

FROM CABIN TO CAPITAL

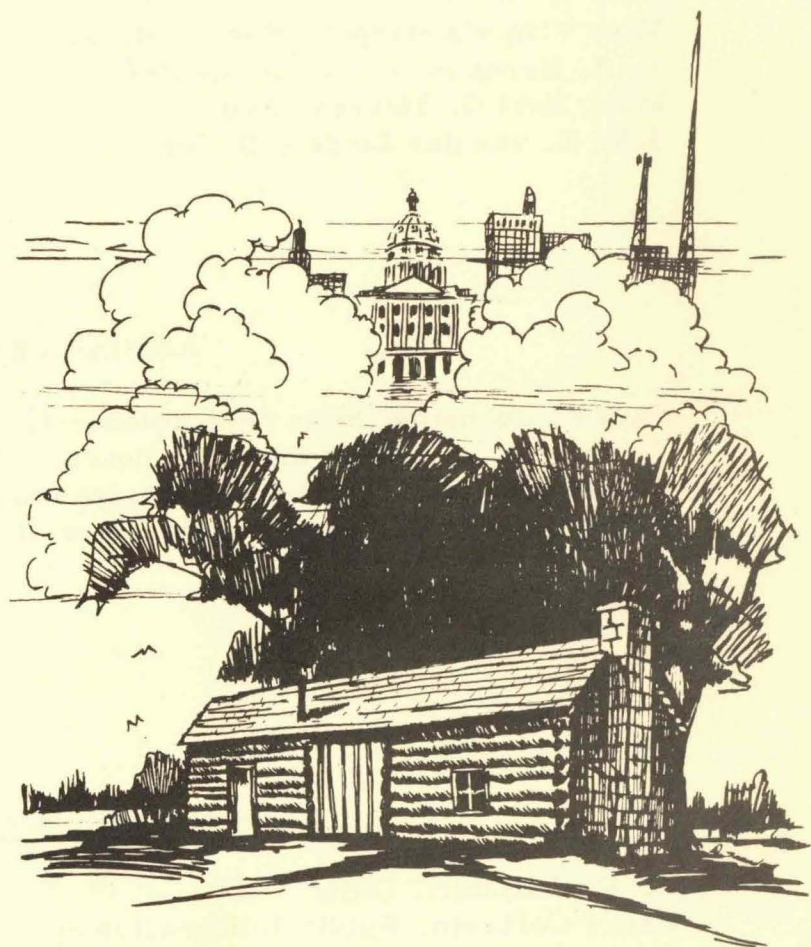
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State of Iowa • Department of Public Instruction

FROM CABIN TO CAPITAL

by
LeRoy G. Pratt



State of Iowa • Department of Public Instruction

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Foreword

From Cabin to Capital originally appeared in 1966 in response to the numerous requests from teachers, students, historical groups, and other educational and lay organizations for information about Iowa's Capital City. This revised edition includes additional material and brings the section on "Important Dates in the History of Des Moines" up-to-date. It is hoped that this brief history of Des Moines and Polk County will fill an existing need.

Our citizens have recognized the importance of Iowa's heritage by requiring that the history of Iowa be taught in our schools. This serves to instill in our young people the perspective needed to properly understand local, regional, state, and national history and show how these are interrelated. The Curriculum Division, Department of Public Instruction, recommends that a sequential approach be used in teaching Iowa history, beginning in grades one through six, with a definite emphasis in the fifth grade.

This publication may be used as a handy reference by adults, students of all ages, and teachers of history. Anyone having a desire to learn more about the origins and development of our Capital City will find it of interest.

PAUL F. JOHNSTON
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Summer 1971 gyl

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to all persons who gave of their time to go over the original draft of this publication to make it more readable and accurate. Lida Lisle Greene, librarian, State Historical Library, was most cooperative and helpful in checking dates and factual data. The assistance of the staff in the reference department of the Des Moines Public Library is also acknowledged. In addition, Paul K. Ashby, Cliff Millen, Woodrow Westholm, and other members of the Polk County Historical Society helped in verifying certain information. Drawings and art work were done by Vicki Carver, Marvin W. Ingle, Frances Lenan, Jeff Lockwood, Dennis Saunders, and architect-artist William J. Wagner.



FROM CABIN TO CAPITAL

A Brief History of Des Moines and Polk County Iowa

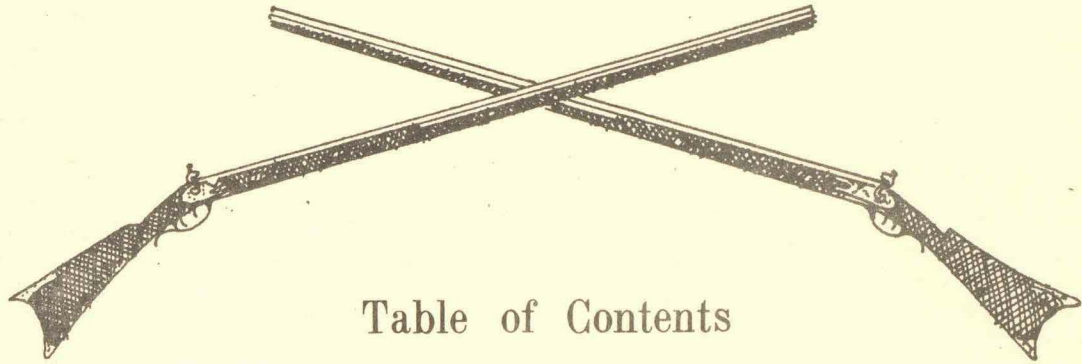


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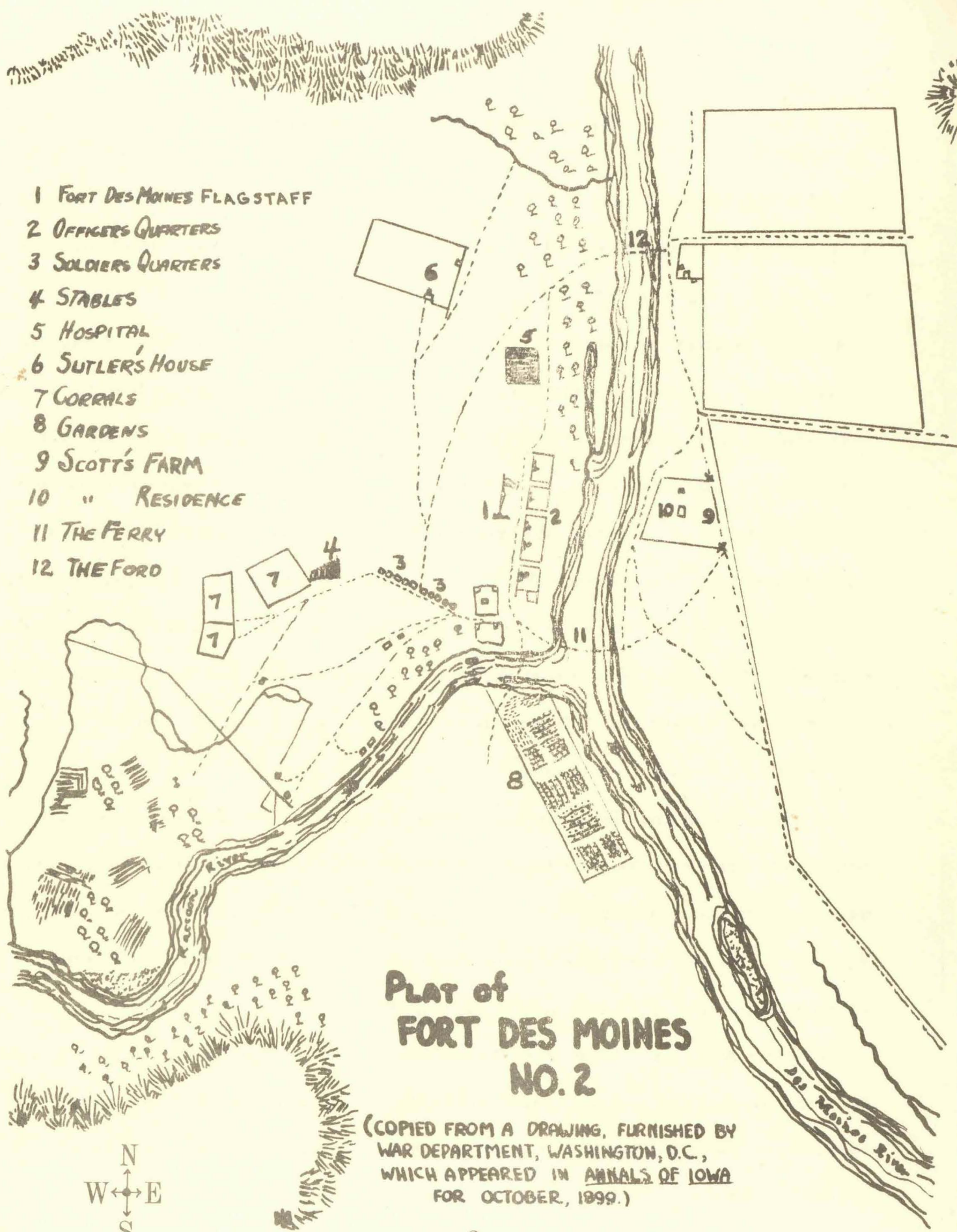
The Birthplace of Des Moines

The capital and principal city of Iowa had its beginning at the forks of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers. This was one of the locations in a chain of military posts recommended in 1834 to the U. S. War Department. Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny (1794-1848) explored the area in 1820 and 1835 and considered the advantages of this site as a possible garrison. In July, 1841, Lieutenant John C. Fremont (1813-1890) surveyed the Des Moines River for the War Department. The fort was established on May 20, 1843, when Captain James Allen (1806-1846) and his company of U. S. Dragoons arrived here by river steamer from Fort Sanford, which was located on the Des Moines River near what is now Ottumwa in Wapello County. Captain Allen had visited the locality on several occasions and had recommended the point of land for the site of a fort because "the soil is rich; and wood, stone, water and grass are all at hand." In addition, keel boats could bring needed supplies up the Des Moines River to the post.

Captain Allen and his Company I, First Regiment U. S. Dragoons went into camp on the river banks near the edge of the woods. They were joined on the next day following their landing by Captain J. R. B. Gardenier, in command of Company F, First U. S. Infantry, who had marched across country from Fort Crawford, located at the site of present-day Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

Captain Allen graduated from West Point in 1829, in the same class as Robert E. Lee. During his service in the Army, he held many important commands. In 1832, he was with renowned explorer Henry R. Schoolcraft on the first American scientific expedition to the source of the Mississippi River, Lake Itasca. The 35

- 1 FORT DES MOINES FLAGSTAFF
- 2 OFFICERS QUARTERS
- 3 SOLDIERS QUARTERS
- 4 STABLES
- 5 HOSPITAL
- 6 SUTLER'S HOUSE
- 7 CORRALS
- 8 GARDENS
- 9 SCOTT'S FARM
- 10 " RESIDENCE
- 11 THE FERRY
- 12 THE FORD



PLAT of FORT DES MOINES NO. 2

(COPIED FROM A DRAWING, FURNISHED BY
 WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.,
 WHICH APPEARED IN ANNALS OF IOWA
 FOR OCTOBER, 1899.)

persons in the expedition traveled 2,800 miles from June 7 to August 25, 1832. Captain Allen prepared the official map and kept the daily account of the journey. He was a typical frontier soldier, and was familiar with the forests, streams, prairies, wild game, Indians, and the white squatters and lawless vagabonds as well.

It was suggested by Captain Allen that the new post be named Fort Raccoon. However, this was considered by his superiors as "shocking" and "in very bad taste" and General Winfield Scott directed that the name Fort Des Moines be used. The fort was established, not to wage war, but to preserve peace and protect the Sac and Fox Indians from the hostile Sioux Indians and from unscrupulous white traders, land grabbers, and speculators.

At midnight of October 11, 1845, three years after the Sac and Fox Indians had, by treaty, relinquished their rights in this territory, the land was opened to white settlers. The signal agreed upon was the firing of a musket from the Indian Agency building located on the east side of the Des Moines River. The empire of the red man ended as the first shot was relayed from hill to hill until the signal was passed on for miles around, and the civilization of the white man began in central Iowa. Before dawn, thousands of acres of the prairie land had been laid out in claims.

A military reservation one mile square and centering around the flagstaff of the fort was set aside by the U. S. government. Of this area, 160 acres and all buildings thereon were ceded by the government to Polk County on January 17, 1846, just four days after the county was established. However, the official survey of the lands acquired by treaty from the Sac and Fox Indians was not completed until 1847.

It was then discovered that because of individual claims to land within the military reservation, the county had actually obtained clear title to only a little over 144 acres, or nearly 16 acres short. This additional land was eventually acquired to develop the townsite by purchasing it from the various persons having claims.

The order to abandon Fort Des Moines No. 2 as a military post was signed at St. Louis on February 23, 1846. The Sac and Fox Indians still remaining in the area were rounded up by the Dragoons and escorted to a permanent reservation in Kansas, beyond the Missouri River.

On March 10, 1846, Fort Des Moines No. 2 ceased to exist as a military post. During the three years of its existence, the 26-star U. S. flag flying over the garrison gave the needed protection against both the savage and the unscrupulous white men in the territory.

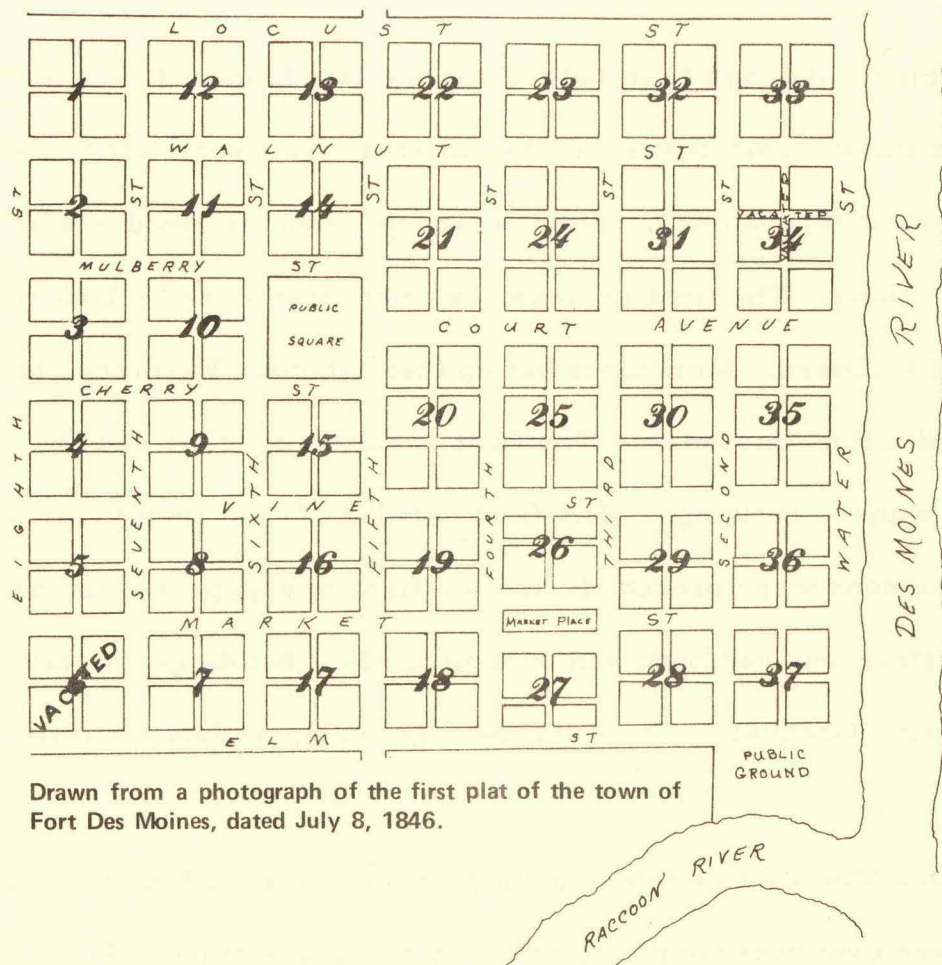
On May 1, 1846, a "large sale of public property" took place at the fort. Property disposed of, as advertised in advance by A. Mackay, Quartermaster of the Army, included "building materials; wagons and harness; artificer's tools; axes; spades; shovels; &c; damaged clothing; tent and camp equipage, left by the Garrison abandoning that post; and probably, the Barracks, quarters, stables, and other buildings. Also, at the same time and place, ... 32 bbls of pork; 110 bbls of flour; 2000 lbs. of rice; 75 bushels of beans; 4000 lbs. of sugar; 2000 lbs. coffee; 22 gallons of whiskey; 1250 lbs. soap; 12 bushels salt; and 300 gallons of vinegar."

At the time of its establishment, Fort Des Moines No. 2 was the extreme outpost on the northern frontier, in the midst of a region that was comparatively unexplored. However, a little colony of sturdy, determined, hardworking pioneers had gathered in the fort area and they were ready to carry on when the soldiers left.

The log cabins which had been built along the Des Moines River for the officers, and those along the Raccoon River for the enlisted men, were left to the civilians -- the first settlers of Des Moines. The townspeople took up residence in some of the abandoned cabins. The first professional men lived here -- lawyers, doctors, ministers, and teachers. Merchants set up their shops. Farmers, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, and tailors moved in. The first sessions of court and the first elections were held in these buildings. The first scholars (13 of them) learned their ABC's, the first sermons were preached, and the first newspapers were printed in the log cabins the Dragoons had built and occupied. New buildings, mostly one-story frame, were erected. Gradually, the settlement grew, spreading for miles beyond the "point."

Fort Des Moines was selected as the county seat of Polk County on May 25, 1846 by three commissioners appointed by the Legislature. There was considerable rivalry over the location of the county seat, but Fort Des Moines, the largest town in the county with its 23 families and a population of 127, won out.

The town of Fort Des Moines was surveyed in June 1846 by A. D. Jones, who is said to have used a rope for that purpose. He filed the plat on July 8, 1846, but there were not enough settlers then to formally organize a government. Four years later, however, The Iowa Star, in the issue of January 25, proclaimed to "all the world and the rest of mankind" that the town was fast becoming metropolitan. In 1850, Fort Des Moines boasted nine dry goods stores, with assortments of clothing, groceries, hardware, etc.; a hardware store; two drug stores; two provision stores; one tinware manufactory; a bakery; two printing offices; two weekly newspapers; a gunsmith; three or four blacksmith shops; six or eight builders;

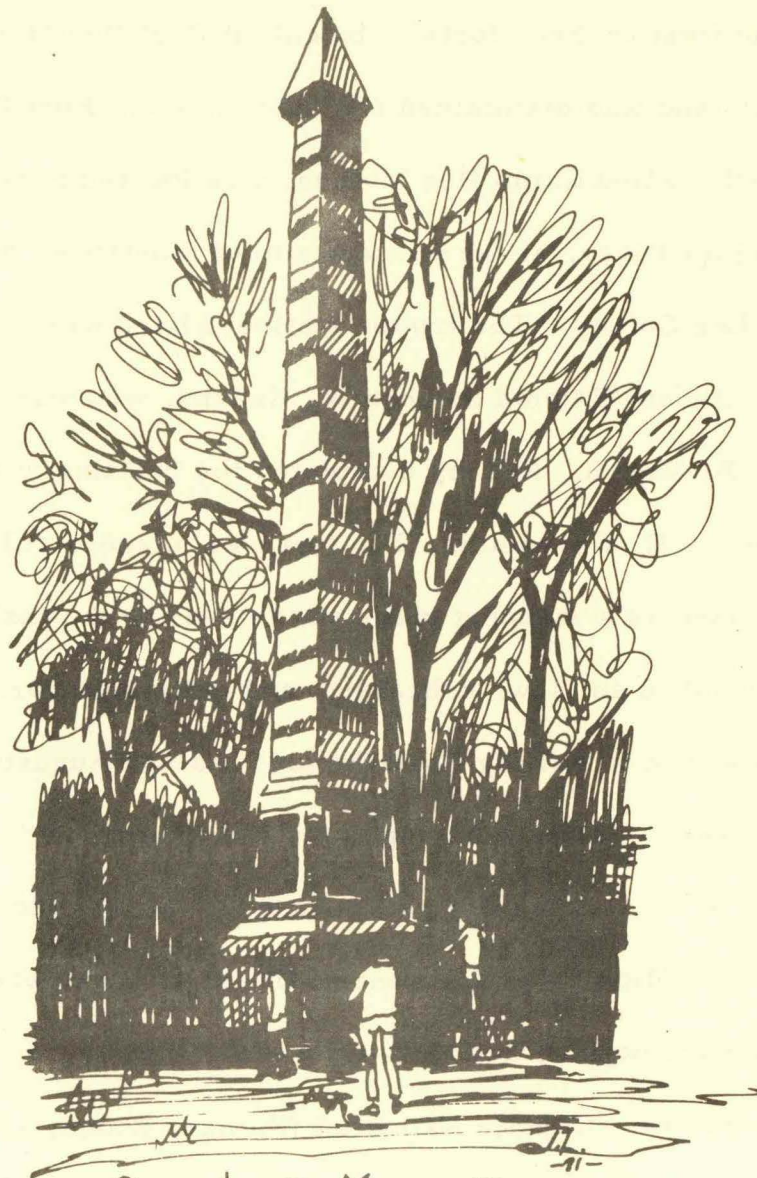


six or eight plasterers; a barrel factory; several shoe shops, cabinetmakers, painters, tailor shops; and two hotels. In addition, there were "seventeen or eighteen lawyers; seven or eight physicians and half that number of patients." The newspaper account concluded with the assurance that "one year more will make this far the largest town in the State off the Mississippi."

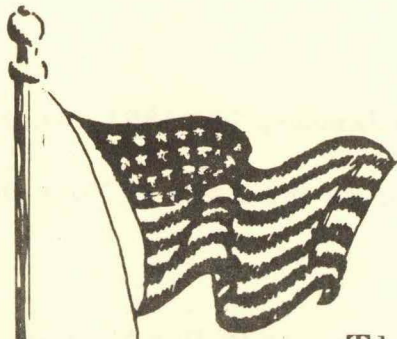
It was not until September 22, 1851, that the town of Fort Des Moines was incorporated. The first town election was then held October 18, when 25 voters unanimously approved the town charter. On October 20, 1851, eight councilmen were elected, and at their first meeting on October 25, Reverend Thompson Bird became the first president of the town council (mayor). At this time, land was available for \$1.25 per acre, and a double log cabin could be built for about \$70.

The town continued under the 1851 charter until January 18, 1853, when the Fourth General Assembly passed "An Act to Incorporate the Town of Fort Des Moines in Polk County, Iowa."

On January 28, 1857, the name of the town was changed to Des Moines. The population was then 3,500, and there were approximately 500 dwellings. This was the year of the Indian uprisings in Iowa, climaxed by the Spirit Lake Massacre of March 8-13.



SPIRIT LAKE MASSACRE -
ARNOLDS PARK, IOWA



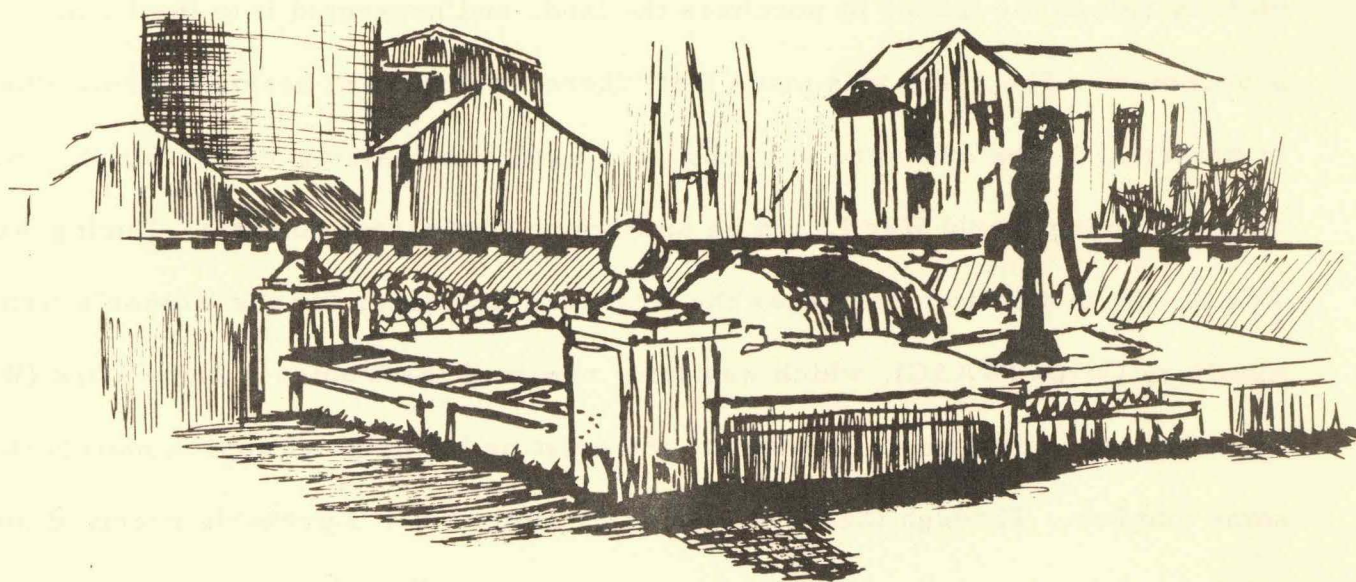
Three Military Posts in Iowa

Have Been Named Fort Des Moines

Fort Des Moines No. 1.

The first of three forts to be called Fort Des Moines was established in 1834 and was maintained for three years. Fort Des Moines No. 1, originally called Camp Des Moines, was located near the mouth of the Des Moines River, at the present site of Montrose, on the Mississippi River, in Lee County. The troops stationed here were under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, who was later relieved by Colonel R. B. Mason. Kearny completed the building of the fort begun by Lieutenant George H. Crossman. The fort was intended only as a temporary post to be used as a stopping place on the road to the Indian territory. It was described as "low, unhealthy, and quite unimportant in a military point of view," by a visiting Englishman, Charles Augustus Murray, who considered the site "chosen with singularly bad judgement." From this fort, Kearny left on his 1,100 mile reconnoiter up the Des Moines River valley. With the expedition was Lieutenant Albert M. Lea, who afterwards published the first popular account of the Iowa District, then a part of Wisconsin Territory. Captain Nathaniel (Nathan) Boone, son of the famous Daniel Boone, was also on this expedition.

In June 1837, the Dragoons were moved to Fort Leavenworth and Fort Des Moines No. 1 was abandoned. The only remaining evidence of this old fort is a well, said to be the oldest in Iowa, used by the soldiers. There is an iron pump on the well, which is surrounded by a stone enclosure.

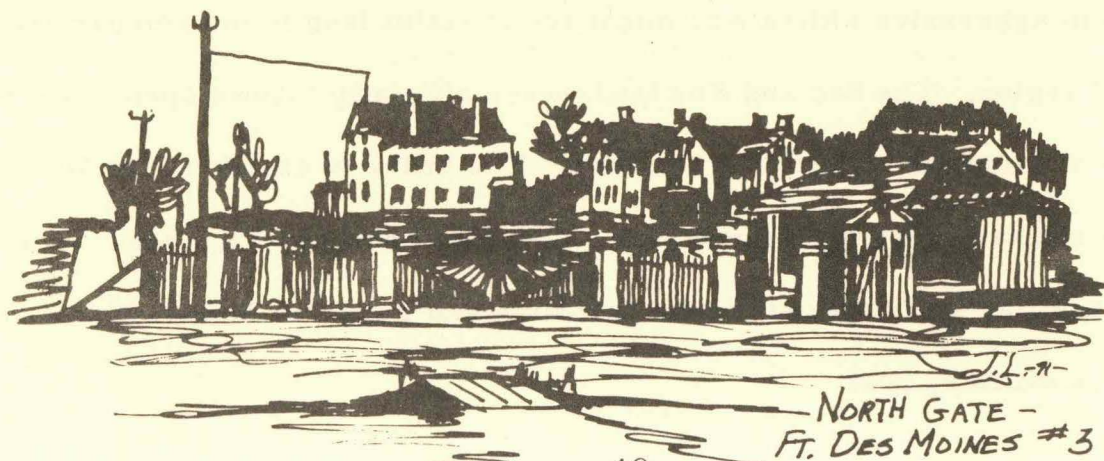


Fort Des Moines No. 2.

The installation at the fork of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers is referred to as Fort Des Moines No. 2. Established in 1843, it was to be occupied for a period of three years, until the Indians were moved on to Kansas. It was the government's responsibility during this time to keep peace on the frontier and to protect the Indians from aggressive whites who might try to claim land in the comparatively unexplored region. The Sac and Fox lands were officially thrown open to white settlement at midnight on October 11, 1845. The order to abandon Fort Des Moines No. 2 as a military post was signed at St. Louis on February 23, 1846. On March 10, 1846, the flag was lowered for the last time and Fort Des Moines No. 2 ceased to exist as a military post.

Fort Des Moines No. 3.

Fort Des Moines No. 3 was established in 1901, about four miles south of the Raccoon forks, just south of the present-day Army Post Road. It was formally dedicated as a cavalry post on November 13, 1903. Citizens of Des Moines and vicinity raised the money to purchase the land, and presented it to the U. S. government. The claim was made that "there was no more beautiful Army Post in America." The 400-acre site was later used as a training center for Negro officers during World War I, and as an Army convalescent hospital. During World War II, the installation served as the first training center for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), which was later renamed the Women's Army Corp (WAC). Over 100 new buildings were added to the existing buildings of approximately the same number. Through the WAC, Fort Des Moines No. 3 probably received more publicity than any other military post in the Nation. Following World War II, Fort Des Moines No. 3 was used for a veterans' housing center for several years. Most of the buildings have since disappeared by demolition, but a part of the original fort area is still used as a training center for Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force reservists, and as an Army Recruiting and Induction Center and headquarters for the Civil Air Patrol, Iowa Wing.



NORTH GATE -
FT. DES MOINES #3

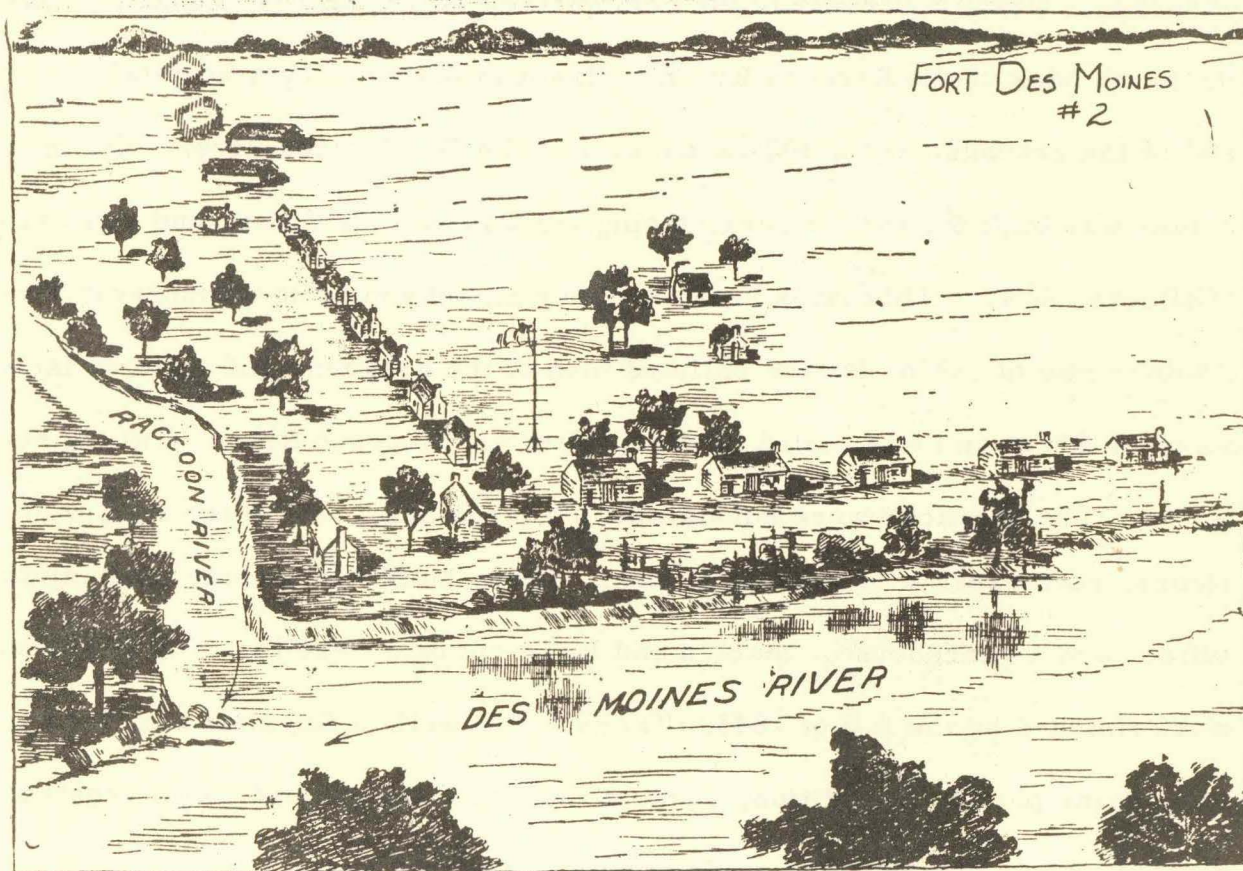
Fort Des Moines No.2 -- 1843-1846

In the early part of 1843, at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, soldier-workmen began the construction of Fort Des Moines No. 2. Logs were obtained from the woods nearby. A sawmill was set up in Middle River near its mouth, to furnish lumber, and suitable clay and limestone were located to produce bricks for fireplaces and chimneys.

The first piece of construction was a dock at the point where the two rivers converge. Next, a warehouse for commissary stores was built about 50 yards from the north bank of the Raccoon River. This was followed by a hospital at the north end of the grounds, about 300 yards west of the Des Moines River. One row of cabins was built for the officers, facing the Des Moines River, and was called "Officers' Row." This later became Water Street and is now Southwest First Street. Another row of cabins for the enlisted men of the dragoons and infantry faced the Raccoon River and was called Soldiers' Row or "Raccoon Row." This is now Elm Street. The barracks were substantial log structures, one story high, with puncheon floors, each capable of housing 10 men. Other buildings included the adjutant's office, and a guardhouse. Stables and large corrals were built for the horses. All were finished by the fall of 1843. There was a well, a flagstaff and "all appurtenances to an army post." In addition, gardens to supply the garrison with vegetables were planted, roads cleared, and bridges built during the year.

Rations for the soldiers and others employed by the government at Fort Des Moines No. 2, generally consisted of flour, bacon, ham, codfish, and rice. At times other provisions, including tobacco and whiskey, were available. Those who did not use tobacco or whiskey could trade it off to others for some-

thing else. Some of the settlers in the area were permitted to raise crops for the garrison. Indians went out on hunting parties, fished in the rivers and streams, and trapped. Fur traders were allowed to bargain with the Indians for the quantities of deer skins, mink, otter, beaver, raccoon, muskrat, skunk, and other furs, which were exchanged for tobacco, powder, shot, lead, and other trade goods.

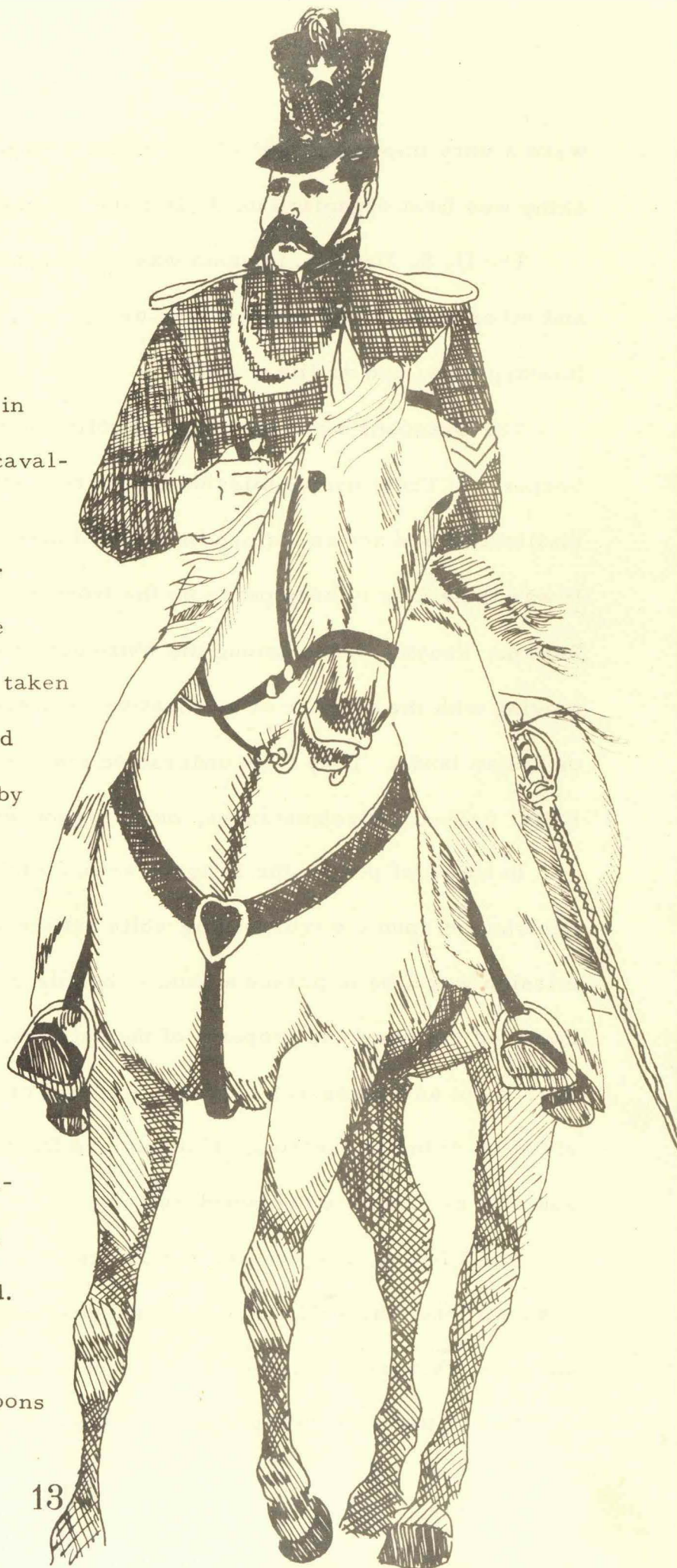


The course of the Raccoon River is now changed from its old location, joining the Des Moines River at a point further downstream than it formerly did.

Dragoons

The term "Dragoon" originated in England where it applied to certain cavalry soldiers who rode swift horses, were lightly armed, and had as their mission the subduing of the obstinate Saxons for the King. The name was taken from "dragon," a short, large-bored musket or carbine that was carried by these early soldiers.

The Dragoons first appeared in America during the Revolutionary War. After the American colonists gained their independence at the close of this war, the English army was used as a model for organizing our army. English tactics and English military terms were adopted. While the term Dragoon is no longer used in military parlance, the Dragoons



were a very important part of our military organization from the time a standing army was first organized until after the close of the Mexican War (1846-1848).

The U. S. Dragoon insignia was a six-pointed star, while the color for facings and other parts of the uniform was orange to distinguish it from cavalry yellow, infantry blue, and artillery red.

The Dragoons were the mounted policemen of their day -- the "watchmen of the borders." Their unique mission for more than fifty years was to lead the van of civilization and act as umpire in cases of dispute between the pioneers and the Indians. It was their duty to keep peace on the frontiers by protecting the settlers from the Indians, keeping order among the white outlaws and renegades who were always moving with the advance of civilization, and keeping squatters from staking out claims on Indian lands. They fully understood the character of the Indians and their tactics. Under ordinary circumstances, one Dragoon was said to be a match for five Indians.

In times of peace, the Dragoon knew no friends. He was as swift in administering punishment upon the trespassing white settler as upon the savage Indian. One day his mission would be to pursue a band of hostile savages who had left their reservation and menaced the lives and property of the settlers, while the next day his task might be to search out an aggressive squatter, who had erected a cabin across the boundary line in violation of Indian treaties. If found, the Dragoon would burn the cabin and drive the squatter back across the boundary line.

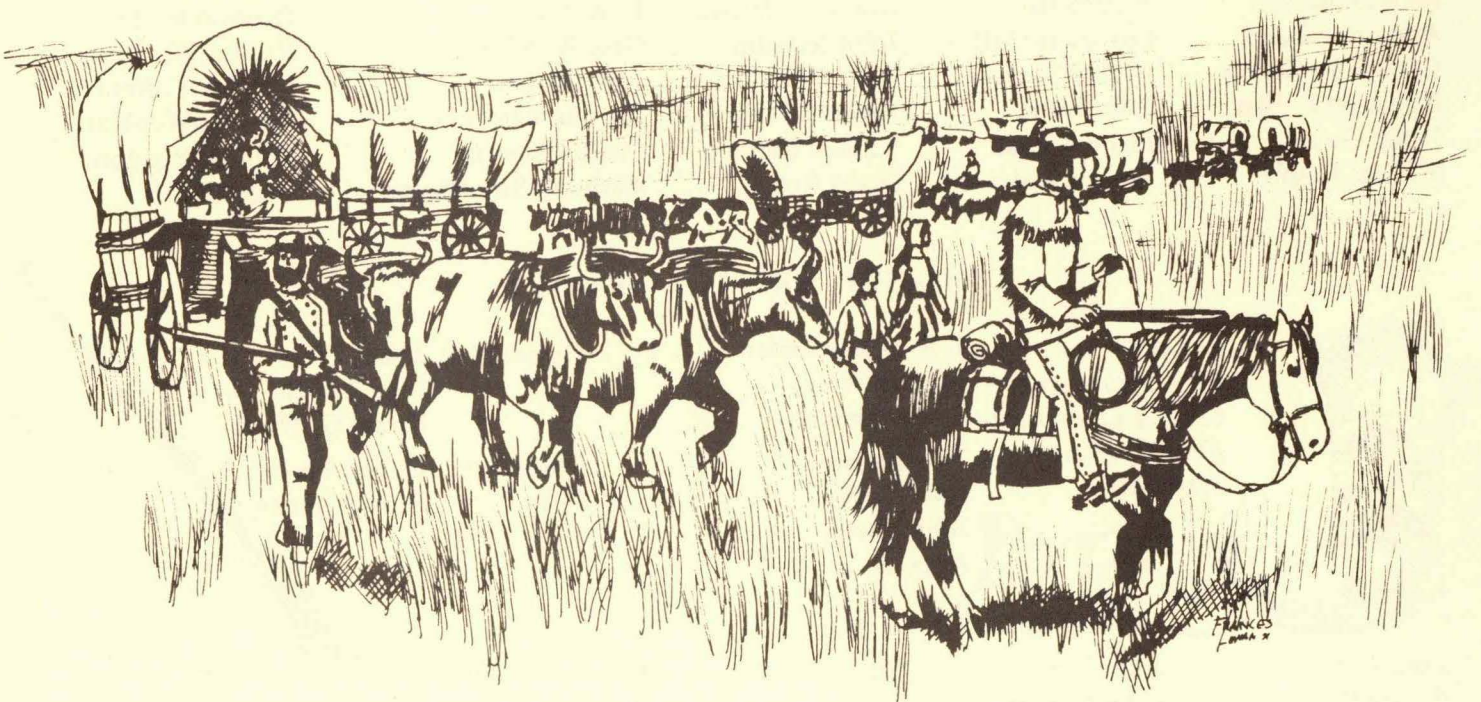
The life of a Dragoon was not an easy one. While on long marches through wild, unknown land, the soldiers were constantly exposed to all kinds of weather. During the summer, they were tormented by insects. Mosquitoes were especially troublesome.

One of the important purposes of the military marches of the Dragoons was to im-

press the Indians with the power of the United States government. Certainly, the Indians were impressed with the Dragoons in their uniforms, mounted on cavalry horses, winding their way through the unsettled river valleys and across the open prairies.

Camps were hastily set up, usually by a stream. Hunting offered a diversion and provided the men with some of their meat -- deer, elk, buffalo, prairie chickens, and water fowl.

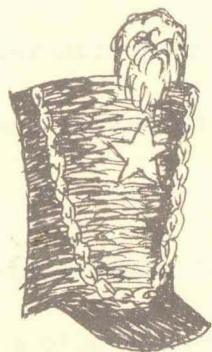
The Dragoons played an important part in opening the Iowa frontier to homesteaders. With the protection provided by the military, white settlers poured into this area to set up their homes and businesses.



Roster -- Fort Des Moines No. 2

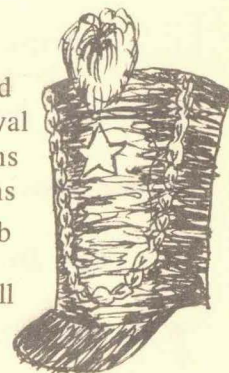
The names of the officers and men who constituted the first garrison of Fort Des Moines No. 2, Iowa, as of June 30, 1843, were as follows:

COMPANY I, FIRST U. S. DRAGOONS



Captain-- James Allen
First Lieutenant-- Wm. N. Grier
Second Lieutenant-- C. F. Ruff
Sergeants-- Parker Gideon
 John Haley
 James Miller
 Charles Williams

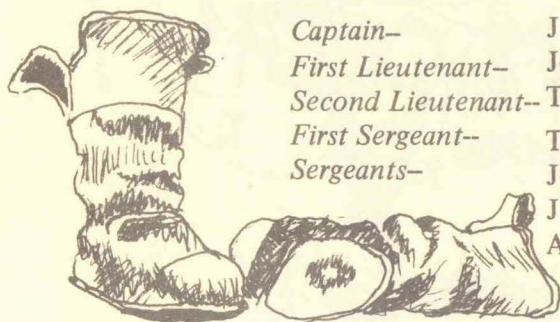
Corporals-- Darius Halstead
 Alexander Newal
 Alonzo Williams
 Robert Williams
Bugler-- Loren Holcomb
Farrier & Blacksmith-- George Marshall



- Privates -

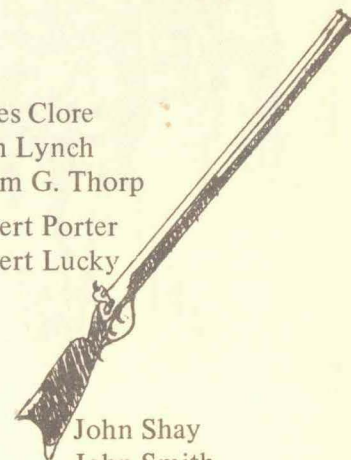
Frederick Banfield	James Hawkins	Lewis Knolle	Voorhus Robbins	Henry Stuckenberg
James Batty	John Happ	Charles W. Lazier	Henry Robertson	Ira Taylor
Joseph Brown	John Harcourt	William Martin	Jame s M. Sampson	Michael Trainor
William Brown	Alexander Howard	Joshua M. Merrill	V. H. Schlegel	William Tyler
John J. Buckmuller	George Howlett	John W. Miller	Christopher Schultz	B. F. Vanhorn
James Caterson	Willard Hill	Joseph C. Moses	F. W. Sick	Herman Walter
Augustine Dame	Cornelius Hutton	John Newton	Geo. W. Silver	Erastus Washburn
George De Groote	William Jackson	Polk O'Conner	John Skillen	Charles W. Wentz
Benjamin F. Fiss	John Jones	Alphens Pomroy	Francis Sleinwinder	Thomas Woolcut
James Gould	Jacob Kichait	William Ramsey	Charles Stewart	Thomas Yeadon
Michael Halpin	Francis Kirkwood	David Roach	Anthony Stromberger	Peter Yerick

COMPANY F, FIRST U. S. INFANTRY



Captain-- J. R. B. Gardenier
First Lieutenant-- John H. King
Second Lieutenant-- T. d'Oremieux
First Sergeant-- Thomas Buxton
Sergeants-- John Farley
 John Fortes
 Augs. A. Sanford

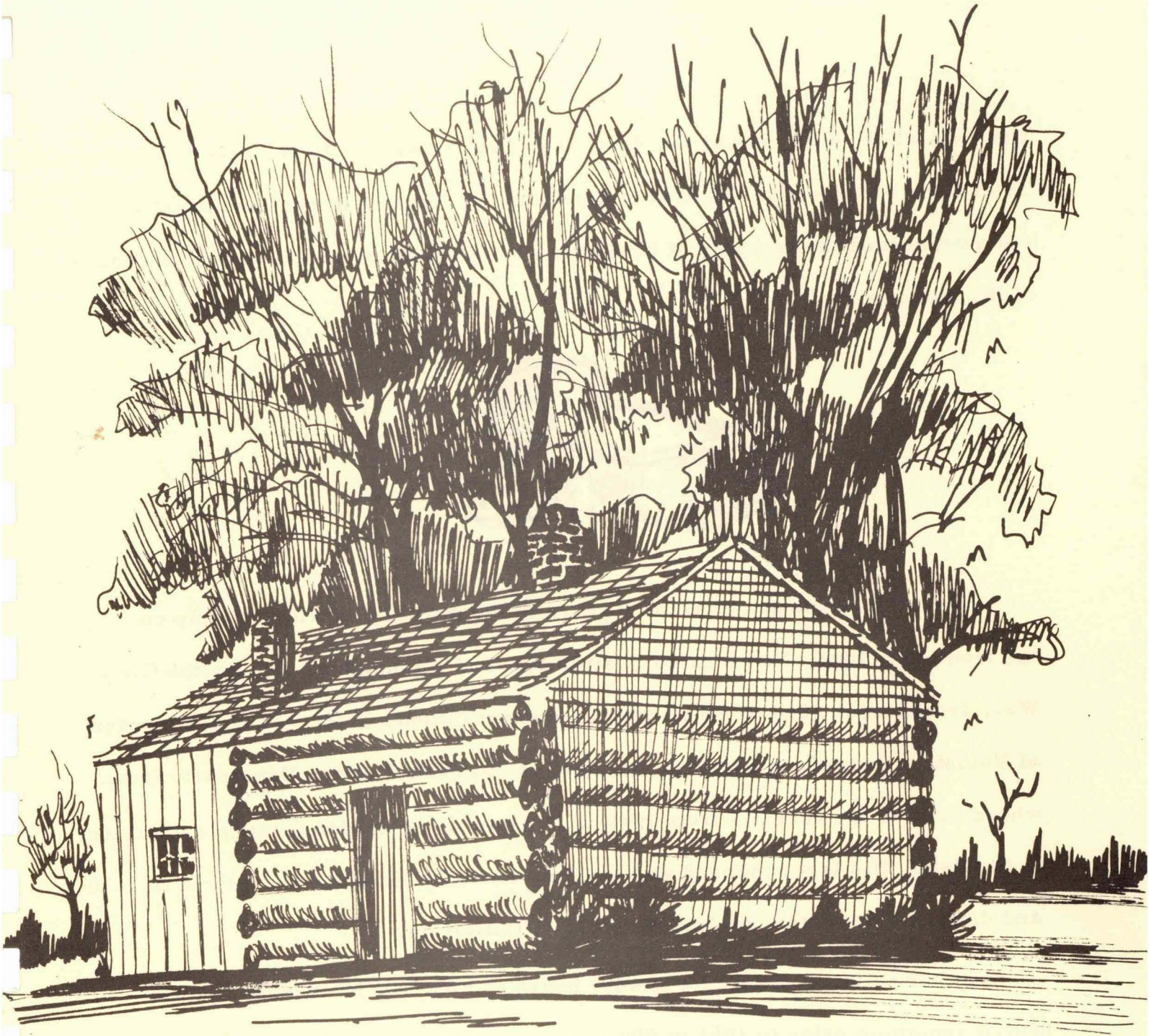
Corporals-- James Clore
 John Lynch
 Hiram G. Thorp
Drummer-- Robert Porter
Fife-- Robert Lucky



John Andrews	John Clee	William Hazen	Thomas McDonald	John Shay
Ropon P. Andruss	Peter Collins	William Hutchinson	Michael McDonough	John Smith
John Barnes	William B. Deros	Edmund L. Jarvis	Soloman Palmer	John G. Smith
William Burns	Daniel Gatnet	James Keenan	Thomas Pew	Samuel Smith
James M. Calder	Peter Grevelle	Samuel Kellogg	Frederick G. Potter	Owen Sullivan
Abraham Canon	John Hamilton	Francis Kennedy	Charles Schlechtweg	William Tate
Palmer Cheesebro	William Hanson	Terrence Lee	Matthias Schlechtweg	David Thompson
				John Welch

(Source: *Annals of Polk County, Iowa and City of Des Moines*, Will Porter. Des Moines, Iowa:

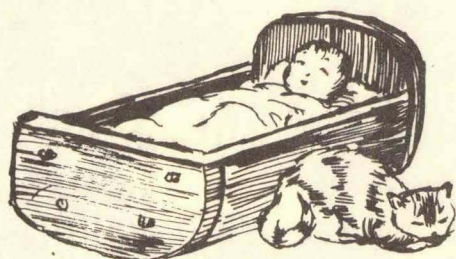
Geo. A. Miller Printing Co. 1898.)



The Last of the Log Cabins at Fort Des Moines No.2

In time, all of the old log buildings disappeared. At the turn of the century, the first house erected at Fort Des Moines No. 2 , in 1843, was somewhat altered and in disrepair. It was then the last remaining building at the old fort site. This was the residence of Lieutenant William N. Grier of the U. S. Dragoons.

The first white child born at the fort -- in 1845 -- was a son of Lieutenant Grier; the boy was also the first to die within its limits. It was Lieutenant Grier who commanded the company of Dragoons when Captain Allen was placed in charge of the military post.



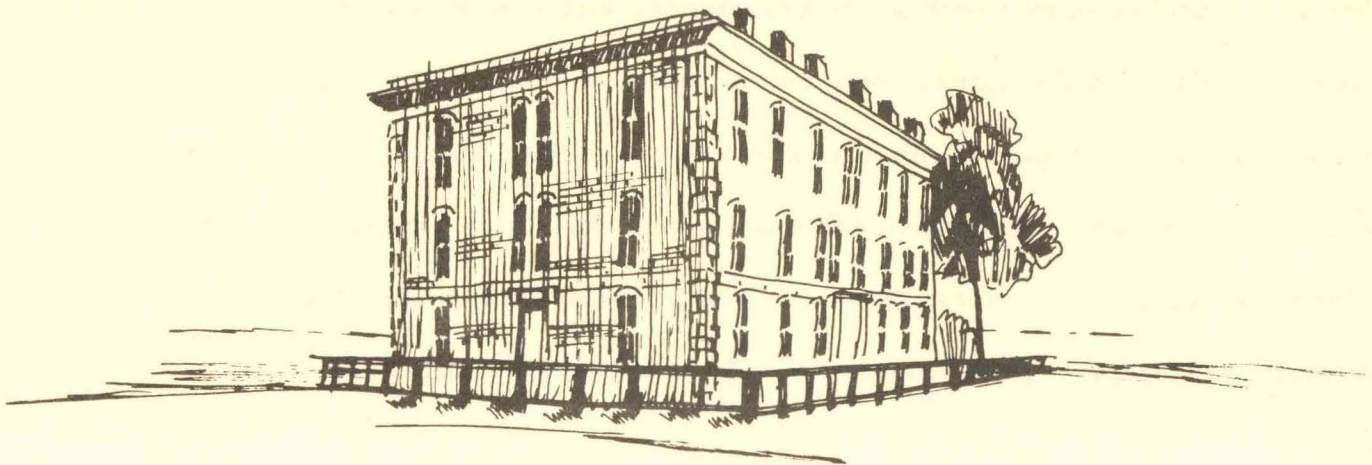
Grier was to spend a total of 30 years in the military service, mainly on the frontier in Iowa, New Mexico, California, and Washington. During the Civil War, from March 1863 to June 1865, Lieutenant Colonel Grier was Superintendent of Volunteer Recruiting Service, stationed at Camp McClellan, Davenport, Iowa, where most of the recruits from Iowa were trained and drilled prior to assignment in the field. His last command was at Camp Halleck, Nevada. He retired in 1870 and died 15 years later, on July 8, 1885, in California.

Another building, used as a powder house at Fort Des Moines No. 2, was moved sometime prior to 1865 to 800 East University Avenue (formerly North Avenue) and served for many years as a home. The 10 X 12-foot, two-room cabin was built of hand-hewn black walnut logs and chinked with yellow clay. In later years it was used as a tool house. Because of its historic significance, the old cabin was often visited by school children and other groups. Efforts by the city and by the Des Moines Pioneer Club to preserve the cabin were unsuccessful, and it was torn down in the late 1940's and burned.

Des Moines Becomes the Capital City

Iowa City was the seat of Iowa's government for 16 years, during which time 14 sessions of the Legislature and 3 Constitutional Conventions convened there. By 1854, the population of the State had tripled in a 7-year period (from 116,454 to 326,500). Settlers were moving into the central and western part of the State, and people in eastern Iowa were becoming reconciled to the idea of moving the capital to a more central location. Fort Des Moines was considered by many as the logical place for the new capitol to be built, since it was "strategically situated on the largest interior waterway in Iowa, and at a point approximately in the center of the commonwealth." However, many other settlements were involved in the fight for the new capitol site, including Brooklyn (East Des Moines) and Monroe City.

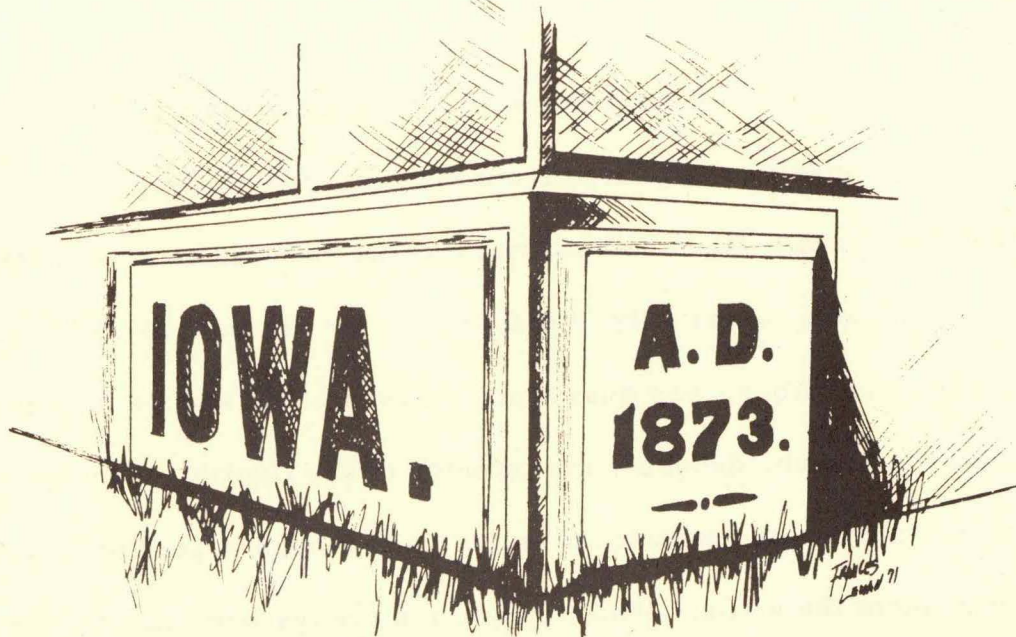
During the years 1856-57, a three-story brick building, 56 X 100 feet, was erected by a group of public-spirited citizens of Des Moines and donated to the State of Iowa for its Capitol. However, due to financial difficulties, the State eventually ended up paying for the building. The Capitol site of approximately 17 acres was donated by Willson Alexander Scott, Harrison Lyon, and others. This Statehouse,



of Ionic architecture, had a tin roof, while the foundation and window sills were of stone. It was built in haste and as cheaply as possible. The "Old Brick Capitol" was located on the lots where the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument now stands. As part of a public celebration held here on July 4, 1857, the stars and stripes was hoisted for the first time on the new Capitol. The building was completed and first occupied by State offices in November 1857, and by the General Assembly in January 1858. For the next 26 years or so, this building housed the State offices and the General Assembly.

On March 7, 1857, Des Moines was organized as a special charter city by the Sixth General Assembly under "An Act to Incorporate the City of Des Moines in Polk County." The city continued to act under this special charter until March 9, 1863, when a citizens' petition was presented to the council requesting that the question of abandoning the special charter and organizing under the general incorporation laws be submitted to the electors. At a special election held on the first Monday in May 1863, this proposal carried by a vote of 485 to 77. The city then proceeded to organize under the general incorporation laws.

The cornerstone of Iowa's present Capitol was laid in 1870. The plans for this new Statehouse met with some resistance, and it was constructed on a pay-as-you-go basis. This original cornerstone and some of the foundation stone was found to be unsatisfactory, since it would not withstand Iowa's winter weather. The defective stone was removed in 1873 and replaced, which explains why the date "1873" is cut in the cornerstone at the southwest corner of the Statehouse. The building was dedicated on January 17, 1884, but was not officially completed until 1886.



With the completion of the new Capitol, the Old Brick Capitol was vacated. The building proved to be difficult to sell or lease and it deteriorated to the point where it was in a dilapidated and dangerous condition. While plans were under way to tear down the building to make way for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, it caught fire on September 1, 1892. The roof and third story were entirely destroyed, and the remainder of the building was ruined by water. The old brick from the first Des Moines Capitol was used to construct fire walls at the boiler room of the heating plant, while the lumber that could be salvaged was used to build sidewalks and for kindling. The remains of this historic old building were replaced with the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument completed in 1894 at a cost of \$150,000.

Through the years, since the 1880's, Iowa's ornate, massive, gold-domed Statehouse has dominated the Des Moines skyline. Many interesting facts are associated with the dignified structure, so typical of the 1870's and 1880's. The golden dome, which rises 275 feet above the ground floor, is said to be the largest gold dome in the country. Granite, limestone, and sandstone used in the super-structure of the building came from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio.

Twenty-nine kinds of marble were used in finishing the interior of the Statehouse, including 22 foreign marbles imported from Mexico, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, and Ireland. Domestic marble came from New York, Tennessee, Vermont, and Charles City, Iowa, where the distinctive coral marble, as found in the Senate chamber, was quarried. Carved stone and wood carvings, the work of skilled craftsmen, decorate the interior of the Capitol in unexpected places. Art work, mural paintings, intricate mosaics, and a huge post-World War I mural photograph ornament the walls. While steam has always been the principal source of heat for the Statehouse, there are 27 fireplaces in the various rooms. In the Law Library there are two circular staircases of iron grillwork, 5-stories high.

The Iowa Capitol, built above the prairie "to last a thousand years," has been described by admirers as one of the most impressive government buildings in the world. Its modified Renaissance architecture is a fitting bulwark to the principles inherent in the Iowa motto:



Restoration of Fort Des Moines No.2

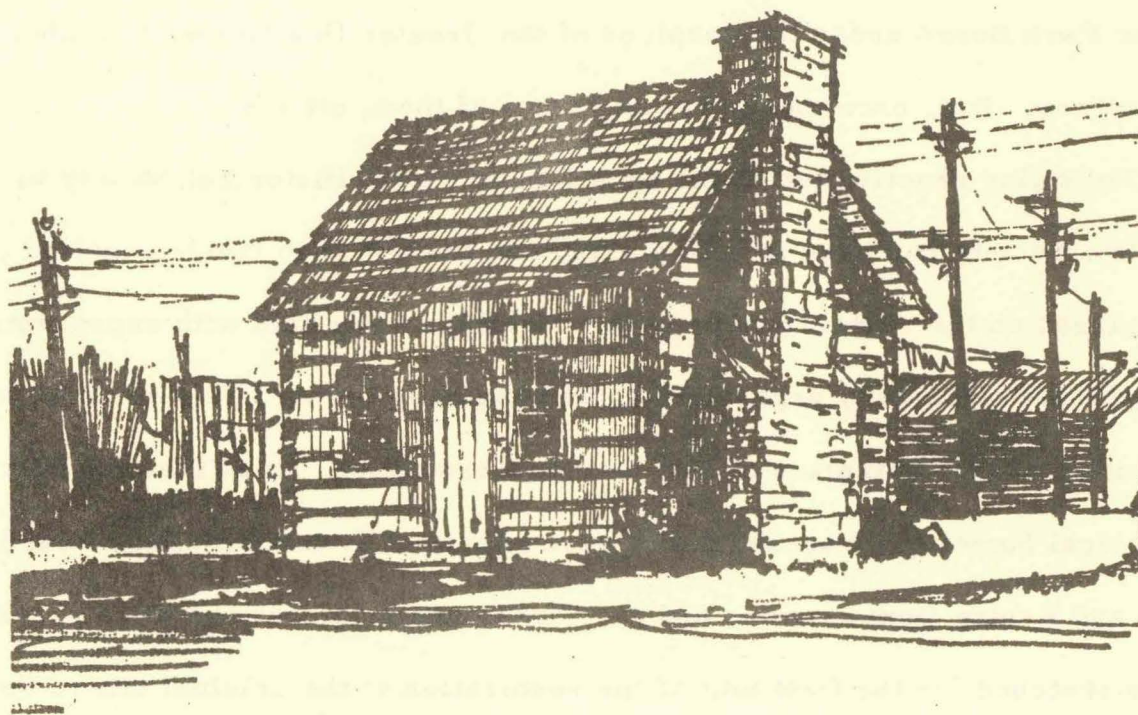
In more recent years, history-minded citizens of Des Moines became interested in restoring the site of Fort Des Moines No. 2 . The first organized attempt was probably in 1901 when the city park commission took over the land. In this respect, Des Moines is more fortunate than many cities in that its birthplace has been owned and preserved by the city and the original site has not fallen into private hands and commercial use.

There were other later attempts to restore the old fort. In 1939, complete Plans for the Restoration of Fort Des Moines at Original Site (1843) were drawn by the Park Board under the auspices of the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. But, once more, nothing came of these efforts.

Following reactivation of the Polk County (Iowa) Historical Society in April, 1961 (the Society had been in active existence from 1938 to 1946), renewed emphasis was placed on the restoration project. Meetings were held with representatives of civic and community organizations and business firms. This resulted in the formation of the Birthplace of Des Moines Association, an affiliate of Polk County Historical Society. Proposed plans were approved by the City Park Board, City Plan and Zoning Commission, and the City Council. Donations were received and plans sketched for the first unit of the restoration at the original site of the old fort.

Exact reconstruction of the 1843 buildings would have been difficult. However, an old but well-preserved hand-hewn log cabin of the 1840 period was located in Washington County, purchased, disassembled, and moved to Des Moines on March 12, 1964 for the first building in the restoration project.

Ground was broken on October 15, 1964 for the erection of the first log cabin. In the true spirit of the pioneer, workmen continued with the construction at Southwest First and Elm Streets all through the winter of 1964-1965. By the 122nd anniversary of the arrival of Captain Allen at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, work on the cabin was completed. At last, on Sunday June 6, 1965, the first restored building of old Fort Des Moines No. 2 was formally dedicated. A crowd of approximately 400 gathered for the dedication ceremonies and the program that followed.



No attempt has been made to recreate the historic old fort. Instead, cabins of the same period, built elsewhere in Iowa, and resembling those which once stood at the point, are being restored at the site of the Birthplace of Des Moines.

Origin of Names - - Des Moines, Polk County, and Iowa

Des Moines

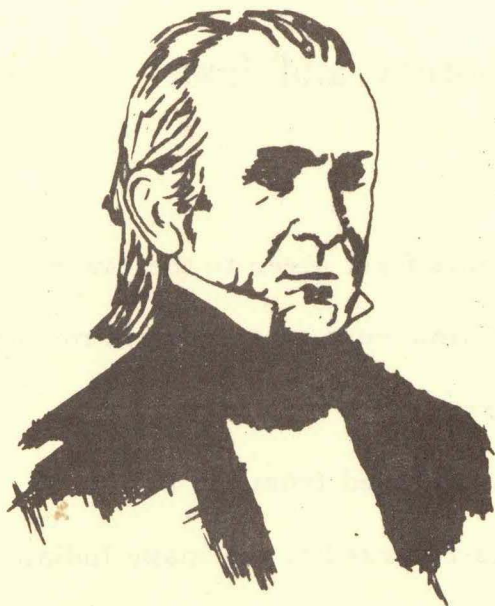
The name, Des Moines, is of doubtful origin. It was first given to the river and later to the capital city. Since the rivers and streams were an important means of travel, they were named first by the early explorers.

Some historians state that the name Des Moines is derived from the Indian word, Moingona, meaning River of the Mounds. This referred to the many Indian mounds to be found near the banks of the river. Others are of the opinion that the name applies to the Trappist Monks (Moines de la Trappe) who lived in huts near the water, at American Bottom, at the mouth of the Des Moines River. The French voyageurs referred to the river as La Riviere des Moines. Since words were spelled phonetically, there are many different spellings -- De Moyen, Demoir, Demoin, De Moins, De Moin, Demoine, and Des Moines. The term, De Moyen, has also been translated as "middle," referring to the principal stream between the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers. Another suggested meaning is "the less" or "the smaller," referring to a small tribe of Indians living on the river opposite another larger band of Indians called the greater.

The consensus appears to be that the name Des Moines is merely an abbreviation or variation on the name Moingona, Moingonan, Moingouena, Moingoun, Mohingona, or Moningouinas, as shown on early maps.

Polk County

Polk County was named to honor the 11th President of the United States (1845-1849), James Knox Polk (1795-1849). Both Iowa (in 1846) and Wisconsin (in 1848) entered the Union during his administration. The lawyer-statesman was



born in North Carolina, but moved with his family at an early age (in 1806) to Tennessee. He was the first "dark horse" presidential nominee in U.S. history; served as a hard-working, strong, and effective President; and enjoyed great prestige within the Democratic Party. His major problems were diplomatic and military. The Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain was an issue, and the Mexican War (1846-1848) was fought during his term in office.

Gold was discovered near Sutter's Mill in California in 1848, stimulating the migration of the Forty-niners. The first U.S. postage stamps were issued in 1847 and carried pictures of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. On Polk's last day as President, in 1849, the Department of Interior was established. Polk fell ill with cholera only three months after leaving office and died on June 15, 1849, when not yet 54 years old. Mrs. Polk lived until 1891. In 1893, their tombs were moved to the grounds of the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville.

Iowa

The Iowa River and the State of Iowa were named for the Ioway Indians, one of the tribes which inhabited this area before the coming of the white man. Various meanings have been given the name Iowa -- "the sleepy ones," "the drowsy ones," "this is the place," "beautiful land," "dusty faces," and "dust in the face."

Lieutenant Albert Miller Lea wrote a book, published in 1836, entitled Notes on Wisconsin Territory, Particularly with Reference to the Iowa District or Black Hawk Purchase, which popularized the name Iowa, given to the Territory in 1838 and to the State in 1846.

Important Dates in the History of Des Moines

- 1673--Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet landed their canoes on the west bank of the Mississippi on June 25, and became the first white men to see and set foot on Iowa land, claiming it for France. This landing was somewhere near the mouth of the Iowa River.
- 1699--Pierre Charles le Sueur, a Frenchman, came up the Mississippi River, met Iowa Indians, and reportedly gave them their first firearms.
- 1735--Nicolas Joseph de Noyelles with a force of 84 Frenchmen and their Indian allies were repulsed on April 19 by the Sac and Fox Indians in a battle at the Raccoon Fork of the Des Moines River.
- 1763--French in America overthrown, and New France, which included Iowa, ceded to England by the Treaty of Paris. England then ceded Louisiana to Spain in exchange for Florida.
- 1766--Jonathan Carver visited northeast Iowa.
- 1773--Peter Pond visited northeast Iowa.
- 1780--Only Iowa naval battle of the American Revolution fought at or near the junction of the Turkey River and the Mississippi in April. The lead mines of Iowa were an important source of lead for bullets during the American Revolution. Jean Marie Cardinal had a mining lease on the west side of the Mississippi. In a subsequent battle at St. Louis on May 26, Jean Marie Cardinal was captured and killed while trying to escape, making him the first and only person on record living in what is now Iowa to give his life in the cause of American Independence.
- 1788--Julien Dubuque began mining lead near the present site of the city of Dubuque. He received a Spanish land grant in 1796 and lived at the mouth of Catfish Creek (the site of a Fox Indian village) until his death in 1810, at the age of 45 1/2 years. Dubuque was the first permanent white settler in what is now Iowa.
- 1798--French fur-trader Jean Baptiste Faribault passed through what is now Polk County.
- 1800--Louisiana Territory, including Iowa, ceded by Spain to France in secret treaty.
- 1803--On April 30 Iowa became part of the territory of the United States which was included in the Louisiana Purchase from Napoleon, by Treaty of Paris for \$15, 000, 000, or approximately 3¢ per acre. President Thomas

Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark out to explore this vast area. The expedition passed along the western border of Iowa for 33 days.

Louisiana District established by U. S. Authority October 31.

1804--Louisiana District attached to Indiana Territory for governmental purposes October 1. Capital at Saint Vincennes (now Vincennes, Indiana).

1805--Area now known as Iowa included in Louisiana Territory July 4.

1808--First American military post in Iowa established at Fort Madison, along the Mississippi River, to guard the new frontier. The fort was evacuated and burned on September 3, 1813.

1812--Area now known as Iowa included in Missouri Territory December 7. Capital at Saint Louis.

1820--Captain Stephen Watts Kearny and the First Regiment of Dragoons, Michigan Territory, crossed what is now Iowa.

1821--Area now known as Iowa included in undivided U. S. Territory August 10 when the State of Missouri, containing the territorial seat of government, was admitted to the Union. This remaining part of what had been Missouri Territory had no local constitutional status nor capital.

1832--Indians defeated in the Black Hawk War, and Black Hawk Purchase Treaty signed September 21.

1833--First legal permanent settlement in the Black Hawk Purchase began June 1.

1834--Area now known as Iowa included in Michigan Territory June 28. Capital at Detroit.

Fort Des Moines No. 1 built by Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny near the mouth of the Des Moines River, at the present site of Montrose, in Lee County. It was maintained for 3 years.

1835--Kearny's second Dragoon expedition, during which the possibility of establishing a military fort at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers was investigated. Lieutenant Albert Miller Lea wrote his Notes on the Wisconsin Territory, Particularly with Reference to the Iowa District or Black Hawk Purchase; published in 1836, it was the first book about Iowa, and brought the name "Iowa" into general use.

1836--Territory of Wisconsin, which included all of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and parts of North and South Dakota, formed by an Act of Congress approved April 20. Belmont, Wisconsin was selected as the first Territorial capital.

Area now known as Iowa included in Wisconsin Territory July 4. Capital at Belmont, Wisconsin until March 4, 1837; then at Madison, Wisconsin, but territorial legislative sessions were held at Burlington (in present-day Iowa) until June 23, 1838 while buildings at Madison were being completed.

First Wisconsin Territorial Legislature met at Belmont from October 25 to December 9. Agreement was reached to move the Territorial capital to Burlington, Iowa for one year.

1837--Legislative assembly of the Territory of Wisconsin convened in Burlington, Iowa as previously agreed.

1838--Territory of Iowa formed by an Act of Congress passed on June 12. Iowa officially became a Territory on July 4, with Burlington designated as the capital. Robert Lucas was appointed by President Martin Van Buren as the first Governor of Iowa Territory.

1840--Coal first discovered in Iowa. Iowa was the second state west of the Mississippi River to open a coal mine (in Jefferson County). By 1890, no less than 20 coal mines were operating within or adjacent to the corporate limits of Des Moines.

1841--John C. Fremont surveyed the Des Moines River, from the Raccoon Forks to its mouth, for the War Department in July.

Capital of Iowa Territory moved from Burlington to Iowa City.

1842--Captain James Allen and a small detachment of Dragoons from Fort Sanford, traveling by river steamer, visited Raccoon Forks in November to consider the establishment of a military fort there. In a letter to the War Department dated December 30, Captain Allen recommended the location.

1843--With the site of Fort Des Moines No. 2 approved, Captain James Allen, accompanied by friendly Sac and Fox Indians, returned by river steamer on April 29 to leave supplies in the care of a small Dragoon guard.

On May 20, Captain Allen, with 4 officers and 48 enlisted men, arrived by keel boat and wagons and began construction of Fort Des Moines No. 2 at Raccoon Forks. On the next day, Captain J. R. B. Gardenier in command of Company F, First U. S. Infantry, arrived, having marched across country from Fort Crawford, on the Mississippi River, at the site of present-day Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

First mill within Polk County opened by Captain Allen and Moses Barlow on Middle River, about 10 miles from the fort, near present-day Carlisle, to furnish lumber for the military post. The mill was later purchased by John D. Parmalee. In 1847 Parmalee's Mill was converted to a

grist mill, to grind corn, and was then the only milling point in central Iowa. Before this, settlers were required to spend several days to several weeks hauling their corn or grain to the nearest mill. By 1848, Parmalee's Mill was grinding wheat for flour. The first mill within the limits of the town was erected by W. H. Meacham on the east side of the Des Moines River, and was originally propelled by horse power.

Captain Allen began a military road to the southeast, through Toole's Point (now Monroe).

The Sac and Fox Indians were moved west of Red Rock, to remain three years and then go on southwest to Kansas.

1845--First regular religious meetings started March 4 (Rathbun Methodist Class), and organized as a church in December.

First birth in Polk County was Hannah Jane (Jenny) Thrift, born March 15. Her parents were Josiah M. and Eunice Jewett Thrift. Mr. Thrift was employed in 1843 as regimental tailor for the First U.S. Dragoons. His shop was afterwards located at Second and Market.

Indian title to lands in Polk County extinguished, and Central Iowa opened to white settlement at midnight, October 11.

Remaining Indians in the area escorted by U. S. Dragoons to reservations in Kansas.

1846--First Sunday school, numbering 7 children, established in the log cabin of Benjamin Hoxie.

Polk County (named for President James Knox Polk) established January 13, 1846.

Polk County organized and 144 acres of land ceded to Polk County on January 17 to develop the townsite of Fort Des Moines.

First political meeting held February 14, 1846 to select candidates for Polk County offices.

Order to abandon Fort Des Moines No. 2 as a military post signed February 23, effective March 10, when the Dragoons left the fort and the civilians took over.

Dr. Thomas K. Brooks became first postmaster on March 2. (Indian Agent Joseph Smart was the first postmaster appointed, on December 13, 1845, but declined the appointment.) The first regular mail arrived

March 3, and the first regular mail route was established in April from Keokuk, Iowa, via Toole's Point, Oskaloosa, Eddyville, Ottumwa, and Agency City.

The first district court convened on April 2.

First marriage solemnized within the limits of Polk County on June 11. Benjamin Bryant and Elvira B. Birge were united in matrimony by Justice of the Peace Aaron E. Stark in the cabin of Henry Birge.

The first Polk County election was held April 6 in one of the abandoned cabins on Raccoon Row, when a Board of 3 Commissioners was chosen, consisting of E. W. Fonts, William H. Meacham, and Benjamin Saylor.

First official entry in records of Polk County Recorder on April 20. The entry was for horses, buggy, and harness, sold by R. A. McKinzie to I. T. Meldrum for \$300.

Polk County incorporated April 22.

First deed of record in Polk County on April 24. Since this was before any land surveys had been made, landmarks described were necessarily rather indefinite. Titles to property were traced from the point where the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers joined.

The town of Fort Des Moines was surveyed in June and the town plat was filed July 8, by Polk County Surveyor A. D. Jones.

First local census taken by Green B. Clark in July; population 127.

First auction of town lots advertised in July and held on August 14.

Captain James Allen, founder of Fort Des Moines No. 2, died on August 23 of "congestive fever" while with the Mormon Battalion, enroute to the Southwest during the Mexican War.

First schools established in fall and winter of 1846-1847, in log cabins on Raccoon Row at Fort Des Moines No. 2. Miss Mary Davis taught 13 pupils; Lewis Whitten taught another class. These were subscription schools, with the pupils' parents paying expenses.

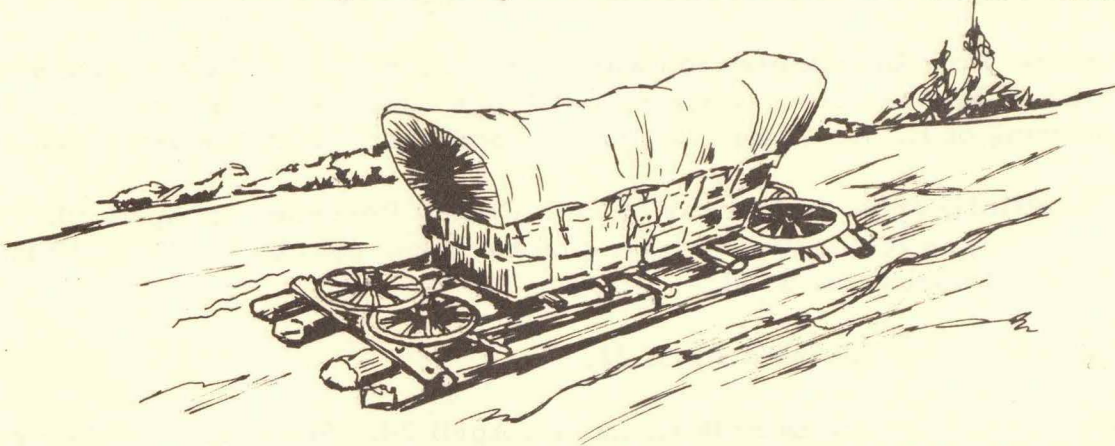
Iowa became the 29th state of the Union and the first free state west of the Mississippi River on December 28; population 102,388.

County Board of Commissioners bought a lot from Thomas H. McMullen for \$25 upon which to erect the first courthouse. It was built by John Saylor at a

cost of \$2,015. Originally designed as a frame structure, the building was later changed to brick veneer with stone foundations. This courthouse, which stood on Cherry Street on the space later occupied by the Union Station, was used for 10 years to house county offices. The building was eventually sold to the Christian Church for \$800 and later to the Wabash and Des Moines Union Railway.

1847--Great Seal of Iowa adopted by First General Assembly; approved February 25.

First license for regular ferry service across the Des Moines River



issued to John B. Scott, who operated the business with his brother, Willson Alexander Scott.

Rosehill, oldest Des Moines house still standing, was built. It is located at 3111 Easton Boulevard.

Official U. S. land survey completed of the territory acquired by treaty from Sac and Fox Indians.

1848--First telegraph lines reached Iowa from the east.

Presbyterian Church began services in one of the buildings at Fort Des Moines No. 2.

First brick building in town was erected by J. A. Campbell.

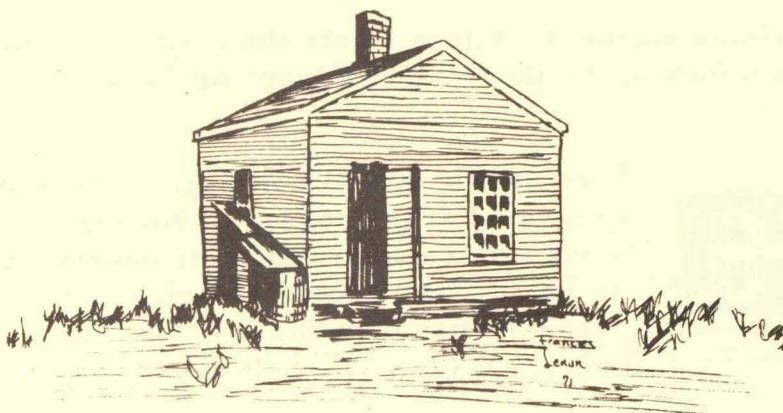
1849--First newspaper The Iowa Star, began publication on July 26, by Barlow Granger on a press installed in a former barracks at Fort Des Moines No. 2.

First known death in the frontier town of Fort Des Moines -- Mary Eunice Thrift, the infant daughter of Josiah M. Thrift, who was employed in 1843 as regimental tailor for the First U. S. Dragoons. His shop was afterwards located at Second and Market.

The first stage line to Fort Des Moines was established by Frink and Walker. The line connected Keokuk with Fort Des Moines, and the fare was \$10. The stages were described by the newspaper as "wagons without springs and with white muslin tops, drawn by two horses, arriving with great regularity semi-occasionally."

First public school in the town of Fort Des Moines was organized September 8, with Byron Rice as the teacher. Classes were first held in the Methodist church, but later were moved to the courthouse.

1850--First post office built by Hoyt Sherman, postmaster, on the northeast corner of Second and Vine Streets.



1851-- \$100 was appropriated for purchase of a half-acre of land on the corner of Ninth and Locust Streets as a site for a proposed new public school building.

Town of Fort Des Moines incorporated on September 22.

First town election held October 18, when voters unanimously approved the town charter. Twenty-five votes were cast.

First town council elected October 20, consisting of Reverend Thompson Bird, P. M. Casady, Jesse Dicks, W. T. Marvin, C. D. Reinking, Hoyt Sherman, L. P. Sherman, and R. W. Sypher.

First town council meeting October 25. Reverend Thompson Bird was elected president (mayor).

1853--Fourth General Assembly passed "An Act to incorporate the town of Fort Des Moines" approved January 18.

First drayman, Michael Kennedy, arrived in Fort Des Moines with the first two-wheeled dray ever seen in the village. He drove his dray over-land from Iowa City.

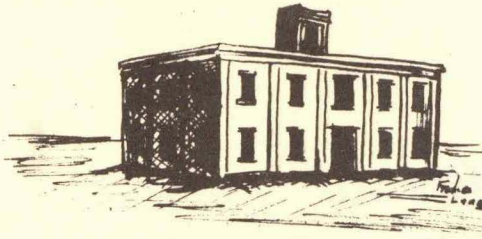
U. S. Land Office established at Fort Des Moines; Isaac Cooper, agent; R. L. Tidrick, register. Joseph Buffon Stewart appointed registrar of deeds in 1854.

1854--Shamrock House started by Michael McTighe at S. W. 2nd and Vine Street, a rallying place for the Irish and politicians.

First tax for the erection of a school building was levied.

First coach of Western Stage Company arrived July 1. The driver was Edward Foster Mills (Colonel) Hooker (1813-1896). This company succeeded to the franchise of Frink and Walker, and started using two-horse "jerkeys."

1855--Governor Grimes signed the bill to locate the capitol "within two miles of the Raccoon fork of the Des Moines River" on January 15.



First public school building, costing about \$8,000, completed at the corner of 9th and Locust Streets, after being under construction for nearly two years. Known as Third Ward School or Brick School House, it was ready for use by winter.

1856--A commission designated the precise location of the capitol on $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres of ground given to the State of Iowa by a syndicate of businessmen headed by Willson Alexander Scott.

Sac and Fox Indians gave up their government payments and returned to Iowa to purchase land near Tama. Their collective farm land, owned by approximately 500 members of the tribe, now covers 3,600 acres.

First Savery Hotel built on present site of Kirkwood Hotel.

First pontoon bridge built across Des Moines River on Sycamore Street (now Grand Avenue) at the ferry crossing site; it was washed out by a flood two years later.

First toll bridge built at Court Avenue.

First photographer, G. L. Reynolds, opened his studio in Exchange Block, Walnut Street.

1857--Name of Fort Des Moines changed to Des Moines on January 28. The first mayor and council (aldermen) were elected at large, for a one-year term.

Spirit Lake Massacre March 8-13, during which time Inkpahutah and his band of hostile Sioux Indians attacked the settlers at Arnolds Park, Iowa, killing 41 people.

Trestle bridge built across the Des Moines River at Market Street.

Des Moines officially declared to be the new State Capital, by proclamation of Governor James W. Grimes, on October 19.

First capitol, a three-story brick structure, was erected about where the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument stands today on the capitol grounds, and opened for business on November 10; used until 1886, it was destroyed by fire on September 1, 1892.

Official State records brought on ox-drawn bobsleds from Iowa City to Des Moines in December.

1858--First meeting of State Legislature in new capitol in Des Moines.

Covered bridge built across Raccoon River at South First Street.

1861--The "Capitol Guards" with Marcellus M. Crocker left on May 4 for Keokuk to be mustered in for duty in the Civil War.

1862--First company of 12 runaway slaves from Missouri arrived in Des Moines.

1864--Gas lighting used in Des Moines.

1866--First street railway built in Des Moines. The horse drawn, narrow gauge line ran from the courthouse to Capitol Hill.

1866--First train of the Keokuk and Des Moines Valley Railroad reached Des Moines August 29. The engine bringing in the "excursion train" was the Keokuk No. 1, with James Tibbetts the engineer and R. Patch the conductor. The train came from Keokuk by way of Burlington, Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa. The entire trip took $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours, compared with 3 days by stagecoach. Stagecoach and river traffic began to decline and later ended.

First library in Des Moines established in the basement of the Methodist Church with 2,300 volumes and 30 newspapers and magazines. Founded by attorney Hiram Y. Smith, December 17.

1867--The Equitable Life Insurance Company incorporated on January 25, the first of its type organized west of the Mississippi River.

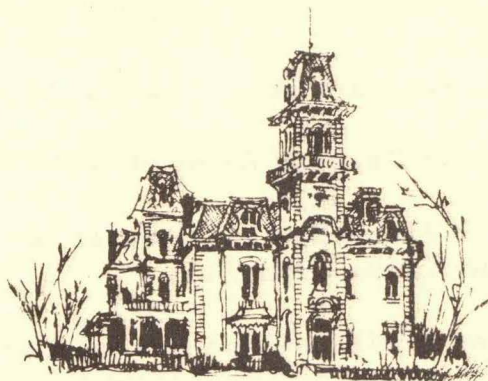
Northwestern Railroad completed to Council Bluffs, first line to span the state east to west.

Public library opened in September in rented rooms in the B. F. Allen Bank Building, Fourth and Court.

1868--Charter granted for a municipal water system. The company was unable to supply the amount of water called for by the contract, however, and had to forfeit its charter.

Des Moines received its first fire engine, the "General Crocker."

1869--Terrace Hill built by Benjamin Franklin Allen, a nephew of Captain James Allen and Iowa's first millionaire, on Sycamore Road (now 2300 Grand Avenue) at a cost of \$250,000.



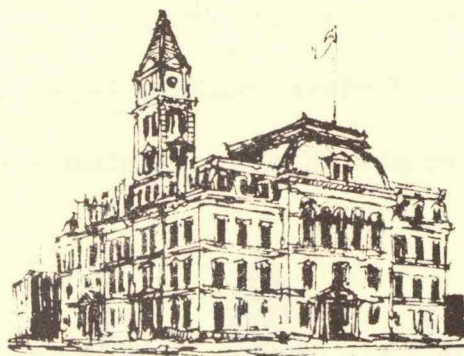
1870-- First capitol commission organized, with 9 members, on May 25, to employ an architect and select building plans.

The last of the stagecoaches left Des Moines on July 1. The line of stages had developed from the "jerkeys" of 1854 to the Concord coach. Until the coming of the railroad, the horse-drawn stagecoach was an important part of Des Moines life, with from 6 to 12 coaches arriving and departing daily.

1871--Des Moines Water Works Company organized by Jefferson Scott Polk, Frederick M. Hubbell, Benjamin Franklin Allen, and others on April 3 and granted a 40-year charter on May 2. Five years later, there were 15 miles of water mains and 556 customers.

Construction begun on Iowa's present capitol, dedicated in 1884, and completed in 1886 at a cost of \$2,873,294.59. The final audit showed only \$3.77 unaccounted for in the 15-year period of construction. Cornerstone cut from an Iowa granite boulder, and laid by Governor Samuel Merrill, on November 23. This stone, replaced in 1873, was 7 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 3 feet thick, and came from Buchanan County.

Federal Building completed on northeast corner of Court Avenue and Fifth Street at a cost of \$217,023.52.



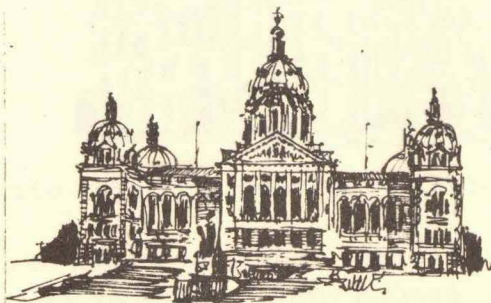
- 1872-- Second capitol commission, with four members, organized April 10.
- 1873-- Unsuitable stone removed from capitol, at a loss of approximately \$100,000. Cornerstone laid for the second time September 29, to replace original stone of poor quality.
- 1876-- Centennial 4th of July celebrated in Des Moines. A parade nearly 3 miles long portrayed Iowa in 1776 -- an unbroken prairie -- followed by representations of an Indian camp, Iowa in 1830, Iowa products in 1876, over 500 troops, and many floats.
- 1877-- Hoyt Sherman Place built by Major Hoyt Sherman, brother of General William Tecumseh Sherman, at Woodland Avenue and 15th Street.
- 1878-- Savery House, the hotel built by James C. Savery and others in 1856, closed its doors on the night of November 11, due to financial difficulties.
- 1879-- Iowa State Fair moved to Des Moines. The first fair was held at Fairfield, October 25 to 27, 1854.
- 1881-- Drake University established. Named for one of its founders, General Francis Marion Drake, who was elected Governor of Iowa and served one term (1896-1898).
- 1882-- Completion of first pavement, made of cedar blocks.
- Des Moines City Hall built at northwest corner of 2nd Avenue and Locust Street, at a cost of \$25,000.
- 1883-- Construction of an additional story on Federal Building commenced.
- Capitol dedicated January 17. John A. Kasson delivered a notable address, reviewing Iowa history.

1884-- First free public kindergarten established. (Des Moines was second only to St. Louis in the United States in starting these classes.)

1885-- Fairgrounds deeded to the State June 26.

Extension at north side of Federal Building begun in June.

1886-- Present State Capitol completed, and commission finished its work July 4.



New Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines dedicated September 7.

1888-- First electric street cars in Des Moines put into service December 20, the second electric railway in the United States.

1889-- First brick paving laid in Des Moines.

All street car lines in Des Moines consolidated under one management by Jefferson Scott Polk. Each of the 10 lines had a right to charge a 5¢ fare. Combined under one system, a transfer plan was put into effect, permitting a passenger to ride for 12 miles for only one 5¢ fare.

Extensions and alterations to Federal Building completed at a cost of \$333,000.

Work begun on 145-foot high Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument.

1890-- Boundaries of City of Des Moines expanded to include 55.1 square miles, or about 35,264 acres. Incorporated towns included in the enlarged city were North Des Moines, University Place, Greenwood Park, Sevastopol, Gilbert (Chesterfield), Grant Park, Easton Place, and Capitol Park, in addition to the platted territories of Highland Park, Oak Park, and Clifton Heights.

1892-- Iowa State Historical Department organized by Charles Aldrich.

1894-- "Kelly's Army" of nearly 1,000 unemployed men descended upon Des Moines in May on their march from Omaha to Washington to plead their cause in Congress. They built 150 flatboats in Des Moines and started on downstream

May 9. Among the "sailors" was Jack London who later gained fame as a writer.

1895-- All Des Moines street cars equipped with letter boxes. Street cars were required to stop at any street crossing to receive mail. Within 25 to 40 minutes from the time a letter was posted it was carried by street cars to the central waiting room, then to the post office. Des Moines was the first, and for many years the only, city in the United States to have this service.

Grand View College and Theological Seminary established.

1897-- Wild Rose officially designated as the State Flower of Iowa on May 7, by the 26th General Assembly in extraordinary session.



Des Moines Water Works Company failed and was subsequently turned over to its bondholders.

1898-- Construction of State Historical Building begun; cornerstone laid by Governor Leslie M. Shaw on May 17, 1899. An addition was made to the building in 1908.

Interurban railway company began operating street cars between Des Moines and Valley Junction (West Des Moines) in October.

1900-- Cornerstone of present Main Library of Des Moines laid May 19.

1901-- Fort Des Moines No. 3 established south of Army Post Road.

1903-- Third capitol commission organized to modernize capitol.

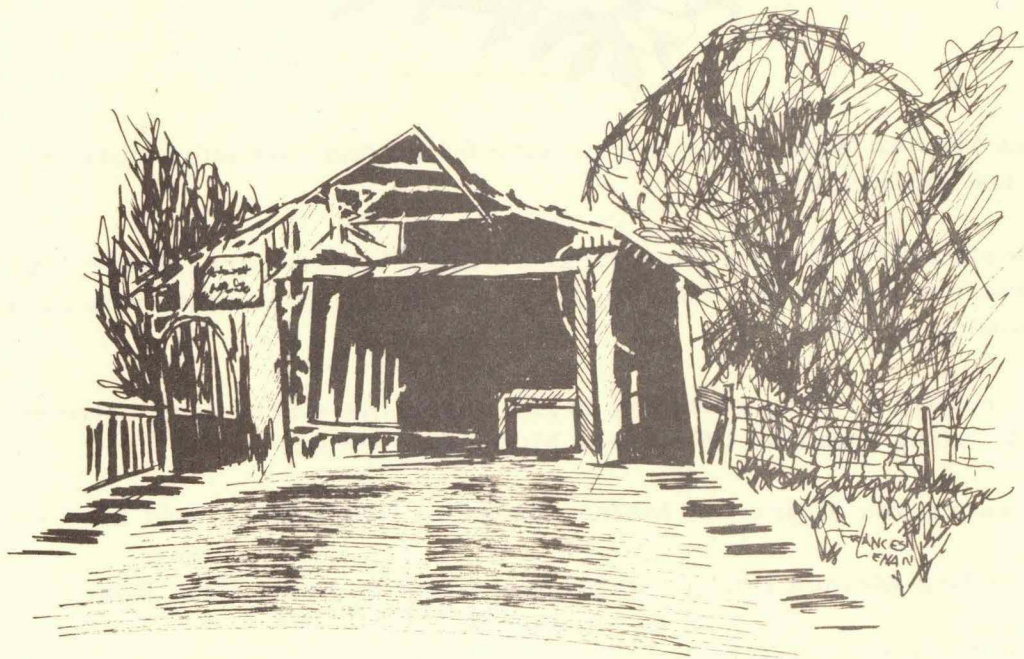
Fort Des Moines No. 3 dedicated as a U. S. Army cavalry post November 13.

1904-- Fire extensively damaged north wing (House Chamber and Committee Rooms) of the Capitol on January 4. Total cost of the Capitol, including remodeling after the fire, was \$3,296,256.

1906-- First dirigible flown around State Capitol.

The Humane Society installed 16 horse watering troughs in Des Moines.

- 1907-- Des Moines adopted the commission system of city government at a special election held June 30. The new form of local government became operative on April 1, 1908, and was known throughout the United States as the Des Moines Plan. This system was highly praised as a method of checking party politics, of concentrating responsibility in a small administrative body (five commissioners, including the mayor, each in charge of one of five specific departments), and of getting a council representative of the entire city and not just one ward.
- 1910-- City Hall completed on East bank of Des Moines River between East Locust Street and East Grand Avenue on site of mill erected and operated in the early 1850's.
- 1914-- Capitol grounds enlarged from about 9 acres to 93 acres through efforts of Governor George W. Clarke (1913-1917).
- 1916-- Old covered bridge built in 1858 across the Raccoon River at South First Street swept away by ice jam, shortly after 8 p.m., February 21.



- 1917-- Camp Dodge established; 100,000 Iowans trained here for World War I.
- 1919-- Ownership and management of the municipal water system turned over to the city of Des Moines November 19.
- 1921-- Official Iowa State Banner (flag) adopted by 39th General Assembly on March 29. The banner, consisting of three vertical stripes of blue, white,

and red, was designed by the Iowa Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

1926-- First municipal airport established 8 miles east of Des Moines. Dedicated by Charles A. Lindbergh in 1927.

1933-- Eastern Goldfinch (wild canary) adopted by a concurrent resolution of the 45th General Assembly as the State Bird of Iowa on March 22.

Dedication of present municipal airport at Fleur Drive and Army Post Road.

1938-- Polk County (Iowa) Historical Society organized and incorporated.

1939-- Iowa State Historical Department reorganized as the Iowa State Department of History and Archives.

Old stone sidewalks removed from around Federal Building at Fifth and Court and replaced with concrete.

1940-- Federal Building cleaned and renovated for first time in 52 years.

1942-- On July 20, Fort Des Moines No. 3 designated the first training center for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), which became the Women's Army Corps (WAC) on August 4, 1943.

1943-- Centennial Ceremony held on May 20 in Council Chamber, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Fort Des Moines No. 2.

1946-- Centennial of Polk County and of State of Iowa observed.

1947-- Governor's Mansion at 2900 Grand Avenue built by W. W. Witmer in 1903 purchased by the State of Iowa from Gerald S. Nollen, whose wife was a daughter of the builder. Cost of the house and lot was \$27,200. Remodeling cost another \$22,800 and furnishing and decorating \$22,421.

1948-- Des Moines Art Center opened at Greenwood Park.

1949-- Governor William S. Beardsley, in January, became the first chief executive of Iowa to occupy the Governor's Mansion at 2900 Grand Avenue.

1950-- Council-Manager form of city government became effective. This system won approval in 1949 by a margin of 810 votes because of the weaknesses and failures under the commission form of government.

1951-- State Office Building completed at a cost of \$4,935,892.45.

1952-- Construction started on Veterans Memorial Auditorium December 15. Cornerstone laid June 16, 1954; building completed in 1955.

1953-- Tunnel from State Office Building to Capitol completed at a cost of \$92,841.71.

1954-- Highest floods on record for central Iowa in June.

1955-- City Council passed an ordinance to appoint a Redevelopment and Housing Administrator for Des Moines on October 10.

1957-- Redevelopment Committee selected an area for the first urban renewal project in Des Moines on July 22.

Following approval by the Des Moines Planning and Zoning Commission and a public hearing, the city council officially declared the River Hills area as an urban renewal area on December 2.

1959-- Proposal to return to the mayor-alderman system of city government defeated at special election by a large margin.

1961-- The Oak was designated as the official State Tree of Iowa by a resolution adopted by the 59th General Assembly on March 13.

Polk County (Iowa) Historical Society, inactive since 1946, reactivated in April.

1962-- New Longfellow School, the first building constructed in the River Hills urban renewal area, opened to accommodate children of the old Longfellow School (built in 1882) and Webster School, both razed during the summer to make way for the Des Moines Freeway. Longfellow School was named for poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and was located in what was once a largely Swedish neighborhood, with many miners and railroad workers.

1963-- First privately owned building completed by Iowa Dental Supply Company at Fifth and Laurel Streets in River Hills urban renewal area in May.

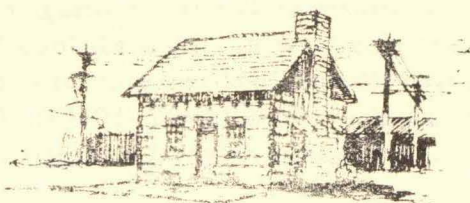
Iowa Employment Security Commission building, 1000 East Grand Avenue, first occupied in October.

Proposal to return to commission plan of city government defeated by voters.

1964-- Ground broken October 15 for erection of first log cabin unit in the Des Moines Birthplace restoration project, sponsored by Polk County Historical Society.

Ground broken December 1, for new Federal Office Building at 210 Walnut Street.

- 1965-- Birthplace of Des Moines dedication ceremonies held, Sunday, June 6, at site of Fort Des Moines No. 2, Southwest First and Elm Streets, and attended by a crowd of approximately 400. First log cabin completed in the restoration of Fort Des Moines No. 2 opened to public.



Excavation and construction of the first section of the earth dam of the Saylorville Dam and Reservoir on the Des Moines River begun in July.

- 1966-- General contract let on March 29 and ground broken for new State Office Building at East Grand Avenue and East 14th Street on June 28.

"Bridge Day" in Des Moines proclaimed October 14 when four bridges (Sixth Avenue, University Avenue, Walnut Street and Seventh Street) were opened to traffic again. Having been closed since 1965, at which time they began collapsing and disintegrating at a rapid rate, these bridges were rebuilt or repaired at a cost of \$3.4 million.

State Office Building completed in 1951 and located between East 12th and 13th and Capitol Avenue and Walnut Street officially named Robert Lucas State Office Building, in honor of Iowa's first Territorial Governor (1838-1841), on December 19.

- 1967-- Geode adopted as the State Rock of Iowa by a house joint resolution of the 62nd General Assembly on March 13.

The longest legislative session in Iowa history officially adjourned July 2. This 62nd General Assembly convened January 9 and ran for 175 calendar days. This was the last biennial session; annual sessions of the Legislature were begun in 1969. There are now two sessions in each General Assembly, one in each year of the biennium.

At a special referendum on September 28, voters approved a change from the council-manager system of city government to the ward-manager plan, by a vote of 15,386 to 13,093. The change was advocated by the League of Women Voters as a means of broadening representation on the council and giving the mayor greater opportunity for leadership.

New 10-story Federal Office Building completed November 30, at a cost of \$8,800,000.

Des Moines City Council approved an exchange agreement on December 27 with the Federal Government, conveying to General Services Administration a part of the City Parking Lot at East 2nd and Walnut and receiving, in exchange, the Old Federal Building at Fifth and Court.

1968-- A seven-member council, organized under the manager-ward system of city government, became effective January 2. Des Moines has operated under four different systems of government: (1) the mayor-alderman system (1857-1907); (2) the commission system (1907-1950); (3) the council-manager system (1950-1967); and (4) the manager-ward system (1968 to date).

Construction begun on a \$12 million U. S. Post Office Building at Second and University Avenues.

State Department of Public Instruction moved into new State Office Building at East Grand Avenue and East 14th Street in May. The building wasn't completed until August.

Des Moines City Council voted 4 to 3 on August 5 to demolish the Old Federal Building located at Fifth and Court, in spite of strong public support for its preservation as a historic landmark.

1969-- State Office Building at East 14th Street and East Grand Avenue officially named James W. Grimes State Office Building on July 25, 1969, in honor of Iowa's third elected Governor (1854-1858). Grimes was Governor of Iowa when the name of the city was changed from Fort Des Moines to Des Moines (1857), and by proclamation on October 19, 1857, he declared Des Moines to be the new State Capitol. He was the first Governor to occupy the old brick capitol, which was located just south of the present Statehouse, where the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument now stands.

Gray's Lake acquired for a city park after many previous unsuccessful attempts. Local and federal funds were provided to finance the project.

1970-- Iowa Symbol and Theme (Iowa, a place to grow) adopted January 6.



Iowa Legislature authorized the Iowa Executive Council to negotiate to acquire Terrace Hill for the State of Iowa.

Gray's Lake officially dedicated as a city park April 28.

Last passenger train service to Des Moines on May 31. Trains Number 7 and 10 of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Co. made their final run between Chicago, Illinois and Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Grain Harvest Festival held at Living History Farms July 31 and August 1 -- the first public event scheduled at the 565-acre site along Interstates 35 and 80, northwest of Des Moines.

Final audit by U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requested on September 15 for closeout of River Hills project. Other urban development projects are Oakridge, Cleveland Park, Model Cities, and Southeast Bottoms.

Des Moines Center of Science and Industry opened to public October 17.

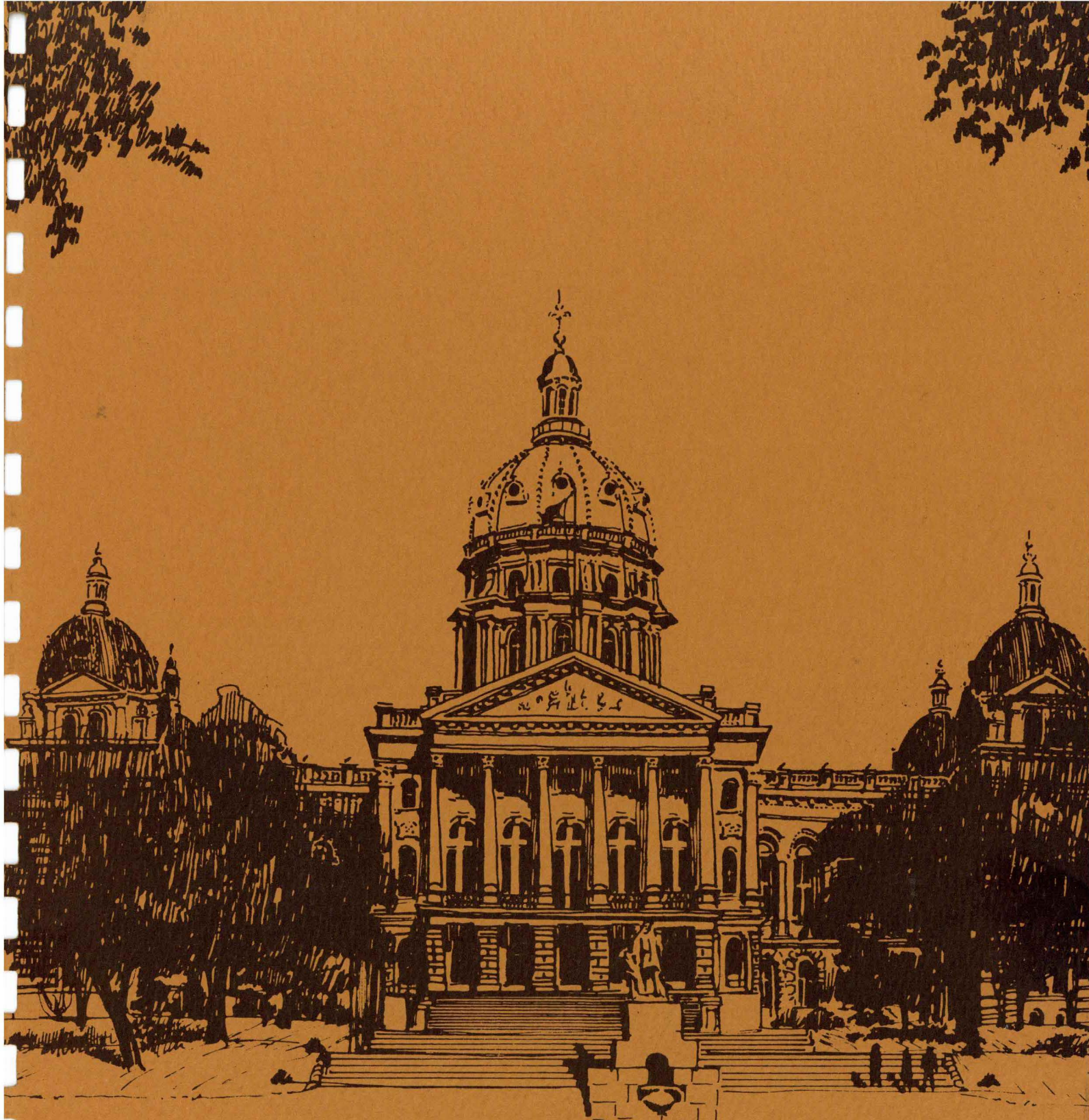
Attorney Nolden Gentry elected by a wide margin to the Des Moines School Board October 19, the first black person to be elected to a city-wide governing board. He resigned from the Iowa State Board of Public Instruction in order to serve on the local board.

1971-- New U. S. Post Office at Second and University Avenues opened to the public January 11. The former main Post Office at Second Avenue and Walnut Street became a carrier base.

On March 1, Richard Milhous Nixon (1913 -) spoke for 21 minutes before a joint session of the Iowa General Assembly, the first U.S. President to address an Iowa Legislature.

Population of Des Moines

1846	127	1900	62,139
1850	986	1910	86,368
1860	3,965	1920	126,468
1867	7,206	1930	142,550
1870	12,035	1940	159,819
1880	22,408	1950	177,965
1885	32,469	1960	208,982
1890	50,093	1970	200,587



IOWA STATE CAPITOL COMPLETED 1886

