thompson's transcribed diary, *Trench Knives and Mustard Gas: With the 42nd Rainbow Division in France*, edited by Robert H. Ferrell (2004), which also recounts the experiences of an army officer attached to the 168th Regiment. However, because this is a diary, anyone seeking an analytical account of World War I or life in the trenches will need to look elsewhere.

*American Organic: A Cultural History of Farming, Gardening, Shopping, and Eating*, by Robin O'Sullivan. CultureAmerica Series. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015. 382 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Barbara J. Dilly is associate professor of anthropology at Creighton University and an Iowa resident. Her research and writing focus on, among other things, rural communities and sustainability.

Through a kaleidoscopic interdisciplinary lens, Robin O'Sullivan examines what is really on our plates when we decide to eat organic. Large, looming, complex, and interconnected issues are embedded in the individual question "what's for dinner" in America. This historical analysis of the American organic movement provides a new critical paradigm to tackle the complexity of what is at stake within organic farming, gardening, shopping, and eating decisions in terms of health, food justice, and environmental sustainability. O'Sullivan examines

how food is grown and why that matters to human and environmental health as well as the health of the rural economy. She questions how food is marketed and whether or not Americans actually have free choice or enough credible information to make healthy and morally responsible consumer choices.

Can consumers improve their health and enact social change by buying organic food? O'Sullivan argues that the history of the movement does not show that consumer health is greatly improved or that mainstream food production practices have significantly changed as a result of consumer activism. Even though organic production can protect soil and water health, conserve energy, and promote sustainable communities, it cannot be shown that organic consumers have enough power to choose and control their food choices in the capitalist marketplace, let alone change the large structures that control the way food is produced in America.

The organic movement began on the periphery of American society and gained credibility with environmentalists and food consumers because it offered individual decision-making alternatives to conventional agriculture. The practical individual economic decision alternatives regarding what and how to grow and market food were, however, historically complicated by policy debates. O'Sullivan makes a major methodological contribution by drawing these issues into one rigorous study that examines subversive challenges to scientific knowledge and reveals conflicted social and moral philosophies. It is a mouthful, and it takes time to digest, but O'Sullivan's impressive scholarship provides an academic gourmet menu for food studies, consumer studies, and environmental studies scholars as well as for the general public.

O'Sullivan reveals that organics are still part of larger unanswered questions centered on quests for a better life for the environment, for farmers, and for consumers. What started out as a moral alternative individual decision movement led by J. I. Rodale in 1947 took on broad reform and even revolutionary dimensions as it evolved. But those dimensions remained fragmented; the movement did not centralize leadership to transform agricultural production and marketing. In fact, the movement went mainstream only when the discourses on healthy eating were coopted by the capitalist market's emphasis on consumer choice. Why has the movement not moved past individual decisions? What fragments it? O'Sullivan places the complexity of these questions within the context of the capitalist food production infrastructure, where she exposes the imbalances in power relations that shape individual decisions about what to eat and how to produce it.

The questions of what to eat need to be broadened, O'Sullivan argues, to include "what kind of agriculture can best reduce carbon

emissions, increase biodiversity, improve human health and still ‘feed the world’” (6). While there are strong, culturally resilient ideas associated with respect for nature’s wholeness and simplicity, independence and freedom to engage in meaningful and sustainable relationships to land, abundant harvests and health, respect for honest hard work, and higher purposes in life (12), there are powerful capitalist infrastructure forces that enable concentrated economic, political, and cultural authority to sustain the hegemony of conventional chemically based agriculture.

O’Sullivan argues that while the organic movement convinced many people that they can formulate policy through consumer power, it failed to coalesce an organized movement to influence systemic reform. This study reveals that placing the burden of social and environmental damage to human and environmental health on the shoulders of consumers draws attention away from the crucial players in organizations and government who should be accountable for making agriculture sustainable and food safe and nutritious. This rigorous study shows how the viability of organic farming and its broader implications for health and sustainability depend on policy change and not consumer appeal. The challenges to consumption, she argues, should be focused on a challenge to the frameworks that sustain over-consumption (259).

This book should be of interest to Iowans because it challenges us to think about our food production systems in terms broader than just our daily bread. O’Sullivan argues that “the entire organic movement has remained oriented toward praising acts of individual salvation, not mobilizing for social revolution (194).” A broader moral vision is important, she argues, because organics may provide solutions to the rising costs of health care, global warming, and world hunger, but not without more integrated scientific studies, central organizational vision, and charismatic leadership. Much more is needed than just individual ethical decision making.

*Iowa’s Record Setting Governor: The Terry Branstad Story*, by Mike Chapman. Des Moines: Business Publications Corp., 2015. xxii, 234 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, index. \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewer Timothy Walch is director emeritus of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and a volunteer at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

You should never judge a book by its cover, but it is fair to judge this biography by its title: *Iowa’s Record Setting Governor*. That Terry Branstad has served as governor of Iowa for a long time is a given. Several

years ago he passed his next-closest contemporary, Bill Janklow of South Dakota. And in December 2015 Branstad passed George Clinton—the long-forgotten governor of New York, to become the longest-serving governor in U.S. history. In length of gubernatorial service, Terry Branstad has no peer.

In recognition of that achievement, well-known Iowa journalist Mike Chapman has compiled a useful if uncritical biography of Branstad's life and career. Although this is not an official biography, Chapman did have the cooperation of the governor and his family as well as numerous staff members who worked with him over the years. The result is an affectionate, anecdotal portrait of a hard-working, unpretentious leader who has steered Iowa for a generation.

Chapman follows the traditional arc of most biographies, beginning with three chapters on Branstad's life before he launched his career in Des Moines. Here you will find stories of Branstad's youth in Leland and life on the farm with his parents and brother. Chapman goes on to write about the governor's years at the University of Iowa, two years in the U.S. Army, and law school at Drake University. The third chapter also includes his courtship and marriage to Christine Johnson and his burgeoning political career in the state senate and as Robert Ray's lieutenant governor.

The next four chapters focus on Branstad's first four terms as governor from 1983 to 1999. For the most part, these are brief overviews of the political landscape in Iowa as the governor sought election in 1982 and then re-election in 1986, 1990, and 1994. Although there is passing mention of the issues that he faced in each of these terms, the focus is more specifically on Branstad's political campaigns against Roxanne Conlin, Lowell Junkins, Don Avenson, and Bonnie Campbell. It is noteworthy that his closest race was a primary challenge from Congressman Fred Grandy in 1994.

Branstad chose not to run in 1998 and turned the office over to Democrat Tom Vilsack. The next three chapters touch on Branstad's career since 1999. In "Life after Terrace Hill" Chapman summarizes Branstad's work as an attorney and advisor and briefly discusses his six-plus years as president of Des Moines University. "The Comeback" returns the story to politics—Branstad's decision to run again in 2010 and his election victory over Chet Culver. The last chapter, titled "The Chinese Connection," traces the unusual friendship between Branstad and President Xi Jinping of China.

Chapman concludes the Branstad story with three chapters of summary: "Life in the Bubble," "The Legacy," and "Reflections." In addition to 27 pages of photographs and cartoons, the book ends with

appendixes listing the governors of Iowa, the longest-serving governors in U.S. history, the Branstad family, and staff members of the Branstad administrations. The book also includes footnotes, a list of interview subjects, additional sources of information, and an index.

Chapman has written a readable biography that belongs in every library in Iowa. That having been said, it is only the first draft of the Branstad story. Yet to come, of course, will be more rigorous study of his leadership through challenging times. That future work will necessarily be based on Branstad's gubernatorial papers and records held by the State Historical Society of Iowa. Indeed, a future study also will include assessments by Branstad's critics as well as his staff and supporters.

*Corn Poll: A Novel of the Iowa Caucuses*, by Zachary Michael Jack. North Liberty, Iowa: Ice Cube Press, 2015. 496 pp. Discussion guide. \$21.95 paperback.

Reviewer Matthew Schaefer is an archivist at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch.

Iowans have grown used to the quadrennial invasion of politicians seeking their votes, or at least their caucus-night commitment, to jump start their presidential campaigns. Those who have lived in Iowa long enough might even grow tired of the fresh-faced volunteers canvassing neighborhoods, robo-calls from uncharted political vectors, and the relentless drone of television ads and news merging into tasteless political mush. For Iowans who have gone so far as to become jaded by the caucus process, Zachary Michael Jack's *Corn Poll: A Novel of the Iowa Caucuses* would be a bracing tonic.

*Corn Poll* is a sweetly savage satire examining the all-too-familiar characters of the Iowa caucuses: cardboard cut-out politicians making feeble efforts to appear authentic in the retail politics of Iowa; worldly agents of the press corps deigning to spend a month in the Hawkeye state [in a state of high dudgeon], back-room politicians stage-managing events to make the "three out of Iowa" cut. Into this toxic mix, Jack introduces a hero, Jacob Preston, an Iowan ex-pat who recently lost his writing job at the *Rocky Mountain Partisan*. Preston wins the "Politics up Close" contest cosponsored by the Iowa GOP and the Republican National Committee. The political hacks hope to trade on Preston's access to further their own agendas for the 2012 election.

At loose ends, Preston packs up his Honda and motors east to Hereford, Iowa—home of the Fighting Plowmen, the Calvin Coolidge Café, and Herb Clarke, curmudgeonly editor of the local newspaper.

Hereford, it turns out, has become the de facto political center of Iowa (and the known universe) when candidate Milt Cloward moves his Iowa headquarters there. After Cloward's poll numbers rise 10 percentage points, other candidates join the exodus from Des Moines. Soon Paul Paule, Rochelle Boxman, Rick Santoro, and other GOP hopefuls move their headquarters to the authenticity of small-town Iowa. As you can see, Jack enjoys wordplay just enough to move out of the libel zone.

Put on the spot during his first press conference, Preston poses an awkward question: "If there were a trophy given to the Iowa Caucus winner, what should it be?" The flummoxed politicians flail about, struggling with a question they could not have anticipated, before eventually agreeing on the Silver Steer as the appropriate prize. Functioning as Greek chorus, Herb Clarke calls this an apt trophy because "the political process is a farce, a circus sold to the highest bidder while being pitched to the public as an exercise in participatory democracy."

Artifice though it may be, the Silver Steer becomes a political player during the 40 days and 40 nights of political machinations and hypocrisy that lead to caucus night. Voters see in the Silver Steer a way to express their frustration with a political system that seems rigged. As caucus night nears and the Silver Steer rises in the polls, cow-napping, covert political operatives, and assorted dirty tricks liven up small-town Iowa. Everyman Jacob Preston finds himself celebrated as the wise fool on the national talk shows; the nation turns its jaundiced eye to Iowa to see if an inanimate object can win one of the three tickets out of Iowa.

I won't spoil the story by revealing the ending, but know that I found *Corn Poll* to be an enjoyable romp. It is a pleasant diversion from the twisted political corn roast that is Iowa in January of election years. Clearly Zachary Michael Jack had fun with this take on the 2012 Republican caucus—drawing on candidates who are largely self-parodying and cooking up a plot line that keeps readers laughing. Including heroes grounded in the Iowa soil offers hope that the political process can be improved. If Jack had this much fun making hash of the 2012 Republicans, I wonder what he would do with the 2016 candidate pool.



# Montana The Magazine of Western History

For 65 years . . . one of the best history magazines in the nation! Contact us for subscriptions, back issues, advertising opportunities, and to ask about the books we publish. Mention this ad to receive a free gift with your new subscription.

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.

## Montana

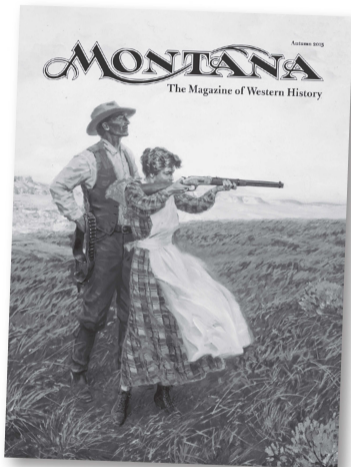
**Historical Society**

[montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org)

[tryan@mt.gov](mailto:tryan@mt.gov) (406) 444-4708

225 N. Roberts, P.O. Box 201201

Helena, MT 59620-1201



YouTube



## Contributors

BILL R. DOUGLAS of Des Moines is a retired teaching assistant, political organizer for socialism and for criminal justice reform, and delivery worker. He works on the religious history of Iowa and is currently researching the effects of the fundamentalist movement on local congregations. His articles have appeared in *Minnesota History*, *Quaker History*, the *Annals of Iowa*, the *Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*, and the *Wapsipinicon Almanac*.

PATRICK J. JUNG is professor of history and anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in U.S. history from Marquette University. His research and writing have focused mostly on the history of American Indian societies in the western Great Lakes region. He is the author of *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (2007) and, along with Nancy Lurie, coauthor of *The Nicolet Corrigenda: New France Revisited* (2009). He is working on a book on the history of the War of 1812 in the upper Mississippi River valley.

## The State Historical Society of Iowa

*The Annals of Iowa* is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the State of Iowa. The society operates from two centers, Des Moines and Iowa City. A museum, research library, state archives, special collections, community programming, historic preservation, and membership programs are located at 600 East Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, phone 515-281-5111. Publications, a research library, and special collections are located at 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240, phone 319-335-3916. The society also operates several historic sites across the state.

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions to *The Annals of Iowa* are \$24.95 per year; single copies are \$7. Contact Publications, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

The *Annals* is available on microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

## Submissions

*The Annals of Iowa* invites the submission of articles on Iowa history and on subjects concerning the nation and the Midwest with an Iowa focus. State, local, and regional studies of political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual, institutional, ethnic, religious, material culture, archeological, and architectural history are welcome. The *Annals* also reviews significant books on related topics. A detailed set of editorial guidelines is available on request. All correspondence concerning editorial matters should be addressed to:

Marvin Bergman, editor  
*The Annals of Iowa*  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
402 Iowa Avenue  
Iowa City IA 52240

*The Annals of Iowa* is a participating member of the Conference of Historical Journals.



Printed on  
Recycled Paper



The acid-free paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Services—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z739.48B1984.