Thomas Mitchell, Pioneer
Iowa Community Builder

ANNALS OF IOWA

A MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

Established 1863
Third Series
Vol. XXXI, No. 8

APRIL, 1953

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
IOWA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
AND ARCHIVES
DES MOINES, IOWA

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Chapter I
BACKGROUND OF SETTLEMENT

THIRTY YEARS after the Louisiana Purchase was made, in 1833, people afflicted with "western fever" were lined up at several points of entry along the Mississippi River, ready to go into what later became Iowa and settle. Some of these people were to learn from experience that this new land was *not* a part of the "Great American Desert," as they had heard. There must be some attraction about a land to draw some 10,000 settlers to it by 1836 and over twice that many by 1838.[1]

There were Indians in Iowa, but on the whole, they were friendly. In 1839 General Joseph Street had five bands of them under his care. This amounted to more than 4,000. In 1842 steps were taken to move the Red men out of Iowa altogether. A treaty was signed at Agency City in Wapello County on October 11, providing that the Sac and Fox Indians were to give up their hunting grounds in Iowa three years from that date. In the meantime a fort was to be established to protect them from the more hostile Sioux to the north.

Actual settlement of the State started in 1833. According to law, no settlers were to come in to the new Territory before the land had been surveyed and was ready for sale. However, general survey was not begun until 1836, and no sales were made until 1838. It was true in Iowa as in other undeveloped areas, that some settlers went ahead of the government, hewing out log houses for themselves and raising crops before the land was officially surveyed. It was so with adventurous Thomas Mitchell, the founder of Mitchellville.

A year and a half before the white people were legally allowed to enter Polk County, Thomas Mitchell, with permission from the officers at Fort Des Moines, had his double log cabin built near Camp Creek and the woods which he later named Apple Grove (See map).

It has been generally conceded that Thomas Mitchell was the first permanent white settler in Polk County and that at one time he knew everyone within its boundaries. The account which he himself wrote, probably about 1876, tells us of his first coming:

> "Beaver Township was settled first by Thomas Mitchell who came there from Jefferson County near Fairfield, Iowa. He got permission of Capt. John Beach and Captain James Allen. Capt. Beach was Indian Agent of the Sacs and Foxes and Capt. Allen commanded Fort Des Moines. In February 1844 they gave Mr. Mitchell permit to build a station and keep the public at the crossing of Camp Creek in the Eastern part of what is now Beaver Township then in the Indian country.
>
> "It was necessary to have a feeding [?] place between the Indian boundary line and the Fort the line being near where Monroe now is. All of the supplies for the Indians and troops had to be hauled by wagons from Keokuk to the Fort. Therefore there was considerable travel.
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> "Mr. Mitchell moved his family to Camp Creek in April 1844. The family consisted at that time of wife and two children, one son about 22 months old and daughter two

months. He brought with him a hired girl and hired man. Mrs. Mitchell did not see a white woman for three months after moveing into the country. There were no whites nearer than the Agency at Fort Des Moines and but five or six women there. The first white woman she saw was Mrs. Capt. Beach going down to the old Agency in Wapello County to visit her mother Mrs. General Street.

"Mr. Mitchell and family lived there surrounded by Indians until Oct 11th 1845 when the Indian tittle became Extinct." (Some commas, all periods and paragraphing mine.—L.C.)

Mr. Mitchell, descendant of English and Scotch-Irish ancestors, came to Fairfield, Iowa in 1840 from Claremont, New Hampshire. There he lived and worked with his brother Henry, taking up farm land and building a home west of Fairfield. In 1842 he was elected commissioner of Jefferson County and held the office for two years, an event which marked the beginning of his career as officeholder in the state.

We have explained the exact reason why our founder came to Camp Creek. What brought other settlers to eastern Polk County during the 1840's and 1850's? Mainly, the same thing that brought thousands of pioneers to Iowa—cheap land. Heads of large families in the more thickly populated areas of the United States looked for new opportunities for themselves and for their sons and for room to stretch out; they had begun to feel crowded back East.

There were other reasons why people came to the West. Men who worked at various trades could foresee that a country which was settling up rapidly would need their skills. Thus, we have Daniel Trullinger making bricks for the buildings at Fort Des Moines, Thomas Mitchell equipping his place to accommodate the travelling public, later David Mattern and Simon Waltz setting up as blacksmiths, Jonathan Blyler as tanner and cobbler, J. N. Bowman as carpenter, James Craig as mason and plasterer, Reuben Ellis with his sawmill. These and others were engaged in occupations that were necessary to a new settlement in a new country. Not all of them came for the $1.25-an-acre land, though most of them did.

Some were induced on to the prairie in the middle fifties because they thought the railroad would come soon. A very few people came to run away from trouble. One Joe Wert from Ohio was the leader of a gang of thieves who had their headquarters between here and Marshalltown during the late 1850's. The majority of the settlers were honest and industrious, however.

Having relatives or friends already here was an attraction for many which no doubt made it easier to sever ties from the home town back East. This was the case with the Mitchell's, Swift's, Mattern's, Walker's, R. B. Ellis's, Tyler's, and others from New Hampshire and Vermont and with several families who came to Mitchellville and vicinity from the same communities in Pennsylvania and Ohio—Seiberling's, De Long's, Weaver's, Craig's, Blyler's, Waltz's, Biery's.

We may safely conclude, then, that most people came to Mitchellville (by that I mean also the surrounding area) because they thought there would be opportunities to better themselves.

During the 1840's the origin of the greater number of Iowa's settlers were from the southern states of Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, southern Indiana and Ohio. Eastern Polk County received its share of southerners during this period. Some were pro-slavery and Democratic in belief and became an element for the Republicans to contend with, especially in the Camp Township, Rising Sun, and Trullinger Grove area. But not all of them were in favor of slavery.

The tide was turned, however, in the 1850's. New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio contributed large numbers of settlers during that decade to Iowa and more specifically, to the area which eventually had Mitchellville as its trading center. This shift to a direct east-to-west movement was encouraged tremendously by the railroads. More often than not the people were thrifty, hard working Whigs (later Republicans) bent on shaping their new community, as nearly as they could, like the one they left in the East, with schools and churches.

The Iowa Census record shows that in 1856 in Beaver Township 46 inhabintants were born in Iowa, 43 in Ohio, 23 in Indiana, 18 each in New Hampshire and New York, and 13 in Pennsylvania. With Franklin Township, the states which were the heaviest contributors were Ohio, with 52, Indiana, with 39, Iowa, 38, Pennsylvania, 22, and Michigan, 19.

The population of Beaver Township increased from 208 in 1856 to 381 in 1865. This increase of only 173 people does not seem very large, especially considering the fact that what is now Clay Township was a part of Beaver during the Civil War. One explanation of this is that Beaver consisted mostly of prairie land, and most early settlers located near timber when at all possible. In other words, there was not enough timber for the incoming settlers, which to them was so vital for fuel and building material.

There were agencies at work which promoted settlement. Among them was the American Emigrant Company, which encouraged the westward movement by advertising the rich soil, healthful climate, and best routes to take. As late as 1864 the IOWA STATE REGISTER was pleading: "Iowa wants 50,000 settlers to supply the places of her soldiers in the field, and more Emigrant Companies interested in settling up our rich lands."

Moving West

There were almost as many routes to Iowa as there were emigrants. In general, the waterways were used whenever possible because they were the most convenient. Where there were no railroads, ox-drawn wagons were employed, and also the stage coach, although fare on the latter was expensive (ten cents a mile) and could be afforded by only a few. "Emigration was heaviest in 1855 and the summer of 1856, when prairie schooners, with their loads of tow-headed infants and household goods, came into the new settlements. . . ."[2]

From his home in Claremont, New Hampshire, Henry Mitchell, and probably his brother Thomas too, travelled over the mountains by oxen and wagon to Troy, New York, from there to Buffalo over the Erie Canal, by boat from Buffalo to Cleveland on Lake Erie, then

by canal to Portsmouth, on the Ohio River, and from there to Cairo, Illinois, and up the Mississippi River.[3]

The journeys were beset by many delays and changes. Steamers and packets were often many hours behind schedule, on the canals locks frequently broke, and stage coaches were held up by muddy roads, which at times required the passengers to get out and walk for a few miles!

The following record of the trip to Polk County from Indiana by the William Sweeney and the Williams family is one of the earliest we have.

> "About April 10th 1850 nine families with a complete emmigrant outfit of wagons, horses and oxen, all complete to protect the women and children from wind and rain, all anxious for a start to the then far away Iowa. About two hundred neighbors and friends met at the cross roads between Edinburg and Black Hawk for a final start and a final good bye. . . . About one o'clock the train pulled out, a day that I never will forget, there was many a tear stained eye left behind still watching the long train until it moved out of sight. A long tedious journey was ahead of it.
>
> "In the spring of the year through the flat level country of Illinois ponds and sloughs, almost too numerous to mention, had to be crossed quite often it would be necessary to hitch five and six yoke of oxen to some of the heavy loaded wagons to get them through the sloughs. Many times it would be necessary for the men to carry the women and children out of their wagons in order to get through. Some of the roads were planked with toll gates every few miles that the teams had to pass through the tole had to be paid whether you drove on the plank road or off, which caused many unpleasant words to be exchanged. . . .
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> "The journey continued without any serious mishaps no loss of horses or oxen and no serious sickness in any of the families. . . .
>
> "On May 22 about 12 o'clock noon the eastern banks of the father of waters . . . was reached. Two large ferry boats were anchored in waiting to transport the large colony across the mighty river. After the dinner hour was over two old boats with their four old blind horses were in readiness for their task. The afternoon was taken up in landing three of the families and four of the teams over on Iowa soil. . . .
>
> "About 12 o'clock noon on June 1, 1850, the east line of Polk county was reached. A halt was made on the Skunk river at the Plummer bridge for the noon hour while the good mothers were preparing the dinner quite a few indians visited the camp quiet and peacable, but much interest was manifested in the mode of cooking by them. A very agreeable surprise was sprung on the colony by the approach of the Hon. Thomas Mitchell on horseback, who hearing of the coming of the colony came to meet them and act as their escort across the unbroken prairie to his old home, that he built in 1843 [should be 1844], now the home of the

George Barlow family at Apple Grove, on Camp Creek, Polk county, Iowa. After the noon hour, Mr. Mitchell had a friendly visit with the Indians, they could converse with each other freely. The journey was continued and in the evening as the sun was sinking in the western horison the longed looked for [home] was reached. . . .

"The morning of the 2d was a fine [one] and general breaking up of camp was indulged in, the majority going on to the Rising Sun neighborhood where they expected to locate homes."[4]

The Jonathan Blyler family, from Western Star, near Akron, Ohio, left there in September, 1857. They shipped a team of horses and household goods from Cleveland, Ohio to Davenport, Iowa, the family riding in a caboose attached to a freight train. Although the railroad went as far as Iowa City, they went overland from Davenport to Cedar County, where lived some Ohio friends by the name of Baughman. They had difficulty finding lodging, there being no vacancies, until they arrived at what was called the twelve mile house about ten o'clock at night. Here Jonathan did not ask any questions, but unloaded the family and told them to go in. Although the proprietor told them there was no room, Mr. Blyler was persistent and refused to go any farther. "The landlord finally gave up and said we could stay, and soon prepared us supper, and we spread our bedding on the floor beside the rest and slept until morning; and next day wended our way toward Cedar County."[5] The Blylers came to Mitchellville in 1858.

David Mattern, who was the first settler in the first Mitchellville, felt crowded in mountainous Pennsylvania. He needed land for his large family. Someone had told him to write to Tom Mitchell, who could help him get land. It is also likely that Isaac and Benjamin Woodrow, who had settled in 1855 north of what is now Altoona, had persuaded them to come, for they were related to David's sister-in-law.

In 1856 the David Mattern family came by covered wagon. The nine children took turns walking and riding. If the Matterns had any ideas that life on the frontier would be comfortable and mild, they were soon disillusioned by the privations of their first winter there.

Mr. Mitchell was supposed to have a house all ready for them when they arrived, but for some unknown reason it had not even been started; the lumber had not come yet from Iowa City. So they spent the first winter in a green plastered house, and it all fell off. It was a terribly cold winter, and they must have suffered. In the spring of 1857 dead cattle lay on the prairie, silent evidence of the uncontrollable hardships of severe weather, an element which often seemed cruel to the pioneers.[6]

In March, 1860 a bride and groom of two months arrived at Humphrey's Stage Coach stop four and a half miles south of Mitchellville. James Craig and his wife, Fianna Blyler Craig, were also from Western Star, Ohio. From Humphrey's they walked the distance to their new home in Mitchellville.

Chapter II

RICH LAND

IT WAS only natural for the pioneers to look for the familiar surroundings which they had left behind them. They were possessed with the idea that land which did not grow trees was useless. There is an amusing story, though true, about a hired man who came to Iowa from Ohio with a family which eventually settled in Mitchellville. When he first surveyed the great treeless prairie, he exclaimed: "Why I thought we were coming to a new country! Why they have more clearing done here than they have in Ohio!"

The prairie grass sometimes grew as tall as a man's shoulders, and it covered a rich black loam which produced, after much hard work, abundant crops. Tough-rooted blue stem grass was good for hay, and the horses liked it because it was sweet.

In an emigrant guide, published in 1838, instructions were given to the prospective western settler about cultivating unbroken prairie. They should plow with three or four yoke of oxen, the point of the plow turning up about eighteen to twenty-four inches of turf as a furrow in breadth, and three or four inches deep. This turned the sod completely over, laying the grass down, fitting furrow to furrow. It was usually broken up in May and sod corn planted the first season; that is, the seed was dropped along the edge of every fourth row. This sod corn produced only half a crop and was used as fodder for stock; but the next year the crop of corn was abundant, yielding fifty to 100 bushels per acre.[7]

Tree growth was to be found chiefly along the rivers and streams, where the pioneers settled because of their need of lumber for housing and fuel.

Of wild life there was a variety. East of Fort Des Moines there were fifty deer seen in 1846. The wolf population was large enough to frighten women and children and to warrant a circular wolf hunt during the winter of 1857. Elijah Canfield, who came to Garrett Grove, Camp Township, in 1845, killed a timber wolf which measured two and a half feet high.[8] Rattlesnakes were a common sight. Thomas Mitchell's son Orrin was bitten by one, and a Dr. Fagan from Des Moines, who happened to be at the Mitchell Inn at the time of the accident, prescribed two remedies—whisky and tobacco.

Prairie chickens, wild ducks, geese, quail, wild turkeys, ground squirrels, and mink were the hunters' and trappers' delight. In the winter of 1858 Sam Baughman did a great deal of hunting and trapping in the vicinity of Mitchellville. He used steel traps for catching mink and made a "considerable sum of money that winter."

The men and boys greatly enjoyed this sport and also that of fishing in Skunk River and in the creeks near by, where it was not unusual to find pike, pickerel, and bass. Pike two feet long were caught in Camp Creek west of Mitchellville.

Chapter III

RELATIONS WITH THE INDIANS

FORTUNATELY, the story of the relations between the Indians and white people of this area is a peaceful one; there are no bloody battles or masacres to record, one reason being the skill and fairness with which Thomas Mitchell dealt with them.

From time to time there were large settlements of them on the hills east of Colfax, along the Skunk and Des Moines Rivers and also along Camp Creek. Peaceful and harmless, they were tolerated with indifference by most of the whites, who were ignorant of their culture and history. They had been taught to look upon them as an inferior minority group that was gradually decreasing, and they believed that the government would surely intervene if they started trouble. The Indians, on the other hand, wanted to be left undisturbed to go in their own ways.

Thomas Mitchell was considered a friend of the Indian. He took his visiting relatives to see them. He could speak their language and was generous with them, as he was with those of his own race. He gave them ten acres of corn one time for their ponies; at other times he gave them hogs.[9]

Two incidents will suffice to show beyond a doubt that the sincerest of friendly relations existed between the first permanent white settler and the Red men who were eventually dispossssed of the land by the thousands of incoming settlers. Once late at night a knock was heard at the door of Tom Mitchell's house north of town. It was an Indian, warning, "Moko man's cattle in corn field." 'Moko' is the Indian word for 'white.' Even a small favor like that shows the Indians' regard for Mr. Mitchell.

During the late 1850's or early 1860's Ann and Orrin Mitchell, children of Thomas, went on outings with the Mesquakies who camped along Skunk River. The Indians came after the youngsters in the morning and brought them home at night.[10]

Jerry Williams recounted the experience his family had with the Indians in the winter of 1850-51, probably a typical one for the average settler near here:

> "Five hundred Indians wintered within one mile of our house and very few days passed that some of them did not visit our home, come in and warm by the fire and dry their mocisons from the snow, and if it happened to be about dinner time they would not refuse an invitation to dine with the family. The squaws could be filled but the bucks would eat as long as you would pass the pone, hog and hominy and if the squaws should happen to leave any coffee, milk or any food on their plate, Mr. Buck would clean it all up, but touch nothing unless handed to him. They never molested any thing nor acted ugly in any way during the winter time. We children visited their camp many times during the winter and watched them cook their meals. They would ask us to eat with them but we did not as we could see them preparing their food to be cooked and that would satisfy our appetite. The men would kill the game the squaws bring it in and

prepare it for the meal—anything but a wolf the men would not kill one of them they called the wolf the good man's dog, but all other wild game they would eat. A good fat dog was fine."

Not only did they cook dogs, but also that most repulsive of all animals—the skunk! They cleaned it very carefully—on the outside—then put the whole carcass into the pot to cook! They also feasted on the delicacy of smoked skunk.

From their encampments on Skunk River frequently a number of the Indians walked across the plain, single file, perhaps several dogs following them. Before that day was over, several families in the little village could report that they had had callers who begged and were given (*usually* were given, but not always) a bit of salt, sugar, or flour, a sack of potatoes, or a spool of thread. Often two at a time came into the house without knocking, wearing their big blankets. What went out under those blankets that did not come in was not always easy to tell. But in the main, the whites had learned that their Indian neighbors meant no harm. Even when they pushed their faces up hard against the windows of the little frame houses in Mitchellville and frightened the children, there was no harm intended. They merely wanted to see the white woman's "papoose," and went away laughing.

Chapter IV
OUTLYING SETTLEMENTS

WOOD, water, and land were three basic essentials necessary for the physical existence of the pioneers. The question of whether the land in Polk County was good for raising crops had been well established by 1856. Nearly always the settlers staked out their claims near a stream and a grove to satisfy their need for water, fuel for warmth, and logs for building. These geographical reasons and the prospect of a coming railroad help to explain why there were five different settlements in outlying areas from Section Two before there was an attempt to found a town.

Apple Grove was on Camp Creek in a wooded area. The center of this settlement was for many years Thomas Mitchell's Inn, which was a stopping place on the stage coach route, voting place, and post office. People for miles around used Apple Grove as their mailing address. Official post office records show it to have been a post office from 1849 to 1868.

Garrett Grove community was located near Mud Creek, south of what later became Ivy. It had a schoolhouse very early, and later a Methodist Church. Canfield Cemetery was near. The grove was named after the Garrett's, who came there from Ohio in 1849.

Trullinger Grove was also named for the family which first settled by its side. Two brothers—Daniel and Eli Trullinger—came from Ohio, but stopped first at Fairfield, Iowa, where they evidently made the acquaintance of Thomas Mitchell. Daniel was in Fort Des Moines in 1843. Eli broke prairie for Thomas Mitchell at Apple Grove in 1844, then settled by the grove in 1846. Trullinger's community was northwest of Mitchellville, near Skunk River. Before 1860 there was a sawmill there, a schoolhouse that served as a church.

Lee's Burying Ground (now Franklin Cemetery) was not far away.[11]

Plummer's Grove, to the northeast, was also by the river. Here too was a sawmill and a bridge which made it easier for pioneers to come to Polk County.

Woodville settlement, southeast of town, started in 1855 and became quite a little community because it was the end of the Des Moines Valley (now Keokuk and Des Moines) Railroad and a station for several years. As in the Trullinger Grove area, the schoolhouse served both educational and religious purposes.

Thomas Mitchell wrote of the founding of Beaver Township:

> "In 1855 the Prairie began to settle in the north west part of Beaver. Mr. Isaac Woodrow, Benjamin Woodrow, John Robinson and Mr. Ingrahan settled a little north of what is now Altoona. Mr. Dewitt Devotie had bot out Blueford Barlow a few years before and Mr. Walter Ellis in 1854 had bought out the Millers. Mr. John Duncan settled north of Burk on Mud Creek in 1854. Mr. Benj. Pearson moved into the township in 1853 or four. The above constituted the settlement in 1855.
>
> "I think there was an election held in Beaver township in April 1846 at which time Mr. Mitchell was elected sheriff. Elections were held after that sometimes at Mitchells and sometimes at the House of Eli Trullinger, in the south part of Franklin Township as both townships voted together for two or three years.
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> "In 1856 Samuel Chambers settled on section 12 and made a Farm now owned by his widow. About that time Mr. Post commenced an improvement near the heart of the Grove on Camp Creek. Also Thomas Duncan made an improvement on Mud Creek about that time or a year or two previous."

Chapter V
PIONEER LIVING

IN CONTRAST to the luxurious homes of today, the homes of the pioneers of a century ago and more were crude indeed. They varied in size, some being 14 x 16 or 20, others 16 x 18 feet in size. The average one was made out of hewed green logs, had one door and one window, puncheon floors. The cracks between the logs were chinked with sticks and daubed with mud. Most of the furniture was hand made and rough, although a few prized pieces were sometimes brought from back East. A flat table, four split bottom chairs and stool, one bedstead, with one corner post and the side walls of the house for the other support, a push-under bed were most of the furnishings in one early cabin. The fireplace, built of mud and sticks, served double duty for warmth and cooking.

Home planners of today advocate at least one room per person. When Polk County was settling up, families with five to ten members lived, slept, and ate in one room or at best two or three. Everyone was poor on the frontier; there were no dudes or wealthy aristocrats. It was true that a few, like Thomas Mitchell, got ahead early and were able to build larger homes and have more luxuries, but nearly

every one was on the same level economically. They had very little ready cash to bring with them from the East, only a few dollars being necessary to buy land from the government. The only money they needed after that was to buy the essentials which they could not themselves make.

At first, staples, such as flour, and other groceries had to be brought from Oskaloosa, or Keokuk; later from Fort Des Moines. Marion McCleary took grain to Keokuk to be ground. Supplement to the simple diet was provided by the land—wild crab apples, wild grapes along the rivers, wild plums in the thickets, berries, luscious big watermelons, hazelnuts, walnuts, and hickory nuts. Sarah Trullinger Reed bought the silver she had when she was married with money from hickory nuts she picked and sold. Mushrooms were plentiful in Trullinger's Grove. Morgans made apple butter in big copper kettles. The Lee's used to salt down a barrel of cucumbers at one time. Game and fish were easily brought in by the man or boy with a ready gun. Although at times the meals consisted only of monotonous corn meal, side pork and milk, still, there was no need of starvation.

The clothes were made out of coarse, woven homespun, dyed brown with walnut hulls or dyed with roots of plants and bark from trees. The yarn was woven into different patterns and plaids. Shoes were made by hand, not finely finished, but durable, for the ladies French calf, boots for the men. In order to make their shoes last a longer time, the members of one family in Rising Sun carried their shoes until they almost reached church and then put them on. Nearly everyone went barefooted in the summer.

Severe weather presented one aspect of hardship for cabin dwellers. The winter of 1848-1849 was known as the winter of deep snows. Beginning early in November, the snowfall reached a depth of over three feet. This, together with frequent violent winds and low temperatures, made it almost impossible to move about. No high-powered snow plows in those days.

In the spring travellers and settlers had to contend with floods on Skunk River and the several creeks in the territory. Rickety bridges washed out, and fording was impossible.

Sickness was another hardship that was not often alleviated by the comforting attention of doctors. In the summer of 1846 there was a bitter epidemic of ague in the Camp Township settlement. In Elijah Canfield's family seven became ill, and two died. During the illness the supply of flour and meal was exhausted, and the father was obliged to go to Oskaloosa to get some. Already weakened, he was stricken again while away, and his delay caused the family great distress. The mother, worn by care and sickness, was unable to look after the cows, which wandered away.[12]

Census records giving the causes of deaths are revealing. Violent sounding diseases were no doubt the same as some sicknesses today which are known by other names. Congestion of the brain, inflammation of the bowels, affliction of the lungs, membrane croup, sinking chills, putrid sore throat, dropsy of the brain, cramp collic, fits—these were some of the dreadful killers that physicians treated and pioneers feared.

The first doctor located in the town of Mitchellville in 1859. He was Dr. J. R. Wharton, an educated physician, who enlisted in the second Iowa Cavalry Regiment in the Civil War. Late in the summer of 1862 he was mustered out and returned to Mitchellville to practice medicine.

For a period the closest doctor was a Dr. Parks at Green Castle, nine miles to the northeast. A friend or relative of the sick person, going after the Doctor on foot or horseback, could never be sure he would find the doctor home. If he was away, no one knew for certain when he would return.

Frank Blyler recalled how Skunk River malaria was treated at a time when every family along the river was stricken by it:

> "[Dr. Parks] was in constant demand during the fall and spring months. In fact he had plenty to do the year round. The main medicines in those days were quinine, padophylin, calomel and dovers powders. Doc was not very sparing with his medicine, but gave it in large doses. He was very rough in his ways and conversation, yet in those days every one was glad to see old 'Dock' as they called him. For years he did all of the doctoring within a radius of ten or fifteen miles of Green Castle. He practiced surgery and dentistry as well as medicine. His surgical instruments looked something like the tools in a country meat market, and for dentistry the only kind of instruments that he had was a pair of bone forcepts and an old-fashioned 'turn keys'. This was about as rusty as a pair of blacksmiths tongs, and he used to carry them in his old-fashioned saddle bags wrapped in an old calf skin boot leg. In those days the Doctor carried his own medicine and filled his own prescriptions."

The way the pioneers lived shows us that the power to suffer great hardship, to get along with few comforts, and to be self-reliant were the qualities which made them remarkable. A faith in the future of the land enabled them to endure much. Time has proved that this faith was not in vain.

Chapter VI
PRE-EMINENT PIONEER

NOT every community can trace its beginning so clearly to one man as we. Not every community can boast of such a notable founder as we. It seems that the outstanding traits which attracted people to Thomas Mitchell were his honesty, generosity, and genial kindness. From the time of his entrance into Polk County in 1844 until his death fifty years later he was one of the county's most prominent public men. His position as innkeeper, farmer, sheriff, member of the County Board of Supervisors, State Representative and Senator made him such. He was a natural born leader.

We read stories of pioneers who came to the frontier with only a dollar and so many cents left over to start life anew after the trip. We do not know how much money Thomas Mitchell had when he arrived in Fairfield in 1840, or at Apple Grove in 1844; but it could not have been very much considering his work experiences in New

England before his coming. He had to have money to buy the 1040 acres of land in 1844 from the government. He must have made a good margin of profit when he sold that land in 1846 for $10.00 per acre. He owned all the land on the site of the present Mitchellville and sold the lots of it to settlers and home owners. Although at one time he was considered a wealthy man, he lost a lot of money and at the time of his death had comparatively little. After all, it does not matter how much money a man has if he uses it wisely. Certainly Mr. Mitchell used his money to help others and for many good causes.

The generosity of the man and his good nature were in no place more evident than at the Inn which he kept from 1844 to about 1854. Even long after he ceased to be an innkeeper, his large farm home north of the present town, part of which is still standing, was a hotel for many a way-farer. Much early Mitchellville history was made in his tavern: Sermons were preached there, many parties for Des Moines young people were held, the first wedding in the county occurred there, the first school in Beaver Township had classes there, it was precinct headquarters for the first election in the county, and many thousands of travellers partook of his hospitality.

Thomas Mitchell's cabin at Apple Grove was strategically located from the very first.[13] Primarily, it had the sanction of the government because in exchange for permission to settle there on Indian land he had to build a bridge across Camp Creek, which was at times impassable. It was a stopping place for provision wagons traveling between Keokuk and Fort Des Moines. It was stopping place for two stage coach routes—the one between Ft. Des Moines and Keokuk, the other between Ft. Des Moines and Iowa City.

It was a well advertised hotel. The reader of HARRIS OVER LAND GUIDE for January, 1852 could have seen his advertisement: "Tom Mitchell (!!!) Dispenses comfort to the weary (!) feeds the hungry (!) and cheers the gloomy (!!!) at his old, well-known stand, 13 miles east of Ft. Des Moines. Don't pass me by."

For the westward-moving gold seekers in 1849, Mr. Mitchell fed 7000 teams.[14] He ran short of provisions, the tavern consuming more than his farm produced; and his friend, Daniel Trullinger, who was a teamster, hauled a load of corn and other provisions to Apple Grove.

Mr. Mitchell had the distinction of serving in the first legislature which met in Des Moines. "In the fall of 1857, Mitchell was elected on the Republican ticket to represent Polk and Jasper Counties in the lower house of the legislature. . . . He served on a committee to examine credentials of persons claiming seats in the House, on committees for claims, for public buildings, and for the improvement of the Des Moines River." His activities in the General Assembly, not only in the 1857 session, but as Senator in the 1870's, testify to his high intelligence and leadership ability.

To protect his own as well as other settlers' interests, he, along with other prominent land holders, belonged to a Claim Club, organized in 1848, to prevent the speculator from coming in and buying up a lot of land just to make money on it. It was really an organization which supplied the need of the law enforcement agencies that were lacking or ineffective on this part of the frontier while it

was being filled up. The following account gives a clear picture of the Claim Club at work:

> "When the public land sale occurred at Iowa City, October, 1848, R. L. Tidrick was sent as agent of the club, with instructions to allow no interference with his mission. He took the names of all claimants, a description of their claims, and several trusty men, handy with a gun. As each claim in his list was put up he bid $1.25 an acre, and no person seemed inclined to raise it. If, after the official survey was made claims were found overlapping, the discrepancies were all amicably adjusted by the club, and the county escaped the disturbance, litigation, and even murders which was had in some counties."[15]

The chief occupation of Mitchellville's founder was farming. His many public duties necessitated his hiring most of the labor done on his farm; nevertheless, he was vitally interested and possessed a good deal of practical knowledge. We do not know how much he was called upon to use the "healing art," but one old timer remembers that when he was a boy his father asked him to go after Uncle Tom to treat their sick horse.[16]

He seemed to have a sense of obligation to help all those he could. Much space could be used telling about his generosity alone. He allowed a widow and her two sons to live on some of his land, then when the sons were old enough to farm and they wanted to buy cheap land in another part of the state, Mr. Mitchell gave them $400 before they left.[17]

When A. C. Bondurant came to Polk County, he, like his fellow-pioneers, had very little money. He found a benefactor in Thomas Mitchell, who loaned him $250. Mr. Bondurant was five years in paying it, but in the end he prospered, and our neighboring town was given his name.

A man met Mitchell on some of the high rolling prairie in the eastern part of the county. He was looking for some land and asked Thomas if he knew any good land he might locate. A bargain was immediately made whereby for a roll of bills Mitchell was to select some land for him and send him the patents. The stranger gave him his name and address but failed to secure his "agent's" name.

"Men on meeting Mr. Mitchell intsinctively trusted him. This gentleman, on reflection, wondered if he had not trusted too much to instinct. He didn't know Mr. Mitchell's name nor address, and, for all he could tell, the stranger to whom he had given his money might be as much a stranger to the new prairie country as he was. He described the incident at a half-way house as he rode towards the Mississippi.

"'You're all right,' the landlord responded, 'that was Tom Mitchell.'

"And of course he was all right."[18]

Mitchellville's founder was known for his clean life and for his moral goodness. Judge Wright, a long-time friend in Des Moines, never knew him to utter an oath or an unclean word. He was a total abstainer from liquor and tobacco. While almost the typical

"hale fellow well met, he never sacrificed purity of thought or act to the end of entertaining."[19]

The following incident reveals his sense of humor and a streak of Yankee common sense which at times led him to teach a practical lesson.

> "Mr. Mitchell was ever on the alert for fun. In a quiet, innocent-like manner, he often taught a needed lesson. A young relative of his had come from the east to settle in the west. He was faultlessly attired in a white duck suit and patent leather shoes. Uncle Tom wanted the youngster to succeed in the west, and concluded one of the first things needed was to have 'the starch' taken out of him. He suggested that perhaps this young man and another would like to drive with him across the country. They hadn't gone many miles until they came to some muddy bottom land, in which the team was partially, and the buggy almost wholly stalled. With a slight twinkle in his eyes, Mr. Mitchell calmly remarked: 'Well, boys, I guess we'll have to lift her out; — you get hold of this wheel, and — you get hold of this, and I'll lift behind.'
>
> "The young man in the white duck suit and patent leather shoes was a sight to behold after he had helped get the buggy out and the trio had waded from the mire back onto solid ground. Uncle Tommy, though, simply smiled. The significance of the smile did not fully dawn upon the young man's mind for a time, but it did after while, and the lesson was learned."[20]

Chapter VII
EARLY AGRICULTURE

THE pioneers who came to this region in the 1840's, 1850's, and 1860's were not long in discovering the advantage of raising corn and hogs. Excepting for the soil on Skunk River bottom, the soil was rich. (Thomas Mitchell said that Skunk River land was all sand when he came in 1844, as the soil on the hills had not yet washed down.) Corn was the staple grain crop in Iowa from the beginning, and hogs became the outlet for converting the surplus corn into money. Furthermore, pork was the chief meat supply for the farmer and his family.

Since there were few fences around the country until the 1870's, the hogs were left to roam on the prairie in the summer and early winter, "when they were penned and fed some corn." They were usually two years old when marketed.

Before the advent of the railroad (1866) hog raisers of Mitchellville were compelled to drive their animals to market. There are recorded instances of their being driven as far as Keokuk, Ottumwa, and Oskaloosa; later, of course, to Des Moines. By 1859 Muscatine and Keokuk were already packing centers.

> "Some of the drives were made by the owners themselves, but more often by drovers who speculated in hogs. These drives apparently were very spectacular. Men and boys

on foot and horseback equipped with sticks and whips would drive large droves running into the hundreds to a market which it took days to reach. Five to ten miles a day was considered a good day's travel. The hog, not adapted to fast walking, is an obstinate creature, difficult to drive. . . . Ox teams would accompany the drives, loaded with food for the drivers and corn for the hogs. The overseer of the drive went ahead and arranged for the overnight stopping places. . . . Stories relate that great difficulty was encountered in getting the hogs to cross bridges. Often they had to be ferried across, or they swam streams and in some cases crossed on ice. Occasionally the ice would break, plunging the hogs into the stream, and casualties frequently resulted from ice cutting the throats of the swimming hogs. Drivers of hogs in stockyards today usually yell 'sui' or 'su-boy' to urge the hogs along; this was the term used by the drivers years ago to speed the laggards on their long treks to market."[21]

A strange mixture of hog marketing and politics occurred in 1854. The outcome of an exciting election that year in Polk County was determined by Thomas Mitchell and Granville Holland, who hired sixteen good Democrats to drive some hogs to Ottumwa so that they would be away at election time! The two men secured a good drove by scouring the settlements along the river and throughout the county, paying one and a half cents a pound. They themselves accompanied the drivers to Ottumwa, but returned on fleet horses in time to vote, while the drivers were delayed by having to bring back the teams. For the first time the Democrats were beaten by the Whigs in Polk County. "Thy were terribly mad then, but they relate the incident now with hearty glee."[22]

One prosperous hog raiser near Mitchellville sold thirty-two hogs weighing a total of 10,929 pounds, an average of 343½ pounds per hog. The newspaper writer boasted in 1862 of this "chapter in the history of Polk County Porkdom!"

A random look at the Iowa Census for 1856 shows us what four pioneer farmers were producing. It is best shown in the following table:

Name	Improved Land	Unimproved Land	Bushels of Corn	Bushels of Wheat	Bushels of Potatoes	Hogs Sold	Lbs. Wool	Lbs. Butter
Peter Marmon	10	70	500			8	12	50
Ishmael Lee	60	165	800	104	60	6	47	250
James Rooker	25	135	1000		50	19		50
Elijah Canfield			1400	360	75	100	40	100

Tillers of the soil did not receive the prices they hoped for their produce, especially during the hard times of the late 1850's. In 1846 Indian corn was worth twenty-five cents per bushel, sheep $1.00-$1.25 per head, and horses $30.00-$60.00.[23] It is hard to imagine that one

hundred years ago eggs brought only three cents a dozen, butter five and six cents a pound, and pork one and a half cents per pound.

The following quotation shows the unstable financial conditions of 1857:

> "Every man who did any business carried a Bank Note Detector, a book about the size of a small sized magazine, giving cuts and descriptions of all the banks having money in circulation, and their standing. The great trouble was the Detector might report a bank as good in one issue and in the very next report it as being bad. Farmers would often take their pork to Iowa City and receive their pay in wild cat currency and before they would get home the bank would be 'busted' and all the money received for a whole load of dressed hogs would not buy them a single meal."[24]

The Whigs, or Republicans, blamed the Buchanan administration for the panic of the fall of 1857. Indeed, this financial distress, coupled with crop failures in 1857 and 1858, retarded settlement and growth of the County and State.

The moldboard style walking plow was widely used in early days, and oxen, horses or mules were employed in pulling the plow.[25]

Frank Blyler related his experiences with oxen *and* snakes:

> ". . . about twice each week Rock and Jack would take a notion to go home, and as soon as the yoke was dropped away they would start for Uncle Tom's place, four miles away. They were about as nimble as a horse, and were hardly ever caught before getting home. I would generally follow them on foot and bring them back the next morning. . . . Henry [Mitchell] and I worked together all summer, and raised a good crop, with nothing to break the monotony only killing snakes and occasionally shaking with the ague. One would have supposed had he seen all the snakes killed that St. Patrick when he banished the snakes from Ireland had sent them all to Iowa. There were garter snakes, blue racers, bull snakes and rattlesnakes. While plenty of them were found on the prairies, yet they seemed to congregate in in large numbers on the cultivated lands, and by actual count we often killed from 30 to 40 in a half day while ploughing, including many bull snakes from 4 to 6 feet long."

Fairs and agricultural societies were incentives to farmers to improve breeds and methods. Thomas Mitchell was particularly active. "As early as 1852 he showed Durham cattle at a fair held in Des Moines and was one of the three directors of it. In December, 1853, the first State Agricultural Society was organized in Fairfield with a board of managers composed of five members from each of the thirteen counties. Mr. Mitchell was on the board from Polk County. Later he was active in the Polk County Agricultural Society and served as Vice-President of the Model Farm and Agricultural College provided for by act of the General Assembly of 1858."[26]

Chapter VIII
THE BEGINNINGS OF MITCHELLVILLE

FROM the northwest corner of the corporate limits of the present town of Mitchellville, if you will walk in a northwesterly direction over a knoll and down again, less than a half mile, you will come to the site of the first village of Mitchellville, laid out in 1856. (Sometimes it was referred to as Mitchelltown or Mitchell, but the official post office name, from 1860 on, was Mitchellville.)

Why did Mr. Mitchell decide to build a town there one hundred years ago? There were good reasons. In the first place, the settlers were numerous enough to warrant the starting of a town. The time was ripe, for there was need of a trading center and institutions representing civilization. Ft. Des Moines was too far away, and there were no other towns near. The road to the Fort ran diagonally across the prairie in a southwesterly direction, and to make the trip one way from Mitchellville with an ordinary farm team required four hours. Bad roads, bottomless sloughs, and swollen streams forced the traveller to take the most of the day to go to the Fort for trading and milling.

The immediate cause for the rise of the town was the prospect of a railroad coming through. This is the founder's own story:

> "In 1853 the Rock Island Rail Road was surveyed then known as the M & M Road [Mississippi and Missouri Railroad]. It was surveyed by Granville M. Dodge and Peter A. Dey, one General Dodge, the other Commission Dey of today. It was thought at that time that the Road would be built to Des Moines in two years. The Company made the proposition to the different Counties through which it was intended the Road should run that if the counties would aid the Road with Bonds to the amount of from fifty thousand dollars for the weaker counties and to two hundred thousand for the stronger counties they would put the Road to Des Moines by Jan 1st 1857. With that expectation some of the Counties voted Bonds, but the Hard times set in and that caused the Company to suspend the building further west for a time but the hope of the Road had induced some settlers on to the Prairie.
>
> "Mr. Tracy suggested that Section two would be a good place for a station and he would make one there when the Road was built. With that idea Messers Swofferd and Jones of Wayne County Indiana and Thos Mitchell laid out a town on Sect 2, 79, 22 in 1856 and it began to settle up."

Once started, the town grew steadily. One pioneer wrote that it . . . at once became a thriving village."

Eighty acres were set aside for the town. "The streets did not run on a line with the cardinal points of the compass; those that ran nearest north and south . . . were Park, Market and Mill; those that ran nearly east and west were Plum, Chestnut, Pearl, Railroad (on which the depot grounds lay), Vine, Elm, Locust. The lots were the same size as they now are in this city."[27] (See plat of Mitchellville, center spread.)

The eighty acres was cut in two parts by what was called the big slough, there being a north and south side. Camp Creek ran from north to south through the town, and a very small creek ran from west to east. A swampy place west of the town was used as dumping ground for garbage and dead animals. The stage coach road went to the southwest toward Fort Des Moines.

In old Mitchelltown the log cabin gave way to the small frame house made out of lumber from nearby Trullinger Grove. There were, however, cases where some of the pioneers usd wood hauled by wagon from Keokuk or Iowa City. Reuben B. Ellis, native of Claremont, New Hampshire, with the assistance of Thomas Mitchell, put up a saw mill at Trullinger's Grove. There were other mills at Plummer's Grove on Skunk River close to Colfax and at Ottawa (later Elkhart) in Elkhart Township.

Linn and bass wood were used for siding, hard oak for the frame, walnut for doors and casings. A house of extra good quality had black walnut siding. Lime was procured by breaking up large limestone boulders and taking it through a certain process. A limestone quarry was opened up near Apple Grove by Thomas Mitchell. Kiln-dried boards were planed by hand, and the carpenter made shingles, doors and sashes by hand. Newlin McGrew, John V. Bowman, Frank and William Miller, Dorwell E. Tyler, Jack Mills, Emery and Elisha Bowen built houses in Mitchellville. Some of those men were carpenters by trade.

By the time the population reached 200 in 1861 there was quite a row of houses. From log cabin to frame dwelling house represents a step up in the material culture of our forefahers, but the improvement had more to do with the exterior than with the interior. One of the houses, which was perhaps twenty-four feet long and sixteen feet wide, had walnut siding and hard oak inside. It had two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The remaining member of a family of seven children still wonders how and where they all slept in that four-room house!

In contrast, the twenty-two room house that Thomas Mitchell built seemed like a mansion. This building north of Mitchellville was constructed soon after he sold his tavern at Apple Grove in March, 1854 to Mr. M. C. Kieth of western New York. It was three quarters of a mile north of Mitchellville, and the genial hospitality of the Mitchell family continued to attract travellers, circuit riding preachers, and young people from Des Moines.

Businesses

The few business houses in Mitchellville reflected the self-sufficiency of a frontier people and were the minimum essentials. It is significant that the founder's first concern was in bringing from the East a blacksmith—David Mattern—who would shoe the horses, repair the plows and do metal work of all kinds.

William Sweeney put up a store in 1857-1858. It was a general country store. E. J. Valentine owned it later and moved it to the new town.

Wilson Jones, Joseph Shissler, Jeremiah Spofford, and Thomas Mitchell built a hotel known as the Mitchell House. For the size of the town it was considered quite large. Mr. Mitchell never kept the

hotel himself. One writer thought a man by the name of Mr. George McGrew was the first proprietor. The building was later moved to the new town and was known as Humphrey's Hotel. In connection with the hotel was a barn where changes of horses for the stage coach were kept.

The steam saw mill owned by R. B. Ellis and Thomas Mitchell, located in Trullinger's Grove, has already been mentioned. There were several carpenters. To further represent the building trades was James Craig, a mason and plasterer.

Jonathan Blyler, who came originally from Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1858, set up a tannery and shoe store. William Jones worked for him making shoes and boots. In recent years the men who have farmed the land where the town used to be have plowed up scraps of leather, remnants of Uncle Jonathan's tannery.

Chapter IX
TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

THE most common method of travel a hundred years ago was by heavy wagon, pulled by oxen, mules, or horses. The wagons were of various types because of their having been brought from different eastern states. They ranged "from the old Indiana broad-gauge to the old fashioned Ohio iron express wagon, and from the old Kentucky schooner to the Concord coach." There were few buggies until after 1875. A measure of prosperity was indicated by the farmer's purchasing a new wagon and replacing the oxen with a team of horses.

The uses for the wagon were many. It was the means employed by teamsters in taking produce to market at Iowa City, Keokuk, Oskaloosa, or Des Moines. It brought supplies back to the general store and its customers. It carried gold seekers to California in 1849 and Pike's Peak in 1859. Fifty to sixty wagons a day crossed the prairie of eastern Polk County on their way to Colorado. It furnished the means whereby the settler and his family could go to church, political meetings, Fourth of July celebrations or to visit his neighbors. Shepherd's Mill at First and Grand Avenue in Des Moines was the grinding center for many. Here the farmer had to wait sometimes for days for his turn while the identical wheat he brought was made into flour to take home. In the winter the wagon became a bobsled.[28]

Wagon roads were important in the growth of Des Moines, as Captain Allen at the Fort encouraged road building "by permitting two settlers to live in a restricted area on the condition that they would bridge the two creeks east of the city."[29] The men and creeks referred to were J. D. Parmalee at Four Mile and Thomas Mitchell at Camp.

Stage Coaches

Stage coach routes were never the same for very long at a time, their courses being determined by many factors—the level terrain, and especially the state of the streams. The accompanying map will show the approximate line of three routes. The Iowa City line sometimes went by Apple Grove and sometimes by Mitchell-

ville. Thomas Mitchell fought to get the coaches to go through his newly-established village and did not always win. Presumably, one argument by the Stage Company was that the Apple Grove route was more direct to Iowa City than the one four miles north. The stages also went through Rising Sun in Four Mile Township.

Frink, Walker and Company and the Western Stage Company were the two concerns which operated the coaches in this vicinity. As early as 1849 the mail arrived in Des Moines from Oskaloosa every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. From Iowa City it reached Des Moines on Wednesdays and Fridays at 6:00 p.m.[30]

It was probably not until 1861 or 1862 that the stage coach came through Mitchellville daily. Whenever it was put back on the Apple Grove route, people had to go to Sternberg's four miles south for their mail. The following description of stage coach travel was given by an early Mitchellville pioneer:

> "They were always drawn by four horses, and were arranged to carry nine passengers on the inside, with a boot behind and before in which to carry the baggage, mails and express packages. Regular express messengers would accompany the express coaches. Then when the roads were in good shape an extra passenger or two would sometimes take deck passage either with the driver or on top of the coach. The regular fare was ten cents per mile, which made it rather expensive traveling, and in the spring of the year when the roads were bad passengers after paying their fare would be compelled to walk a great portion of the distance besides, and sometimes were compelled to carry a rail with which to pry the stage out of the mud. The drivers were generally whole-souled, jolly set of fellows. The stations were generally from nine to fifeen miles a part. Each driver would take care of his own teams, and this was no small job, as the horses and harness had to be kept scrupulously clean."

The jolting stage coaches of a century ago present a dramatic contrast to the modern streamlined train. Their swaying and bumping tested the endurance of the strongest constitution. In this region, however, Skunk River stood as the greatest obstacle of all to drivers and travellers. There were no strong, safe bridges built across it until after the Civil War, although the citizens of Story County were raising a subscription to build a trestle and bridge across the river at Cory Grove as early as 1863.

In March, 1865 stage coaches on the Iowa City line were delayed for over night at Grinnell because of that stream going on a rampage.

Although easterners heard and believed exaggerated stories about Skunk river mud, its notoriety was deserved because "the broad, flat flood-plain is covered with a rich deep clay soil, which in time of long continued rains and overflows of the river, has made the valley . . . a terror to travelers from the earliest settlement of the country."[31] Sometimes willow trees and long prairie grasses were cut down and laid across the swamps to provide footing. Where the river was wide and deep, ferries furnished passage across.

HARPER'S WEEKLY, a well known magazine published in the East, contained in the 1860's an illustration showing the hazards of Skunk bottom, and one traveller who came across the plains in 1863 recorded

in his diary: "It is said that in wet seasons it has often taken 100 yoke of oxen to pull an empty wagon across. That people have frequently been delayed for about a month to effect a crossing."[32] A westward moving caravan, which camped at Mitchell's Inn at Apple Grove in 1852, encountered the Skunk River. With that group it took an hour to cross the river between Newton and Colfax. But then they made good time, for there were six wagons, sixty-four head of cattle, one horse, and twenty-five men, women and children.[33]

The experience of a soldier returning to Mitchellville for veteran furlough in April, 1864 vividly pictures for us some of the difficulties of stage coach travel, and perhaps it also illustrates the fact that a Civil War soldier had not used up all his fighting spirit on the battle field.

> "We went to the hotel [in Grinnell] and got dinner; two stages were ready to convey our party to Des Moines. We left Grinnell about 4 p.m. The roads were very muddy and it was raining and we made very slow progress. After we got out some five or six miles both coaches drove into a big slough and stuck in the mud.
>
> "The drivers wanted us to help pry them out. This we refused to do. One of the drivers became quite saucy, and our orderly sargeant gave him a handsome thrashing. By that time it was dark, so we divided our crowd and went to some farm houses and stayed all night, and next morning walked to Newton. The stages were still 'in it' when we left. At Newton other stages were furnished and we came on as best we could."

For comfort and relief, for changes and feeding of horses, Inns were scattered at intervals on the prairie. Reports vary as to their convenience and cleanliness, but at least they provided food, and shelter from the weather. On writer mentioned bed bugs and dirty dinner pots at an Inn near Mitchellville, but went on to excuse the poor entertainment because help could not readily be obtained, there was frequently a shortage of supplies and a "constant rush of cross, tired travelers from the comforts of the older settled states."

Coming to Jasper County (Washington Township) in 1855, John Woods gave three and nine-tenths acres to the Des Moines Valley Railroad and built a tavern out of wood hauled from Ottumwa. He hoped that the Des Moines Valley would come to his place before the Mississippi and Missouri line did to Mitchellville. In fact, there seemed to have been a rivalry between John Woods and Tom Mitchell. The story is that whoever would be the first to get the railroad would get the town. The railroad came first to John Woods, and he tried to build a town, but his settlement was not destined to be the thriving village that Mitchell's town became.

The Woods Inn was about sixty rods from the stage road, and the coach had to be flagged. The importance of the Inn increased when the Railroad came, and while Woodville was a station at the end of line.[34] During this period the Woods' helped transport passengers to Des Moines.

Honey and cornbread were served for supper at the Woods Inn; the odor of baking powder biscuits floated up to the guests who slept over the kitchen.[35]

At Apple Grove Inn the weary traveller could secure a meal of side pork, cornbread and milk for twelve and a half cents and a night's lodging for twenty-five cents. At times there was only floor space; that is, the beds were filled, and many a guest had to sleep on the floor, "packed along side like herrings in a box."

One writer, perhaps the editor of a Des Moines paper, took a trip to Keokuk on the Western Stage Company coach in 1858 and commented: "We breakfasted at that popular station, HUMPHREY'S, where that meal is gotten up just right to suit the weary and sleepy passenger, who has been awakened before four o'clock." Humphrey's was an Inn and stage coach stop for the coaches going from Des Moines to Keokuk and was located one-half mile south and one-half mile west of Apple Grove (second location).

The coming and going of travellers, no matter by what means, was an event which brought relief from the lonesomeness and monotony of the lives of the pioneers. Of particular diversion was the passing through of that notable group, the Mormons, on their way to Utah. Curiostiy and sympathy were shown by setlers near Rising Sun in Four Mile Township:

> "One evening someone ran into the house and cried 'The Mormons are coming!' Everyone ran out doors and looked up the road to see a cloud of dust and hundreds of people marching down the hot dusty road. Their few horses carried provisions and those unable to walk. Carts were pushed by the people strong enough to do so. This really made a sight to behold! Among the throng was a very young mother with a tiny baby. The young mother was so weary and foot-sore she attracted the attention of grandmother who took her into her home and bathed her feet, gave her hot tea, bathed the baby, put clean clothes on it, and gave them both shelter for the night, then watched them leave in the morning on that long, long journey they had ahead of them. . . ."[36]

The above incident could have occurred in 1856, for that was the year the first Hand-Cart Expedition of Mormon converts from Europe started out from Iowa City for Utah.

Post Offices and Newspapers

Mail service was another contact with the outside world. Before the stage line came to Mitchellville someone had to walk to Apple Grove for the mail. The four-mile errand of the young boy who went after the mail was made lighter now and then by a stop at the Wheeler place (original Tom Mitchell cabin) for refreshments of fresh butter and square-cut biscuits, wild crapapple pies or sauce. Finally reaching his destination, he was handed the letters by the postmaster-innkeeper, Lambert Sternberg, who had stored them in his pocket.

About 1860 a mail route was established from Des Moines to Marietta, then the seat of Marshall County. Mitchellville was a stop on this route. The first rural free delivery service in this area was not carried on by a man in a smooth-running, well-heated car, but by a man on horseback. With canvas sacks full of mail thrown on the

back of the horse, the mail man's ride across the almost uninhabited prairies was cold and dreary in the winter time. A fifteen-year-old boy from Mitchellville had the contract during the winter of 1861. His route was as follows: Rode to Des Moines on Monday, to Mitchellville by dinner time on Tuesday, on to five miles beyond Green Castle where he stayed all night at "old man Trammel's", Wednesday to Edenville and Marietta. On Thursday return as far as Mitchellville, on Friday to Des Moines and reurn in the afternoon to Mitchellville where he could spend the weekend at home.[37]

The mail sack contained not only personal letters but also copies of the weekly Iowa State Register. But in January, 1862 the Register was able to begin publishing a daily paper because of the arrival of telegraph service in the Capital City. Although other newspapers, such as the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, were subscribed to, it is safe to say that the Des Moines paper was the most popular and influential with the citizens of Mitchellville from early times, mainly because in the local news section there appeared a liberal sprinkling of items about the village.

Listed below are the names of the postmasters who served at Mitchellville when the town was on Section Two. Opposite the name is the date of appointment of each:

Joseph Williams	October 18, 1860
Jonathan Blyler	December 15, 1864
William F. Tate	February 9, 1865
Edmond J. Valentine	October 30, 1865
Hiram J. Grismere	October 15, 1868[38]

The Coming of the "Cars"

The coming of the railroad encouraged the westward movement, and the westward movement encouraged the coming of the railroad. Many settlers were induced to come to Polk County in the 1850's because they believed the railroad would soon be here to aid in transportation, marketing, and communication. The railroad companies wanted the people to settle because they would support them with their money.

In November, 1853 General Grenville M. Dodge and Peter A. Dey made a survey in Iowa for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad (later the Rock Island) and demonstrated that a line across Iowa was feasible. It was thought at the time that the Road would be built to Des Moines in two years.

The chief engineer of the M. & M. Railroad Company published a report in 1854 which told of fertile land in Iowa and of the population flooding in. "All that is required in prairie is to turn up the sod and plant the seed." That sounded simple! The document assured the public that as a natural avenue to the Pacific Coast from the Atlantic Ocean it was bound to be a success. "The line from Iowa City to Fort Des Moines, 119 miles farther west, is fixed, and the work ready to be put under contract."[39]

The company was always behind in its promises. In the foregoing report the pledge was made to have the first division (Davenport to Iowa City) completed by January 1, 1855. It was finished at midnight, December 31, 1855, twelve months later.

To promote the venture, Congress passed an act in 1856 making a grant of lands to the State of Iowa. The stipulation was set down that all roads must be completed within ten years of that date. In June, 1856 M. & M. agents held a meeting in Des Moines and asked Polk County for bonds amounting to $100,000.[40] At an election on September 20, 1856 the people of Polk County voted to issue bonds for the railroad company to the amount of $300,000. But after waiting three years they showed their impatience by rescinding the vote.[41]

Progress was slow, and it seemed that the "cars," as the trains were called, would never arrive. By the fall of 1860 the route was put to Marengo. The Civil War interrupted the track laying to the extent of almost bringing it to a halt because of lack of workers and material. However, the trains were coming as far as Grinnell in 1863. "Year after year we looked, and waited, and watched, and turned away disappointed," lamented a Des Moines newspaper writer. It took two years to come from Grinnell to Kellogg.[42] From 1860 to 1866 the end of the track was pushed forward only forty miles.[43]

The depression of 1857 and the Civil War were not the only hindrances to progress. The M. & M. was poorly managed, and the chief contractor, Thomas C. Durant, became absorbed in his duties as Vice-President of the Union Pacific Company, neglecting the construction of the M. & M.

The complex problems which led to a virtual standstill of construction were cleared up in 1866 when the business was reorganized and sold to the Rock Island Railroad. Hearing of the transfer, the editor of the Des Moines newspaper questioned, "Will it bring about a speedy extension to Des Moines, or will it permit the concern to hang fire at the station on the other side of Newton, until the last dog on earth shall have wiggled his tail for the last time?" Under new managemen the "cars" arrived at Des Moines in 1867, amid the celebration of a large crowd.

Every Mitchellvillian knows that the coming of the Rock Island was of particular significance to his town, for the route was changed, resulting in the moving of Mr. Mitchells' town from Section Two to Section Twelve in 1867. Afer a good deal of research this writer has not been able to discover the exact reason why the line was changed. Thomas Mitchell certainly would not have established a town where he did if he had not been certain the railroad would come that way. The M. & M. officials assured him it would. The tracks were to come through the middle of the town. Space was set aside for station purposes—a block long on each side, 200 feet in depth. Why, then, the change? Was it because the present route was less hilly than the land which lies directly east of the old town? This seems a logical explanation. Furthermore, much of the land which lay in and around Mitchellville was swampy. The present route comes within an eighth of a mile of the old town, which fact only adds to the mystery of why the line of the railroad was changed and the town moved.

In June, 1864 Congress passed a law which allowed the M. & M. to "modify or change the location of incomplete portion of its line, provided that said new line should . . . pass through . . . Des Moines

and Council Bluffs." A new line of survey was then run from the Valley of the North Skunk River (at Kellogg) westwardly to see if they could save some of the heavy excavations through the bluffs of the River. In 1866 railroad officials assured J. B. Grinnell that the line would be located "as near the old line as practicable."

As late as November, 1866 there is evidence that the Rock Island line would come, as planned ten years earlier, to Mitchellville. Rock Island officials declared that although the contractors had been at work only about 30 days, one-sixth of the work of grading was already completed between Kellogg and the Skunk River, and that with a continuation of six weeks of good weather, the bulk of the grading would be completed to Mitchellville.[44]

The Des Moines Valley Railroad (now known as the Keokuk and Des Moines) reached Des Moines about a year before the Rock Island did. Thomas Mitchell manifested his concern by attending a meeting of "railroad-interested" people at the Court House in Des Moines to raise funds "for immediate extension of the Des Moines Valley Railroad to Des Moines." This was in 1865.

During the War between the States the Road extended only as far as Eddyville, but the work was pushed forward rapidly after the cessation of hostilities. By early in December, 1865, it had reached Monroe. The "cars" were expected at Prairie City June 1, 1866. It was during the month of July that the Road was being built south of Mitchellville.

The excitement caused by the coming of the railroad even inspired men to attempt to write poetry. The following poem, entitled "Four Miles this side of Woodville Station," appeared in the weekly IOWA STATE REGISTER, July 25, 1866.

"This world is filled with animation
And much it needs congratulation
And as a copious illustration,
Permit us here to make narration
In Dixon's style of grand elation,
That at this point of declaration
The track is laid within this station,
Four miles this side of Woodville Station!"

Although at one time people of Des Moines hoped the Des Moines Valley Railroad would reach there by July 4, 1866 so that they could have a great celebration, it was on Tuesday, September 4 that 20,000 people witnessed the arrival of the first train at the depot in the Capital City.

To a young girl who lived only one-half mile south of the tracks, on Camp Creek, the railroad was of great significance. The bridge over the Creek seemed so high! "People came from miles around to watch for the train, and what a thrill it was to see that wonderful invention of iron and steel go 'thundering' by at a speed of nearly twenty miles per hour."[45]

The D. M. Valley was a well-built railroad. The iron for it came from England, was shipped to New Orleans and up the Mississippi River. Before leaving England the iron was inspected. It had more ties to the mile than other railroads. By the fall of 1866 it owned

"two fine passenger cars," two engines called the "Iowa" and the "R. P. Lowe" after a former governor.

Many Iowans experienced the thrill of their first train ride in November, 1866 when an excursion was sponsored by the Des Moines Valley for 300 poeple in the Des Moines area. This trip consumed the better part of a day. In 1867 two passenger trains left Des Moines daily. The one which departed at 7:30 p.m. arrived in Keokuk at 5:30 a.m. Later on there were three trains a day each way.

Train transportation had its hindrances, as stage coach travel had its troubles earlier. During a snowstorm on the night of December 15, 1866, the train bound for Des Moines got stuck in the snow four miles east of Woodville. After shoveling two hours it was able to go to Woodville where it stayed for the night. It finally arrived in Des Moines at 3:00 p.m. the next day. In the meantime Conductor Clark Livingston did all he could to make the passengers comfortable.

Until about 1871 the depot nearest Mitchellville (old or new town) was at Woodville. In that year it was moved to Nobleton, three quarters of a mile south of where the Rock Island Depot now stands. Nobleton was immediately west of where Highway Six crosses the tracks. When this change was made, from Woodville to Nobleton, there were predictions that Mitchellville, being blessed with *two* railroads, was destined to grow more and more prosperous.

Chapter X

THE CIVIL WAR

Background

COMPROMISES had failed to bring about a settlement of differences between the North and South, and the Civil War began in April, 1861. By this time more of the people of Polk County and of Iowa were opposed to slavery, since there had been thousands who came from the northern and eastern states during the decade of the 1850's.

There were influences at work which fortified this abolitionist sentiment. In January, 1858 Governor Ralph P. Lowe gave a speech on the subject of free labor. He declared that slavery and free labor "cannot exist upon the same soil. They are natural and irreconcilable foes." Samuel Kirkwood, elected Governor in 1860 and again in 1862, was a Republican and Abolitionist.

The IOWA STATE REGISTER spoke out against slavery and no doubt was influential in promoting the Northern cause. It often plead for boys to go to war. On the other hand, popular opinion supported the Civil War. In 1862 Mitchellville was receiving daily mail service from Des Moines. In the spring of that year the editor made the statement that the people of Mitchellville appreciated a strongly Union paper. Alhough this was written in a tone of advertising, it was not an exaggeration.

John Brown's radical spirit possessed some of the people who were devoted to the cause of abolition. John Brown himself, with three men who were later executed with him at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, passed through near Mitchellville on his way eastward from Kansas. Frank Blyler, a Civil War soldier from old Mitchellville, expressed his accord with John Brown thus:

"Brown may have been insane and rash on the subject of human slavery, yet after all it was such men as he that brought about the glorious results of the war, and made our country free indeed, when it had been so only in name before. Thousands of men all over the north were of the same opinion as John Brown, and were not willing that the condition should be continued in such a way as to give slavery any legal standing. Nor were they even willing that a majority should in any Territory decide the freedom of a single being. But they believed in the great principle laid down in the Declaration of Independence, that all men were created free and equal."[46]

Quakers believed that everyone is equal in the sight of God, and therefore, that there should be no slavery. An unflinching loyalty to this doctrine led the Friends of one hundred years ago in Mitchellville to take a stand on the slavery issue. Among this humble group were some who kept stations on the Underground Railroad. These were secret places—a barn, a cellar, any kind of hide-out—for escaping Negroes to stay in during the day time to keep away from the pursuer until the darkness of night allowed them to hurry toward Canada and freedom.

One night three runaway slaves were hidden in the barn of Demas Robinson near Four Mile Creek. At sun up the next morning three Missourians came to tell Demas they had come to "liberate" those Negroes. He then "got his shotgun and told them if he ever heard of them in this country again trying to 'liberate' Negroes as they called it that he would put more holes through them than there was in a skimmer."[47]

Ishmael Lee was one Quaker who devoted his life to helping colored men find freedom, and he probably did as much as anyone else in this area for the cause. Before coming to Franklin Township in 1853 he was active in Underground Railroad work in Cass County, Michigan. He and eleven others were sued for $400 by some slaveholders for violating the Fugitive Slave Law. This incident, which took place in Michigan, shows Mr. Lee's anti-slavery spirit:

"At one time he was down in Indiana attending a meeting of Friends. He found a slave mother and two children, who had been left by their escaping companions, the mother being sick and unable to go farther. Ishmael Lee took them into his covered wagon and started north with them. The pursuing owners of these three fugitives overtook and conversed with him, but did not look into the wagon for the slaves, nor ask him a word about them. They got free. Years later this same Negro mother wrote a letter to Ishmael Lee in Mitchellville, thanking him for her deliverance."[48]

Quakers were not the only ones who kept depots on the Underground Railroad. The following story was one which Thomas Mitchell told about his efforts to bring freedom to the Negro:

"One night more than thirty years ago, when I lived over at Apple Grove and the house was full of people, I sat on the porch at dark casting my eye about to see if all was right, when I heard voices which I recognized as those of

colored persons. I went down the lane in the direction of the sounds and found two colored men and a woman with team and wagon.

"'Is this Mitchell's?' one of them asked.

"'Yes.'

"'Are you Massa Mitchell?'

"'Yes.'

"'We want to go toward Grinnell.'

"'Do you want something to eat?'

"'No, Massa, we got plenty!'

"They were directed on the Grinnell road to a Quaker settlement where further guidance would be at hand, with the injunction, 'Don't you let the grass grow under your feet.'

"'What name there, Massa?'

"'Inquire for Hammer. Don't forget it. Think of strike somebody.'

"'We not forget, Massa,' and off they sped in the darkness."

"The next day two men came along, wanted dinner, and asked, 'Have you seen any niggers go by?' stating in explanation of anxiety to catch the fugitives, that they had killed a man.

"I owned that I had seen some darkeys go along, and directed the pursuers to an old Kentucky friend named Van Wrinkle, living southeast of here, four miles off the trail, assuring them that if he had seen anything of the runaways he would tell them all about it. I laughed inside; for Van Wrinkle was the most vigorous abolitionist in all this region, needing but a hint of slave-catching to cause him to smite and spare not, and to go to his place would cost them seven miles extra travel.

"The men hurried off. In about three weeks they came back and stopped again for dinner. They had continued their unsuccessful chase as far as Chicago, and were in no happy mood. Uncomplimentary epithets were freely bestowed, and I was asked if I had any lies for today. But I assured them I had told no lies; they admitted having interviewed my Kentucky friend; and, being given the choice either to smother their wrath and incivility or to go on without dinner, they quieted down."

Depot "agents" on the Underground Railroad sometimes used code language in forwarding escaped slaves to the next agent. An example of this is the following note, written by Thomas Mitchell to J. B. Grinnell:

"Dear Grinnell:

Uncle Tom says if the roads are not too bad you can look for those fleeces of wool by tomorrow. Send them on to test the market-price, and no back charges.

Yours,Hub."[49]

Although a great number of people in Mitchellville were on the side of the North in the Civil War, there were some who were not

sympathetic. Families were divided on the issue—children against parents, husbands against wives, brothers against brothers. Tension broke out into open fighting when at the schools in Mitchellville, Trullinger Grove, and Garrett Grove children of Abolitionists were called "Black Abolitionists," while the children of Democrats, or southern sympathizers, were embarrassed by being called "Copperheads." There were instances of "Copperhead" children being mistreated by having their clothes torn, or by being "taken down" and having mud put in their mouths.

There is the story of the Democrat who tied a dirty rag on the door knob when President Lincoln was killed, as if to make a mockery at mourning for him, and of how that same man is supposed to have declared to an Abolitionist in Mitchellville that he hoped the war would never end as long as trees grew and water ran, unless the South could win. This outspoken expression drew the anger and hatred of a mob which demanded that the man be hung. The intervention of Thomas Mitchell saved his life.

The Call of Duty

Around fifty men went into the Civil War from Mitchellville. This means from the town itself and surrounding vicinity. (See list of soldiers in Appendix.) At that time Clay Township was a part of Beaver, and Washington Township was sparsely settled. There were no deficiencies in quotas in the county, and Beaver Township had a surplus.[50]

One stage driver ran away from the draft and later was exempt because he drove a stage coach which carried U. S. mails. With that exception, all the other quotas in Beaver Township were filled by volunteers.

To counteract any spirit of indifference toward the Northern cause, Union meetings were held all over the county. One such gathering which was held in Mitchellville is described in the Iowa State Register for June 1, 1864:

> "WAR MEETING.—On Tuesday evening last a spirited war meeting was held in Mitchellville, this county. An excellent address was delivered by Captain Roach who succeeded in obtaining six recruits for the hundred days' service. The Captain thinks that he will make up half a company before the time shall have expired for procuring enlistments. Two companies from Polk County will make a very fair showing."

The Captain Roach mentioned above served one year in the Twenty-third Iowa Infantry, then because of ill health came home and gave his time and talent to recruiting the ranks for the Union army. He was a great organizer and speaker; when Roach could not enthuse the boys to enlist, no one else could, it was said. His task required nerve and patience because most of the boys had already enlisted, and not everyone was in favor of the war. Later on Captain Roach served in the Christian Commission, where he looked after the spiritual and physical welfare of the soldiers. He did some preaching in the Mitchellville Christian Church during his declining days.

Opposed to war on Scriptural grounds and also to slavery, some quakers found themselves in a dilemma. A battle went on in the mind of Peter Lee, son of pronounced Abolitionist Ishmael Lee in Franklin Township. When Peter made up his mind to enlist, he faced his moher with, "Well, Mother, what would thee have me do? Go to the army like a man or be drafted like a dog?"[51] Peter went to the army like a man. He died of disease in a Memphis, Tennessee hospital and is buried in Franklin Cemetery.

As in every war, young boys defied their parents' wishes and plotted to get into the army some way. There were three young boys southwest of Mitchellville who were chums—Charles Glenn, Carey Garrett, and Owen Kinsman. Charles and his brother Frank slipped out of the house in the night to go to Fort Des Moines to enlist. His mother hurried to the Fort to put a stop to it, but it was too late. They returned home three years later.[52]

Owen Kinsman's parents purchased him a drum with the idea that it would prevent him from enlisting. The scheme did not work, however. One day in July, 1862, as seventeen-year-old Carey Garrett walked west toward Fort Des Moines, he saw his friend Owen, barefooted, hoeing in a nearby field. Owen said, "Wait till I get my boots on, and I'll go with you." So the boys went to enlist together.

Faced by young Owen, the officer asked, "What can *you* do?"

"I can play a drum," he answered.

"You'll do," was the verdict. The two boys went through the war together and remained lifelong friends.[53]

The Tenth Iowa Regiment contained boys from Polk County and many from Mitchellville. Company G. of the twently-third Iowa Infantry was raised by Capt. J. P. Roach, and in it were mostly boys from Camp and Four Mile Townships. It was commanded by Captain Hull. The Regiment broke camp at Camp Crocker near where the Redhead residence is in east Des Moines and started their march southeastward along what is now Highway 163. While they were stopped for dinner near Rising Sun, hundreds of people were there to bid them good-bye—wives, mothers, sisters, sweethearts, fathers, and brothers. An eleven-year-old girl sat on the grassy bank along the side of the road and thrilled to the music of fifes and drums.[54]

The Regiment made a name for itself by fighting at Black River Bridge, Vicksburg, Milikens Bend and through the swamps of Louisiana. Hundreds never returned, among them, Hance Ferguson and Harry Mattern. Jerry Swift, Jerry D. Williams, William Woodrow were some of the survivors in this Regiment from Mitchellville.

Civil War Stories

The Iowa State Register (July 16, 1862) made mention of one Mitchellville hero, who passed through Des Moines as he was returning home. Jonathan Johnston, who lived in Trullinger Grove, was only sixteen years old, a member of Company B., Fifteenth Iowa Regiment. He had bullet wounds in his head and left foot.

> "The rebels seemed determined that he should never reach his home, but he has disappointed their malignity. . . . Before he was carried helpless from the field, he sent over into the rebel ranks forty-two rounds of solid Iowa Pills.

. . . This young hero has done enough, and should be exempted from military duty during the rest of his life."

Another soldier who was maimed by the war was John H. Bearry, who entered the army from Ohio but later lived in Mitchellville. He lost both arms at the Battle of Gettysburg. But John overcame his handicap and lived a useful life, cultivating a good garden because he fixed a hoe that was attached to his foot or shoe.

Deacon J. Whitaker enlisted in the Second Iowa Battery in 1861 and served to the end of the war. At the end of six months spent in a Southern prison his name was omitted from the list of those to be released. He asked his officer if he could go on that ship. The officer replied that he could not say yes, but that there was plenty of room and food on the ship. "Dake" thanked him and was set free.[55]

Peter Lee and William Reed, both from Trullinger Grove, or Mitchellville, served also in the Second Iowa Battery. The following are excerpts from letters by Peter Lee:

"Abbeville, Miss., Aug. 18, 1864

"We were ordered to the front yesterday. It rained very hard as we started. We went about six miles to a creek called Hurricane; there we ran into the Rebs and fought them an hour and a half. The Rebs had also a six-gun battery and breastworks. We were on a high hill, in plain view of them. They poured the shell into us when we were placing our battery in position. Shells flew around us and over our heads thick and fast. Yet in the fight we had but two men hurt, and they slightly. I could see the shells coming and it looked like they were coming right at my head. I would rather be at the guns than with the team."

"Memphis, Feb. 19, 1865"

"I employ most of my time in reading my Testament and religious papers the Christian Commission brings us. I have read my Testament almost through since I have been here."[56]

From his death bed in the hospital Peter watched his friend William Reed through the window as he left for the front. Peter died soon after that. After William came home, whenever Mrs. Lee saw him, she kissed him, because he was one of the last to see her son and to tell her of him.[57]

Thomas Mitchell's son Orrin was a young man of talent and promise who left his studies in a private school in Des Moines to help in the Union cause. He was Quartermaster Sergeant in the Eighth Iowa Cavalry Regiment.

The following excerpts from letters tell the tragic story:

"Waverly, Tenn., Dec. 19, 1863

"We took ten guerrillas night before last; and when bringing them into camp a tree blew down (for it was rainy and blowing) and fell upon one of the prisoners, who proved to be a captain of one of their bands—killing him and his horse."

* * * *

"Waverly, Jan. 18, 1864

"You asked what kind of a time I had Christmas. I had a pretty rough time. I started on a scout about nine o'clock in the evening and never suffered more with cold than I did that night. It rained a good part of the night and the next day, and we had no blankets along. I got warmed up in the morning for a little while. We were in pursuit of some guerillas, and in the chase I forgot all about the cold. They fired several shots. We kept on after them until they escaped across the river."

* * * *

"Waverly, Tenn., March 7, 1864

"Thomas Mitchell, Esq.,--About two weeks ago, your son Orrin was taken with what proved to be typhoid fever. He has gradually sunk till yesterday, when he seemed to revive a little, which gave us a faint hope of his ultimate recovery. But to tell the truth, my dear sir, I very much doubt whether he will ever be restored to health.

H. H. Bufield
Lt. 8th Iowa Cavalry"

* * * *

"Waverly, March 17, 1864

"It has now become my painful duty to inform you of his death, which took place at three P. M., today. Orrin was a favorite in the regiment; held in highest esteem by all who knew him.

H.H.B."[58]

Orrin Mitchell's sister, Mary Anne, was engaged to marry Harry Mattern before he went off to help "put down the rebellion." Tragically, death intervened to prevent the marriage. Harry, or William H., died in New Orleans in January, 1864. From Patterson, Missouri, in the winter of 1862, he wrote:

"Dear Mother and sister

I had not thought of writing for a few days yet but we are under marching orders We march tomorrow I thought I might not have an oportunity to write for a few days so I came to the conclusion that it was best to write to night I can't say where we will go I will let you know the first oportunity I have after finding to what point we will go I am still enjoying the best of health The boys are all well except John Brown and Charley Jones. Charly has been sick is nearly well again John won't be stout as long as he stay in the army. he has a very bad cough I hope he will be discharged before a great while I am very sorry to hear of Janes illness I am pleased to hear that Carry is going to see her

"Dear mother bear up under your troubles which are coming heavy and fast on you a few more years at the farthest and you will meet your loved one that has been taken from our number We all have to meet death at some time and I believe it will be no harder one time than an other When we have to bid adieu to this world He will be

there to welcome us home. This is enough to cheer us through this life Let us trust in God and all will be well. . . .

"Father I want you to write I should very much like to get a letter from you Give me the news in general I would like to get a letter from Miles & Scott . . . give Vana a kiss for me Vana you must learn to write then you can write me [a] letter how [it] would please me to get a letter from you I must close my love to all My regards to all inquiring friends

God bless you Truly yours
From
Harry

P. S. Please write soon let me know how Jane is getting along."

The trouble he writes of—the loved one "that has been taken from our number"—was his brother David, who enlisted in the same company but took sick and died of diphtheria in Mitchellville before he could be sworn in. It was not to be long before his mother needed to be comforted because of the loss of Harry, too.

"Hd.-Qrs., 23d Iowa Vols.,
Indianola, Texas,
Feb. 27, 1864

"Dear and Much Esteemed Bro. Mattern,—I received the painful intelligence a few days since that your beloved son Harry was no more. He died at New Orleans, La., on the 23d day of January ,1864. Your son was a good boy, and I am satisfied that he was prepared to go. He was very anxious to see you all. He had a bright future before him if it had been the will of Providence to spare his life. But the struggle is over, and he rests secure beneath the shadow of the Almighty's throne.

"Harry was beloved by all the regiment. He was pleasant and cheerful. Although not required to go into the engagements (being Q. M. S. of the regiment), yet at Port Gibson he took his musket, and on that memorable day he was in the midst of the fight. He was a brave soldier and a true patriot. . . . My sympathies are truly with you in your afflictions."

"A. J. Barton,
Chaplain 23d Iowa."[59]

Before the war was over, Mr. and Mrs. David Mattern sacrificed three sons—David, Harry, and Miles. The latter enlisted in the Forty-seventh Iowa and died at Helena, Arkansas. A fourth son, Scott, was a member of the Eighth Iowa Cavalry and a prisoner of war many months, but he returned home.

The War on the Home Front

Patriotism was not a virtue confined to those who did the actual fighting in the Civil War. There was plenty of it shown at home. While some soldiers were home on furlough in Mitchellville, there were picnics, parties, and dances to entertain them. A man by the

name of John Parker, in Cory Grove, gave an elaborate reception—a big dinner for at least 300 people. "Speeches were made, songs were sung, and everybody had a good time."

"Even the boys organized themselves into a company. We had quite a good company for a time of boys who were too young to enlist. I was elected captain and we were full of soldier business and drilled almost every night," wrote Frank Blyler.

Of more importance to Mitchellville were the Home Guards. This organization, formed in 1863, was made up of young boys and old men too young or old or too feeble to fight. How significant the group was here is hard to tell. Nearly every town had its Home Guard during the war, aimed to protect the people at home. We do know, at any rate, that a flag was presented to the Home Guard of the Garrett Grove Community during the war, and that the Mitchellville Home Guards held a reunion in the Park on July 3, 1886.

Music always helps to stir up patriotic feeling in the hearts of people, especially in war time. No doubt the brass band served this and other purposes in old Mitchellville. Perhaps it played for the drilling of the Home Guard, or when soldiers went off to war, and when "Johnnie came marching home." We know that it played at political rallies. It was probably organized about 1862.

The leader from its beginning was James Craig, who came in 1860 from near Akron, Ohio, originally from Allentown, Pennsylvania. He had had experience playing in a band in Akron. For years the bass drum in the band was one yhich had been used in the Civil War. On the shell of it was a patch that covered a hole, a bullet hole put there during the war.[60]

Appeals were made to raise funds for the support of orphans and widows of soldiers and to send clothing and other items to the boys in blue. As in more recent wars in which our country has been involved, so then, meetings were held to raise money for this purpose. In Mitchellville on October 9, 1864, Messrs. H. Monroe and Dwight Klinck of Des Moines earnestly plead for aid to the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' home.

On October 8, 1862 the IOWA STATE REGISTER carried this item:

> "RECEIVED.—The loyal and liberal citizens of Mitchellville, this county, have sent to the Soldiers' Aid Society of this place, eight comfortables and two blankets. They came through Thomas Mitchell, Esq. Not long since, circulars were sent out into different parts of the country, asking for articles of the above character for the benefit of the 39th Regiment. . . . The boys of the 39th have not received their uniforms, nor anything else as yet from the Government; and many of them stand in need of more covering to keep off the chill of autumnal nights."

One company of the Twenty-third Infantry Regiment, which contained many boys from Polk County, raised $6,907 for soldiers' orphans. William H. Woodrow and Jeremiah Swift were two who contributed. Mrs. Mattern of Beaver Township, and Mrs. J. Brown of Franklin, were elected to Life Membership in the Iowa State Orphan Asylum.

Thomas Mitchell introduced a resolution at a meeting of the Polk County Board of Supervisors: "That the sum of $1000 be set aside

to give to needy families of soldiers to be distributed by a committee."

Even amid the excitement and confusion of war, any lack of patriotic spirit was exposed and left vivid memories with the Union people. F. F. Blyler recalled a dramatic incident which occurred while he was home on furlough:

> "I arrived at home on Saturday evening, April 10th [1864] and completely surprised the folks. I had not written home for a long time and the folks had heard indirectly that I had been killed on Sherman's Meridian raid through Mississippi, and no surprise could have been greater to them than to see me coming home alive and well. The next day I had a perfect ovation. Father at that time kept the hotel, having just moved in. . . . Father had succeeded a man by the name of Brannon in the hotel. . . . Thirty days before, the 4th Iowa Infantry returned home; they came by Mitchelltown one cold morning early in March. Brannon refused to build them a fire or to get them any breakfast so they were compelled to go through to Des Moines hungry and cold. The boys spotted the place however and agreed to attend to it on their return. In the meantime the stages were again moved to Sternberg's. One Sunday evening however a team drove up. The wagon contained 4 soldiers and the driver. They came in; one of them was quite boisterous and under the influence of liquor. He wanted some man to call him a d----d 'Lincolnite.' The office was full but he soon had possession for he scared them all out. They got their suppers and were quite orderly. I was the only other soldier present and could handle them pretty well, but no citizen dared to say anything to them. I finally went to bed. As soon as I got away they became rampant. Father ran up stairs after me. I came down. When I got down they had gone to the wagon after their guns, and declared their intention of cleaning out the house. I as yet knew nothing about their former grievance. So I asked one of them what the matter was. He told me that he was a Lieutenant in the 4th Iowa Infantry, and of their mistreatment 30 days before, and that when they learned that the stages had quit running through Mitchelltown they hired a team to bring them through to clean the place out and that they were now ready to do it. I at once saw the situation and explained to them that Brannon had moved out and was no longer the proprietor, and that my father kept the house now and that he was a good Union man, when they at once subsided and became as orderly as any one."

Politics

In spite of wars and rumors of war, politics went on the same. Rather, the election of officers went on; politics was not the same, for party loyalties were more intense during the War between the States. Since most of the earliest settlers came to Iowa from the South, the state was Democratic. However, as east-west transportation was made easier by railroads and canals, more and more people came from the Whig (or Republican) minded states of the East and

North. The 1850's was a decade when the power of the Democrats was decreasing and Republican strength was increasing.

The Democrats in eastern Polk County were active one hundred years ago. Rallies were held and speakers procured. In 1858 M. M. Crocker, Democratic candidate for Judge of the Fifth Judicial District, addressed a group of people at Apple Grove at 2:00 p.m. one October afternoon, and at 7:30 that night spoke to the crowd gathered at Rising Sun.

The IOWA STATESMAN, a Democratic paper, conceded defeat in the election a few days later in the pronouncement: "This County has gone Republican!" This did not mean that the Democrats were giving up, however. The next year Lambert Sternberg from Beaver, Jesse Barlow from Four Mile, and Richard Pring from Franklin Townships were entitled to seats at the Democratic County Convention.

Some idea of the extent of participation in local government may be gained from looking at the list of names of people who signed a petition to submit to the voters the question of whether to build a courthouse in Des Moines and at the list of those who signed a petition to have it built. Many familiar names are found there: From Franklin Township—Ishmael Lee, Richard Pring, Samuel Hedges, Ephraim Lee, Aaron Brown, Eli Trullinger, A. C. Bondurant. From Beaver Township—Samuel Chambers, J. D. Wood, P. H. Humphreys, Lambert Sternberg, Benjamin Pearson, Thomas Pack, Moses Barlow, Green Wheeler, B. E. H. Woodrow, Jesse Pearson, Robert Ingram, Wm. Duncan, D. E. Tyler, John B. Bowman, Jeremiah Swift, Thos. Mitchell, Wm. Miller, Wm. Sweeney, Newlin McGrew, Lewis M. Burk, James Rooker, Elijah Canfield, J. B. Grinstead, William Garrett.

Another indication of participation in government is found in the list of officers put into various positions in 1869.[61]

BEAVER TOWNSHIP

Trustees	J. Blyler, Amos Rothrock, James Walter
Assessor	Lindsay Carr
Clerk	N. W. Cram
Constables	W. O. Smith, G. P. Canfield

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

Trustees	Jas. Barrett, E. Trullinger, W. F. Thompson
Assessor	Peter Marmon
Clerk	Peter Marmon
Constables	Wm. Reed, B. F. Burge
Justices of Peace	D. E. Tyler, John Wilson

Union meetings was what Republican rallies were sometimes termed during the Civil War. The Union cause and the Republican Party were closely allied. A Judge from Des Moines tried to influence the voters in Mitchellville when he addressd them October 5, 1863. The IOWA STATE REGISTER, by way of prediction, claimed that Beaver Township could usually be counted on to go Republican. "It is always close but reliable." Camp Township usually went Democratic but had a few strong Unionists.

At a convention of Union men on September 3, 1864 in Des Moines, Thomas Mitchell and Jonathan Blyler were the delegates from

Beaver Township. The following year Thomas Mitchell and E. J. Valentine, a store owner in Mitchellville, were the delegates to the county convention.

Northern Republicans, who had won the war, desired to keep in power. In 1868 they "whooped it up" for U. S. Grant and his running mate, Schuyler Colfax. So it was in eastern Polk County.

> "RADICAL RALLY AT MITCHELLTOWN—On Wednesday evening the Republicans of Beaver Township were in council at Mitchelltown. A whole school-houseful of Republicans were in attendance. Speeches were made by Demas Robinson and Peter Russell—stirring up the crowd with the true gospel in an orthodox way.
>
> "A Grant and Colfax Club was organized at the meeting. That prince of Radicals, Tom Mitchell, was made the President. The Club went right to business, opened their rolls, and over seventy persons immediately signed their names. They have live Republicans out in that rich part of Polk County, and are making things whirr for Grant and Colfax."[62]

The next month two rallies were held, one in Mitchellville and one at a schoolhouse on Mud Creek in the south part of Beaver Township. At the latter, two men from Des Moines spoke an hour apiece for the Republican cause. "The loyal, lively Tannars of Mitchellville" added to the enthusiasm of the rally.

We have mentioned before that the Mitchellville Band played at political rallies. Their talents were asked for in the years immediately following the Civil War. The Republican members of the organization resented having to play at Democratic meetings, and the Democratic players, who were in the minority, hated to play at Republican rallies. A sort of feud developed in 1868 between the band and Rising Sun. It was all brought about by the DES MOINES STATESMAN, which printed a letter of ridicule about the band after they had played at a Republican meeting and pole-raising in Rising Sun. It seems that the Democrats stirred up trouble and made things somewhat unpleasant for the Republicans.

The letter in the STATESMAN evidently was signed "Old John." At any rate, here is part of the answer which appeared in the Republican IOWA STATE REGISTER and was signed "The Mitchellville Brass Band":

> "By the way, 'Old John' appears to be a very popular man or a kind of ringleader among the Copperheads of Rising Sun—and anything like advancement they oppose. They would rather back down to the days when old Granny Buchanan sat in the Presidential Chair, and in whose reign the Democracy discarded 'Yankee Doodle' and 'Hail Columbia,' and took up 'Dixie,' the 'Bonnie Blue Flag,' and such tunes of that style, and they hate the loyal old airs yet.
>
> ". . . And in conclusion we will make a proposition: If 'Old John' will come down to Mitchellville we will play him 'Dixie,' and make him a present of a pass, and give him a hearty push upon the Salt River packet, which will leave about November 4th."

Crime

One hundred years ago this part of the country was frontier enough to know what lawlessness was. A band of desperadoes lived in Polk County which was a part of a well organized chain of robbers extending northward to Minnesota and southward into Missouri. Horse stealing was their specialty. Farmers were compelled to keep their teams under lock and key. Things became so bad that people had to organize themselves into Vigilantes to ferret out and punish the criminals, as so often occurred on the forntier. In 1866 Polk and Warren Counties combined to form a Horse-Thief Detecting Company, with 129 members. Leaders in Mitchellville, among them, David Mattern, Thomas Mitchell, and Jonathan Blyler, were called upon to serve as jurors in various criminal and civil trials.

A fellow by the name of Comequick lived in Camp Township and was a terror to the whole community.

> "Several times he [Comequick] was arrested and on trial, each time managing to secure an acquittal. Finally the bodies of a man and woman were discovered in two corn shocks in Jasper county, not far from the Polk county line. They had been murdered and the corpses secreted in this singular and brutal manner.
>
> "The whole country was aroused and a thorough investigation of the case was made. It was developed at the examination that the murdered pair were emigrants from the East, traveling through Iowa in a wagon. The team and wagon were found in Comequick's possession. He was arrested by an excited mob and brought before a Justice. General Crocker went down from Des Moines to defend him, and was glad to get away from Newton with his life, so intense was the feeling against his client. A mob rescued Comequick from the officers, compelled him to walk over burning embers to induce him to confess, and finally hung him to a tree at Montezuma."[63]

Chapter XI
CIVILIZING INFLUENCES

DURING the years of its existence on Section Two, old Mitchellville was upset by the confusion and excitement, the hatred and heartache of war. This fact, coupled with the lawlessness which was characteristic of the frontier, retarded the advance of civilization. Nevertheless, there were forces at work which meant progress—estabishment of businesses, education, religion and attempted reforms, communication with the outside world by mail, stage coach and railroad.

Education

In 1851 Miss Lucia Carey was paid eight dollars a month to teach Thomas Mitchell's and William Sweeney's children in the Apple Grove Inn. This waas probably the first attempt to have a formal school in this part of the county. After the town was laid out in 1856, one of Mr. Mitchell's first concerns was to provide educational opportunities. He wrote that "there was a good Public School House

built that year [1857]." It was true that it was a good building—large enough to accommodate the pupils of that time, well arranged, and with a steeple. There was no bell at first, but Jonathan Blyler furnished one later. The founder not only paid for the building but for several years also paid the teacher and furnished the fuel.

Frank Blyler (Jonathan's son) remembered the building where he received nearly all the formal schooling he had:

> "Here I went to school for years. Every paper wad on the ceiling, every niche cut in the desks and seats bring back to my mind so many fond recollections. Here we went to church and Sunday School, for it was the only church building old Mitchellville ever had. Here also were held all of the political meetings held in those early times. As it was before the war, we heard the great question of 'slavery' discussed within its walls both pro and con, by able and eloquent speakers, and it was here also I first heard of Abraham Lincoln and John Brown, and here I instinctively learned to love the cause for which they died. Although many years have since rolled by I have never yet seen any cause to regret my early teachings, and the view I took of things at that time. Had I the means that old house would be preserved as one of the early monuments of the country ,in the most conspicuous place of what is now known as Mitchellville."[64]

From the above quotation we learn that the school was the center of community life, as it still is in most small towns of America.

The Federal Census figures for 1860 show us that fifty-two children from Franklin Township and eighty-nine children from Beaver Township attended school "within the year." Their ages ranged from five to twenty-two. Undoubtedly they did not all go to Mitchellville, as there were other schools in the vicinity. However, we do know that youngsters who lived four miles away (for example, the Glenn's) walked to the school in old Mitchellville. (See Appendix for Census lists.)

Three early teachers Frank Blyler remembered were Hiram Ramsdell from New Hampshire, Abbie Mitchell, a nice of Thomas's, and R. P. Woodruff. In the Bringolf district and Camp Township there was a teacher by the name of Mr. Webber, farther on west a school taught by Mr. Woodruff's brother. As early as 1856 in Franklin Township there was a teacher by the name of Maria Doud, a native of Pennsylvania. Near Rising Sun, but still in Beaver Township, lived a young girl teacher from Vermont—E. Downes.

The standards of the school in Mitchellville during the 1860's were somewhat above average for the time and the newness of the country. The length and number of terms varied. At one time there was a four-month period in the winter and a three-month period in the summer. Later on, there were three-quarters of three months each, fall, winter, and summer. There were no strict laws requiring children to go to school, and it was a common practice on the frontier, where everyone had to work hard for a living, to allow children to drop out of school to work, the boys to help with farming and the girls with housework.

Mr. Woodruff was considered the best teacher the old town had. Enthusiastic and hard working, he held regular night sessions as well as six hours during the day. While he was the instructor there, the school competed for a prize to be given to the best school in the county. In sub-zero weather a class of seven pupils (Ann and Orrin Mitchell, David, Harry, and Henrietta Mattern, T. O. Walker, and Frank Blyler) and Mr. Woodruff bundled themselves up in robes and blankets and rode in a sled to Des Moines, where, in spite of frozen feet or faces or ears, they won the prize for the second best school in Polk County. Evidently the winners were judged by how much the pupils knew.

Although Mr. Woodruff's instruction was nearly all oral, there were textbooks used. Those recommended by the State Superintendent and in general use in Polk County in 1860 were: McGuffey's Reader and Speller, Ray's Arithmeitc, Pinneo's Grammar, Montieth and McNally's Geographies, and Wilson's History of the United States.[65] McGuffey's books instilled moral and religious principles, a feature which is lacking to a large extent in modern school books. Moreover, McGuffey's lessons also stressed the idea that anyone could get ahead in the world if he tried hard enough.

Teachers profited from the County Institutes held regularly in Des Moines. These were devoted mainly to exercises in the subject matter and in moral and inspirational talks.

By 1867 the County Board of Supervisors restricted the issuance of teachers' certificates to those who could pass examinations in arithmetic, analytical grammar, "especially in the analysis of sentences." Further, the teaching candidates had to "be prepared to give the boundaries of countries and States, to give the location of the principal cities, mountains, capes, seas, lakes, rivers, etc., must be able to give an account of the principal events in the history of our country, and spell ordinarily well, and write a plain hand, and must be good readers."[66] No one under sixteen could teach.

How strictly standards were adhered to is questionable, but the County Superintendent visited schools to examine them.

In 1862 it was suggested at the County Teachers' Institute that schools be given particular attention, "as they underlie all free government." Lofty ideals, however, did not prevent the war spirit from creeping into the schools, as shown by the resolution passed by the Teachers' Institute in April, 1864, held at the Courthouse in Des Moines. This allowed corporal punishment only in cases of extreme necessity; however, if any pupil were a Rebel or Southerner, "he may inflict corporeal punishment with hearty good will." The teachers at that meeting resolved to govern their schools with the spirit of kindness. The statement makes one wonder if such severe disciplinary measures were used in the schools of that day as are commonly thought.

Social Life

To offset the drugery and monotony of hard work and the loneliness of new country, there were social good times in the 1850's and 1860's. Sleighs or wagons took young people to popular hotels in Vandalia or Green Castle, where dances were held, with a fiddler to furnish the music. The hotel in Mitchelltown was also used for

this purpose, and it was a common thing for young people from Des Moines to bring their music and put on a dance which would last all night. George and Beulah McGrew were the hospitable landlord and landlady at one time. Liquor was not served if Tom Mitchell could help it. There is the story, though, of a party becoming hilarious because of the guests being served a lot of Beulah's mince pie. It had brandy in it!

One type of party which was accompanied by frontier rowdyism and crudity was the charivari. Invariably someone would bring liquor, and the whole affair might be considered funny to some, but disgraceful to others.

More refined sources of amusement were the spelling schools and lyceums. The young people would pile into wagons or sleds and travel five to ten miles to one of these literaries, which were held not only in Mitchellville but also at schoolhouses on Mud Crek southwest of Apple Grove four or five miles, at a schoolhouse on Mud Creek east of what is now Altoona (the old Woodrow settlement), and at the McCleary school on the north side of Trullinger Grove.

Hunting fish and game was a favorite pastime with men and boys. They were plentiful in those days. For the girls it was fun to go nutting, and no doubt there was ice skating on Skunk River. House raisings, barn raisings, butcherings, and "bees" of various kinds also provided fun and brought the community together.

The romance of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Weaver is an interesting story which took place in the old town. It happened after the new town was begun, but while there were many people still living in old Mitchellville. The account was written by Mrs. Weaver's daughter.

> "Names play a strange part in our lives. Mother said when she was young, she despised the name 'Sam,' and declared she would never marry anyone named 'Sam.' Well, it does not pay to brag about what we will not do for one day a young man was walking across a field going to old Mitchellville which was located northwest of the present town of Mitchellville. Along the trail this young man found a tiny belt belonging to a girl's dress. This boy stuck the belt in his pocket and remarked, 'When I find the girl this belt belongs to, I'll marry her.' It was not long until he found the girl—a little slim girl with curls all around her head. Her name was Mary Elizabeth Hayes. He liked the girl from the first, but there was one thing that was against him. His name was 'Sam!' It was Sam Weaver, my father. The meeting spelled ROMANCE and they were married April 28, 1870. They began their housekeeping in a small house across from grandmother's home. Their furniture was for the most part, wooden boxes. One large box was used for a table, smaller ones to sit upon. An old team, a cow and a few chickens were their meager possessions, but they were very rich in their thoughts for the future and their belief that the sun would shine for them."[67]

Religion

At least five different denominations had a following in and around Mitchellville ninety or 100 years ago—Universalist, Methodist, Christian, Allbrights, and Quakers. The first-named church was not usually very strong in a frontier community, but the fact that it was here was largely due to Thomas Mitchell's leadership.

Universalists

Universalist preachers were hired by the founder to hold services in the school-church in Mitchellville about every fourth Sunday. Their Society, precursor to the Church, was organized in 1860. Some of their early ministers here were: T. C. Eaton, W. W. King, Thomas Ballinger, J. P. Sanford, Erasmus Manford, and Rev. Hanson. Better educated than the average preacher of those days, they were many times called upon to defend their belief that God, bing infinitely good, could only have planned for all men to be saved. Public debates were sometimes held between a Universalist preacher and one of another denomination.

State conventions and official meetings were held in the Universalist Church in Mitchellville, the first house of worship to be constructed in the present town—1868. One of the first of such gatherings, held even before the church was built, was the Annual Meeting of the Central Association of Universalists. The IOWA STATE REGISTER announced it for July 13, 14, 1867 in Mitchellville. Whether it was held in the old town or new town is not known. Anyway, carriages were furnished to carry people from Wood's Station, the depot for the only railroad to Mitchellville. "Several distinguished clergymen of that denomination will be present. A basket dinner will be provided for the multitude on Sunday."

Methodists

On the Sundays Uncle Tom could not manage to have ministers of his own church preach in Mitchellville, he arranged for others to come. In doing so, he was not just being tolerant or broadminded; he did it mainly because he realized that religion, any kind of religion, was a taming influence, a civilizing influence in a new country.

One of the first Methodist preachers in Polk County—Ezra Rathbun—was paid by Mitchell several years to preach in his town.[68] Of Portuguese descent, his dark skin sometimes caused people to mistake him for a Negro. Tom Mitchell defended him on such occasions, and the two were firm friends.

Rathbun preached not only at the schoolhouse in Mitchellville, but also at Apple Grove Inn before there was a town, and in private homes. In 1845 he helped organize the first church, probably a Methodist Class, in Elijah Canfield's home southwest of Mitchellville.[69] This pioneer preacher, with many of his family, is buried in Canfield Cemetery southwest of town.

As has already been indicated, the Methodists did not confine their activities to towns and church buildings. The method of setting up several points on a circuit, cared for by one man, enabled them to reach far more people on the frontier than otherwise would have been possible.

A Methodist Society was organized very early in the McCleary Schoolhouse north of Trullinger Grove. A man by the name of Jacob Butt, an exhorter, held meetings there. He lived near Altoona and drove an ox team to the schoolhouse on Sunday mornings.

Other Methodist leaders, besides Rathbun and Butt, were Simon Doran, Arthur Barton, Camillas Leftwich, and Rev. Plummer.[70] Other early laymen, besides Elijah Canfield, were Lot Plummer, David Mattern, Samuel Hedges, and Richard Pring.

Camp meetings were held in groves around Mitchellville—on Mud Creek, southwest of town, at Green Castle, and at Trullinger Grove.

> "Camp Meeting.—A Camp meeting will be held at Trullinger's Grove, in Franklin Township, commencing on Friday, the 15th of September, and lasting three or four days. A cordial invitation is extended to all to attend."[71]

Christians

The Christians were numerous at Apple Grove, Woodrow settlement, and in and about Rising Sun. J. P. Roach was one outstanding leader. P. T. Russell and Dennis Ellis preached for them before and after the church in the present town was organized in 1870. Some early pioneers who supported the Christian Church were: James Rooker, Ike and Benny Woodrow, John Woodward, Elizabeth Glenn, Joel Osgood, John Wheeler, Moses Brown, Sam Weaver, Wm. Sweeney, Wm. Dawson, Ingel's, and Winterrowds'.

Allbrights

A litlte-known group which were here early were the Allbrights. Of German origin, they were later called Evangelical or Evangelical Reformed Church. As zealous and earnest as Methodists, they were quite prominent around Green Castle, northeast of Mitchellville. But there was a Society of them at Trullinger Grove and at Corey Grove northwest of Trullinger's. Rev. Tobias and Uncle Abe Byers preached for them.

Quakers

"Call my dog 'Mr.,' but call me 'Sammy'." That is the way Samuel Chambers replied when a man and his son greeted him with, "Good morning, Mr. Chambers," as they walked across the prairie. Uncle Sammy was one of the Quakers who was here 100 years ago. They insisted on calling people by their first names, even children their elders, because it denoted equality, and they believed everyone was equal in the sight of God. This doctrine led them to take a stand against slavery and allow their homes to be used as stations in the Underground Railroad. Like other religious groups, they did not wait for a church edifice to be built before they worshipped, but they met in various homes, one of which was that of Sam Chambers, located about one-half mile southeast of the present town. Ishmael Lee and Peter Marmon, who came with him from Michigan in 1853, and William Hibbs were also Friends. A little later there came others to their fellowship—Pearson's, Hiatt's, and Quaintance's.

A Friends Church was built where the road west of Bondurant crosses Four Mile Creek. A common sight was to see Uncle Billy Hibbs going to "Meeting" there in his covered carriage. They also met in various schoolhouses, including the one in Mitchellville.

The following quotation defines and summarizes the role of religion on the Iowa frontier and in no small degree aplies to what the various religious groups contributed to the development of Mitchellville:

> "All of these faiths supplied the Iowa pioneers with the religious resources needed by any and every people in every age. Not merely this; they also kept alive the spark of man's intellect, fortified his faith in the eternal destiny of the human race, and tempered man's judgment of his contemporaries. Life in Iowa was to no small degree humanized, democratized, and energized by the sense of responsibilitity generated by the religious forces. In turn there was imparted to the new citizenry a spirit of cooperation through its worship as well as its constructive service from the framing of the first houses to the governing of the new state by Christian men. Iowa, land of high ideals, rich in human association, looks to its religious roots as being of the greatest significance in its own significant course of historical development."[72]

Temperance

The attempt to regulate the liquor traffic in the interest of decency and morality was quite a strong movement in the last century. There were many churches and societies devoted to this cause, but one in particular we will notice here. That is the Independent Order of Good Templars. In 1854 the Grand Lodge of the I.O.G.T. was organized in Iowa. Six years later there was a local branch organized in old Mitchelvlille by Isaac Brandt from Des Moines. It was called Mitchell Lodge No. 250, I.O.G.T.

The primary purpose of the Lodge was set forth in their constitution: "No member shall make, buy, sell, use, furnish or cause to be furnished to others, as a beverage, any spirituous or malt liquors, wine or cider; and every member shall discountenance the manufacture, sale and use thereof, in all proper ways."

The religious character of the Lodge can be seen in the following declaration: No person can be admitted to membership of this Order "unless he believes in the existence of Almighty God as the Ruler and Governor of all things, and is willing to take our pledge for life."

Surprising as it may seem, the membership did not exclude inebriates. However, a drinking person could not be admitted unless he "earnestly desires to reform."

The lodge in Mitchellville met in the room or attic over the schoolhouse. The furniture consisted of benches, a few chairs, and a stand or two. Frank Blyler believed that the club was a great power for good.

"Scarcely an old settler in the country but what some time belonged to old Mitchell Lodge. The sentiment was contagious and the contagion has remained. Good lecturers on temperance frequently came this way. Isaac Brandt and others have walked from Des Moines to attend the old Lodge, and give us good sound temperance lectures. Father Frazier for years did but little else than preach temperance at the different school houses. Nearly every old settler will remember Father Frazier and his old white hat and how he would always sing the 'Little Brown Jug'."[73]

One of the activities of that secret order was to conduct funerals, as it did the burial service of one of the Mattern boys, who was killed in the Civil War. Capt. Roach delivered the sermon on that occasion in March, 1864.

The social good times of the lodge was perhaps its strongest attraction. The Mitchellville chapter joined with others for picnics, parties, conventions. An example of this was the "Grand Temperance PIC-nic" held by twelve lodges in the county at a grove near Rising Sun on May 22, 1866. A procession formed at the depot grounds on West Walnut Street in Des Moines and marched to Rising Sun. Others joined the ranks as the line proceeded eastward.

The program of the day was music by a glee club, prayer by the chaplain, songs by the "Quartette Club," refreshments consisting of "cake, jellies, canned fruits, viands, and pies." There were addresses, to be sure, by W. S. Peterson and J. M. Dixon. Mr. Dixon was the blind editor of the IOWA STATE REGISTER.

Accompanying the notice of the meeting was an item encouraging people to support the worthy cause of temperance:

"Go, then, to the May Festival of the Water Drinkers, and while there, enjoying a social reunion with the friends of Temperance, let the vow which you have taken, and which has been registered in books of which angels and the Creator of angels have everlasting cognizance, be impressively renewed in your heart."

Conclusion

The official proceedings of the Polk County Board of Supervisors, which declared in 1872 that plats in Mitchelltown would have to be vacated, appear cold and hard; but to the imaginative person, they speak volumes. They signify the closing of one chapter in our history and the opening up of another.

In a few short years after the Rock Island Railroad came through (1867), old Mitchellville had the appearance of a "Deserted Village." Mere fields of corn, wheat, a clump of maple trees were the reminders of the town where once there were soldirs coming and going, Indians passing through on thir way to and from the river; children frolicking, stage coaches rumbling through the streets.

The work of transplanting the town from Section Two to Section Twelve was done between 1867 and 1872. Several residences, the hotel, school, and store were removed to Mitchellville. Bert Craig, born in the old town in the same month and year the new town was laid out—June, 1867—recalled his parents' moving their house in 1872. It was done by the aid of horse power and a capstan. Jules Biddle remembers that people traded at E. J. Valentine's store as it was traveling to the present town.

In making the transfer, there was left behind some of the restlessness and instability of a frontier town. Now, the people could look forward to a settled, prosperous, growing town, where institutions of a civilized society would thrive. The editor of a Des Moines paper put it well when he said in 1871, "Tom Mitchell, of Tom Mitchelltownville, the oldest living settler in what is now Polk county, was in town yesterday, and reports his end of the commonwealth of Polk in a flourishing condition."

[END]