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**HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA:
ASPECTS OF LIFE FROM 1920 TO 1930**

A Thesis
Presented to the

Department of History
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

By

Gary D. Dixon

May 1997

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**HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA:
ASPECTS OF LIFE FROM 1920 TO 1930**

Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Masters of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Committee

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Date December 12, 1996

ABSTRACT

This is an examination of Harrison County, Iowa, during the decade from 1920 to 1930. Because farming was the major source of income, agricultural conditions are a major part of this story. So too are the changes which the 1920s brought to the towns of Harrison County. The thesis will also look at the social activities and political issues of the county's citizens, and how these disparate elements of life interacted to form a more complex picture than one might at first think likely.

The 1920s was a time of profound change in the nation, and Harrison County was not spared this upheaval. Change had two sides, and for every benefit or improvement which came to the people, difficulties arose to challenge their patience and ingenuity. Technological advances affected every aspect of society, from new agricultural techniques to new types of entertainment brought by radio and movies, some of which was of questionable value to the county's residents.

The county was rural, but the proximity of the Council Bluffs-Omaha urban area just to its south exerted a tremendous influence. Because of the rapidly improving system of roads and the increasing number of automobiles, people found new opportunities in all directions. Better roads and faster automobiles allowed the pursuit of business ventures in other cities and states and family vacations to distant locales, but unfortunately also allowed for a significant increase in the spread of crime. A deadly rise in the number of

accidents and the outrage caused by speeding vehicles and glaring headlights made the automobile a mixed blessing. For good or ill, the era of relative isolation experienced by residents of many rural counties throughout the Midwest had begun to close forever.

This work is as much a study of the effect of changing technology, social ideas and political views of the people of the county as it is an examination of their specific activities. The decade was a difficult time for a county which depended on agriculture, for the farmer's economic picture was very bleak and caused frustrations which were revealed in many ways. The changes brought by new technologies, and the new ideas and social mores arriving by roadway and radio wave combined to create one of the most transitional eras for this county and others like it. This is a story of a people dealing with the rapid emergence of their society from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, adapting where they must, yet retaining their moral and social convictions with all the strength they could muster.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of a number of people who have helped me in the long process of research, development, and presentation of this thesis project. First I would like to thank my thesis committee: Dr. Richard Overfield, Dr. Charles Gildersleeve, and Dr. Harl Dalstrom. Dr. Dalstrom was my thesis advisor, and I will always remember the many times he went out of his way to offer me his help, advice, and encouragement. I also thank Dr. Bruce Garver for his assistance in providing information on the railroads in Harrison County.

Much of my research was completed in the town of Logan, the county seat. I would like to express my thanks to the staff of the county extension office for access to their annual narrative reports and for providing me with one of the maps used in my project. The office of the county Clerk of Court and the Logan and Dunlap libraries also assisted in my research. Nearly every time I arrived with a problem or question I met someone new, yet was received with the same gracious assistance on each occasion.

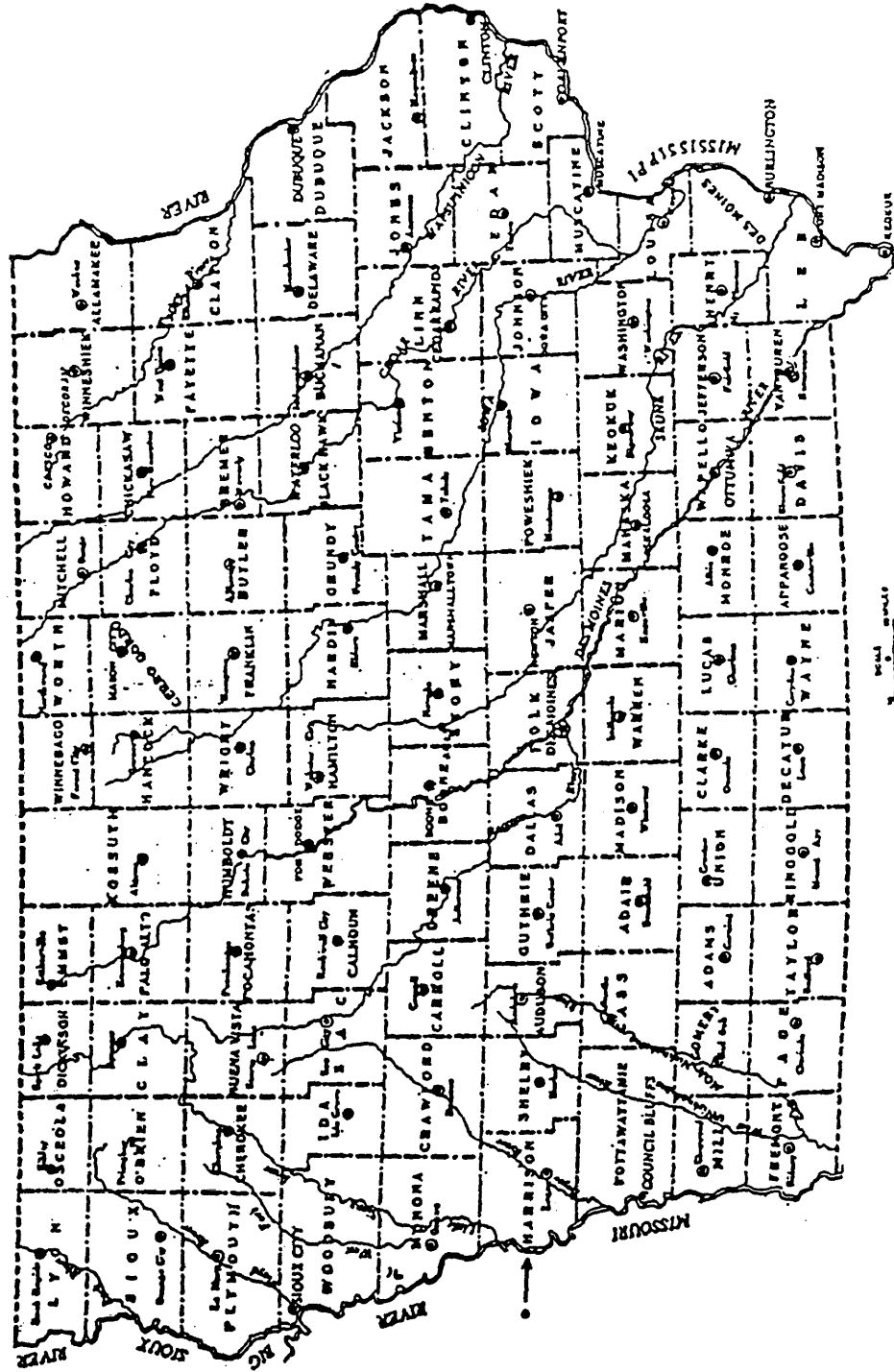
Even as the people of Harrison County went through a painful transition period into the modern world, so also did I. Forced reluctantly into the new age of the personal computer, I must thank several of my dearest friends whose assistance not only enabled me to produce the thesis, but allowed me to maintain some semblance of sanity during the procedure.

My thanks go to Dr. Robert Grimm and his wife Tracy Grimm, for lending me the use of their computer on which to work, and to Todd Sells and Kenneth W. Johnson III, for the use of their computer experience. I remember with gratitude the many occasions on which I called upon their aid when my limited skills failed me, and for the time they gave to help proofread and critique my work. Thank you all for your encouragement and patience, for none of this would have been possible without your help.

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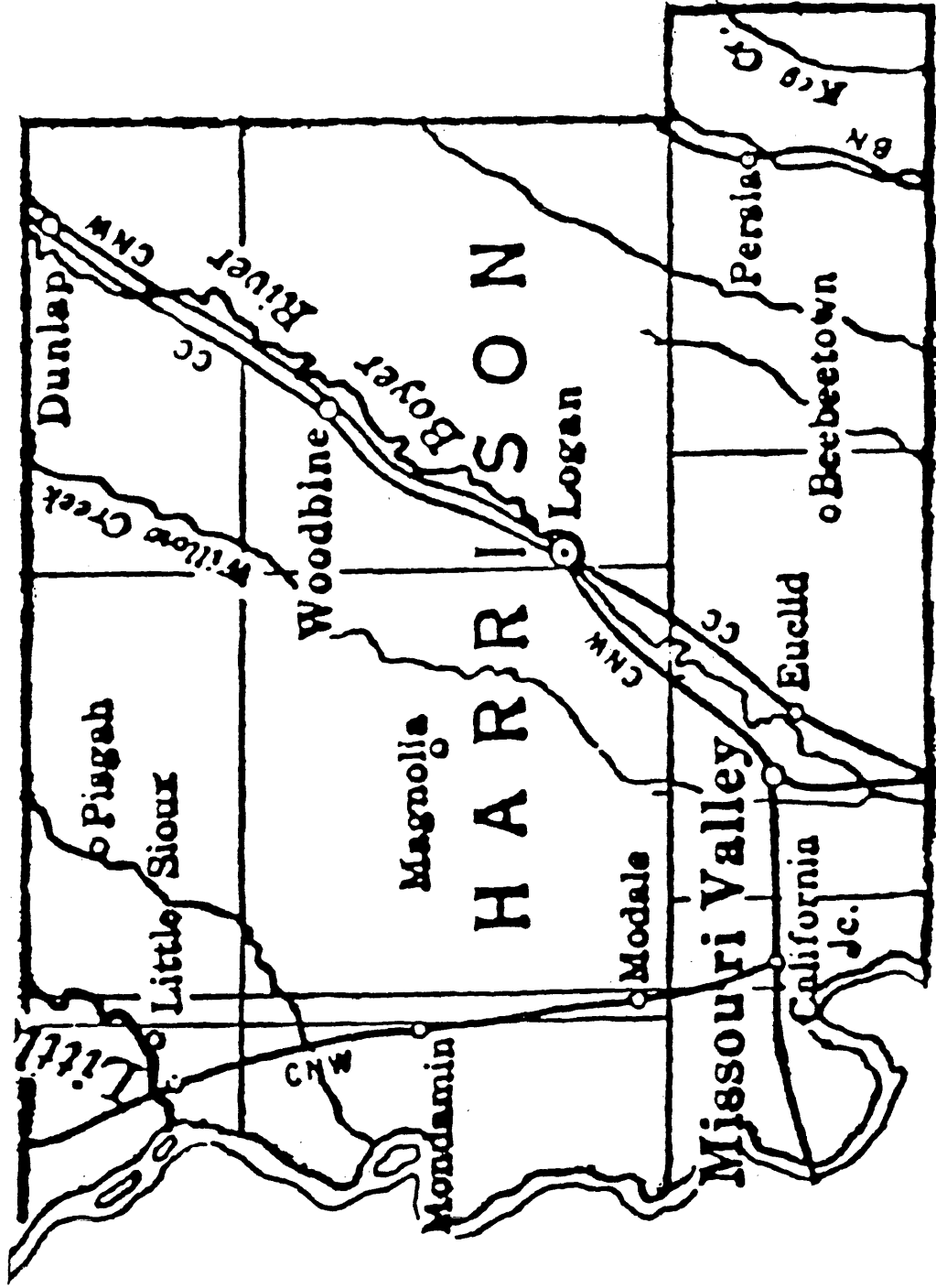
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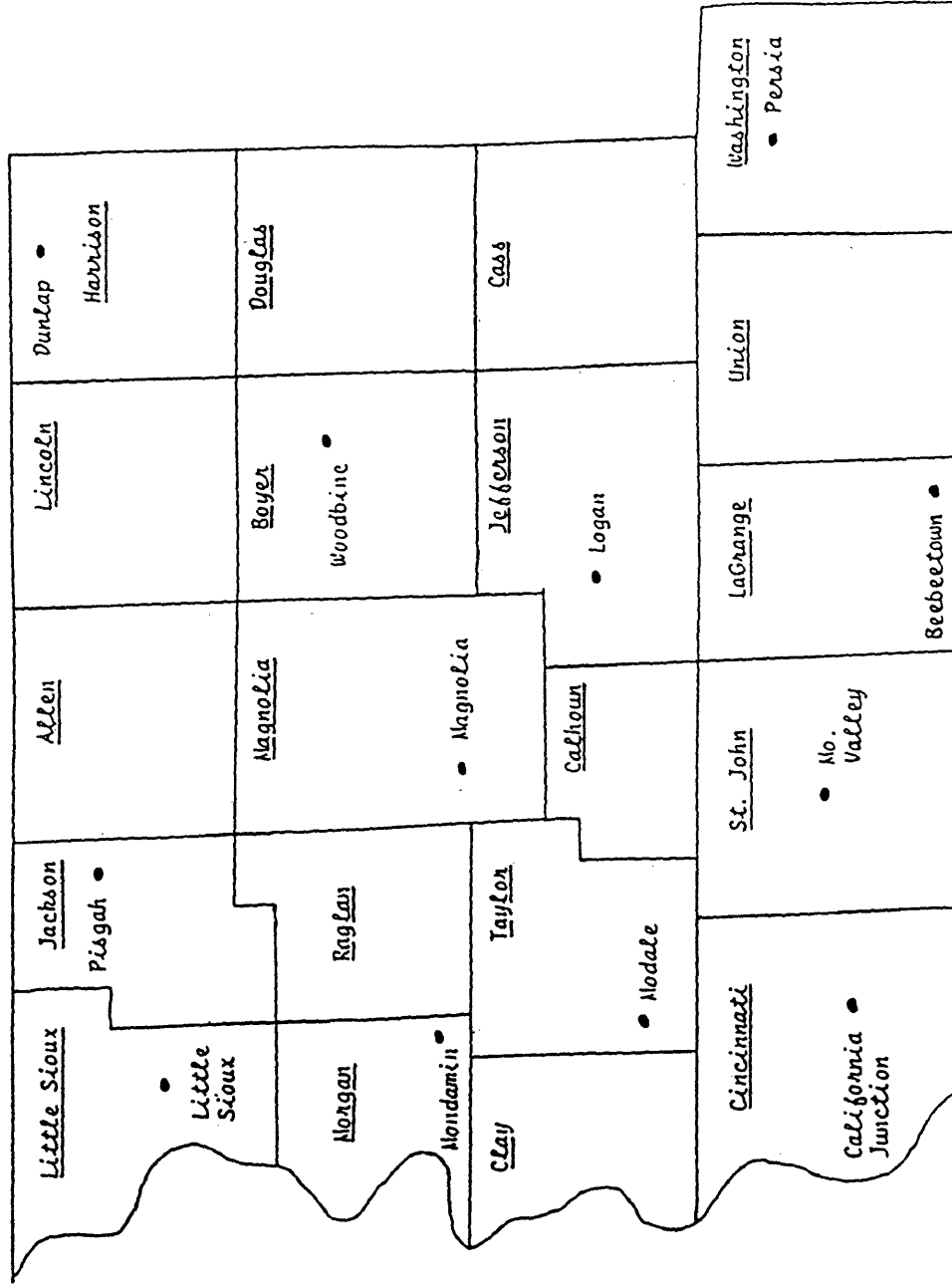
Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Vol. III, Part I. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 746.

HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA, GENERAL FEATURES



Rand McNally Road Atlas, 1993 edition, p. 34. Enlarged for detail.

HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA: TOWNSHIPS



Map provided by the Harrison County Extension Office.

INTRODUCTION

NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER SOURCES

Aside from the many books and articles consulted during the compilation of this work, there were three sources which were of greatest use: the published census documents, the annual narrative reports of the Harrison County Extension Office, and four newspapers, the Logan Observer, Woodbine Twiner, Little Sioux Hustler, and Dunlap Reporter.

Census documents were vital because of the massive statistics they presented on almost every conceivable subject from population of people and animals, to what was grown and sold in the county, to what many things were worth, and the membership totals for the various religious denominations. This information gave much factual evidence and provided a good foundation for further research. The major detriment of this type of documentation is that it simply lists things, and does not provide, or attempt to provide, additional insights into how this data reflected the lives of the real people who lived in the county. Other sources were necessary to gain this perspective.

The annual extension reports which began in Harrison County in 1925 also provided hard data, but were much more revealing when it came to people's business, entertainment, and opinions. Of course, they were limited mainly to those things which were of interest to a rural extension office: the raising of crops and livestock, parasitic infestations, disease control, and farm management. Happily, they also provided an

excellent source of information for many of the farm or home-related clubs and activities in which many women and children participated for entertainment or educational purposes. They also provided some indication of political concerns, at least those concerns which touched on agriculture. This material depended to some extent upon the particular personality of the extension agent, who was trying to get the county's farmers to unite and vote in ways which would advance agriculture as a business and as a successful way of life.

Ultimately, the principal and most useful sources were the newspapers. They are at the opposite end of the spectrum from the census documents, as they only occasionally give hard statistical data (except for periodic bank reports), but provide a wealth of opinion and information on what was of importance to the people of Harrison County. They covered every subject of public interest, from politics and current events, to civic improvements, religion, and entertainment. If the paper stopped discussing a particular subject, such as the Ku Klux Klan, then it is a good indication that the subject had ceased to be locally important.

Of course, one can never be certain that some political stories might have remained unprinted because of an editor's bias or reluctance to offend individuals or the community. Likewise, political partisanship and other affiliations may influence newspaper content; however, in spite of the fact that two of the four newspapers consulted for this work were Republican, another sometimes Republican and sometimes independent, and the fourth solidly independent, each had its own character and did not always report on the same

topic in the same way. This undoubtedly reflected the individuality of the editors. Although their biases were easily detected in their editorial columns, they were all fairly good at keeping such slants out of their news articles.

The first paper was the Logan Observer, utilized for this work from the years 1920 through 1931. It was a Republican paper delivered to its readers on Thursdays, and its editor throughout these years was F. H. McCabe.¹ It was an eight-page paper which increased the amount of information it could deliver by changing from a six-column format to a seven-column format in late 1929. This paper had the most to say about everything, and was particularly blunt in its editorials. It led the character assassinations on S. W. Brookhart and F. D. Roosevelt, and was equally vociferous on individuals and subjects it supported.

The Observer was very favorable to prohibition and very much against the League of Nations, which it seemed to see as a threat to American independence. Its biases notwithstanding, the Observer could boast, in general, the best writing and editing of the four papers, and seemed to attract the largest numbers of ads and printed the most cartoons and pictures.

Among the features of the Observer was a series of editorial articles called "Uncle Ted's Bedtime Stories," which took the format of a down-home midwestern farmer who also just happened to be a world-traveler with powerful connections and vast historical knowledge giving history lessons to his eagerly attentive niece and nephew, as well as the person actually reading the article. Subjects under discussion were always of national and

international importance, and were designed to increase the reader's awareness of important national issues. It was very interesting and entertaining reading but was very biased against Democrats and foreigners. This weekly feature ended in 1924. There were also serialized novels on page eight which, as the decade progressed, were gradually phased out.

There were Sunday school lessons on page eight every week, until they were displaced as the years went on, and a ubiquitous little cartoon character called "Bill Booster" who appeared in 1923 and whose job it was to deliver peppy remarks in support of conservative ethics, hard work and the American way of life in general. There was one very useful article which appeared nearly every week from the Public Health Service, which gave tips on health, disease, vaccines, and explained various body parts in as much detail as decorum allowed.

The Woodbine Twiner, used for the years 1920 through 1929, was also an eight-page paper delivered on Thursdays. It was Republican and its editor during these years was E. A. Stevens.² Like the Observer, its editing and writing were good, and while its editorials were less partisan than the Observer's, it also pulled no punches when it came to a subject it supported or opposed. It will be seen that of all the papers used, only the Twiner was completely against the Ku Klux Klan. Of course, it also came out in support of prohibition, as it was bound to do because of its Republicanism.

All of the papers derided the driving skills of the county's motorists, but the Twiner was particularly shrill on this subject, with a constant attack on automobile headlights,

either the lack of them or, more usually, complaining about how bright and glaring they were. It listed in gruesome detail the death and destruction caused by brilliant lights and demanded responsibility from drivers.

Of course, the Twiner also had serialized stories and Sunday school lessons, but these were phased out as time went on, just as in the Observer. Possibly their publishers could no longer afford to buy the serializations. Notably, alone among the Republican newspapers used, the Twiner, in the weeks leading to the elections of 1922, invited the Democrats to give them a weekly column to print in their editorials to show two views of the issues at hand, which says much about E. A. Stevens, the paper's editor.

The Little Sioux Hustler, used for the years from 1920 through 1930, was delivered on Fridays and at four pages in length, was only half the size of the other papers. Its editor during the decade was H. W. Kerr. The political affiliation of the paper wavered considerably; from 1920 until 1923 it was Republican, after which it became independent. From 1925 to 1926 it labeled itself an "independent Republican" paper, and then it changed back to independent from 1927 on through the end of the decade.³ The paper seemed to have more ads than anything else, and the editing appeared minimal. The paper was full of grammatical and printing errors and the spelling, even in the headlines, was so poor as to be a serious distraction. The paper increased its reporting capacity by the addition of an extra column in November of 1924.

The editorials followed the Republican line, being pro-suffrage and pro-prohibition. Of the four papers, the Hustler seemed to be the most vocal against the

"Reds" in the early years of the decade, and carried a number of front page political cartoons devoted to the subject. Invariably these were in a national context, so as to impress upon the readers the enormity of the danger.

The last newspaper utilized was the Dunlap Reporter, from 1920 through 1930. It was an independent paper which was delivered on Thursdays, and its editor throughout this period was O. E. Bramson.⁴ It was an eight-page paper with six columns, but the preponderance of many large-scale ads throughout each edition tended to reduce the amount of information it provided. It lived up to its status as an independent paper admirably by rarely giving strong political opinions. Even in its editorials the paper remained generally aloof, only providing short observations on any given issue, and these many times in the form of an amusing parable or a witty saying. The one important exception to this rule was the very strong antipathy displayed in the editorials toward Robert La Follette during his presidential campaign in 1924. La Follette received scant support from the other papers studied, but the Reporter provided the most vocal opposition to his candidacy.

In the early years there was a feature called "Little Shots at Bolshevism" which consisted of small patriotic sayings promoting the American way of life, but nothing approaching the Hustler's coverage of the subject of Communism. Prohibition and the Chicago criminal element, beloved mainstays of the Observer's editorial columns, were almost never discussed. Neither was the Ku Klux Klan, although this organization was reported on by the other papers used. One received the impression that this paper was

intentionally avoiding any political issue which was likely to cause contention amongst its readers.

The Reporter presented several cartoon characters whose purpose was to provide peppy, uplifting comments, sometimes on a current issue, but more often about nothing specific at all. A character called "U. B. Thrifty" was sponsored by the Dunlap State Bank, and predictably his boosterisms concerned financial matters. Then there was "Red Pep, the Live Wire Philosopher," a natty little individual sponsored by Enoch Ericson Groceries, who promoted quality meats and groceries along with his comments on human nature. The character, "Bill Booster," was issue-oriented, and was shared by the Logan Observer. The Reporter retained this character long after the Observer had abandoned it.

Sunday school lessons and serializations appeared in various locations in the Reporter, just as they did in the other three papers. Unlike the other papers, however, the Reporter retained its serializations all the way through the decade, evidently deciding the expense of printing them was justified. This paper was also alone in printing crossword puzzles, which it did beginning in 1925. They were evidently judged to be of less value than the serial stories, however, as they were discontinued the very next year.

In general, the four newspapers were useful in showing what was important to Harrison County residents, and in doing so revealed tendencies or traits common in the county. The early presence of lengthy Sunday school lessons and Bible verses, not to mention the specific articles on the activities of each local church, suggested that the people of the county in the early to middle 1920s were very religious and felt their

churches to be a vital part of their life and society. The obituaries, which were prominent in all the papers, were full of religious feeling and faith. The papers published the titles of the next Sunday's sermons, weekly church attendance figures, and how much money in tithes and offerings individual churches had received.

The fact that as the decade progressed much of this information, which had at first tended to be placed in the front of the paper, was either shoved further back or was reduced or eliminated altogether, should not necessarily be seen as a loss of religious feeling in the county. Rather, it was likely a response to the worsening economic situation and an indication of increasing political uncertainties, and the need to be better informed about vital national politics which affected the county's citizens. In addition to this, it also reflected a basic change in the county's social life, for as the decade progressed the increasing number of automobiles and better roads provided the county's citizens with a wider choice of activities and diversions than ever before. Thus, the newspapers began to use their valuable space to promote these social events, ranging from county and township fairs to the latest offerings of Omaha's movie palaces.

ENDNOTES

1. Iowa Official Register, 1919-1920, 630. The editions of the Register through the decade show that he continued as editor of the Observer during these years and beyond.
2. Ibid., 639. The editions of the Register through the decade show that he continued as editor of the Twiner during these years and beyond.
3. Ibid., 630, gives the editor's name and the Hustler's Republican affiliation. The Register, 1923-1924, 587, shows the paper was now independent. The Register, 1925-1926, 630, lists the Hustler as "Independent Republican," and the Register, 1927-1928, 541, shows it had reverted to "Independent," and it remained this way for the rest of the decade.
4. Iowa Official Register, 1919-1920, 629. The editions of the Register through the decade show that he continued as editor of the Reporter during these years and beyond.

CHAPTER I

SETTLEMENT AND POPULATION

There is a county in western Iowa, snug up against the Missouri River, which has many wooded hills and small winding rivers. Its geography is typical of the counties along the east bank of the Missouri, while in other respects it fits in with other agricultural counties all across the Midwest. It has been home to generations of people who have lived there, raised families on its farms and in its towns, and have been buried there. People who have moved from its rural lands have retained connections there throughout their lives wherever they have gone. It is Harrison County, and the purpose of this work is to reconstruct and examine the life of its citizens during the decade between 1920 and 1930: it will examine how people worked; how they played; what their political and civic concerns were, and how citizens strove to improve their way of life.

Before the white settlers arrived to carve a section of land into a unit called Harrison County, it was first used by indigenous peoples of various tribes. There is little evidence that Indians lived permanently in the area, but the Sioux, Pottawattamies, Otoes, and Omahas utilized the area as a hunting ground.¹ According to an early history, when white pioneers began to move in, Otoe and Sioux bands would sometimes terrorize them, and then turn around and beg food from them, and when that did not succeed, they would fight among themselves.²

Fur traders were likely the first white men to reach the east bank of the Missouri, but the first expedition to set foot in Harrison County were the men who traveled with Lewis and Clark when they pitched camp somewhere below the mouth of the Soldier River in 1804.³ There were additional explorations under Edwin James, attached to Stephen H. Long's expedition, and Stephen W. Kearny in 1820, who explored the Boyer River valley to ascertain the value of the local resources.⁴ Shortly after this, the whole of western Iowa and more was acquired by the United States in a treaty signed on July 15, 1830, whereby the numerous tribes of Indians ceded away all of their claims to the land.⁵

White settlement in western Iowa began in earnest when the area west of the Mississippi and east of the Missouri was organized into the Territory of Michigan in 1834. This region was transferred to Wisconsin Territory in 1836, and the next year it became the new Territory of Iowa.⁶ The first significant group of white people to settle in southwestern Iowa were Mormons, who generally stopped only temporarily along the Missouri during their trek west. But some stayed, making up the bulk of the initial white squatters who remained in what would become Harrison County.⁷ The first known people to settle in the county were the Mormons Daniel Brown and his family, who located near Calhoun on April 3, 1848.⁸

There is some confusion in the sources as to just when Harrison County was first organized. In some cases, the year 1851 is given, and in others the date is 1853. The discrepancy seems to arise from the fact that the borders of the county were set in 1851, although no county seat was chosen until 1853, when Magnolia was accorded this status.⁹

The issue becomes even more cloudy when we discover that the county's townships were officially surveyed and fixed in 1852.¹⁰ The correct date for the county's organization should be 1851, as this is when its borders were fixed, even if the designation is meaningless without an established center for county administration.

The county's formal existence was vital to the attraction of settlers, for from the beginning, the county was the political basis for representation in the lower house of the Iowa General Assembly.¹¹ When counties were established, settlers could expect the rapid development of the area and the arrival of government services, such as the post office. Because of the difficulties of frontier travel, the county developed into the largest unit with which most people identified. Land and towns several counties away may as well have been in a foreign country.

Counties, however, were considered to be secondary in importance to municipalities.¹² Many people lived in the towns, encouraging post offices, businesses, theaters, schools and churches to locate in or near them. They were centers of trade and industry, even more so when railroads were established. Missouri Valley, Logan, and Dunlap came into existence in 1867 when the Chicago and North Western Railway created junctions at these sites.¹³ And amongst the towns, the county seat was the most important of all.

"County seats were queens of the early political chess boards . . ." ¹⁴ They held the county offices and therefore had the greatest opportunity for development, growth, and prosperity. This fact was a perennial source of strife in the Midwest in the early years of

settlement. There are ninety-nine county seats in Iowa, and about two-thirds of these were selected only after a series of heated contests with neighboring communities.¹⁵ In one county, "contests were so frequent . . . that an editor once suggested putting the county offices on wheels so that the seat of local government might be more readily moved from place to place as the whim of the voters should direct."¹⁶ Harrison County was no stranger to this type of discord.

Three locations were originally proposed to be the county seat: Calhoun, Magnolia, and Reel's Mill near what is now Logan.¹⁷ Magnolia was chosen in 1853, and Calhoun at once disputed this, but without success.¹⁸ For a number of years, Magnolia thrived, gaining the first district schoolhouse in the county, the first mill on Willow River, the first post office, first stage coach route, and in 1858 the first Masonic lodge. By this time Magnolia had three hundred citizens and a wide range of businesses including a tailor, a cobbler, a plasterer, two jewelers, and ten carpenters.¹⁹

Good times were threatened in 1866 when the Chicago and North Western railroad, building across Iowa, missed Magnolia.²⁰ By 1869 Missouri Valley felt that its position was secure enough to try for the seat. Its growth was impressive; it possessed important machine repair shops for the railroad, and Magnolia was isolated by poor roads. The citizens of Logan, already in competition with Missouri Valley, sided this time with Magnolia. Elections in 1870 and 1873 failed to move the seat to Missouri Valley.²¹

In 1875 it was Logan's turn, for it also possessed railroad connections, expanding businesses, and had a central location. Neither Missouri Valley nor Magnolia put forth

any great effort to stop this attempt, and in the general election of that year the seat was transferred to Logan by a margin of two votes.²² Missouri Valley and Magnolia allied against Logan to try to remove the seat to Missouri Valley in 1887, but were defeated, as was the final attempt by Missouri Valley in 1891 when the town offered \$7,500 towards the cost of building a new courthouse. This last episode became so vitriolic that Missouri Valley and Logan accused each other of unethical behavior, and the case reached Iowa's Supreme Court. When the matter was finally laid to rest, Logan retained the seat.²³ In more recent times, the state constitution prevented the arbitrary relocation of county seats to prevent such infighting, mainly because the reasons to do so had revolved around community economic rivalries rather than any administrative need.²⁴

Settlement in the county, as previously stated, began in earnest in 1853 when the first county seat was established. There were about fifty frontier families scattered across Harrison County before this date, but the number quickly grew as there were many attractive natural resources to be had.²⁵

As is true for most of Iowa's western tier of counties, Harrison County presented a more varied topography than most of the counties further east. Nearly the entire county was crossed by rivers and streams, some of considerable size, which flowed in a southwesterly direction to the Missouri River. The land was therefore very well-watered and drained and quite suitable for farming.

The Missouri River's tributaries in the county were the Boyer, Soldier, and Little Sioux rivers, and there were several notable creeks, such as the Wilson, Mosquito, and

Pigeon. The Boyer valley varied from a half-mile to two miles in width. This was alluvial land bordered by slopes until it reached the Missouri bottoms. Both the Soldier and Little Sioux were edged by striking hills and bluffs as they reached the Missouri. The valleys of the Pigeon and Mosquito Creeks were also formed of fertile alluvial soil and were margined by high sloping uplands.

The Missouri bottomlands into which all of these channels flowed was a wide level plain varying in width from four to ten miles, bordered on the east by high bluffs. A belt of woodlands extended from there through the county along the rivers, and included cottonwood, elm, mulberry, walnut, ash, oak and willow. The soil of the bottomlands was very fertile and capable of supporting grains and vegetables in abundance. The soil of the central uplands was similar to the rich soil of the bottoms, but contained less humus, yet was still suitable for the raising of crops and livestock.

Harrison County contained more timber than any other Iowa county along the Missouri River, and it was found crowded along the river valleys and beside the banks of every stream. There were groves along the Little Sioux and Soldier Rivers, and near Magnolia and Logan. Fruit trees did very well in the county, and apples, pears, quinces and grapes were grown with great success.

The county also had extensive deposits of limestone, and several quarries were eventually put into operation. The largest of these was near Logan, from which, in time, "a considerable amount [was] annually shipped to Council Bluffs and other points."²⁶

Attracted by all of these resources, incoming settlers brought the population of the county to 1,900 by 1856, and by 1867 it had grown by three thousand more, living either on farms or in the small towns which had been formed by this date. These were Magnolia, Missouri Valley, Logan, Woodbine, Calhoun, Dunlap, Little Sioux, and St. John's.²⁷

Population continued to increase gradually until 1890, when drought in the plains devastated crops as far east as central Iowa. Many plains settlers were not as financially secure as Iowa farmers and were forced to sell their land. Large numbers of these people retreated eastward into western Iowa to settle, "contributing to one of the fastest population jumps in area history."²⁸

In 1900, the total population of the county had been 25,597; in 1910 it had dropped to 23,162, with a rebound in 1920 to 24,488.²⁹ The largest of the county's twenty townships in 1920 were: St. John, including Missouri Valley, with 4,876; Jefferson Township with Logan at 2,619; Boyer Township with Woodbine at 2,266; and Harrison Township with Dunlap at 2,128. The other townships having a thousand or more people were, in order of descent, Magnolia Township and town, Washington Township with Persia, and Little Sioux Township and town (See Table I).³⁰

TABLE I - POPULATION BY TOWNSHIP		
Township	Census of 1920	Census of 1930
Allen	596	584
Boyer (including Woodbine)	2,266	2,143
Calhoun	509	538

TABLE I (Continued) - POPULATION BY TOWNSHIP		
Township	Census of 1920	Census of 1930
Cass	843	818
Cincinnati	534	606
Clay	457	482
Douglas	750	718
Harrison (including Dunlap)	2,128	2,192
Jackson (including Pisgah)	970	1,019
Jefferson (including Logan)	2,619	2,685
La Grange	724	721
Lincoln	600	660
Little Sioux (including Little Sioux)	1,114	1,074
Magnolia (including Magnolia)	1,286	1,250
Morgan (including Mondamin)	907	878
Raglan	529	580
St. John (including Missouri Valley)	4,876	5,166
Taylor (including Modale)	819	812
Union	800	848
Washington (including Persia)	1,161	1,123
Total Harrison County	24,488	24,897

In 1920, 12,571 Harrison County residents were male, and 11,917 were female. All of these were white persons, except for twenty-three blacks.³¹ The vast majority of the

population, 20,503, lived rurally with only 3,985 living in the towns.³² Harrison County's people were of ethnically diverse origins. The majority were second generation or older Americans, but 1,464 persons were foreign-born, coming from Germany, Denmark, Canada, England, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, and Wales, in descending totals, with just a few immigrants of Slavic origins.³³

By 1930, the total population of the county had increased only slightly to 24,897. The difference in the sexes had widened by over three hundred people, as there were now 12,935 men to only 11,962 women. The number of blacks in the county had increased to twenty-seven.³⁴ There were only 1,089 first generation immigrants new to the county at this time, with a similar national representation to the previous census.³⁵

Perhaps the most significant change between 1920 and 1930 was in the number of people who lived on the farms as opposed to those who lived in the towns. In 1930 the number of people on farms was 20,667, an increase of only 164. The urban population - those living in one of the little towns or villages - was now 4,230, an increase of 245.³⁶ This represented the first small step in an irreversible trend in which the agrarian population would become a smaller and smaller percentage of the total as cities grew in size and importance.

ENDNOTES

1. Joe H. Smith, History of Harrison County, Iowa (Des Moines: Iowa Printing Company, 1888), 67. Similar information can be found in A. T. Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1875), 492.
2. A. T. Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1875), 492.
3. John W. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1968), 1.
4. William J. Petersen, Iowa: The Rivers of Her Valleys (Iowa City: The Torch Press, 1941), 275-276.
5. Frank H. Garver, "Boundary History of the Counties of Iowa," Iowa Journal 7 (Jan., 1909): 48.
6. Charles W. Hunt, History of Harrison County, Iowa (Indianapolis, In.: B. R. Bowen and Company, Inc., 1915), 85. Similar information can be found in Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1974), 60.
7. Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 492.
8. Ibid.
9. Two writers state that Harrison County was organized by the Iowa Legislature on January 15, 1851. These are Jacob A. Swisher, "The Location of County Seats in Iowa," Iowa Journal 22 (Jan., April, July, 1924): 253, and Garver, "Boundary History of the Counties of Iowa," Iowa Journal, 48. However, other sources give the date as March, 1853. These are Blanche C. Sly, "Magnolia," Palimpsest 2 (Sept., 1921): 290; Hunt, History of Harrison County, Iowa, 97; Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 492; and Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 5. The discrepancy arises from the fact that the Legislature drew the county borders in 1851, while a county seat was not chosen until 1853, when Magnolia was selected, which is obviously the basis for the later date.
10. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 4-5.

11. Kirk H. Porter, "Definition of the County in Iowa," Applied History 4 (1925): 3.
12. Ibid., 2.
13. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 10, and Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 492.
14. Richard C. Legett, "A Courthouse at a Bargain," The Annals of Iowa 27 (July, 1945): 37.
15. Jacob A. Swisher, "A Transient County Seat," Palimpsest 7 (Dec., 1926): 390.
16. Ibid.
17. Swisher, "The Location of County Seats in Iowa," 253.
18. Hunt, History of Harrison County, Iowa, 97.
19. Sly, "Magnolia," 291-297.
20. Ibid., 295.
21. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 18-19.
22. Ibid., 20, and Swisher, "The Location of County Seats in Iowa," 253. Again, there is a slight discrepancy in the dates, as in Sly, "Magnolia," 295, the date is given as 1876. I believe 1875 is the correct date as this is the only instance when I found the move of the county seat to Logan given as 1876.
23. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 21.
24. Porter, "Definition of the County in Iowa," 13.
25. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 4.
26. Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 492.
27. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 6-7, and Andreas, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 492.

28. Helen Adams, ed. Harrison County Iowa, Vol. 1, (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1931), 7.
29. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920. Population, Vol. I., 419.
30. Ibid., for the 1920 Census information in Table I, and for the 1930 information, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population, Vol. III, Part I., 804-805.
31. Ibid., 1,338.
32. Ibid., 157.
33. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. III., 334.
34. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population, Vol. III. Part I., 759 and 804.
35. Ibid., 786.
36. Ibid., 759.

CHAPTER II

AGRICULTURE

Iowa is an agricultural state, with about ninety-four percent of its total land area being fit for agricultural purposes.¹ Harrison County in the 1920s was a typical agricultural county sharing with its neighbors a farm-based economy. The farm and its products provided the major source of income for the county's citizens. During the 1920s the farmer, not only in Harrison County but throughout the Midwest, began to suffer the effects of an increasing economic depression beginning with the end of World War I and culminating at the close of the decade in the stock market crash.

To understand the nature of the agricultural problem more clearly, it needs to be said that farming is a difficult and uncertain profession. The farmer has no control over the prices he pays for goods or, more importantly, for what he can ask for his own products, as he "buys in a seller's market, and he sells in a buyer's market."² In 1920, a twenty-three year period known as the Golden Age of Agriculture ended. It is likely this period would have closed in 1913 but for the stimulus provided by the First World War.³

During the war, all sectors of the national economy produced as much as possible to help the war effort, and it was profitable as well as patriotic to raise crops at top capacity.⁴ Government price supports for agriculture were kept through 1920, when the guaranteed prices on wheat and other crops were terminated. The government ended loans to European nations at the same time, which meant they were unable to purchase our agricultural products. This is what had kept the exports going, and the exports had

driven the farmer's boom. In the years just after the war, the prices for farm goods fell by half, as did farmer income. The Federal Reserve raised the credit rate just when the farmer needed its help the most, so money tightened up, banks did not renew notes, but mortgages and bills still came due. To make it worse, the railroads raised their freight rates, so it was more expensive to get the crops to market.⁵

Nationwide, demand for American food fell dramatically. Farm income fell from \$17.7 billion in 1919 to \$10.5 million in 1921, and the price of wheat alone decreased to less than half of its wartime price. Taxes on the remaining income, and the other expenses incurred in farming, remained as high as they ever were, or increased.⁶

These economic troubles affected farm families across the nation by forcing them to return to practices they had begun to abandon in previous years. As money became scarce, activities such as slaughtering, canning, baking, and tailoring, which had begun to move into the factories, had to be re-established at home.⁷ Those farming operations which utilized hired labor found that money could be saved by letting these people go and using family members instead, "even if it meant women working in the fields and the premature termination of schooling for children."⁸

Reduced opportunities on the farm led many to look for a better life in the towns and cities of the nation. Some farmers were able to consolidate small neighboring farms into larger operations as an answer to the situation, but many more found that a job of any sort in the city was a better financial move. At the very least, this provided a measure of security for themselves and their families which could no longer be found on the farm. Up

until 1920, there had been an historic growth in the number and size of farms in the nation; in the years just following, the number of farms, total farm acreage, and farm population all suffered drastic reduction.⁹ Nationally, "farm population showed net losses of 478,000 in 1922 and 234,000 in 1923."¹⁰

Abandoned farmhouses became a sight that was increasingly common, as by 1922 fourteen percent of the habitable farmhouses in the country lay vacant. From 1919 to 1924 there was a 3.25 percent decrease in the total number of farms with a 7.8 percent reduction in the amount of land that was actively used for agricultural purposes.¹¹

Along with this came a growing fear that the quality of the nation's farmers was falling into an inevitable decline. As the crisis deepened in the early years of the decade, more farmers who had reached retirement age were moving to the city and taking their wealth with them. The more lucrative prospects of the city were also luring the best of the younger generations away, as those with the drive and ambition to succeed were taking their gifts into urban professions. "Rural sociologists became imbued with a settled pessimism"¹² as it began to appear that the only people who were going to remain on the farms were lugheads and slaggards, and not only would farming as a profession be reduced in wealth, it would also decline in social status.

In Iowa, farm values had almost tripled between 1910 and 1920, to over eight and a half billion dollars.¹³ In the next decade, farm value had dropped by nearly half of that figure.¹⁴ This is illustrated by Harrison County's total crop values, which in 1919 were \$10,818,336, and which fell to \$5, 733, 568 by 1924.¹⁵

In Harrison County, land values in 1930 were at forty-one million dollars, a drop of over thirty-five million from 1920.¹⁶ In spite of all their efforts, everything the local farmer had worked for during the decade of the 1920s was not enough to prevent the loss of their income or land and equipment value.

By the end of the period, there were increasing calls for the farmer to produce less. As an example, the Federal Farm Board received pleas from the governor of North Dakota requesting that wheat farmers reduce production by ten percent.¹⁷ Wheat, along with corn and oats, was one of Harrison County's major crops. Economic experts urged farmers to reduce poultry and egg production to help boost the price of dairy goods nationwide.¹⁸ Harrison's farmers of the period, as evidenced by several letters to the editor of the Logan Observer, were not as concerned with such economic projections as they were worried that they were being asked to reduce production, without compensation, of the only things which were bringing in money.

To understand the deteriorating farm situation in Harrison County, it is necessary to consider the details of local farm operation in the 1920s. This will illustrate some of the agricultural trends during the decade and indicate what the farmers of the county were doing to cope with their problems.

The actual number of farms in the county, as well as the average size of the farms, fluctuated somewhat during this time. In 1910, during the boom period, there were 2,914 farms in Harrison County, with a slight decrease in the number to 2,881 by 1920.¹⁹ By 1925, the number had decreased further to 2,753, but rebounded by the end of 1930 to

2,960.²⁰ The average size of these farms was 144 acres in 1920; it increased to 145.4 acres in 1925, and remained nearly the same by 1930 at 145.3.²¹ The total land given over to farms in the county was 414,961 acres, or 93.8 percent in 1920, which increased to 430,152 acres, or 97.3 percent, by 1930.²²

Of the different types of domestic animals to be found on Harrison County's farms, it can be said that while the numbers of animals increased over the decade, their total value fell significantly. Cattle, for instance, numbered 41,647 in 1920, and increased slightly to 42,218 by 1930. The other types of farm animals whose numbers increased during the decade were mules, from 2,161 to 2,450; sheep from 8,124 to 10,791; goats from 152 to 309; chickens from 316,396 to 342,190; and swine, from 96,056 to 126,632. The increased production of corn was one of the main reasons the county could raise so many more hogs, as it could be fed to them successfully and provided a growing slice of the county's income.

Of the animals whose total numbers decreased, horses fell from 16,220 in 1920 to 14,012 in 1930, asses and burros from 26 to 16, and the number of bee hives from 2,200 to 850. The total value of these animals in 1920 was \$6,396,735, and in 1930 was \$6,026,310 (See Table II).²³ A bright note was the total value of dairy products, which increased from \$423,355 in 1920 to \$625,618 by 1930.²⁴

TABLE II		
Number and Total Value of Domestic Animals in Harrison County		
Domestic Animals	Census of 1920	Census of 1930
Cattle	41,647	42,218
Mules	2,161	2,450
Sheep	8,124	10,791
Goats	152	309
Chickens	316,396	342,190
Swine	96,056	126,632
Horses	16,220	14,012
Asses and Burros	26	16
Bee Hives	2,200	850
Total U.S. Dollar Value	\$6,396,735	\$6,026,310

A much bleaker statistic for the county concerns the value of the different types of food stuffs grown by the local farmer. In general, the farmer produced much more of everything, but could only watch while the overall cash value of his product dwindled. This was due to the decrease in demand for these products as foreign markets were taken away at the end of World War I and was basic to the farm crisis of the early years of the 1920s. In Harrison County, corn was king, and in 1920 the total number of bushels grown

was 5,041,567, which increased by 1930 to 8,597,337. Also increasing in production was oats, in bushels, from 855,384 to 1,522,770; barley, from 49,856 bushels to 110,572; potatoes, from 58,271 bushels to 116,622. Crops decreasing in production were wheat from 648,406 bushels in 1920 to 494,436 in 1930; rye, from 4,578 bushels to 4,219; alfalfa, from 47,288 tons to 30,771; and clover, from 2,718 tons to 1,917.²⁵ The surprising reduction in the amount of wheat grown in the county is likely the result of the falling prices for wheat in the country due to the importation of Canadian and Argentine wheat after the war.²⁶ Farmers were abandoning wheat and alfalfa to grow other crops or raise hogs in an attempt to find something which would pay their bills.

A general increase in the amount of fruit products is also reported during the decade. The number of quarts of strawberries produced in 1920 was 9,740, which increased dramatically to 46,615 by 1930. Also reporting increases were raspberries, from 20,012 quarts to 34,457; peaches, only 3 bushels to 971; pears, from 96 bushels to 2,192; plums and prunes, from 555 bushels to 3,051; cherries, from 1,797 bushels to 2,068; and grapes, from 141,418 pounds to 298,560. The only reported decrease in production was apples, which fell from 55,400 bushels to 32,323 by 1930 (See Table III).²⁷

The total value of this tremendous increase in produce of all kinds, cereals, vegetables and fruits, was \$11,095,251 in 1920, and only \$7,974,150 in 1930.²⁸ The increase in production by 1930 can be seen as both a cause and effect of the low prices, for as a farmer's surplus increases, its market worth is likely to decrease. It is natural to want to make more of your product if it is selling slowly in the hope more people will

want to buy from you, to compensate for the depressed prices caused by the surplus in the first place.

Produce	Unit of Measure	Census of 1920	Census of 1930
Corn	Bushels	5,041,567	8,597,337
Oats	Bushels	855,384	1,522,770
Barley	Bushels	49,856	110,572
Potatoes	Bushels	58,271	116,622
Wheat	Bushels	648,406	494,436
Rye	Bushels	4,578	4,219
Alfalfa	Tons	47,288	30,771
Clover	Tons	2,718	1,917
Strawberries	Quarts	9,740	46,615
Raspberries	Quarts	20,012	34,457
Peaches	Bushels	3	971
Pears	Bushels	96	2,192
Plums and Prunes	Bushels	555	3,051
Cherries	Bushels	1,797	2,068
Grapes	Pounds	141,418	298,560
Apples	Bushels	55,400	32,323
Total Value	U.S. Dollars	\$11,095,251	\$7,974,150

It is possible this is why there was such an increase in fruit production, so that more could be sold to the people living in the county's towns, and for the farm family's own home consumption. During the difficult days of 1929 and 1930 when bankruptcies and bank failures began to overwhelm the national economy, and high transportation costs from farms to the big cities began to cause food shortages and bread lines, "bands of

hungry men took to the road searching for jobs. Rural Harrison County was more fortunate, because people could at least raise their own food.”²⁹

In response to these dark developments, the farmer of the county did not, on the whole, pack up his household and move to greener pastures elsewhere. Instead, he turned to organizing with his neighbors so that their shared concerns could be heard by the county, state, and national government. Farmers' organization in the state of Iowa had long been recognized as a viable means to an end, a way to make sure their concerns were weighed just as heavily as those of other sectors of society.

The earliest mention of agricultural organization in Iowa came on December 19, 1838, when a law entitled "An Act to provide for the Incorporation of Agricultural Societies" was enacted.³⁰ This law allowed twenty or more individuals to incorporate into societies whose purpose was to promote agriculture and stock-raising by awarding prizes for innovations that were developed. A second law similar to this was passed in 1842, which provided for a blanket society spanning the entire territory.³¹

Initially there had been no great rush to organize, so in 1843 the General Assembly tried to encourage it by allowing groups of twenty or more to organize and charge annual dues of five dollars a person for the collective benefit of the organization. It was not until 1852 that the provisions of this law were used, when the Jefferson County Agricultural Society was formed.³² This group was helped when laws were enacted to allow them to draw state funds to an amount equal to the 1853 poll tax for the county so long as a county fair was held.³³

Growing interest led to a desire for a state-wide fair, which was first held in October of 1854 at Fairfield, and which was attended by from seven to ten thousand people.³⁴ Subsequently, the State Agricultural Society conducted an annual state fair until the organization was abolished in 1900 and transformed into the Department of Agriculture.³⁵ In 1923, the state fair became the responsibility of the Iowa State Fair Board.³⁶

The fairs, both county and state, were important to all the citizens, both farmers and townsfolk, not only as a venue for entertainment but as a means for sharing new farming techniques and equipment. "The county fairs served as a means of bringing the people of their respective communities together while the state fairs brought people from all sections of the state into closer contact."³⁷

As the 1920s began, there were a number of farm organizations in Harrison County. A small farmer's club was organized in January of 1920 in the village of Beebetown, because all the farmers were "beginning to sit up and take notice" of the impending agricultural troubles.³⁸ In the even smaller town of Reeder Mills, the local Progressive Farmer's Club held a meeting in 1921, which was composed of younger people and was organized to instruct them in new techniques in the raising of crops and livestock.³⁹ In 1923, the Farmer Club of Harrison County held its ninth annual meeting and picnic in Woodbine.⁴⁰ Other examples of small scale, locally organized farmer's clubs can be found in most of the county's newspapers during the decade, in large part aimed at children and young adults. They were designed to teach them about farming, and

encourage them about agriculture's future during increasingly hard times, as there was real concern about the tendency for young people to leave farming for jobs in the growing towns and cities.

For most adult farmers, however, the Farm Bureau was the organization of choice. Tied into an ever more intimate relationship with the county's extension office, this was where the real work was done in organizing farmers and their families. A wide spectrum of information was dispersed on subjects ranging from new techniques of swine management, to new chemical treatments for bot-fly infestations, to organizing the wives of farmers into support groups for their husbands and home industries for themselves.

The Farm Bureau's close ties with the extension office offered benefits to the county's farmers even as it drew complaints from those not associated with the Farm Bureau. Extension officials worked for Iowa State College (ISC), the parent organization for extension work in Iowa. The county extension agent was jointly employed by ISC and the Farm Bureau, which acted as its sponsoring farm aid society and had a hand in choosing the extension agent. As the agent also sold memberships in the Farm Bureau, this linked the two organizations even closer in the public's mind.⁴¹ Iowa state law also provided that ISC and the Farm Bureau work together to compile the annual agenda of programs for each county in meetings held every August or September.⁴²

The county agent quickly became the major source of information for farmers who needed answers to agricultural problems. If no answer or solution was readily available, the agent knew whom to contact to get the problem solved.⁴³ Although all farmers

appreciated this assistance, not every farmer was associated with the Farm Bureau, and this caused serious difficulties.

Farmers associated with the Grange or the Farmer's Union criticized the close connection between extension offices and the Farm Bureau because they felt that extension agents favored farmers belonging to the Farm Bureau over those who did not. "Membership in Farm Bureau was never a prerequisite to participation in extension projects, but for many the perception was more important than the fact."⁴⁴ Any opposition which was felt towards the Farm Bureau would therefore inevitably be transferred to the extension office and its agent.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the work accomplished by the extension office during the 1920s in Harrison County or Iowa as a whole.

Most of the evidence for extension activity in Harrison County comes from the records of the extension office in Logan, specifically from the county's annual narrative reports. These tidy and comprehensive yearly summaries of many things of importance in the county provide a revealing glance at the people of the county from 1925 on. Unfortunately, for the first five years of the decade there is only a skimpy, handwritten book called Short Course Building Minutes. The meaning of the title is a mystery, and the contents only include a few simple entries a year, and some years are passed over entirely. They only record who said what during county meetings that were evidently only rarely held and were of short duration.

All of this changed for the better in 1925. In this year a new County Agent, F. B. Hanson, was chosen, who remained in office for years after the scope of this work. He graduated from Iowa State College in Ames in 1913 and farmed at Inwood, Iowa, until January of 1925, when he became Agent. He also became secretary of the Harrison County Wheat Control Association, Harrison County Soil Conservation Association, and the Harrison County Corn Hog Control Association.⁴⁶

When he became Agent there had been virtually no 4-H boys club work in the county, and only three members in a baby beef club. During his nearly twelve years in office he expanded this to the point where a full time club agent had to be hired to handle all the club activities. He became very involved with tuberculosis eradication, corn improvement, insect control and fruit growing. In fact, the annual Harrison County Fruit Growers School, founded in 1929, became one of the best in the state.⁴⁷ Hanson remained as Agent until June of 1936, when he left to take the position of community project manager of the Granger Homestead in Granger, Iowa, under the supervision of the Resettlement Administration of ISC.⁴⁸

Hanson, as Agent, was responsible for the detailed annual reports kept by his office, as they began in the same year he arrived, and contained introductions and conclusions which he wrote. The first report, in 1925, stated that while he was a newcomer and not very well known, it was certain that as he became more familiar to the people of the county he would be better accepted and more able to organize projects and activities.⁴⁹

Every year the reports specify how many miles he traveled, and whether he went by train or car; how many home or farm visits he made; how many meetings he attended; how many letters and circulars he sent; how many telephone interviews he gave; how many days he spent in the office, in the field, or in other counties. They tell how many farm laborers he placed, how many blueprints and plans for farm buildings he helped create, and how many press articles he released. Significantly, they also report how often he was gone from the office. In the five years from 1925 to 1930, Hanson took an average of only eleven days leave of absence each year, including vacations, and only about half a day each year for sick leave.⁵⁰

By the end of the decade, Hanson had firmly established himself in the county as a man well worth his hire. He was involved in all aspects of farm management, promoting new methods of raising swine, new vaccines for cattle, new strains of hybrid corns which were being tested all over the county throughout this period, and new ways of organizing the county fair. In the yearly reports he told of new state and federal legislation which would affect farmers, and passionately urged them to participate in the Farm Bureau and to vote in ways which would support the agricultural economy. He seemed to appear whenever three or more people gathered together to discuss agriculture, and judging by the miles he logged in the annual reports and the respectful mentions given to him by the Logan Observer and other newspapers, he could very easily have become the single most important person in the county.⁵¹

The annual work agenda for the Farm Bureau and the extension office was determined by a vote of the county's people. Their main concerns were then turned into the specific projects that would be dealt with in the following year, and would appear under their own headings in the annual reports.⁵² It is thus fairly easy to follow the progress of individual programs from year to year. Perhaps the most frustrating project of all for Hanson was getting the men of the county to involve themselves in almost any activity, judging from the yearly pleas through 1930 for male participation.⁵³

Some of the Agent's ongoing concerns, aside from prodding the men of the county to participate in cooperative extension work, included the strategy for marketing the farmer's produce. Hanson was a strong proponent of cooperative marketing from the beginning, which was initially unpopular in Harrison County.⁵⁴ The Agent wanted to see better breeding sires in use for all types of livestock to improve their quality and value for the county.⁵⁵ Hanson's pleas for greater membership in the local Farm Bureau and local awareness of national agricultural politics increased as the years progressed, and became a more important part of his yearly summaries in the annual reports.

Strong organization was seen as the answer to Harrison County's problems. Hanson realized the terrible urban economic problems were impacting the farmers directly and he constantly fought the view that farmers were somehow unaffected by urban problems in distant states. The farmer must not simply sit back and accept what was offered to him by the federal government, but must organize to defeat "the sinister interests that would be satisfied by an American peasantry."⁵⁶ He did not specify just who

these sinister interests were, but it can be assumed he was referring to any individual or group who could be counted on to vote against legislation designed to help the farmer.

The Agent organized specific projects of long-term duration whose progress can be followed in the annual reports. One of these projects was county forestry, or shelter belt plantations. Seven shelter belts, set up in 1922, 1923, and 1924 were under careful observation by the extension office.⁵⁷ Three very dry years between 1923 and 1926 left the test shelter belts uneven, but did reveal that Carolina poplar, ash, white pine and cedar were excellent trees to use for this purpose, while western yellow pine tended to succumb regularly to the dry conditions.⁵⁸ By 1927, the extension office had encouraged the planting of more test belts in seven additional townships, with new types of trees such as Douglas fir and Norway spruce, both of which grew well.⁵⁹ The actual work of planting such belts was done by the Agent and the farmers on whose land the trees stood, assisted by any neighbors who were present to pick up information on the subject.

The extension office ran a continuing study of the county's soil, which initially received very little local interest, as the only real concern with the soil in Harrison County was erosion. This could be controlled with ditches and small drainage dams.⁶⁰ On the upland soil the major requirement was the addition of nitrogen and humus, both acquired by the seeding of sweet clover.⁶¹ The apple trees of Raglan Township had failed to produce on a par with previous years, so chemical fertilizers such as nitrate of soda and sulfate of ammonia were added to the soil. This was an apparent innovation, as this chemical fertilizer seems to have hardly been used in western Iowa before then.⁶²

By 1928, the third year chemical fertilizers had been tested in Harrison County soil, it had become clear that the normal procedure of planting sweet clover and alfalfa was an unsatisfactory solution for the county's lime-deficient upland soils which were mainly found in the eastern tier of townships.⁶³ Accordingly, lime additives were used with the clover in 1929, and the results were very impressive. The increase in the growth and stand of the clover in the treated fields was so marked that it could be seen from "a mile away."⁶⁴ Thereafter, local interest in chemical fertilizers grew quickly, mainly due to the aggressiveness of fertilizer salesmen. The Farm Bureau, however, still cautioned against the investment of too much money in such fertilizers until their effectiveness could be proven to be consistently beneficial.⁶⁵

One of the most vital projects selected directly by the Farm Bureau in 1925 was bovine tuberculosis eradication. The extension office gathered a list of 1,698 farmers for participation, as this disease was a threat to the local cattle economy and a health hazard to the people. The townsfolk of the county demanded that any dairy products they purchased from their rural neighbors be certified as free of tuberculosis.⁶⁶

To deal with the problem, many meetings were scheduled in Logan, Missouri Valley, Woodbine, Pisgah and Persia. The demonstrations and lectures at these seminars were well attended by the county's farmers. Nevertheless, the results for 1925 were very disappointing, because a court injunction was filed to stop further action on the eradication plan by unnamed opponents who felt that an organized tuberculosis eradication plan was just an excuse for another tax.⁶⁷ These court proceedings dragged on

from 1925 to July of 1927, despite a petition containing the signatures of fifty-seven percent of the county's farmers demanding the immediate commencement of the program. The matter was settled when the Iowa Supreme Court overturned the injunction and appointed a state inspector who would be put in charge of herd-testing for the county.⁶⁸

By 1928, more meetings were being held to refresh everyone's memory after the delay, and over sixty-five percent of the county's farmers had signed up for the seminars which would teach them about tuberculosis and the vaccines which would be used to fight it.⁶⁹ In 1929 there were no concrete results although vaccination schools had been set up the previous year to instruct farmers how to test herds and give vaccinations against tuberculosis and hog cholera. In 1928 there were 194 people who had completed the course, and in 1929 this number had grown to 216.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, no actual numbers of cattle lost to the disease or saved by the vaccines were reported, but it can be reasonably assumed that the combination of increasing local interest, continuing education, and the vaccine itself led to acceptable control of bovine tuberculosis in later years.

Another major project encouraged by the Farm Bureau and directed by the extension office was swine management, as hog-raising was the second most important source of income for the county, after the raising of corn. The concern here was arriving at a larger, healthier animal, and in 1926 the Agent decided to promote a new way to raise swine, called the McLean clean ground system. Simply put, if you expended the energy to provide a clean living area for your swine, you ended up with an adult pig whose average weight was one hundred pounds instead of sixty-three. That year the Bureau held twenty-

two demonstrations of the McLean system in Harrison County. They taught farmers how to raise hogs that were free of disease; how to select their sows; how to improve overall sanitation, and how to use their equipment properly.⁷¹

In 1927, use of the McLean system spread throughout the county as the improvement in weight and health of hogs was noted. A new design for a moveable hog shed was introduced which elicited much interest, as it facilitated the movement of hogs to new, clean areas and away from old hog lots. A great deal of attention was paid to the design of this shed and the increased ventilation it allowed.⁷²

Swine management was not listed as a separate project in the extension reports of 1928, 1929, or 1930. Because of the importance of hogs in the county, it is unlikely that observations were not continued, but during these years the legal action holding up the vaccinations for bovine tuberculosis and hog cholera was resolved and attention turned to the instruction of farmers on these matters. It can be assumed that with basic sanitation improved and a new vaccine in place, hogs could only become bigger and better. The significant increase already reported in the number of hogs raised by 1930 supports the view that the project was successful.

No doubt the most important agricultural project directed by the Agent was corn improvement. There were early worries that Iowa would endanger her agricultural dominance by relying too heavily on corn.⁷³ This crop, however, did represent the major source of income for Harrison County during the decade from 1920 to 1930 and the county ranked fifth in the state in corn production.⁷⁴

Corn improvement meant the development of hybrid strains of corn by artificially cross-fertilizing the corn to increase yield.⁷⁵ The desire was to gain the maximum production with the minimum of human labor, and was an idea which went back to 1877 when the first scientific attempts at cross-fertilization in the Midwest began.⁷⁶ In addition to producing more bushels per acre, good hybrids, as opposed to open-pollinated corn, made harvesting easier as they produced ears which stood up straight and to a relatively even height, so that the harvesting process could be mechanized.⁷⁷

The corn improvement project in Harrison County from 1925 through 1930 mainly consisted of an exhaustive series of tests run by the extension office of different types of hybrids planted in a variety of soils in a search for the best yields. Initially, there were some discouraging results with the tests, as there were major seed problems in 1925.⁷⁸ After rectifying the situation in 1926, hybrid production was so promising that Hanson estimated that Harrison County would produce an additional 650,000 bushels because of it.⁷⁹

In 1927 the project suffered another setback when rodents and disease struck at the test fields throughout the county. To combat these, the Agent again turned to science with new types of dusts and chemical preparations. The results were inconclusive, and the farmers said that while the treatments did not seem to do additional harm to the crops, it was not certain that they accomplished anything beneficial.⁸⁰

The next year was more successful, and additional corn hybrids were tested. In 1929, the tests on hybrids and chemicals to deter pests were widened to include new types

of legumes. Although specifics on how the tests were administered were not given, by 1930 the results of the five-year program were reported. The official view was that hybrids performed better than the farmer's open-pollinated strains, and that chemical pest and disease controls were marginally successful, but required more tests in the future to be certain.⁸¹

One of the minor projects pursued by Agent Hanson was the testing of his new pesticides on the county's orchards. The greatest concentration of orchards was in Raglan Township and eastern Morgan Township around Mondamin. The loess soil prevalent here was the major attraction to this area, which remained the center of the county's fruit-growing industry for many years after the end of the decade.⁸²

A glance at the statistics presented previously reveals just how much more the people of the county were turning to fruit production, especially in Raglan Township, where soil conditions were optimal. In 1925 the Agent reported on the fire-blight which devastated Raglan Township's apple trees, while commenting approvingly on the support the fruit growers there gave each other. He pointedly held it up as an example for the rest of the county to follow.⁸³

By 1926, the township's orchards still had not improved, so the Agent had nitrate of soda and sulfate of ammonia tested. By 1928, he was encouraging an even newer product called calyx spray for the township's apple orchards, which produced some nervousness on the part of the fruit growers because this treatment was new and unproven.⁸⁴

The farmer's fears were shortly dispelled, for by 1929 Harrison County had the fastest growing apple acreage in the entire state, with 742 acres. Fruit growers had only a few problems with cedar apple rust that year, whereas it had caused a great deal of damage the previous year before Hanson's calyx spray had been used.⁸⁵

Cooperative extension work included bee-keeping. In 1925, local farmers approached the extension office for information on the setting up of apiaries, or bee hives, for the production of honey, an idea which arose from the large number of nectar-producing plants in the county. Experts were contacted for feasibility studies, and the resultant advice was to go ahead, as it was felt Harrison County could produce larger crops of honey per colony than most other parts of the state.⁸⁶

In 1926 the extension office put on a number of bee-keeping demonstrations and interest among the local farmers seemed to grow. The Agent dropped it as an active extension project after 1926, but continued to advise and assist those who had decided to take on bee-keeping.⁸⁷ A major blow was struck against the project in 1927, when American foul brood struck at the hives in Little Sioux, Morgan, and Clay townships in the far western part of the county. This disease is caused when larvae, or half-hatched bees, also called "brood", perish in their cells "and become a putrid, pestilential mass in [the] hive."⁸⁸ This condition proceeds either to kill off the colony, or to drive the surviving bees away from the hive by the stench caused by it.

It was stopped in time, which saved the county's fourteen bee-keepers thousands of dollars, but they were very discouraged.⁸⁹ In 1929, the extension report noted that a

number of apiaries had been destroyed by foul brood in 1928 and 1929, but that it was under control, and the county was reasonably free of the disease.⁹⁰

Agent Hanson's last major campaign of the decade centered upon farm economics and farm marketing. In the early 1920s the county's farmers were very upset at lower prices at home and imports of agricultural products from other countries. Farmers felt that the United States produced the best and the most, so the situation should be reversed, as indeed it had been during the profitable years of the war.

In 1920 the local farmer did not want to lower his prices until the cost of other goods was reduced first. During the farm crisis of the early 1920s the farmer had not been making much money, and he was as "worthy of his hire" as anyone else.⁹¹ In 1921, farmers were up in arms about the flood of beef entering the country from Argentina and other South American nations. The local answer to this was to raise bigger and better animals to combat these allegedly inferior breeds.⁹² At the same time, farmers blamed the importation of vast amounts of Argentine and Canadian wheat for falling wheat prices at home.⁹³ Imported Argentine butter caused a frenzied outburst of indignation from local dairy producers later on in the year.⁹⁴ They were outraged by the suggestions that there were better, safer, and cheaper substitutes for milk, such as coconut oil and butterfat. They claimed that children who were forced to take milk substitutes would suffer from rickets after only a few weeks of use.⁹⁵

Agent Hanson stated that cooperative marketing of farm products would be the single most effective solution to these problems. Judging by the extension reports, there

was considerable local resistance to this, but the Agent was aware that nationally, an increasing number of farmers were having success with cooperatives. "A peak in the formation of new cooperatives was reached in 1920, when 1,967 marketing and purchasing associations were founded, bringing the number to 13,212."⁹⁶ By 1923, an estimated ten to fifteen percent of farm produce in the country was handled by co-ops.⁹⁷ In the narrative reports, however, the tone of the discussions on the subject was that of a man fighting a frustrating uphill battle against heavy odds. Specific statistics did not appear in the reports until 1928, when the sale price of butterfat and cream was discussed.

Harrison County farmers were getting an average of 46.7 cents per pound of butterfat in 1928, with state highs being 51 cents and state lows 44 cents. The highest prices were to be found in northwestern Iowa, where cooperative marketing practices were most prevalent. Hanson said that this was due to the cooperative creameries to be found in that part of the state and he decried the lack of them in Harrison County. The same curve of statistics held true for the sale of eggs, and the local Farm Bureau lent its support to Hanson's calls for cooperative marketing. In fact, the only co-op efforts which were succeeding in the county, in even a small way, were a few grain elevators.⁹⁸

In 1929 the fight was still on. A farmer's cooperative creamery was opened that year at Avoca in Pottawattamie County and Hanson was still pushing to get one going in Harrison County. He pointed out that creamery products sold cooperatively always sold for four to six cents more per pound than the same products sold independently.⁹⁹ In fact, it was not until 1930, after the stock market crash, that the farmers of the county seemed

sufficiently uneasy to warm to the idea. The Agent reported that cooperative ventures were finally beginning to look possible because of the economic depression. Even though Hanson said that no cooperatives had been started that year, it was clear that the threshold had been reached and his tone was much more optimistic.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, if the extension reports and the newspapers reflected attitudes accurately, the people of Harrison County were surprisingly upbeat at the end of the decade. It was obvious that difficult economic times had arrived for everyone, not just the farmers. Nevertheless, with recognition of the problems came the inevitable human response of organizing to find and implement solutions to them. The county newspapers, with their penchant for boosterism, used their considerable influence to encourage farmers and townsfolk alike to work harder and work together to overcome the current difficulties and offered assurance that economic improvement was sure to follow.

ENDNOTES

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18. Ibid., April 3, 1930, p. 3.
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21. Ibid.
22. The figures for 1920 are in the Fourteenth Census, Agriculture, on page 538, as in note 19, and those for 1930 are in the Fifteenth Census, Agriculture, on page 889, as in note 20.
23. All figures for 1920 come from the Fourteenth Census of Agriculture, 548, and all figures for 1930 from the Fifteenth Census of Agriculture, 912 and 954.
24. Total dairy product value for 1920 comes from the Fourteenth Census of Agriculture, 548, and the figure for 1930 from the Fifteenth Census of Agriculture, 959. For this figure, it must be noted that while the total dairy product values are reported in the 1920 and 1930 Census documents, they actually represent the value of goods actually sold in 1919 and 1929, respectively.
25. All figures for 1920 come from the Fourteenth Census of Agriculture, 557, and all figures for 1930 come from the Fifteenth Census of Agriculture, 922. It should be remembered here that figures for crops from the 1930 Census are dated from the year 1929, when the complete totals were known. While the 1920 Census does not indicate a date of 1919 for these crops, it is likely that the same holds true.
26. The Logan Observer, February 17, 1921, p. 1.
27. All figures for 1920 come from the Fourteenth Census of Agriculture, 557, and all figures for 1930 come from the Fifteenth Census of Agriculture, 947. It should be noted here that the 1920 Census figures for total fruit product date from 1919, while the 1930 Census figures record the amounts from 1929.
28. The figure for total crop value of 1920 comes from the Fourteenth Census of Agriculture, 557, and the figure for 1930 from the Fifteenth Census of Agriculture, 959.

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47. Ibid., 5.
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49. Annual Narrative Report, 1925, 21.
50. Ibid., 1930, 29, gives a convenient table listing the five-year averages for Agent Hanson in all categories, although each yearly report has tables giving all the specifics for that particular year.
51. The Logan Observer, January 23, 1930, p. 4.
52. Annual Narrative Report, 1927, 9.
53. Ibid., 1925, 59.
54. Ibid., 1928, 76.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., 1931, 82.
57. Ibid., 1925, iii.
58. Ibid., 1926, 68.
59. Ibid., 1928, 55.
60. Ibid., 1925, iv. Three new flood dams had been constructed in Calhoun Township. There were some brief, heavy rains in June of 1925 which proved how well they worked.
61. Ibid., 22.
62. Ibid., 1926, 52.
63. Ibid., 1929, 61.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., 1930, 59.
66. Ibid., 1925, 1.
67. Ibid., 2-3.
68. Ibid., 1926, 72, and 1927, 49.

69. Ibid., 1928, 58.
70. Ibid., 1929, 72
71. Ibid., 1926, 27.
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73. The Logan Observer, March 17, 1921, p. 3.
74. Annual Narrative Report, 1926, 31.
75. Betty Fussell, The Story of Corn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1992), 68-70.
76. Ibid., 71
77. Ibid., 73-74.
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79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., 1927, 39.
81. Ibid., 1930, 30.
82. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 42.
83. Ibid., 1925, 33.
84. Ibid., 1928, 52.
85. Ibid., 1929, 66.
86. Ibid., 1929, 43.
87. Ibid., 1926, 80.
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92. Ibid., February 17, 1921, p. 1.
93. Ibid., 2.
94. Ibid., July 28, 1921, p. 6.
95. The Little Sioux Hustler, October 7, 1921, p. 2.
96. Shideler, Farm Crisis, 1919-1923, 91.
97. Ibid.
98. Annual Narrative Report, 1928, 32. Agent Hanson was likely to be very familiar with the success of cooperative ventures in northwestern Iowa, as he had farmed at Inwood, Lyon County, in the extreme northwestern corner of the state.
99. Ibid., 1929, 43.
100. Ibid., 1930, 72.

CHAPTER III

CIVIC CONCERNS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Harrison County was a rural county in the decade from 1920 to 1930, which meant that the business of the farm and its products provided the foundation of the local economy. Even so, not all of the people who lived in the county were farmers or worked in businesses which were farm-related. There was a significant and growing sector of the population which lived and worked in the county's towns, people whose immediate concerns were not those of the farmer, but were those of town-dwellers anywhere. Citizens in these communities were involved in town businesses, arranged their finances through local banks, took much of their entertainment locally, and were eager to see physical improvements come to their towns and homes.

The best source of information on business in the county's towns and villages are the newspapers, for it is here that local entrepreneurs advertised their goods and services. The newspapers are not a perfect mirror, for early in the decade ads were not as numerous as they were later on, nor can one be sure that every business advertised. Word of mouth can be as good an advertisement as a newspaper ad and has the added benefit of being free. Nevertheless, newspapers show that Harrison County towns had a variety of town businesses providing local people many services.

Of course, many of the businesses were related to agriculture, such as mills and grain elevators. In 1920 the River Sioux Farmer's Elevator was publishing ads in the

Little Sioux Hustler, and there are many others throughout the decade.¹ Creameries were also an important agricultural business, and a number were operating in the county during this time. The Magnolia Creamery Company was holding emergency stock meetings in February of 1920, and in March of that year the firm collapsed and went out of business.² Later on in the decade, however, the Gillette Sanitary Dairy and Creamery opened in Missouri Valley, and was said to have been very successful.³ Robertson Creamery in Dunlap operated throughout the decade, despite being sold to a Lincoln, Nebraska businessman in 1924.⁴

A very important industry in the county, one which moved not only farm produce but people as well, was the railroad. The major railroad was the Chicago and North Western, and the next largest was the Illinois Central, which went east through Euclid, Logan, Woodbine and Dunlap on to Chicago. The county was also served by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul which went through Persia to the north. Finally, the Chicago Great Western Maple Leaf route extended from St. Paul-Minneapolis and Chicago south to Council Bluffs, passing through the extreme south-eastern corner of the county, with one station at Magill.⁵

Missouri Valley had the lion's share of local employment opportunity from the railroads, as the Chicago and North Western had important machine and repair shops located there. Unfortunately, as the decade progressed, these shops suffered, particularly after the stock market crash in 1929. By 1931, they only employed fifty men, where once they had provided steady work for about five hundred men.⁶

A number of other town businesses which advertised in the papers and which served the needs of the farmer can be mentioned. One of the older organizations was the Farmer's Mercantile Company in Logan, which reported that 1919 had been a fine business year, with fifty percent more profit than in 1918. This firm continued well into the decade.⁷ Also prominent were two seed companies, Northrup Seeds and Terry's Purebred Seeds, which provided all of the latest corn hybrids. Later in the decade a new hatchery for chicks opened in Dunlap, called the Big Hen Hatchery.⁸

Several building supply companies advertised, such as the Quinn Lumber Company in Little Sioux, Roger's Lumber Company in Dunlap, Youman's Lumber in Logan, and the Sand and Gravel Company, begun in Woodbine in 1920.⁹ This last company incorporated just in time to meet some of the road improvement programs beginning in the early years of the decade.

As automobiles were beginning to be a factor in the county, several businesses were in place to service them. The Beebe Auto Company, home of the over-advertised Nash '400, was located in Logan and promoted itself widely. Some competition was provided by the Hill Motor Company in Woodbine. Once the car was bought, Goodyear Tires in Logan and the River Sioux Garage in Little Sioux helped keep them going, as did a new gas station in Logan.¹⁰

To entice weary travelers using the railroad or an automobile to come into the county, Pisgah's Hotel Niles advertised rooms in the Hustler.¹¹ The Logan Businessmen's Association also developed plans to sell stock for a hotel and cafe in 1920, to provide

some competition. They felt that they needed to offer this service, rather than let Omaha, or some other county town, get all the business.¹²

Despite the rural nature of the county, a surprising number of physicians of various types advertised in the papers throughout the decade, and if the ads are any indication, most seemed to be located in Logan. These included Dr. Rolla Hook, an osteopathic physician and surgeon, and Dr. Lucy Wood, one of two female doctors advertising in the Observer, the other being Cornelia McGrew, a chiropractor. Dr. A. H. Webber was an ear, nose, and throat specialist, and Dr. H. E. Carson, a dentist, ran many ads. Logan had a settled ophthalmologist, Dr. D. Williams, while Pisgah advertised for an unnamed roving optometrist in the early 1920s. Dr. W. A. Shields was just one of several veterinarians who advertised. Dunlap was also well-supplied with physicians, boasting two surgeons, F. E. Peters and J. Wilber Denniston; two dentists, F. L. Henderson and W. L. Reichelt; and a veterinarian, Dr. R. G. Moore.¹³

If the doctor's skills failed them, then Logan's Yeaman Funeral Home or Little Sioux's H. Z. Hathering Undertakers were prepared to provide their services. Should the grieving family feel that medical irregularities may have promoted a loved-one's demise, there were numerous attorneys to consult, such as Welch and McDermott, who advertised prominently in both the Hustler and the Observer during the first half of the decade.

A partial list of other businesses advertising their wares or services in the county's newspapers includes Barbara's Beauty Shoppe, Logan's Grocery, Read and Hammerstrom Shoes, J. A. Heterick Clothes, the Logan Broom Factory, Harvey's Men's Clothes, Mac's

Cafe, and C. G. McKenzie's Cash Produce Dealer in Logan; Lytle's Hardware, S. B. Terry Grocery, and John Ross Work and Driving Horses in Little Sioux; The Boy's Store, Lehan Drug Store, Louis Folino Shoes, A. B. Shubert Raw Furs, and McDally Hardware Company in Dunlap; and Vredenburg Lewis Co. Clothiers and the Woodbine Sweet Shop in Woodbine. Indeed, the number of businesses promoting themselves is astonishing. Even if there were other businesses which did not advertise in the newspapers, it is clear that there was no lack of variety in the services and goods available to the people living in and around Harrison County's towns.

Despite all of this, a theme which reappeared constantly was the need to spend hard-earned money at home, if it was going to be spent at all. Particularly as the decade progressed, "automobiles and improved roads made the attractions of larger cities more tempting and, as people spent less money in their home towns, business suffered."¹⁴ Newspapers, especially the Hustler and the Observer, pleaded with their readers to spend their money in local stores so that the buying power would remain in the area and promote growth at home.¹⁵

This tendency to buy goods away from home was put into national context by an article in the Observer which related how the United States army was buying its matches from the Soviet Union because they were cheaper than American matches. Even if foreign-made goods were cheaper, the Observer cried indignantly, the purchase of American products would stimulate a home industry. The editors then brought the

problem down to local significance, vilifying those who took their business out of their home towns, thus hurting the local economy.¹⁶

On the other hand, the Observer showed little concern about American business outside of Harrison County, despite its previous words to the contrary. The editor praised local people who saved money by buying fewer new dresses, coats, and other articles of clothing. Such thrift was very laudable, and while it may have hurt the textile workers of Chicago and other cities, those people and their problems were so far away "that it doesn't matter here."¹⁷

Small town business could also be endangered by the changing nature of farm operation. Previously, farms needed a great deal of hired labor, which had always benefited the towns because they were a major source for that labor. As the decade of the 1920s began, fewer laborers were being hired for farm work. Part of the reason for this was the worsening farm economy, as farmers found it less expensive to use their own family members for labor. Technological advances also reduced the need for farm labor, and had significant implications for agriculture.

Those farmers who could afford tractors to pull their plows purchased them, and many who could not hitched their plows up to their automobiles instead. Increased mechanization of farm processes thus allowed the farmer to get by with less labor and to reduce dependence on expensive draft animals such as horses, whose numbers in the county decreased during the decade.

Agricultural businesses such as grain suppliers began to feel the impact of new trends as well. There were new mail order catalogues such as Sears and Roebuck which farmers could use to order grain and other supplies, and during the decade an increasing number of farmers were purchasing their supplies by mail rather than at local stores.¹⁸ This meant less business for local merchants at a time when it was most needed.

Banking was a crucial enterprise in Harrison County, particularly given the importance of credit to the agricultural economy. During this decade, banks in Harrison County and the entire state of Iowa were not experiencing their best years. Because of the collapse of farm prices, banks were failing all over Iowa. In 1920, 167 banks failed; the next year saw 505 more go, and in 1923, another 366 ceased operations. In the remaining years of the decade, bank failures in Iowa numbered over 500 per year.¹⁹

Harrison County suffered its share of these problems. By 1920 it was harder to borrow money than it had been in many years. County bankers were saying that they had never before experienced such a tight credit situation.²⁰ Most of the difficulty the local banks were having arose because they were operating in a farm economy. The banks got their money from farmers, and farmers got theirs from selling and moving their products, and with farm prices falling in the early years of the decade there was very little in the way of profits coming to anyone.²¹

As a case in point, the Logan Trust and Savings bank had been voluntarily closed on November 20, 1923, so the directors could go over the books and allay the fears of

their depositors. Fortunately, everything was found to be in order and they were able to reopen on December 15 with even more capital than before.²²

The Dunlap State Bank was not so fortunate in 1925. This bank had once been one of the largest in Harrison County, with over a million dollars in deposits on hand. It was forced to close because it was unable to collect on loans to farmers, and it owed money to other banks in the county. There was some hope that it would reorganize so that its investors would not lose their money.²³ Bank officers launched an investigation, and even though no unusual discrepancies were found in the books, the former director of the bank, F. W. Curtis, shot himself to death that December.²⁴

By 1926, there were seventeen banks in Harrison County. This was four fewer than in 1920, which had been the previous height of prosperity.²⁵ The total deposits in the banks were at \$6,337,101 as opposed to \$7,936,938 in 1920, or \$1,599,837 less. Almost every bank in the county had lost deposits, with a few exceptions. In the first six years of the decade, First National of Logan had almost doubled its deposits because customers from failed banks in Logan and Magnolia transferred their funds there. The Missouri Valley Savings bank and Woodbine Savings bank were also able to show increases in their deposits. Actually, the three Missouri Valley banks came through these years the best, and their combined losses over the first six years was only about \$5,000, mainly because the Chicago and North Western Railway payroll there ran over \$120,000 each month. The other banks in the county had to rely on the failing agricultural economy for their deposits.²⁶

In 1927, the banks in the county began to charge fees for some of the services they had previously provided for free. For instance, the people of the county had long gone to banks rather than attorneys to prepare basic legal documents such as deeds and mortgages because it cost them nothing. The free ride ended this year because of the general banking problems, but to retain customers they kept their fees lower than attorney's fees. Banks also began assessing charges for auto, hunting, and pet licenses, and for public notarizations.²⁷

County newspapers would run local bank statements every three or four months, presenting a wide range of financial statistics to show the public the financial status of each bank. The most important information was how much money each bank had on deposit, and a look at several of the county's banks through the decade will illustrate the situation they faced.

First National of Logan, one of the more successful banks in the county, began presenting its reports in 1923, when its total resources were \$572,018.²⁸ It showed a steady increase in funds to \$831,451 in 1925,²⁹ to \$898,933 in 1927,³⁰ to a very impressive \$1,019,141 in 1928.³¹ It retained over a million dollars in resources in 1929, then began falling off in 1930, when in October it had \$961,665, a drop of nearly \$80,000 for the previous six months.³² By October of 1931, its resources had fallen away to \$726,653.³³

The First National Bank of Woodbine also reached impressive heights for awhile. It was already a large bank in 1920, with resources of \$1,265,371.³⁴ It slid into a

breathhtaking decline the next year, and in September of 1921 it only had \$679,431, a reduction in resources of \$585,940, or almost half of its money, in just sixteen months.³⁵ By 1925 it rebounded to \$855,027, and remained at about that level throughout the remainder of the decade, never regaining the prosperity it once knew.³⁶

Dunlap began the decade with three banks. The largest of these was the Dunlap State Bank, which possessed resources of \$1,193,908 in 1920.³⁷ It has already been related that this bank had run into trouble in 1925, when its resources had fallen to \$845,187.³⁸ This bank's reorganization took the form of a merger with the First National Bank of Dunlap in 1926, which produced a new bank called the Dunlap Savings Bank.³⁹ The First National had been Dunlap's second largest bank, beginning the decade with \$761,898 in resources in 1920, but retaining only \$332,138 by the time it merged with Dunlap State to form Dunlap Savings.⁴⁰

Dunlap's third bank, Citizens State Bank, began the decade with resources of \$613,828.⁴¹ This had fallen to \$434,497 in 1925, and remained very near this figure until 1929.⁴² In this year, in response to economic pressures, this bank also consolidated into Dunlap Savings Bank, leaving one bank in Dunlap at the end of the decade with total resources of \$961,459.⁴³

Most of the other banks reporting had much less capital. The State Savings Bank in Logan showed \$751,994 in resources in 1920,⁴⁴ but had fallen to \$447,386 in 1924, after which it ceased reporting.⁴⁵ The Logan Trust and Savings Bank began the decade with \$671,603⁴⁶ and had fallen to \$278,276 in 1925.⁴⁷ By the end of 1930 its holdings

had shrunk to \$197,362, and then it also ceased reporting in the Observer.⁴⁸ The next time the newspaper mentioned that firm was in November of 1931, when the building it had occupied was sold for \$5,000.⁴⁹

The Woodbine Savings Bank had \$273,991 on hand in 1920,⁵⁰ enjoyed a brief blossoming to \$328,820 in 1924,⁵¹ and suffered a gradual decline to near its 1920 level by 1929, when it held \$251,840.⁵² Another Woodbine bank, People's Savings, followed a similar curve, beginning in 1920 with deposits of \$230,377⁵³ to reach \$281,954 in 1923.⁵⁴ It finished the decade better than it started it, with \$298,908 in 1929.⁵⁵

The Magnolia Savings Bank had \$365,951 in resources in 1920,⁵⁶ and then fell to \$279,149 in 1921,⁵⁷ probably as a result of the sharp break in farm prices in the summer of 1920. It rebounded in 1923 to \$328,461, after which it ceased reporting.⁵⁸ A small Logan bank, Farmers State Bank, had \$224,969 in 1920,⁵⁹ increased to \$284,494 in 1923,⁶⁰ and then it, too, disappeared. Although not specifically mentioned, these banks were almost certainly the banks in Magnolia and Logan which the Woodbine Twiner in 1926 reported to have failed and whose depositors were said to be swelling the ranks of First National of Logan.⁶¹

The Little Sioux Savings Bank began the decade with \$173,620⁶² and reached \$201,349 by 1923.⁶³ In line with the majority of the smaller banks of the county, its resources gradually shrank until by 1930 it only had \$126,747 on hand.⁶⁴ The Pisgah Savings Bank had \$319,839 in 1920⁶⁵ and decreased to \$236,460 in 1923;⁶⁶ fell further to

\$189,317 in 1924;⁶⁷ rebounded to \$240,371 in 1926,⁶⁸ to \$255,670 in 1929,⁶⁹ and ended the decade with its resources back down to \$221,794 in 1930.⁷⁰

The little Farmers Savings Bank of River Sioux began the decade with \$129,561⁷¹ and ran into trouble quickly as a result of the agricultural woes of 1920. By 1922 it still had \$108,521 in resources⁷² but in 1924 it only had \$83,158 left, when it ceased reporting.⁷³ In 1927 the Hustler reported that the District Court of Iowa for Harrison County was still trying to resolve the bank's debts after its failure.⁷⁴ The Hustler also had one report from the Mondamin Savings Bank, with deposits of \$411,950 in 1922, but it never reported again, so there is nothing to indicate what happened to that enterprise.⁷⁵

The general trend for most of the medium-sized banks in the county seemed to follow a path of decline during the decade, with a few either experiencing a brief increase of funds around 1924 or 1925, or failing in about the same years. The larger banks managed, on the whole, to survive, but several of the very small banks collapsed, allowing some of the other banks to continue when people transferred their funds to them. This is probably why some banks increased in resources in the middle of the decade when others failed. In any event, despite the survival or failure of any particular bank, the overall financial situation in the county by the end of the decade was becoming serious, and this was very much in line with what was going on in the rest of the state and nation.

The people of Harrison County had other worries in the 1920s besides the unstable condition of their banks, such as a significant increase in crime. In 1920, the prohibition amendment to the Constitution was passed, and many people in the county turned to

distilling their own liquor. In 1921 County Sheriff W. R. Milliman had arrested "many Harrison County people" for flouting the prohibition laws.⁷⁶

Sheriff Milliman continued to fight prohibition lawbreakers as long as he was in office, culminating in a spectacular gun battle in September of 1925. Milliman and Deputy Sheriff O. L. Case had tracked down four rumrunners, who resisted capture with deadly force. Deputy Sheriff Case was shot and killed, but Milliman managed to capture two of the criminals.⁷⁷ The remaining two, including the man who had slain Case, escaped. This murderer was tracked to Omaha where he had been hiding with friends. When Omaha police surrounded his hideout, this man, whose name was not given in the reports, tried to make his escape dressed as a woman but was shot and killed in another gun battle.⁷⁸

Stills were found on at least one farm near Woodbine, and there were reports that citizens would pour their illegal booze into the Missouri and other rivers to avoid arrest at the first hint that the sheriff was approaching. Prohibition led to even more serious crimes as people organized to sell liquor on the black market, and the increasing lawlessness resulted in a growing number of bank robberies and shootings in the county.⁷⁹ There are newspaper reports of criminals fleeing from the county to Omaha, and vice-versa, a situation which hinted at organized criminal activity spreading out from the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area to rural counties in all directions.

All of Iowa experienced a shocking increase in crime at the beginning of the decade. "Between 1920 and 1925 the state's total rate of convictions increased from 3.81 to 5.57 per one thousand population, and the conviction rate in Iowa's twenty-one most

rural counties nearly doubled from 2.29 to 4.50 during the same period."⁸⁰ In 1919 there had been no bank robberies and only one attempted bank burglary in Iowa, but in 1920 there were five. The incidence of bank robberies increased steadily, and in 1922, the state suffered twenty-eight bank robberies in the last six months of the year, most of which were in rural areas.⁸¹

Harrison County was not immune, despite its rural nature, to violent crime. Not all violent crime was organized. For instance, a group of young Logan men got together in Woodbine and became rowdy one evening in February, 1920, and when a policeman was summoned to quiet them down, they decided that as they outnumbered him, they did not need to obey him. Evidently a fight broke out, and the policeman shot one of them in the arm.⁸² This incident was reported in the Logan Observer, and the tone of the article suggested that if a few more of them had been wounded, it might have served as an even more instructive lesson to those who would disturb the peace.

At about the same time in 1920, a Miss Sadie Hill was put on trial for intending to kill Lawrence Fitzpatrick in Modale. She had shot him three times and permanently blinded him. In the view of the Observer she was acquitted, not so much because there was the possibility of self-defense, but mainly because "it is mighty hard to get a jury of men to sentence a woman to the penitentiary. There seems to be among men a resentment against that sort of thing, and it does not matter much what the woman does or is charged with."⁸³ Subsequent comments in the Observer on this matter hint that they felt that justice had not been done, and a guilty verdict should have been given out, woman or not.

In July of 1920 a young man driving near Dunlap was pursued by two cars occupied by five men and three women. These people overtook him, forced him off the road, and beat him and his companion senseless. They then made off with his car, never to be seen again.⁸⁴ In Missouri Valley in 1925, a police officer was shot and killed by an unknown assailant who also escaped capture.⁸⁵

In September of 1924 in Missouri Valley, an Ernest Reed, 23, was convicted of killing Harry Reel, only 21. Reel had been a special policeman for the Missouri Valley town fair and had noticed Reed trying several times to slip over the fence into the fairgrounds. When Reel warned him not to do it again, he was shot and killed by Reed, who ran away but was almost immediately captured.⁸⁶ On September 30th Reed was convicted of first-degree murder, and for the first time in Harrison County history a death sentence was rendered, to be carried out by hanging on December 18, 1925 at Fort Madison.⁸⁷

Reed's attorneys fought for his life, but a motion for a new trial was denied by the judge, who confirmed the execution date.⁸⁸ Legal delaying tactics spared Reed's life, however, and he spent the next two years on death row in Fort Madison until April of 1926, when he was brought back to the Harrison County jail. This was due to a successful appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court, which ordered a new trial in September.⁸⁹

In this second trial Reed was again convicted of murder, but in the second degree, and his sentence of death was changed to ten to twenty-five years in prison.⁹⁰ Reed's attorneys made an appeal for a third trial at once, based upon alleged irregularities in jury

selection.⁹¹ This backfired, however, for the judge denied the appeal for a new trial after reviewing the case, and changed Reed's sentence once more; this time to life imprisonment.⁹² Reed spent the rest of his life in jail at the penitentiary at Fort Madison, until his death on October 18, 1943.⁹³

The county was also afflicted by a rash of robberies. In 1921, the Pisgah bank was robbed of over \$2,000 in cash and \$16,000 in bonds by three men who fled in a stolen car and who were chased by police and caught in Omaha.⁹⁴ In 1922, several of Persia's stores were burglarized by a group of teenage boys, who then fled the county. They were pursued by police and, like the Pisgah fugitives, were finally apprehended in Omaha.⁹⁵ The relative anonymity of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area proved irresistible to lawbreakers fleeing the county, for Logan was only thirty miles from Council Bluffs and easy to reach if one possessed a car.

In 1924 one of Little Sioux's banks was robbed of over \$3,000 when an unknown number of individuals blew open the safe with explosives, severely damaging the building. These criminals escaped despite a vigorous barrage of gunfire from some of the town's citizens.⁹⁶ In 1926 a bank in Modale was hit for \$4,200. Once again, local townspeople shot at the fleeing miscreants, who were chased by police out of the county and who were caught, predictably, in Omaha.⁹⁷ Two years later, in 1928, the State Savings Bank of Missouri Valley was robbed of about \$7,000, and the perpetrators managed to escape.⁹⁸

As the decade progressed, the law-abiding citizens of the county had seen enough of this, and in 1925 a group called the Vigilantes of Harrison was organized.⁹⁹ This group

was sponsored by the county's bankers, as their institutions were obviously the main targets of criminals. According to the Observer, this group was "approved by the state" and was not likely to have been allowed if it were not needed. Indicative of a hardening stance against crime was the Observer's comment that "a bank robber that is shot and killed doesn't rob any more banks."¹⁰⁰ The willingness of townsfolk to pull out a gun and try to kill a criminal or two on their own, with the apparent acquiescence of the local authorities and obvious approval of several of the county's newspapers, indicates just how bad the situation was perceived to be.

The formation of vigilante groups was not confined to Harrison County, but was to be seen all over Iowa at this time. To deal with the growing problem of bank robberies, "bankers organized 3,484 Iowans into vigilante groups in 726 towns in 78 counties, and armed them with weapons purchased from the War Department."¹⁰¹ Evidently, the inclination of the people to use deadly force had a significant impact upon the situation, for only a year after vigilante operations began in earnest, the number of attempted robberies in the state had fallen to eleven, of which only three were successful, and six bank robbers had been shot to death.¹⁰²

Farmers were also putting pressure on the state government to take action against the rural crime wave. It was not until 1927, however, that a strong rural crime bill was enacted, but it designated the theft of any farm property as grand larceny regardless of the actual value of the items stolen.¹⁰³

In line with the tone of civic unrest in Harrison County was the popularity of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1920s. At first glance it seems surprising that the KKK would be operating in a rural midwestern county with, at most, a tiny handful of black citizens, but a little investigation can soon clear up the apparent incongruity.

The history of the KKK is not the history of a single continuous movement, but rather of three movements born out of different times, with different people, and occasionally different aims. The first movement, formed by Confederate veterans in 1866, was concerned primarily with preserving white supremacy in the South and preventing black people from exercising their rights. The third movement, the current one, is also concerned with blacks in the South and was organized in 1946 with similar aims.¹⁰⁴

The second movement, called the Invisible Empire, was most prominent in the 1920s and embodied some significant differences from the movements preceding or following it. It was never predominantly southern, or rural, or necessarily violent. Members called themselves the "Defenders of Americanism," and denounced Catholics, Jews, blacks, integration and the immigration of other nationalities into this country.¹⁰⁵

In fact, the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and 1930s was an organization of white supremacists alarmed by the arrival in the country of vast numbers of immigrants of varying ethnic backgrounds just before and after the first World War. As a group that was supposedly defending all things American, they were against anything or anyone they could label "un-American." This vague and over-used term could be twisted to fit whomever or whatever the KKK feared or disliked. They called themselves "a secret

organization of Protestant, white, gentile Americans, ready to uphold the Constitution;"¹⁰⁶ consequently, if one were a Catholic or Jew, one was a valid target for them. The Klan was clear about its reasoning in this matter, as a Catholic must always be suspected of loyalty to the Vatican rather than to the United States, and Jews were supposedly incapable of proper Protestant values and were thus impossible to assimilate into American society.¹⁰⁷

"In the summer of 1924, the Invisible Empire could boast that it was the most powerful fraternal and nationalistic organization in American history."¹⁰⁷ With about two million members across the nation it could almost qualify as an "authentic folk movement."¹⁰⁹ Between 1923 and 1929 the organization experienced real national power, and then fell off into relative obscurity. It continued on during the 1930s but remained out of national politics until it was dissolved during World War II, only to be followed after the war's end by its revival in its current form. The fatal flaw of the Invisible Empire was "its lack of a positive program and a reliance upon emotion [and ritual] rather than reason."¹¹⁰

In Harrison County the Invisible Empire was far from invisible, at least for a time. It managed to attract rural people because of the growing dissatisfaction with the economic situation. "Farmers watched their children leave for jobs in the cities. While they read of urban prosperity, many farmers felt left out [and] in their frustration, joined societies like the Ku Klux Klan, which became popular in the Midwest."¹¹¹

The KKK sought out members actively and did their best to entice children into the organization. Boys were urged to join the Junior Klan, and girls were invited to form Tri-K clubs. Women participated in an auxiliary group called Women of the Klan.¹¹² The success of their efforts can be illustrated in neighboring Nebraska, where in 1922 Klan membership was estimated at 1,100, but by 1923 it had ballooned to an amazing 45,000.¹¹³

The Klan advertised its activities in the newspapers just like any other organization in the county, with most of their local activities taking place in 1924 and 1925. For instance, the Klan held a large gathering in Logan in June, 1924, when 500 or more white-robed men and women gathered and held a festive cross-burning ceremony which was well attended, as over 1,000 cars and 5,000 people jammed into town to participate.¹¹⁴ That same month the KKK held a similar meeting in Missouri Valley, but it was not so festive as a fight broke out, presumably between the KKK and those who did not share their views, and twelve men were thrown in jail. This gathering was even larger, as Missouri Valley was swamped with over 2,500 cars and more than 6,000 people.¹¹⁵

The Klan seems to have had only one more big gathering in the county in 1925. A KKK Conclave was announced for October 3 at the Missouri Valley fairgrounds. The Observer simply reported it, while the ad in the Hustler encouraged folks to attend and enjoy the food and fun.¹¹⁶

Obviously, this organization had its opponents, and this was reflected in the Woodbine Twiner. Perhaps it is significant that of the four newspapers utilized for this

work, only the Twiner openly opposed the KKK, while just the opposite seemed to be the case with the Observer and Hustler, which reported the Klan's activities with no hint of disapproval. The Dunlap Reporter did its best to avoid mentioning the KKK at all.

Anti-Klan sentiment was already being voiced in the Twiner in 1922, when an editorial said that "the Boll weevil has his little faults but he doesn't wear a sheet and operate at night."¹¹⁷ In 1923, a local chapter of the American Legion came out in steadfast opposition to the KKK, stating that their aims were at odds and that they would "fight the Klan to a finish."¹¹⁸ In 1924, there was more violence between Klan and anti-Klan groups, when a night meeting of thirty or so Klan members in the country between Logan and Missouri Valley was invaded by a large group of anti-Klan people. This resulted in more arrests.¹¹⁹

Predictably, the Klan was also opposed by Catholics who formed a significant part of the county's population. The papers utilized said little about organized Roman Catholic opposition to the Klan, but it is unrealistic to suppose that this meant that there was none at all. The burning of crosses in the hills deeply angered Catholics and caused long-lasting resentments between Catholics and their non-Catholic neighbors.¹²⁰

Then, almost as quickly as it started, it was over, at least for Harrison County. After 1926, the newspapers did not carry any more reports of local Klan activity, which suggests that the people of the county had either tired of the sporadic fighting between Klan supporters and opponents, or that the conservative nature of the people there had reasserted itself and that interest in what was to them a fad was gone. Perhaps local Klan

activity was no longer supported by the national organization, or maybe it was a little of all three. There were an abundance of other concerns so the KKK proved to be only a temporary distraction.

Prominent amongst these problems was the spread of contagious disease, for as noted earlier, townspeople wished their dairy products to be free of tuberculosis. Harrison County historian Helen Adams contends that the social gatherings and fairs so popular in the county offered a tremendous danger for people and “encouraged the spread of contagious diseases.”¹²¹ Tuberculosis was only one of the contagions to sweep regularly across the county, particularly during the early years of the decade.

Newspaper obituaries were full of pathetic notices of children perishing from one illness or another at very young ages. There was whooping cough, measles, small pox, pneumonia, and a variety of fevers which claimed the lives of children and their mothers as well. “Farmers were vulnerable to tetanus [and] one unfortunate man suffered when his doctor wired his mouth open to keep his jaws from locking shut.”¹²²

The flu was a major problem and in February of 1920 an extremely virulent strain struck the county. The epidemic hit the village of Melrose very hard for two weeks, and the obituaries told of many of the very young and the very old who died of it.¹²³ The public schools in Pisgah were closed for a week because of the flu, and many deaths were reported there and throughout the county as a result of the outbreak.¹²⁴

Unfortunately, numerous deaths due to disease continued to occur through the decade, although there was no repetition of a flu epidemic of the magnitude of that of

1920. New vaccines were being developed to combat diseases, which paralleled the advances science was making with vaccines for farm animals, but the very young and the very old continued to be at great risk throughout the decade.

Another problem facing property owners during the decade was damage from the occasional tornado. Because of the rural nature of the county, most of the storms hit the fields and did little damage to urban areas. There was one considerable exception, however, for in June, 1925 a huge twister touched down at various points in the Mosquito Valley near Persia, doing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage to crops and property. Even though there were no reported deaths, both the Logan Observer and Woodbine Twiner stated that it was by far the worst storm to hit Harrison County in recorded history.¹²⁵

If the people of the county accepted epidemics and natural disasters as unavoidable, there were problems of another sort which were entirely man-made and which received considerable attention in the newspapers used for this work. They revolved around the relatively new contraption which was quickly changing the face of human mobility: the automobile.

The poor condition of county roads and the overwhelming preponderance of horse-drawn traffic in the early years of the decade was a simple fact of life. Indeed, the mayor of Little Sioux was getting complaints from his citizens of wandering groups of cattle and horses regularly obstructing the town's main street in 1920. At the same time the mayor was also receiving complaints about the steps bicyclists were taking to avoid

these animals, and the reckless and inconsiderate speeds at which these people would fly past unsuspecting pedestrians.¹²⁶ The mayor used the Hustler as a forum for his demands for civic responsibility, requiring that large animals be restrained and bicyclists drive considerately and at reasonable speeds. This problem was by no means restricted to Little Sioux and illustrates the sort of obstacles which motorists needed to consider.

Even early automobiles were well able to leave the most enthusiastic cyclist in the dust, and speeding problems were a constant fact of life for the people of the county during the decade. The automobile was not so new as to be an unfamiliar sight, but it was evidently new enough that the people had some difficulties in dealing with the ramifications posed by this speedy mode of transportation.

In 1920 the Logan Observer wanted local speeders to be fined heavily. Missouri Valley and Woodbine were ticketing their speeders at this time, so the paper was certain that this was why they all seemed to be coming to Logan. In April of that year a local pedestrian was nearly run down by a speeding motorist traveling without lights, and the Observer complained that such a person knew he would not have to pay more than fifty cents if he were caught, so there was no incentive to slow his vehicle down.¹²⁷

Another problem concerned headlights, either the lack of them, as in the incident above, or that they were too bright or set too high. The Twiner was by far the most strident of the four newspapers on this issue, and the editorials were full of acrimonious denunciations of people's driving habits. Actually, all four of them were full of acidic and personal comments about motorists in general, belittling the brains and morals of local

drivers at every opportunity. There are many articles, editorial comments, cartoons, and sarcastically humorous one-liners which derided or even condemned the automobile as something little short of divine punishment for the people's sins, serving rather the same function as a biblical plague.

Acrimony aside, some steps had to be taken to try to alleviate the problem. In 1921, Pisgah passed a town speed limit of ten miles per hour.¹²⁸ At the same time demands were being made by several of the papers for a state law regulating the setting of headlight beams.¹²⁹ It was not until 1931, however, that the state enacted such a law.¹³⁰

Automobiles remained a considerable difficulty for county people throughout the decade, despite attempts to lighten motorists' lead feet. Logan reported an unending series of accidents in town where Highway 30 became the main street. Coming from the west one had to navigate two severe turns in entering town. Deadly mishaps occurred on these curves regularly, not only involving out-of-town people passing through, but local residents who should have known better.

Indeed, by 1930 there had been a twenty-four percent increase in Harrison County road accidents over the previous two years, and in the first six months of 1930 some 231 people died in Iowa as a direct result of automobile accidents.¹³¹ At the beginning of the year the Observer ran an editorial cartoon which noted an appalling nationwide death-toll of at least 30,000 persons in 1929, with the number sure to increase.¹³² Harrison County's struggles with this situation were mirrored throughout the nation.

Part of the problem was the roads, and demands for graveling and paving projects were being made well before the beginning of the decade. In 1922 the condition of Iowa's roads was deplorable: only 334 miles, or about five percent, of the state's roads were paved. After a good rain travelers heading east or west across the state were faced with "a three-hundred-mile-long mudhole."¹³³

The condition of county roads has been referred to several times before, but it was an important matter for every one in the county. Before paving or graveling, rain would make a road an impenetrable morass and would prevent farmers from coming into town to do business, so it was to everyone's advantage to not only pave existing roads, but to build new ones.

An increasing number of people were purchasing automobiles in the 1910s and 1920s, and their unfortunate experiences with muddy roads led to strident demands for "improved roads to allow easier travel across the county. One of the most famous, the Lincoln Highway, was built to Missouri Valley and Council Bluffs in 1915."¹³⁴ Improvements on this important road were continued throughout the decade.

The mapping of the route of the Lincoln Highway, later known as Highway 30, actually caused a great deal of difficulty for Iowa. The Highway was conceived of as a transcontinental roadway and, just as with the railroads before it, any towns located along it were going to see an increase in their business opportunities. The problem arose from Iowa's geography, which allowed for a number of parallel routes of equal value, whereas in other states, physical geography forced the Highway to follow some obvious pathway

for which there could be little argument. This ensured that when a final route was chosen, many towns missed by the Highway began scheming and plotting with one another to get it altered, causing no small amount of friction between communities.¹³⁵

Town-sponsored paving projects were common during this period. In 1919, Logan was working on paving a number of the more important streets in town.¹³⁶ This project was evidently not completed by 1920, as the town was not able to hold Fourth of July celebrations that year because of paving work in progress.¹³⁷ Also in 1920, Woodbine arranged a contract for thirty-five blocks of concrete and brick paving in town.¹³⁸ Woodbine residents were extremely agitated that year because it looked as if new paving alterations to the Lincoln Highway might change its course so as to miss the town's main street and hurt local businesses. The new paving in town was considered essential so as to entice people traveling on the Highway to stop over.¹³⁹

The citizens of Dunlap were also agitating for paving projects at this time. The editor of the Reporter, in speaking of Woodbine's paving projects for 1920, declared that Dunlap was the only town of its size in western Iowa which had not paved any of its streets, and wondered when the people of the town were going to wake up and get on with it.¹⁴⁰ Within two months discussions for paving the main street were underway. The cost for a square yard of concrete paving ranged from \$3.59 to \$4.37, and for brick \$5.43 to \$5.93.¹⁴¹ As in Woodbine, both concrete and brick were utilized in the paving of Dunlap's most important streets.

The major road improvements in 1921 were on the Lincoln Highway and other county roads. There may have been animosity between local people and the road crews, and the companies hiring them, who came from the Omaha-Council Bluffs area. An editorial in the Observer took aim at the unionized paving crews and blamed them for the tightening money situation in the county. It seems these companies and unions were demanding and getting wages of unheard of levels which, the paper intimated, were likely to plunge the rest of the county's citizens into poverty.¹⁴²

While it may be assumed that occasional projects were undertaken in the next several years, it was not until 1927 that several major projects were announced. In that year Harrison County voters decided to provide for the paving of all primary roads in the county. Primary roads No. 27 and No. 39, both east-west roads, would be paved in their entirety, as well as thirty-one miles of the Lincoln Highway.¹⁴³ One particular stretch of the Highway, from Woodbine to Dunlap, was to be the first instance of "true paving" in the county outside of the towns.¹⁴⁴ By this it is meant that asphalt or concrete would be used instead of bricks or packed gravel.

Also in 1927, plans were finalized for an important viaduct for the Lincoln Highway outside of Logan, over the Chicago and North Western rail lines and the Boyer river.¹⁴⁵ Work began on this project in 1928 and continued until May 24, 1930, when the viaduct was officially opened.¹⁴⁶

Minor paving projects continued in the towns well after the decade ended. Initial projects saw the more important streets in the towns' business districts prepared first; then

other streets in the residential areas. Sidewalks in residential areas were evidently of low priority, for it was only in 1930, at the end of the decade, that concrete walks were being installed in Logan. Prior to this time there were some wooden walks, but these were the exception, and the citizens of the county seat were not amused to have to trudge through mud to reach their newly paved streets.¹⁴⁷

Progress was also being made in important utilities, such as electric power. Electric power had been known in the towns of the county as far back as 1888, when the city council of Missouri Valley "voted to provide the city with electric lighting. This vote was significant because electricity for lighting purposes had [only] come into widespread use" since about 1880.¹⁴⁸ The Missouri Valley Electric Light Company was formed in 1888 to provide street lighting for the town, and by the end of the first year of operation electric lighting had been provided for most businesses.¹⁴⁹ By 1894, the demand had grown so great that the company had to install a new system of dynamos powering six hundred incandescent and thirty arc lights.¹⁵⁰

In 1910, new powerful tungsten lamps were distributed in Missouri Valley's business and residential districts, and by 1916 the Missouri Valley Electric Light Company was providing similar services to the neighboring towns of Logan, Woodbine and Dunlap.¹⁵¹ During the 1920s, however, competition for the lighting concessions began to heat up, and in 1925 Dunlap turned to the Iowa Service Company for its city lighting, for it was felt that the town would receive more lights with greater power and better maintenance for less cost.¹⁵² In 1927, the Iowa Service Company changed its name to the

Iowa-Nebraska Light and Power Company, and began to increase its share of electrical concessions in the county and spread into other utilities.¹⁵³

The majority of the county's citizens did not live in the towns, however, but out on the farms. Helen Adams, in her history of Harrison County, makes it clear that the county was not even seriously discussing rural electrification until the close of the decade, for she states that "unless they had their own power plants, most farmers did not have electricity."¹⁵⁴

It might be thought that people were using gas to light and heat their homes before electrification became widespread in towns as the decade progressed, but this was not the case. City people were still using wood or coal for cooking and heating. It was not as if people were unaware of the benefits of gas, but they had viable alternatives already in place. Indeed, there was a brief flash of excitement early in 1921, when it was thought that large deposits of natural gas had been discovered at the village of California Junction.¹⁵⁵ For a while the Woodbine Twiner was full of boomtown fever, and then the episode blew over. It turned out that the geologists had been mistaken and no gas was found after all, but the excitement showed that people knew the value of gas and its usefulness as an exploitable resource.

Many of the county's towns granted major gas concessions to one or another company in 1930. Missouri Valley had granted a franchise to the Blair Gas Company in 1928 with the stipulation that their gas facilities should be completed within the year. The Blair Company did not hold to the agreement, and it was not until 1930 that Missouri

Valley granted a twenty-five year contract to the Central States Electric Company.¹⁵⁶ In August of 1930, Dunlap granted its gas concession to the Iowa-Nebraska Power and Light Company.¹⁵⁷ In the same year, Logan began to consider granting a gas franchise also, but the issue seemed controversial.

The Logan Observer provided the most extensive coverage of the bringing of natural gas into the towns, but this issue either provoked a great deal of soul-searching in the people of the town or provided the Observer with an opportunity to enthrall its readers, for the pros and cons of the issue were presented with wonderful dramatics by the paper.

Those favoring gas pointed to the new tax revenues that could be generated by the gas companies, not to mention the benefits of gas power itself. Not only that, it was modern and represented progress for the county. On the other hand, the tone of the articles seemed to reveal a vague but powerful suspicion, either of gas power or of the gas companies themselves. Perhaps it was just because the whole situation represented something new. No serious opposition to gas power had been detected in the other three papers, but it was obvious that the Observer's editor was dubious about it all.

Serious discussion began in July of 1930 and remained a major issue for weeks.¹⁵⁸ The railroads wanted to continue to sell coal for heating, as evidenced by their ads in the papers, but did not want to come out directly against gas lest they should be accused of impeding progress for personal gain. The same was true of the lumber yards, who sold much of their scrap wood for fuel. But the Iowa-Nebraska Power and Light Company,

which supplied Logan and surrounding towns with electricity, was making a major play for the gas concession.

All of western Iowa was just at that time getting into the use of gas, and sporadic articles in the Observer spoke of the extension of pipelines to the towns in much the same tone one would use to describe the inexorable march of an invading army which the helpless citizens must of necessity accept as inevitable. The farmers were urged to treat the incoming gas companies well, as they would be providing a valuable new tax source. A vote was held in Logan on September 4, 1930, to decide whether Iowa-Nebraska Power and Light would gain the gas concession, and the results were affirmative.¹⁵⁹ Logan gained its natural gas, but the ads for heating coal continued in the Observer into 1931, although with a noticeable decrease in frequency.

Local people were also concerned with improving the county's schools; not only the buildings, but the way in which they were organized. It was an issue which involved everyone in the county, whether they lived in town or out on the farm. Schools, then as now, were an integral part of society, not only providing education and experience for the students, but entertainment and a sense of community for adults with the various sporting and scholastic events they sponsored. The funding of the schools and their activities was always a topic of debate, particularly as the years went on and money became scarce.

Schools were a major topic of public interest in the decade. In March, 1920, Dunlap dedicated a new high school building, and Persia began laying the foundation of a new school building on August 7, 1922.¹⁶⁰ Of much more concern to the people was how

their schools, new as well as old, were to be organized. The county was experimenting with consolidating some of the separate schools into fewer buildings, which would theoretically cost the county less in building upkeep and teacher salaries.

The organization of school districts was an important issue all over the state, and it posed a complicated set of problems to schools in urban as well as rural areas. The flight of people from farms to cities drained students from rural districts, leaving many country schools with a handful of students and little choice but to consolidate to save money and still provide a good education for their children. At the same time, urban districts were swamped with thousands of new students. New urban professions required city schools to develop new ways of teaching so that students would be properly prepared when they graduated.¹⁶¹

These needs drove teachers and administrators to look for ways to revitalize the whole educational system. New skills required better teachers, so more districts were willing to pay a higher salary to attract them. It was recognized that school buildings should also be improved with proper heating, lighting, ventilation, and sanitation. In the country districts where there was less money available, such improvements had to be more modest, but they were undertaken whenever possible.¹⁶²

In Harrison County as early as 1921, there was talk of setting up a major consolidated school at Woodbine. The Twiner thought it would be a good idea but hastened to assure readers that it would not be forced on anyone.¹⁶³ In neighboring Douglas Township, a consolidated school system had been organized by 1921; and by

1922, petitions were being circulated to end it and return to the old system of rural one-room schools. The increased taxes necessary to support the consolidation were the issue, and opponents were pointing to unfavorable reports about consolidated schools elsewhere in the county as support for their position.¹⁶⁴ Consolidation remained in the township, however, when Miss Alice Divilbess, the County Superintendent of Schools, dismissed the petition in February of 1922.¹⁶⁵

By 1923, finding the money to pay for school tuition was becoming a serious problem for parents with children advancing from the eighth to the ninth grades. The higher grades had been taken out of the county's rural schools and consolidated into larger high schools in the towns several years previously. The county school board had promised parents that there would be no tuition for students who passed eighth grade successfully.¹⁶⁶

In 1923, with the cost of transportation to and from town or of boarding in town in order to attend school being so high, the supposedly free system was costing farmers so much that many students were not able to attend at all. Thus, many youngsters were being denied a high school education as nine out of ten farmers did not have the money to send them to town because farm prices were so bad.¹⁶⁷ Discussion for and against consolidation continued in county newspapers throughout the decade, and this issue was not resolved during this time period.

There were other improvement projects in Harrison County's towns during the 1920s. For instance, Woodbine organized a fire department and bought its first fire truck

in 1926.¹⁶⁸ Fire had always been a major danger and concern in the towns, illustrated most spectacularly by a devastating fire in Persia in 1920. It began when an engine backfired and ignited nearby flammable materials, destroying the town's waterworks, electric plant, an implement store, a garage and six cars. About \$30,000 worth of uninsured damage was caused, and the city was left without water or electricity.¹⁶⁹ The water was soon restored, but Persia was without power for sixteen days.¹⁷⁰

Dunlap also had a series of fires in the early years of the decade, particularly in the winter. In 1920, a home was destroyed by fire because the hydrant two blocks away had frozen and was therefore unusable. Fires in winter were more dangerous for this reason, and the Dunlap Reporter demanded that city officials pay more attention to the hydrants to prevent freezing. Had this fire occurred on Main Street, it was likely the whole town would have been destroyed because of the concentration of wooden buildings there.¹⁷¹

A little later in the year, Dunlap's city council decided to upgrade the town's waterworks, and they contracted the work to Henningson Engineering Company of Omaha. Representatives of the company arrived in May of 1920 to begin the work of extending the waterworks system and repairing and enlarging the town's storm drains and sewers.¹⁷²

The railroads were involved in several other improvements during the decade. In 1920, Woodbine asked for and received a new depot for their town from the Chicago and North Western Railroad because the ramshackle building then in use was not only an eyesore but in danger of collapse.¹⁷³ In 1925, Woodbine demanded that the railroad install

new lights at railway crossings in town to help prevent accidents, as there had been many collisions between trains and automobiles in recent years which caused a number of deaths, and the railroad hastened to comply with the request.¹⁷⁴

Landscaping projects were popular as Woodbine revamped its city park in 1923, putting in permanent seats and a speaker's podium for meetings which could accommodate over five hundred people.¹⁷⁵ In 1928, Logan completed a major landscaping project for the county courthouse which included many new plantings for the lawns.¹⁷⁶ The city also upgraded its park in 1930, when all the low spots were raised and new lighting was installed.¹⁷⁷

Logan also had two improvements to its postal system at the end of the decade. The first was a new post office building in 1930, and the second concerned how the mail was to be delivered in town.¹⁷⁸ The town enacted an ordinance requiring Logan's residences and businesses to be outfitted with building numbers because there were now too many buildings for the mail carriers to remember where everyone was located.¹⁷⁹

As has been noted, the people of Harrison County were concerned with much more than agriculture, although that remained the core of the county's economy. There were other ways to earn money than by tilling the ground, and the declining rural economy drove many from the farm to the town where they believed they would find greater financial security. The gradual growth and expanding variety of businesses and services reflected the needs and desires of this growing town population. Generally speaking, the increasing number of people in the towns, coupled with the failing local farm economy and

the added opportunities for illicit gain offered by prohibition, increased serious crime in the county. The greater number of automobiles and the mobility they provided also added to this problem, and it allowed easier access to the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area.

All of this tied in with a greater sense of frustration and general dissatisfaction which could be seen in the state and the county's interest in the Ku Klux Klan and vigilante groups. People simply needed to feel that there were ways to meet the challenges posed by the shrinking economy and expanding technology, for the ten years from 1920 to 1930 were a time of change in a conservative county that was used to doing most things the way they had been done for decades. If people felt that it was unproductive to worry over national farm policies which they could do little to influence, the county's citizens dealt with their local concerns with considerable vigor and can only have felt a good deal of satisfaction in doing so.

ENDNOTES

1. The Little Sioux Hustler, January 2, 1920, p. 1.
2. The Logan Observer, January 22, 1920, p. 8, for the stock meetings, and for the creamery's failure, see the issue for March 4, 1920, p. 2.
3. John W. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1968), 49.
4. The Dunlap Reporter, March 27, 1924, p. 1.
5. The Woodbine Twiner, November 20, 1924, p. 1. This article gave the information on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul and the Chicago and North Western. It also speaks of the Sioux City and Pacific from Missouri Valley to Sioux City and the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri valley rail lines. These two lines, however, had become part of the CNW railroad just after the turn of the century and no longer existed as separate railroads. Information regarding the Illinois Central and the Chicago Great Western come from William D. Edson, comp. Railroad Names: A Directory of Common Carrier Railroads Operating in the United States 1826-1992, (Potomac, MD.: William D. Edson, pub., 1993), pp. 37 and 73.
6. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 41.
7. The Logan Observer, January 29, 1920, p. 1.
8. The Dunlap Reporter, February 24, 1927, p. 1.
9. The Woodbine Twiner, March 18, 1920, p. 1.
10. The Logan Observer, April 3, 1930, p. 1.
11. The Little Sioux Hustler, January 9, 1920, p. 4.
12. The Logan Observer, January 15, 1920, p. 1.
13. All of these doctors advertised throughout the early years of the decade in the Dunlap Reporter.

14. Helen Adams, ed. Harrison County Iowa, Vol. 1, (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1931), 7.
15. For two examples, see The Logan Observer, November 10, 1921, p. 4, and The Little Sioux Hustler, October 21, 1921, p. 2.
16. The Logan Observer, July 16, 1931, p. 4.
17. Ibid., January 1, 1931, p. 4.
18. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
19. Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1974), 254.
20. The Logan Observer, April 15, 1920, p. 1.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., December 13, 1923, p. 1.
23. Ibid., October 1, 1925, p. 6, and a supporting article can be found in The Woodbine Twiner, October 1, 1925, p. 1.
24. The Woodbine Twiner, December 10, 1925, p. 1.
25. Ibid., May 13, 1926, p. 5.
26. Ibid.
27. The Logan Observer, March 24, 1927, p. 1.
28. Ibid., July 11, 1923, p. 3.
29. Ibid., October 10, 1925, p. 4.
30. Ibid., March 31, 1927, p. 4.
31. Ibid., October 11, 1928, p. 8.
32. Ibid., October 2, 1930, p. 8.
33. Ibid., October 15, 1931, p. 4.

34. The Woodbine Twiner, March 11, 1920, p. 4.
35. Ibid., September 15, 1921, p. 7.
36. Ibid., July 9, 1925, p. 8.
37. The Dunlap Reporter, April 15, 1920, p. 1.
38. Ibid., September 17, 1925, p. 6.
39. Ibid., February 25, 1926, p. 1.
40. For the 1920 figure, see The Dunlap Reporter, March 18, 1920, p. 6, and for the 1926 figure, see the Reporter, January 14, 1926, p. 3.
41. The Dunlap Reporter, April 15, 1920, p. 2.
42. Ibid., September 17, 1925, p. 3.
43. Ibid., July 10, 1930, p. 3.
44. The Logan Observer, April 8, 1920, p. 3.
45. Ibid., July 3, 1924, p. 5.
46. Ibid., April 8, 1920, p. 3.
47. Ibid., October 8, 1925, p. 4.
48. Ibid., October 9, 1930, p. 4.
49. Ibid., November 19, 1931, p. 1.
50. The Woodbine Twiner, September 23, 1920, p. 3.
51. Ibid., July 10, 1924, p. 3.
52. Ibid., October 17, 1929, p. 5.
53. Ibid., July 15, 1920, p. 6.
54. Ibid., September 13, 1923, p. 2.

55. Ibid., October 17, 1929, p. 3.
56. The Logan Observer, January 8, 1920, p. 6.
57. Ibid., September 15, 1921, p. 6.
58. Ibid., September 27, 1923, p. 6.
59. Ibid., September 16, 1920, p. 8.
60. Ibid., April 12, 1923, p. 7.
61. The Woodbine Twiner, May 13, 1926, p. 5. This same article is cited in notes 25 and 26.
62. The Little Sioux Hustler, November 11, 1920, p. 4.
63. Ibid., April 13, 1923, p. 1.
64. Ibid., July 11, 1930, p. 4.
65. Ibid., April 16, 1920, p. 3.
66. Ibid., April 13, 1923, p. 2.
67. Ibid., October 17, 1924, p. 3.
68. Ibid., July 9, 1926, p. 2.
69. Ibid., July 12, 1929, p. 3.
70. Ibid., October 10, 1930, p. 1.
71. Ibid., July 23, 1920, p. 2.
72. Ibid., November 17, 1922, p. 1.
73. Ibid., July 11, 1924, p. 4.
74. Ibid., February 18, 1927, p. 4.
75. Ibid., September 22, 1922, p. 2.

76. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
77. The Dunlap Reporter, September 17, 1925, p. 1.
78. Ibid., October 1, 1925, p. 1.
79. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7-8.
80. Douglas Wertsch, "Wallaces' Farmer's Crusade Against Rural Crime in the 1920s," The Annals of Iowa 50 (Spring, 1990): 377-378.
81. Ibid., 378.
82. The Logan Observer, February 12, 1920, p. 1.
83. Ibid., January 22, 1920, p. 1.
84. The Dunlap Reporter, July 15, 1920, p. 6.
85. The Logan Observer, May 21, 1925, p. 1.
86. The Dunlap Reporter, September 18, 1924, p. 4.
87. The Logan Observer, September 25, 1924, p. 1, followed by another supporting article on October 2, 1924, p. 5.
88. The Dunlap Reporter, October 23, 1924, p. 1.
89. Ibid., August 12, 1926, p. 1.
90. Ibid., September 16, 1926, p. 1.
91. Ibid., September 23, 1926, p. 1.
92. Ibid., September 30, 1926, p. 1.
93. This information was provided by the Department of Records at the Iowa State Penitentiary at Fort Madison, Iowa, via a telephone conversation held on November 21, 1996.
94. There is some discrepancy in the reports of the amount stolen. The Logan Observer, December 29, 1921, p. 1, said that \$2,100 in cash was taken from the Pisgah bank, while The Woodbine Twiner, December 29, 1921, p. 1, stated the

cash amount was \$2,257 and included \$16,000 in bonds. Only the Observer mentioned that the three men were in a stolen car, while both relate the chase and capture of the criminals in Omaha.

95. The Logan Observer, February 16, 1922, p. 5.
96. Ibid., October 23, 1924, p. 1.
97. Ibid., December 16, 1926, p. 1.
98. Ibid., September 6, 1928, p. 1.
99. Ibid., August 27, 1925, p. 2.
100. Ibid.
101. Wertsch, "Wallaces' Farmer's Crusade," 378.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., 387.
104. Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), xi.
105. Ibid., p. xii. See also Mary Wear Briggs, "The Road by Home: Harrison County, Iowa, in the 1920s," Palimpsest 73 (Spring, 1992): 87-88.
106. Michael W. Schuyler, "The Ku Klux Klan in Nebraska, 1920-1930," Nebraska History 66 (Fall, 1985): 235.
107. Ibid., 240.
108. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 251.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid., 254.
111. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
112. Schuyler, "The Ku Klux Klan in Nebraska, 1920-1930," 237.

113. Ibid., 235.
114. The Logan Observer, June 12, 1924, p. 1.
115. Ibid., July 31, 1924, p. 1.
116. Ibid., October 1, 1925, p. 2, and The Little Sioux Hustler, October 2, 1925, p. 2. The apparent enthusiasm of the Hustler's article need not necessarily represent any personal bias of the paper or its editor in this instance, but may simply be the paper printing the words the KKK placed in its advertisement.
117. The Woodbine Twiner, June 15, 1922, p. 8.
118. Ibid., January 18, 1923, p. 1.
119. Ibid., July 3, 1924, p. 1.
120. Briggs, "The Road by Home," 87-88.
121. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
122. Ibid.
123. The Logan Observer, February 12, 1920, p. 6.
124. Ibid., February 5, 1920, p. 7.
125. Ibid., June 11, 1925, p. 1, and The Woodbine Twiner, June 11, 1925, p. 1.
126. The Little Sioux Hustler, June 25, 1920, p. 1, for one example.
127. The Logan Observer, April 8, 1920, p. 2.
128. The Little Sioux Hustler, April 15, 1921, p. 1.
129. The Dunlap Reporter, March 25, 1920, p. 5, for one example.
130. The Logan Observer, June 1, 1931, p. 4.
131. Ibid., March 27, 1930, p. 6, for the twenty-four percent increase in accidents, and August 14, 1930, p. 4, for the figure of 231 deaths from automobile accidents.
132. Ibid., January 23, 1930, p. 1.

133. Drake Hokanson, The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 97.
134. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
135. Hokanson, The Lincoln Highway, 16.
136. The Logan Observer, April 15, 1920, p. 4.
137. Ibid., June 3, 1920, p. 1.
138. Ibid., January 29, 1920, p. 1, noted that the company receiving the paving contract was E. A. Wickham and Co. of Council Bluffs, which was also accepting paving contracts from Logan.
139. The Woodbine Twiner, April 29, 1920, p. 1.
140. The Dunlap Reporter, February 5, 1920, p. 3.
141. Ibid., April 15, 1920, p. 2.
142. The Logan Observer, November 10, 1921, p. 4.
143. The Woodbine Twiner, June 16, 1927, p. 1.
144. The Logan Observer, July 28, 1927, p. 1. A follow-up article on this can be found in the August 18, 1927 issue, p. 1.
145. Ibid., December 22, 1927, p. 1.
146. Ibid., May 22, 1930, p. 1.
147. Ibid., September 11, 1930, p. 6.
148. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 55.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid., 55-56.
151. Ibid., 56-57.
152. The Dunlap Reporter, November 5, 1925, p. 1.

153. Ibid., September 8, 1927, p. 3.
154. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 8.
155. The Woodbine Twiner, January 27, 1921, p. 2. There were several references to this in the very early months of the year, and then nothing further is said of it when it was found to have been a mistake.
156. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 59-60.
157. The Dunlap Reporter, August 14, 1930, p. 1.
158. The Logan Observer, July 17, 1930, p. 4. Many articles succeeded this one, discussing various aspects of the natural gas situation.
159. Ibid., September 11, 1930, p. 1.
160. The Dunlap Reporter, March 25, 1920, p. 1, gives the information about the Dunlap school, and the article about the school in Persia can be found in The Logan Observer, August 10, 1922, p. 8.
161. Keach Johnson, "Roots of Modernization: Educational Reform in Iowa at the Turn of the Century," The Annals of Iowa 50 (Spring, 1991): 894.
162. Ibid., 901-904.
163. The Woodbine Twiner, January 27, 1921, p. 5.
164. Ibid., January 19, 1922, p. 1.
165. Ibid., February 2, 1922, p. 1.
166. The Logan Observer, September 6, 1923, p. 6.
167. Ibid.
168. The Woodbine Twiner, February 18, 1926, p. 1.
169. The Logan Observer, January 8, 1920, p. 1.
170. Ibid., January 29, 1920, p. 6.
171. The Dunlap Reporter, January 15, 1920, p. 1.

172. Ibid., May 6, 1920, p. 1.
173. The Woodbine Twiner, July 1, 1920, p. 1.
174. Ibid., March 26, 1925, p. 1.
175. Ibid., August 2, 1923, p. 1.
176. Iowa Department of Agriculture and Inspection. Harrison County Annual Narrative Report, 1928, 54.
177. The Logan Observer, March 27, 1930, p. 1.
178. Ibid., February 20, 1930, p. 1.
179. Ibid., September 25, 1930, p. 1.

CHAPTER IV

ENTERTAINMENT

Agriculture provided the people of Harrison County with their major sources of income, and during the ten years between 1920 and 1930, their hard work was rewarded with an impressive increase in production. Unfortunately, the sale value of their products fell dramatically during the same period, due in large part to the economic situation prevailing in the world market after the great war. While it can be said that the worsening economic depression was not the sole responsibility of any one national capital, local farmers believed that our federal government could help them far more than it was doing. It all added a sense of growing disenchantment and frustration to a bad economic picture which was expressed in a number of ways, not least in the dramatic Democratic political victories in the years immediately following the period studied here.

If life in Harrison County at this time was a bundle of increasing worries, then one wonders what the people did to ease the pressure and forget their troubles for a time. Life has never been all work and no play at any time or place, even in a rural midwestern county. A commonly held view of such places is that there is nothing to do in one's leisure time. Although it is true that the size and wealth of one's community has a direct impact on the variety of amusements available, it is also true that people take what they have and what they know and weave these elements into their lives to provide not only work, but

play. In fact, Harrison County residents in the 1920s had a wide and growing selection of leisure opportunities.

In the years just prior to 1920, life in Harrison County was in many ways the same as it had been in the nineteenth century. The great majority of people still traveled by horse or train even into the early 1920s. "Ungraveled roads were dusty and rough during dry weather and rutted quagmires when rain fell. Roads suitable for a slow-moving horse and carriage shook the faster automobile and its occupants. During wet periods, automobiles were stuck in the mud."¹ Because the roads were so bad and travel so generally inconvenient, people tended to stay near their own homes for entertainment.

As agriculture was so vital to the county's people, it should be no surprise that much of their entertainment was farm-related. One of the most prevalent answers to leisure time doldrums was the formation of clubs of all kinds. Many clubs and societies had little to do with the farm directly, but others were bound integrally to agriculture and served to teach as well as entertain.

The agricultural clubs in the county involved large numbers of boys and girls and were vital in developing leadership and a sense of responsibility. They revealed the advantages of farm life to members and taught them the value of farm and home commodities. Excellent business skills were imparted to the young people when they had to keep records of club activities, profits and losses. Clubs added a sense of democracy and cooperation, as children had to work together, and provided recreation, play, and pride throughout the year.²

Prominent among the agricultural clubs, which were supervised protectively by the omnipresent Agent F. B. Hanson, were the various livestock clubs, such as the market litter club, the baby beef club, the poultry club, and the market pig club. Boys and girls who were members not only were taught how to raise and care for their charges, but learned all about the diseases which could affect them and the financial considerations which governed their sale. As young people tended young animals, there was evidently no lack of playing with the calves, chicks, lambs, and the other animals, with the occasional footrace with piglet escapees on the side. To top it off, the kids were able to exhibit their best results in the various township, county and state fairs.³

Related to these clubs was the horticultural club, based in Raglan Township, which was the center for the county's fruit-growing enterprises.⁴ Not only children, but many of the farm women participated in this organization, through which they studied the pruning and spraying of orchards and the business management of them. Local fruit-growers, and at times the Agent himself, provided demonstrations on the canning of preserves, jellies, and jams, and, as with the livestock clubs, the best of their work was displayed at the fairs for prizes and recognition.

The extension office also promoted home furnishing clubs for the county's girls and women. Agent Hanson reported these as one of the specific women's projects in the extension reports each year, and they were evidently quite popular as there were eight such clubs in 1925 alone.⁵ These clubs not only taught girls how to be better and more industrious homemakers, but how to make money by saving it; and they gave instruction

in a wide variety of useful crafts. Club projects covered all aspects of the home, from refinishing furniture to drapes, bedding, carpets, and artwork. People considered these things of vital importance, as the "home is the most important spot in the world, and is the place around which life's activities center more than any other."⁶

Women's participation in clubs became very widespread as the decade progressed, as this was one of the few ways in which they could express themselves socially. Even though women had been given the vote in 1920, there were a number of powerful taboos and social conventions which were almost impossible for them to ignore. These ranged from how a decent woman was to dress, which streets were appropriate for her to walk on, which businesses she could be seen entering, what sort of pets were proper for her to own, and even how she was to part her hair. Professional careers were to be terminated upon marriage so she could stay home and raise her children, and the woman who kept on working professionally after her marriage was likely to be ostracized. Club work thus became an important vehicle for a woman's sense of individuality and social purpose.⁷

Women's activities arranged through the county extension office during the 1920s were in fact "an early form of female empowerment."⁸ Thousands of women of all ages participated in the extension programs, which allowed them to develop self-esteem along with their new skills. It went without saying that the work their husbands were doing out in the fields was essential for their families' survival, but now the wives and daughters could feel that they also contributed vital skills to the family operation. The activities developed their confidence even as it instructed and entertained them.⁹

There were a number of clubs, organizations, and societies which were not tied into the farm and its operation. Some were sponsored by schools, some by churches, and others by groups of people who simply shared common interests. For instance, the county had a number of glee clubs which traveled about performing at school and town functions, in particular at the various fairs. Most prominent of these were the Clay Live-Wires, who even performed in other counties and at the state fair.¹⁰

Examples of small societies abound throughout the decade. A chapter of the Rebekahs met all during the period, mainly at Pisgah.¹¹ The Rebekahs' full name was the International Association of Rebekah Assemblies, and they were organized in 1922 as the women's auxiliary of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Among other things, they sponsored youth pilgrimages and promoted education.¹²

In the same town was the Pisgah Canning Club, which met during the early 1920s.¹³ There was the Melrose Stitch and Study Club¹⁴ and the Helping Hand Society, a group of women out of Silver Hill who went about the county assisting people in need.¹⁵ In Beebetown, there was an ominously titled group called the Purity Club, which was busily blackballing unsuitable members in public at the beginning of the decade.¹⁶ Dunlap possessed the Fortnightly Club, which met often to read books, hear music, and put on plays. Many of the teachers and students were heavily involved in it.¹⁷ Also meeting in Dunlap were the Industrial Club for women and the Service Stars, formerly known as the War Mother's Club.¹⁸

The more physically energetic women founded a hiking club whose sole purpose was to gather together, walk out to the more inhospitable parts of the county and encamp overnight, braving the dangers of the wild.¹⁹ The male idea of organized physical activity was best exemplified by the foundation of golf clubs in Logan, Woodbine, and Dunlap.²⁰ Eventually county-wide tournaments evolved from this, which were held at Logan.

The types of entertainment which brought out the largest crowds were the various fairs and special holiday gatherings across the county. The state fair in Des Moines was the largest, of course, and everyone hoped to be able to go there and show their handiwork to the entire state. Because of the nature of the roads, however, most people did not take the arduous journey, at least in the earlier years of the decade. Their attention centered upon the Harrison County fair, which was held at Missouri Valley in September.

Initially the county fair had little that was not farm-related, and the event was intended mainly for the demonstration of new farming techniques and equipment or the display of new hybrid grains. The earliest fairs were "solely for education, but gradually more and more amusements were added until it was considered entertainment."²¹

The first amusements were the same sort of things which midwesterners had been doing since the early frontier days. There were shooting matches, horse racing, husking bees, and quilting bees for the women. Gradually, as technology improved, bicycle and automobile races were included. Dancing was the most popular entertainment of all.²² To help people attend the county fair in the years before automobiles became common, the railroads provided extra trains for as long as the fair ran.²³

In 1920, however, the Harrison County fair organizers may have gone too far for local tastes. This fair lost money, so the county voted to cut back funds for the 1921 county fair. The first thing to go was the carnival that had been set up for the 1920 fair. The conservative editor of the Logan Observer thought this was an excellent idea, as the carnival people just took the money out of local pockets and carried it away out of the county, perhaps even out of the state.²⁴ The Observer's review of the 1921 county fair, after the alterations, was particularly glowing, and the paper said it was the best fair ever. The Observer declared that this fair's superiority was entirely due to the lack of a carnival with its "indecent" shows designed to corrupt the impressionable youth of the county.²⁵ All that had been left to the fair were the livestock and grain demonstrations, and perhaps a few of the traditional horse and bicycle races.

Much smaller than the county fairs were the various community and township fairs which were held all over the county. In 1919, the town of Pisgah began putting on an annual community fair, which was mainly intended to show off the agricultural club work of the local young people.²⁶ Also popular was the Raglan Township fair, which was a showcase for the township's orchards.²⁷ These community fairs were able to draw in respectable crowds; over 1,500 people attended the Pisgah fair for 1921.²⁸

As popular as these fairs were, they did not rate as the best crowd-pleasers. In fact, the county fair ran about third place in the public eye. Corn Day, which seemed to be the biggest draw, ranked on top, while second place was a toss-up between the celebrations held for Decoration Day and the Fourth of July.

Corn Day, which was celebrated in Logan in the spring, received tremendous coverage from the Logan Observer and was full of exhibits ranging from new farm machinery and demonstrations of fertilizers and pesticides to livestock exhibits and the presentation of new hybrid corns which were being tested. The county's glee clubs would perform and there would be heaps of food and crowds of people, even from neighboring counties.²⁹

Decoration Day celebrations were always extensive and well-attended. "Decoration Day" was simply another name for Memorial Day during this period. The name initially arose from the practice of decorating the graves of Civil War soldiers with flowers; this soon grew to include the decoration of the graves of any loved ones one wished to honor.³⁰ However it was named, this day was an occasion for parades, special church services, pancake feeds, music, singing, and dancing. The Woodbine festivities were always large, as were those in Dunlap, Logan, and Missouri Valley.³¹ However, an interesting development could be seen as the decade progressed. In Logan, during the early 1920s, the town's businesses would close all day in honor of the occasion, but by 1930, the stores would only close for the afternoon.³² A possible explanation for this could be the economic situation of the time; these sorts of events always brought in many people, and the opportunity for extra income was probably just too good to pass up.

If Decoration Day was big, the Fourth of July could be a truly staggering occasion. Logan, as the county seat, was generally the center of attention for this event, although the city was not able to hold celebrations in 1920 because of incomplete paving projects and a

flu epidemic.³³ In normal years, though, the event was impressive. The festivities for 1930 drew no fewer than ten thousand visitors from all over western Iowa.³⁴ There was no indication of what the special attraction was that year, but the little town must have been inundated by the crush.

There were other special days that were celebrated in the county and attended by those seeking a little relief from the daily round of work and worry. Armistice Day was observed in November and events varied from town to town and year to year. In Logan in 1921, plans included the usual parades, church services and picnics,³⁵ while celebrations in Pisgah for 1923 were expanded to include boxing, a raffle, a dance, and special movies.³⁶

Rally Day was held in Logan every June and was another occasion where the boys and girls in the county's agricultural clubs would gather to present the fruits of their labors.³⁷ Woodbine also held a local Fall Festival that was mainly an agricultural show including farm exhibits and home economics demonstrations.³⁸ And, of course, there were the picnics - hundreds of them - put on by every town, township, church, farm, town business, and social organization operating at the time.

Some of these picnics were impressive, indeed. The local Farm Bureau picnic held every August in Logan could draw up to 2,500 people. The larger Harrison County Farm Bureau picnic, which evidently moved about in location, was larger yet. In 1920, it was held in Woodbine and drew an astonishing 8,000 people.³⁹

An event which Harrison County people looked forward to with special anticipation was the Chautauqua. This was a peripatetic "spiritual and entertainment

extravaganza, one of the high points of the year."⁴⁰ In essence, it was a traveling variety show with a little something for everyone. There was music, plays of both sacred and secular nature, serious lectures and amusing character sketches and impressions.⁴¹ The county newspapers mentioned Chautauqua many times as the decade began. In 1920, it was held in Woodbine and Pisgah⁴² and stayed on from July 29 through August 2 in Little Sioux and Logan.⁴³ Woodbine held it again in 1921.⁴⁴

In 1922, however, the Chautauqua in Logan, while said to have been very good, was not invited to return the next year due to a vote of the town's citizens.⁴⁵ The reasons were not stated, but it is likely that the event cost the town too much, and perhaps the people's level of interest was just too low to warrant a return. After this, there is little mention of Chautauqua in the newspapers, with one major exception.

The town of Dunlap held Chautauquas during the early 1920s, just as the other towns did, but Dunlap's citizens seemed unwilling to let it die out. A large Chautauqua was held in July of 1925 and another in 1926.⁴⁶ After the close of the 1926 Chautauqua, the Reporter lamented that year's dismal attendance and feared that it was over for good.⁴⁷ Nothing could have been farther from the truth, however, as a Chautauqua with a four-day run was held in Dunlap in June of 1929, and another was held in July of 1930, long after the rest of the county had abandoned this form of entertainment.⁴⁸

Chautauqua was in decline in this decade because of its competition. In spite of the quality of the performances, Chautauqua was still only a once-a-year event. The spread of movies and radio brought big-name entertainment to people on a daily basis, a

fact which lessened Chautauqua's luster and impact. Eventually interest drained away to the point that it ceased altogether after 1931.⁴⁹

Another early program which had rivaled Chautauqua locally in the years prior to 1920 was the play, Uncle Tom's Cabin, a nineteenth century holdover. It was a road show of long-standing duration which was based in Little Sioux during the winter and which toured the country during the summer. Before leaving on tour in the spring, the company held a dance and parade. Balloons would be released which contained tickets for the show, and the children would race after them to win free entrance. The company would then put on the play for up to ten nights in a row.⁵⁰ The festival surrounding the show was mentioned in the Little Sioux Hustler in April of 1920 but was billed as the last show, and it was not mentioned again.⁵¹ Perhaps it too was a victim of the worsening economic situation, or perhaps the changing tastes of its audience had made the play obsolete.

Dancing has already been cited as one of the favorite forms of entertainment in the county, and the newspapers are full of announcements of many dances put on by various organizations all over the region. Woodbine had a permanent dance hall which began advertising in the Logan Observer and Woodbine Twiner in 1929, as well as a community hall which had served that purpose in earlier years.⁵² Magnolia's Olson Hall was holding dances since before 1920.⁵³ The Pavilion in Missouri Valley held Easter dances⁵⁴ and the Mondamin Opera House held masquerade balls, which were very popular through the

decade.⁵⁵ Persia would organize an old-fashioned Valentine's Day dance every year which seemed to be well attended.⁵⁶

The American Legion would hold dances periodically each year, generally in Logan, and the Logan fire department put on an annual ball which drew in people from all over the county.⁵⁷ In Little Sioux there is one brief mention of a Babe Hall which held a dance in 1920.⁵⁸ Considering the fact that many of these dances were being held in the dead of winter, it is clear that a stroll through the snow was no obstacle to local attendance.

Stage plays were also popular, and the Woodbine Theater was kept busy catering to the county's needs. There were ads for the theater in many of the county's newspapers, and by the end of the decade, as many as five plays were put on every two to three weeks.⁵⁹ Many of the performers of these plays were members of traveling companies, and at times, the papers would carry photographs of the cast of a particular play. Other plays, especially those associated with the schools, were presented by local actors.

Much more glamorous than live plays were the movies. At first these had been relatively minor diversions, but they grew to have a tremendous importance as a form of entertainment. The county's people would converge on the towns to see the movies, and at times would arrange their business schedules to accommodate them. "At least one business man assured his customers there would be 'no long waits - we can serve you in time for the movies.'"⁶⁰

There were a number of places in the county where one could go to see Hollywood's latest creations. Logan's Pastime Theater and Magnolia's Idle Hour Theater carried names that were nothing if not descriptive. Woodbine had the Strand Theater, Pisgah had the Gem Movie Theater, and Little Sioux presented movies at the Kerr Opera House and Majestic Theater. The schedules of motion pictures were printed in the papers so that everyone could know what was to be offered on any given night.⁶¹

Upgrades to these theaters were continuous. For instance, Logan's Pastime received a new screen in 1920 and in 1925 was transferred to a new and bigger building. In 1929, it was given sound capabilities.⁶² Magnolia's Idle Hour acquired a new projection system in 1920.⁶³ Despite improvements, running a theater was not without risks, as the Pastime's new building nearly burned down when its nitrate films spontaneously ignited in 1925.⁶⁴

In 1931, a new option presented itself to Harrison County's film buffs, when ads for Omaha's grand RKO-Orpheum began to appear in the Logan Observer, offering Hollywood's glittering spectacles in palatial surroundings. A glance at the weekly social columns in any newspaper revealed that many people were taking the drive on the nice new roads to see them.

The improved roads, coupled with the automobile, allowed for a wider range of entertainment options, as rural people were given access to the same activities enjoyed by people in towns.⁶⁵ New horizons opened as summer vacations to other states and national parks were now possible. Travelers could take long trips with reasonable expense,

cooking meals by the side of the road and staying in the new tourist cabins which were erected along the major routes. By 1927, "twice as many farm families were visiting national parks as families associated with any other professional class."⁶⁶

Automobiles were not just a way to reach a movie theater or park, but could be fun all by themselves. High school and college students discovered the joys of the open road, particularly as it was now easy to get away from the watchful eyes of parents, teachers, and neighbors. The new mobility possessed by younger people and the resulting potential for unsupervised activities was not lost on the older generations, and it began to force changes in the way things were done. For instance, a conservative college administration which had never allowed dances on campus for moral reasons might now decide that it would be a lesser evil than watching their students drive to the nearest larger town to enjoy activities beyond their supervision.⁶⁷

For those who preferred their entertainment at home, there was the Victrola, which was quite the rage in the early part of the decade. They were evidently fairly new in the county by 1920, for the sale of five of them in Pisgah made the paper in Logan.⁶⁸ At the same time, radio gradually became very popular and grew to be an ever more pervasive part of American life at this time. Radios provided instant news and entertainment and were a central feature of evening activity for the family. Some of the earliest ads for radios in the Observer appeared in 1930 and were a regular feature thereafter, which tends to suggest that this form of entertainment had found a prominent place in local homes.⁶⁹

Masonic activities were popular amongst some of the county's adults during this time, although from the relatively few comments made in the newspapers it is difficult to say how large a following could be claimed. The Masonic Lodges and Eastern Star were related organizations and were almost always spoken of in the same breath. They were putting on New Year's parties and dances in Little Sioux in 1920 but were only occasionally mentioned after this.⁷⁰ There was a report of a De Molay Masonic chapter organizing in Logan in 1924, but again, subsequent information is sporadic.⁷¹ De Molay was a fraternal order for young men which sought to build leadership qualities and encouraged participation in humanitarian projects and sports activities.⁷² The Masons and Eastern Star opened a new hall in Woodbine in 1924, and a Harrison County chapter of De Molay was organized in 1925.⁷³

Several towns organized local activities for their citizens. Missouri Valley put in a swimming pool in early 1921,⁷⁴ and Logan formed a town band in 1927, open to anyone who cared to join and who could play an instrument. There is no data on how many people did so, but the town was having band concerts in the park every Wednesday evening in the warm months from 1928 on.⁷⁵ As indicated previously, the men's golfing clubs and tournaments were popular during the summer as well. To facilitate these tournaments, Dunlap put in a new golf course in 1925 and upgraded it significantly in 1929, so much so that it was called "one of the finest in western Iowa."⁷⁶

Schools were also important in providing recreation. There were school plays to attend, the school bands and choirs to listen to, and innumerable debates and declamatory

contests held toward the end of every semester. There were literature class readings, boys and girls glee clubs, and shorthand contests.⁷⁷ The shining jewels in the schools' crowns were the basketball and football teams, whose activities, on or off the field, were followed avidly. The football squads seemed to be the most popular and were very much in demand, en masse, for social gatherings.⁷⁸

Interestingly, there seemed to be little to report on in the way of baseball teams for most of the schools. Of the four papers used for this work, only the Dunlap Reporter showed noticeable enthusiasm for the local school baseball team. The schools did have baseball teams, but it was obvious that football and basketball were simply more popular sports.

There were enough leisure activities in the county so that people could afford to be selective in their entertainment, for a proposed billiard hall was turned down by the town of Logan in a vote which saw heavy participation by the local women.⁷⁹ Obviously there were some pastimes not suitable for the young people of the county.

Harrison County was rural, and in the years between 1920 and 1930 the people who lived there were beset by increasingly difficult times. People seek a variety of entertainment activities even when times are good, and such diversions can become even more important when they are not. The growing popularity of movies, which allowed people to step into new and exciting worlds which were different from their own, went far in easing their minds and gave them something light-hearted to anticipate. The same can be said of radio, which had the added benefit of being able to provide important

information quickly. If entertainment is where you find it, the people of the county in those years did no worse than anyone, anywhere else, and considering how many people would come from surrounding counties to attend their fairs and parades, they probably did a good deal better.

ENDNOTES

1. Helen Adams, ed. Harrison County Iowa, Vol. 1, (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1931), 7.
2. The Logan Observer, September 28, 1922, p.4.
3. Iowa Department of Agriculture and Inspection. Harrison County Annual Narrative Report, 1925, 20. Further examples of these clubs and their activities can be found throughout the pages of the county's newspapers, particularly in the spring and fall months. The narrative reports for each year give a fair amount of attention to these clubs, stressing their importance for local society. The local Farm Bureau worked closely with the extension office to promote them. See also the reports for 1926, p. 42; for 1927, p. 15; for 1928, p. 33; for 1929, p. 45; and for 1930, p. 42.
4. Ibid., 1925, 19.
5. Ibid., ii. See also p. 5 of the same report, where it is stated that 4,335 women attended these clubs in that year alone.
6. Ibid., 7.
7. Thomas J. Morain, Prairie Grass Roots: An Iowa Small Town in the Early Twentieth Century (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 84-85.
8. Dorothy Schwieder, Seventy-Five Years of Service: Cooperative Extension in Iowa (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993), 64.
9. Ibid.
10. There are numerous reports of the Clay Live-Wires and the other glee clubs in all the newspapers during the last three years of the decade. They also appear at times in the narrative reports for the same years.
11. The Logan Observer, January 15, 1920, p. 6, for just one example.
12. Carolyn A. Fischer and Carol A. Schwartz, eds. Encyclopedia of Associations, 1996, Vol. 1, Part 2, 30th Edition (New York: Gale Research Inc., International Thomson Publishing Company, 1995), 2303.

13. This group was occasionally mentioned in the social columns of the Observer during the first years of the decade.
14. The Logan Observer, January 8, 1920, p. 6, for just one example.
15. Ibid., February 19, 1920, p. 6, for just one example. This group was sporadically mentioned throughout the decade.
16. Ibid., February 3, 1921, p. 6.
17. The Dunlap Reporter, January 10, 1924, p. 1, for just one of many mentions.
18. Ibid., January 15, 1920, p. 5, for just one instance when both clubs are mentioned.
19. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
20. The Logan Observer, May 24, 1928, p. 1; The Woodbine Twiner, March 22, 1928, p. 1.
21. Myrtle Beinhauer, "The County, District, and State Agricultural Societies of Iowa," The Annals of Iowa 20 (July, 1935): 68.
22. Bruce E. Mahan, "Frontier Fun," Palimpsest 8 (Jan., 1927): 39-40. This is also corroborated in Beinhauer's article, above, on p. 68.
23. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
24. The Logan Observer, March 24, 1921, p. 1.
25. Ibid., September 27, 1922, p. 1.
26. Ibid., September 9, 1920, p. 2.
27. Ibid., September 7, 1922, p. 1, and August 23, 1923, p. 1.
28. The Little Sioux Hustler, September 2, 1921, p. 1.
29. The Logan Observer, January 23, 1930, p. 4.
30. Jane M. Hatch, ed. The American Book of Days (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1978), 501-502.
31. The Woodbine Twiner, May 29, 1924, p. 1.

32. The Logan Observer, April 18, 1920, p. 6, stated the town stores would remain closed, while the issue of May 28, 1931, p. 1, noted that stores would stay open for half a day.
33. Ibid., June 3, 1920, p. 1.
34. Ibid., July 10, 1930, p. 1.
35. Ibid., July 14, 1921, p. 4. This article looked ahead to the celebration, and was speaking of the events that were still being planned.
36. The Little Sioux Hustler, November 9, 1923, p. 1.
37. Annual Narrative Report, 1926, 45.
38. Ibid., 28.
39. For the Logan Farm Bureau picnic, see Narrative Report, 1929, 25. For the large Harrison County Farm Bureau picnic in 1920, see The Woodbine Twiner, August 12, 1920, p. 1.
40. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
41. Ibid.
42. The Little Sioux Hustler, July 9, 1920, p. 2; The Woodbine Twiner, April 4, 1920, p. 6.
43. The Logan Observer, April 18, 1920, p. 6.
44. The Woodbine Twiner, February 10, 1921, p. 1.
45. The Logan Observer, August 17, 1922, p. 1.
46. The Dunlap Reporter, May 21, 1925, p. 1, where the dates for the 1925 Chautauqua are set for July 10 through July 15.
47. Ibid., July 22, 1926, p. 1.
48. Ibid., June 6, 1929, p. 1, for the 1929 Chautauqua, and the July 17, 1930 issue, p. 1, for the 1930 Chautauqua.
49. Morain, Prairie Grass Roots, 170-171.

50. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
51. The Little Sioux Hustler, April 23, 1920, p. 2.
52. The Woodbine Twiner, February 5, 1920, p. 3.
53. The Logan Observer, February 12, 1920, p. 6.
54. Ibid., October 1, 1925, p. 2.
55. The Little Sioux Hustler, October 27, 1922, p. 3.
56. The Logan Observer, February 17, 1921, p. 8.
57. Ibid., January 27, 1921, p. 8, for just one of many examples of either dance.
58. The Little Sioux Hustler, January 9, 1920, p. 4.
59. The Logan Observer, January 9, 1930, p. 8. This is only one example of many such ads.
60. Adams, Harrison County Iowa, 7.
61. The Logan Observer, May 6, 1920, p. 1, for just one example of many.
62. Ibid., May 6, 1920, p. 1, for the new movie screen; April 30, 1925, p. 8 for the move to a bigger building; and December 17, 1929, p. 1, for the new sound capabilities. The Dunlap Reporter, May 2, 1929, p. 1, also speaks of the theater's new sound equipment.
63. The Logan Observer, March 4, 1920, p. 6.
64. Ibid., June 18, 1925, p. 1.
65. Morain, Prairie Grass Roots, 105.
66. Ibid., 118.
67. Ibid., 167.
68. The Logan Observer, January 1, 1920, p. 2.
69. Ibid., October 2, 1930, p. 7.

70. Ibid., January 8, 1920, p. 8, and January 20, 1920, p. 8.
71. Ibid., September 4, 1924, p. 1.
72. Fischer and Schwartz, Encyclopedia of Associations, 2315.
73. The Logan Observer, August 9, 1924, p. 1, for the new Masonic Hall in Woodbine, and May 7, 1925, p. 1 for the county-wide chapter of De Molay.
74. Ibid., July 14, 1921, p. 1.
75. Ibid., May 24, 1928, p. 1.
76. The Dunlap Reporter, May 7, 1925, p. 1, for the 1925 completion of the golf course, and the April 18, 1929 issue, p. 1, for the course's upgrade.
77. The Logan Observer, September 27, 1922, p. 2; January 23, 1930, p. 4; and The Little Sioux Hustler, October 27, 1922, p. 2, for just a few examples. An hour of reading any part of any paper during the months in which school was in session will yield many such activities.
78. The Logan Observer, January 23, 1930, p 1, for just one example. In this case, the Logan football team was being feted by the local Lion's Club and the 4-H Club. Other instances abound.
79. Ibid., February 19, 1931. p. 1.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS, RELIGION, AND ETHNICITY

Politics is a general term that can include such diverse things as government, administration, elections, popular opinion, or simply the process by which an individual engages in public service. This discussion will examine the government of a typical Iowa county of the 1920s, and what local and national political issues were of particular concern to the people of Harrison County.

It has been previously noted that counties were the largest political units with which most people could comfortably identify, and "in Iowa the county is the most important administrative unit with respect to elections."¹ It is through the county that the people of the nation have most consistently exercised their right to self-government.² It is a useful level of government, for it is large enough to affect a significant number of people and encompass a number of towns and rural residents, but small enough to be responsive to local needs and then bring those needs to the attention of the state government.

The most visible members of the Iowa county government were the county officers who were elected every even-numbered year.³ The state constitution provided only for the county attorney, but there were a number of others.⁴ In Harrison County these included the auditor, clerk of court, treasurer, recorder, sheriff, superintendent of schools, engineer, coroner, and three county supervisors.⁵

County governments were responsible for organizing and implementing solutions to problems deemed of sufficient importance by the county's people, either directly by the action of a specific officer or by enactment of regulations or various public projects. Public works projects could be funded in various ways, and a good example of this was county drainage work.

Drainage is the drawing off of excess water to improve soil and crops, which is accomplished by a combination of pipes, ditches, or trenches.⁶ This type of project is of obvious importance to the counties of an agricultural state. The ditches and pipes needed to be funded, and in Iowa some projects were paid for privately, some by business corporations, and others when a county organized levee districts and then raised taxes to pay for what was considered an essential public need.⁷ In Harrison County's boggy bottom land near the Missouri and Boyer rivers, such drainage projects were not begun in earnest until 1910.⁸

As noted previously, Harrison County needed better roads. In 1925, throughout the state of Iowa there were "more than 104,000 miles of public roads, exclusive of the streets in cities This amounts to a little more than 1,000 miles per county."⁹ There were also some 570,000 automobiles registered in Iowa, and as their size, weight, and speed increased during the decade, the funding for the construction and maintenance of roads was of great importance.¹⁰

About 1883, public desire for better roads resulted in a movement towards highway legislation, and the most consistent factor in the history of such legislation was

the struggle between the forces of governmental centralization and decentralization. Opposition to the State Highway Commission was powerful because this body represented the aggregation of authority by the state over the county in this vital matter.¹¹ Previously, road construction and maintenance had been the responsibility of local government, but in 1902 the Anderson Law created the Highway Commission and took ultimate control over the roads away from the county.¹²

The powers and duties of the Commission were broad. It was responsible for devising all highway construction and adapting it to fit the needs of each particular county. It was required to send the governor reports on the conditions of roads and bridges across the state and was given supervision over county and township officers to ensure that road laws were enforced. The Commission also served as the negotiator between local officials and the railroads when railroad crossings were to be created or updated.¹³

Financing for important primary roads was accomplished through the licensing of automobiles, and these funds could only be used on primary roads. The counties had no control over this, as it was a power of the state.¹⁴ The counties could borrow against their annual government funding if they wished to improve their roads faster or could issue bonds for other projects.¹⁵ Counties paid for their secondary roads and bridges from property taxes raised in the county. Township roads were funded by their one-third share in the gasoline tax, the remainder of which was split by the county and the state. Townships also had access to a poll tax assessed on men between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five.¹⁶

Another responsibility of county government was welfare work. In 1921, there were ninety-six county homes throughout Iowa, which controlled 22,147 acres of land worth \$3,848,368. A study of eighty-nine of these homes showed that they held 3,090 residents, including 1,285 who were classified as insane.¹⁷ The cost to the counties for the maintenance of these homes was far more significant than one might think and "the extent of the burden of the poor on the taxpayers [was] not always fully recognized."¹⁸

The maintenance of eighty-nine of the aforementioned ninety-six homes in 1921 alone ran to \$898,169, while \$1,721,852 was spent on homeless people and \$158,698 was paid out to indigent soldiers and sailors. All of these funds came out of county coffers. "More money was spent by Iowa counties in 1921 for medical care of the poor than for any other item except provisions."¹⁹ This expenditure went on from year to year throughout the decade.

Of course, these figures are only for such welfare assistance as was given by county government; there can be no accounting of all the assistance rendered privately by individual people or church groups to the sick or needy. This must have been a considerable sum, given the close-knit nature of the typical rural Iowa county at this time and the slowly worsening economic situation which would force more people into hardship.

In Harrison County, specific political concerns of the time are best revealed in the editorial columns of the newspapers, as they responded immediately to items of local interest. Local politics mainly involved the election of various county officers. Unfortunately,

the editorials and most of the articles tended to concentrate mainly on national news and did not reveal much information on the winners and losers of local elections.

Specifics concerning the county officers can be retrieved from the Iowa Official Register, a publication of the Iowa Department of State which provides tremendous amounts of statistical data on state and county government and politics. In the years from 1919 to 1926, twelve county officers are listed for Harrison County. Except in 1923 and 1924 when all were Republican, at least one and sometimes two were Democrats. From 1926 on, nine county officers are listed, and there were always one or two Democrats present in the roster until after the election of 1932, when six of the nine were Democrats and only three were Republican.²⁰

One political factor is therefore of paramount importance: Harrison County, along with the state of Iowa, was a bastion of the Republican party. The Democrats were a minority and only occasionally would one be elected to a county office. There was no indication that this was likely to change, even during the bad years of the 1920s, until after the disaster of the stock market crash in 1929. Then it was so obvious that a major change was required that the papers gave indications of what had been the political norm before, and what they desperately hoped could be avoided in the near future.

In the weeks leading up to the 1930 elections, every issue of the Logan Observer exhorted the Republican majority of Harrison County to vote traditionally, which would reaffirm Republican control of county offices at home and the major positions in the state capital. The whole world was groaning under economic woes, the Observer said, so how

could President Hoover or his party be held responsible for this? But he could do nothing to alleviate the situation if a Republican Congress was not elected to support him.²¹

Alas, the county ignored the Observer's pleas and gave the Democrats a most non-traditional landslide which saw them gain all but three county offices. The Observer grumbled that the victory did not mean that the Democrats had anything valuable to offer; it simply illustrated how divided and self-serving the leaders of the GOP had become, and it was this greed which had brought them low. The paper urged Republicans to unify so that this disaster would not be repeated in the presidential election of 1932.²² Of course, Hoover would go on to lose the election to Roosevelt, as counties and states which were traditionally Republican jumped to the Democrats in a bid for anything which promised a change in the devastating economic situation.

A quick look at how Harrison County voted in the presidential elections during the decade indicates the county's usual Republican strength at first, and how that overwhelming majority gradually shifted over to the Democrats as the situation worsened. In the election of 1920, the total county vote was 9,742, with a hefty Republican total of 6,127. Only 3,479 voted Democratic, with 136 choosing some other party or independent candidate.²³ Some of the other groups supporting candidates were the Socialist, Farm Labor, Prohibition, Socialist Labor, and Communist parties.²⁴

In 1924, out of a total vote of 9,915, 5,062 were Republican, 3,179 Democratic, and a surprising 1,674 voted for one of the other parties. Many of these supported Robert

LaFollette's bid for the presidency, but he was not as popular in the county as one might suppose.²⁵

Robert LaFollette was officially a Republican but did not fit into the mainstream of that party's political views. He was very much against big business and monopolies, having fought to retain government control over the railroads in 1919 after the end of the war. He was also vehemently opposed to the power of the Supreme Court, calling it a non-elected judicial oligarchy which threatened to destroy government by popular election.²⁶

LaFollette's political platform was rejected by the Republican party in 1924, and Calvin Coolidge was nominated for the presidency. LaFollette then announced his own presidential candidacy as an independent Progressive.²⁷ His program focused on disbanding monopolies, controlling the railroads, protecting natural resources, disciplining the federal judiciary, protecting the rights of individual workers, and devising treaties to reduce armaments.²⁸

He paid much attention to the plight of American farmers, predictably blaming monopolies for the difficulties they were facing. He also supported cooperative marketing, free from the interference of big business or the government.²⁹ LaFollette presented his message to the public quickly, appearing with Calvin Coolidge and John Davis, the Democratic candidate, in a talking film in which each candidate described his platform. This was the first time that the "voices and visual images of presidential candidates were shown together."³⁰ He was also the first presidential candidate to make a

specially prepared radio broadcast of his views, which was estimated to reach several million listeners.³¹

His campaign gained in strength in the fall of 1924, but then his popularity began to fade as his diverse coalition of supporters, including the Socialist party, railroad brotherhoods, civic reform groups, and women's groups, began to disintegrate and funding problems for his campaign multiplied.³² His speeches drew huge crowds, but the people were there because of his celebrity as an orator, and this popularity did not translate into votes. When all was said and done, Coolidge had won the election with fifty-four percent of the vote; John Davis received twenty-eight percent, and LaFollette only sixteen.³³

In Harrison County, LaFollette found his greatest strength in the precincts of Missouri Valley, Morgan, Logan, and Dunlap, with a total of 795 votes from these locations. Even so, Morgan was the only precinct where he did not come in a distant third place; in Morgan he came in second, ahead of Davis.³⁴

Despite his attention to agriculture, LaFollette was very unpopular in Harrison County, and the Dunlap Reporter broke out of its usual neutrality to attack him. The only reason, the paper said, for the existence of the Progressive party was LaFollette's desire to be President, and derided him as "old, feeble, and growing weaker mentally."³⁵

His attacks on the Supreme Court, and by extension the Constitution, comprised "one of the most serious dangers ever faced by the nation."³⁶ By late October of 1924, the Reporter announced with great satisfaction that LaFollette was losing votes in Iowa.³⁷ The major difficulty with LaFollette seemed to be his connection with so many different

organizations, particularly the Socialists. People in the county were conservative and knew what they were getting with Coolidge, while they were very unsure about LaFollette. Worries over LaFollette's health were also mentioned several times, and these concerns proved valid in the end, for he had died within the year.³⁸

The erosion of Republican support continued in 1928 when the total vote was 10,011, with 5,605 Republican and 4,406 Democratic, and not one vote to an independent or third party candidate.³⁹ After the stock market crash, everyone was so fed up with business as usual that in the 1932 presidential election, out of a total Harrison County vote of 11,008, 7,427 voted Democratic while only 3,513 remained loyal to the GOP, and 68 chose some other party.⁴⁰

Two major national political experiments were on people's minds in 1920: women's suffrage and prohibition. The suffrage issue was resolved in 1920, when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed which gave women the right to vote. Iowa had been the tenth state to ratify the amendment in 1919. Out of the thirty-six states needed to pass the amendment, twenty-nine were Republican and only seven were Democratic, and some Republican Harrison County editors were quick to point this out in their desire to make the Democrats look bad.⁴¹

Prohibition, on the other hand, had only begun in 1920, and much has been said previously about its detrimental side effects, despite any moral attractions the idea may have presented. Republican support of women's suffrage was closely linked to their

support of prohibition; perhaps it was felt that if women were able to vote, they would vote for prohibition and ensure its adoption.

During this decade, if one were a Republican, then one was "dry" or supported prohibition, while Democrats were "wets," or anti-prohibition. Republican politicians and editors of Republican newspapers hinted that those who were against prohibition were people who were for, or supported, whatever evils could be associated with the sale of liquor, such as drunkenness, violence, sloth, or immorality. Much political advantage was sought out of this issue by newspaper editorials.⁴²

A favorite way for the county's newspapers to drum up support for prohibition was to link the illicit use of strong spirits to reckless driving and the accidents this caused, particularly as the decade progressed and it became more and more obvious that the Republicans, and prohibition itself, were on the way out.⁴³ By 1931, the Observer was by far the leader in this trend, gleefully accusing Roosevelt of being a rampant "wet" and predicting that this single fact alone was no doubt sufficient to cost him the upcoming election. Of course, it did not, and prohibition was eventually repealed; but during the 1920s, it was a significant political issue in Harrison County.

National agricultural legislation was proposed during the decade which affected the county's farmers. The Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 was enacted to support cooperatives by exempting them from antitrust provisions of the Clayton and Sherman Acts.⁴⁴ The Intermediate Credit Banks of 1923 were organized as subsidiaries of the

Federal Land Banks. One of their prime purposes was to provide loans directly to cooperative marketing associations.⁴⁵

The McNary-Haugen Plan was designed to establish a Federal Farm Board, to aid in cooperative marketing of farm products and provide for the control and disposition of agricultural surpluses.⁴⁶ The first version of this bill was introduced in Congress in 1924 but was defeated. It was reintroduced in 1925, to be defeated again in 1926. It was not passed into law until 1927.⁴⁷ The Agricultural Marketing Act was passed in 1929, providing for a Farm Board of eight members to be selected by presidential appointment. Their purpose was to direct government policy on agricultural merchandising.⁴⁸

The county's newspapers said little directly about the specific acts, but the editorials did hint at local opinions of the issues they addressed. For instance, it has already been noted that, for most of the decade, cooperative ventures were viewed with disinterest by many of the county's farmers. However, the Observer did think that the McNary-Haugen Plan could be useful for encouraging local cooperative ventures.⁴⁹ There was some wariness evidenced by the paper about the Federal Farm Board set up by the Agricultural Marketing Act. The paper seemed unsure if any committee formed by Washington politicians could really identify with farmers suffering from economic woes. Somewhat grudgingly, the paper decided that it was probably necessary and could be used to promote agricultural issues.⁵⁰

Another national political, or perhaps ideological, concern which newspaper editorials portrayed as important to Harrison County citizens was the issue of

Communism, which appeared after the Bolsheviks gained power in Russia in 1917. This "red scare" was quite real nationally and locally, and the newspapers took care to present Communism as completely anti-American. These sentiments could be expressed in various ways, from the deadly serious to the near-humorous.

In January of 1920, the Woodbine Twiner and Logan Observer ran nearly identical editorials which raved against Bolsheviks, or "reds," who might be found in the United States and stated that they should all be jailed or deported, if not hanged outright, and anyone who could be listed under the nebulous term "disloyal" should be included in this category. All radicals who wanted to overthrow the government would, of course, fall into this group. The Observer assured its readers that the destruction of the United States was not imminent, for if eleven states could not destroy the Union in the Civil War, a few Reds were not going to be able to do it, either.⁵¹

Political cartoons about the Reds, generally in a national context, were common in the newspapers of the early years of the decade. One front page ad for the Little Sioux Savings Bank in 1920 was a classic of advertising, for it solemnly informed readers that "a Bolshevik never has a savings account."⁵² Conversely, opening and maintaining such an account, preferably at that very establishment, would no doubt trumpet one's loyalty to the American Way for all to see. But as time passed, the furor over Communism faded as other, more immediate problems gained the people's attention.

One more political topic of evident interest to Harrison County people, or at least to local editors, was one Smith Wildman Brookhart, who called himself "Iowa's

Statesman." He was a Republican, although one would never guess it by the treatment he received in the editorials from 1923 through the end of the decade.

In 1920, Brookhart lost the race for the Republican senatorial nomination against long-time incumbent Senator Albert B. Cummins in a campaign noted for its bitterness and acrimony.⁵³ Brookhart came back, ran for and won the seat vacated in 1922 by Senator William Kenyon, who had accepted a judicial position.⁵⁴ In 1926, he was unseated in a questionable Senate vote as a result of the contested election of 1924, when "hardly a senator voted according to the evidence, but rather to his personal and party ideology", and Iowa got its first Democratic senator since 1859.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, after a victory in the 1926 election, Brookhart returned to the Senate in 1927 and continued his career as a Republican maverick, making enemies out of conservatives at home.

Local opposition to Brookhart appeared in 1923 when the Twiner lambasted him as being worse than Lenin or Trotsky and completely un-American, a man who should be considered an outcast by all good Republicans.⁵⁶ In 1924, the Reporter attacked him, saying that as he supported LaFollette, he should be viewed with the same distrust.⁵⁷ At the same time, the Observer denounced him, stating that out of twenty-four farm bills presented in the Senate, he had voted against twenty-three.⁵⁸

As the years progressed, the Observer took the lead in the anti-Brookhart crusade, becoming more strident as the end of the decade approached. By 1931, when it was distressingly clear that, barring a major political miracle, the Democrats would take the presidency as well as the Congress, the calls for his defeat reached new heights.

Brookhart was a convenient scapegoat for Republican conservatives who had made a cherished habit of detesting him for years.

If only half of the things said about him were true, he must have been one of Iowa's greatest shames. The major point of concern seems to have been his place of residence, which was, for all intents and purposes, in Virginia. He only came to Iowa, it was said, around election time to gain votes, and the Observer could not imagine how the people of Iowa kept re-electing him. The accusations leveled at Brookhart were many and varied: he lied, he deceived, he practiced nepotism, he was a Communist, and on and on.⁵⁹ By 1931, the Observer used more ink on him than on any other single individual. No support for him was evident in the newspapers and if local Republicans could feel any satisfaction after their massive defeat in 1932, it was that Brookhart was one of the Republicans to lose his job.

Brookhart's fluctuating popularity can be seen clearly in the voting records for Harrison County. In the election of 1922, Brookhart received 4,185 votes compared to his Democratic opponent, Clyde L. Herring, who only received 2,988.⁶⁰ In the 1924 election, Brookhart had evidently fallen very much out of favor, for only 3,073 voted for him, while 6,265 voted for his Democratic rival, Daniel F. Steck.⁶¹ Brookhart performed better in the 1926 election, gaining 3,490 votes to the 3,445 given to the Democrat Claude R. Porter.⁶²

The 1932 election was a humiliation for Brookhart in Harrison County. He was not even running as a Republican candidate this year, but as a Progressive. The

Democratic candidate, Louis Murphy, gained 6,799 votes; the Republican Henry Field garnered 3,853, while Brookhart only managed 228.⁶³ In the state of Iowa, Murphy received a total vote of 538,422; Field received 399,929, and Brookhart only 43,174.⁶⁴

A topic which was likely of more personal importance to average Harrison County inhabitants than political trends was his or her religious beliefs. Religion, as expressed in the various denominations represented in the county, was a powerful force not only in the private lives of individuals but to society, for churches supported activities ranging from holiday picnics through welfare work and helping their members in time of need. Political conservatism was associated with religious conservatism; and as Iowans were politically conservative, so were they religiously conservative and followed traditional religious practices.

Religion had been important in the state from the beginning of settlement. The Mormons had been among the first to settle in Iowa and Harrison County, and they remained important afterwards. The first non-Mormon Protestants to come to Iowa were the Methodists who arrived in 1833.⁶⁵ Churches were crucial in the settlement process and gave a strong sense of unity to new communities.⁶⁶ In Harrison County, the Catholic Church had organized fairly early and drew Irish settlers like a magnet. In 1867, St. Patrick's parish was organized in Missouri Valley; and by 1892, a large church had been constructed which cost \$15,000, a very significant sum for the time.⁶⁷

The religious census of 1916, the closest one to the beginning of the decade studied in this work, reflected the denominational affiliations of Harrison County's people.

In 1916, the two largest denominations by far were the Methodist Episcopal and the Roman Catholic churches, who reported 2,192 and 2,181 members respectively. Next came the Disciples of Christ with 1,740, and the Reorganized Mormons (or Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), with 1,651 members. These were the major denominations; the rest had much smaller congregations.

The Presbyterians numbered 598, while there were 341 Northern Convention Baptists; 306 Synodical Conference Lutherans, and 227 Congregationalists. The Synod of Iowa Lutherans had 86 adherents, and the Evangelicals had only 46 members. The remaining twenty people reporting were listed under the heading "all other bodies," indicating their adherence to some non-traditional or very minor denominations. In all, 9,388 Harrison County citizens out of a total population of 23,162 reported religious affiliation. There is no way to tell what the affiliation of the remainder of the county's people were; no doubt the majority were children too young to be communicants, others may not have been formal members of a particular church, and some may not have bothered with religion at all. Nevertheless, the religious census provides an excellent idea of which denominations were present in the county during the 1920s.⁶⁸

One subject which was only implied in newspaper articles and editorials was attitudes about persons of different ethnic backgrounds. Census reports give data on ethnic or national origins, but only in newspapers can hints of ethnic feeling be perceived. Unfortunately for modern sensibilities, what is revealed is a basic distrust and dislike of people of different races and nationalities.

It must be remembered that conservative views on race and ethnicity were very common to the people of the small towns and farms of the midwest. The great majority of them were of northwestern European descent, and in their view it was their race which had built America and made it great. If the nation and its institutions were to remain that way then their direction must remain in Anglo-Saxon hands. The concern was not so much with blacks as it was with the increasing numbers of immigrants of southern and eastern European descent who were arriving in this country every year. Was it possible for these people to "become one hundred percent American like Anglo-Saxons? The future of the Republic hinged on the answer . . . "69

The Observer, in this as in other things, led the way with blatant statements of ethnic and racial bigotry. These remarks were indicative of the time and place in which they were written, and hinted at views commonly held by the readership of the paper - the people of Logan. As similar comments appear in the other papers, one can say these views were probably acceptable at that time to many people in the county, the state, the Midwest, and perhaps the entire nation.

One example of this was in 1920, when the Observer, reporting on events in far-off Turkey, agreed with President Wilson that the Turks should be kept out of Europe. After discussing the political situation arising from the bitter struggles between Turkey and Greece, the Observer added that just keeping Turks out of Europe was not good enough, "the Turk ought to be boosted clear off the earth. The Black Sea would make a splendid burying place for the whole bunch of Turks, but it would be too bad to spoil perfectly

good water by driving such dirty villains into it."⁷⁰ When one thinks about this comment for a moment, one is reminded instantly of Adolph Hitler's Final Solution.

The most common mention of ethnicity during the later years of the decade was in connection with Chicago gangsters, another long-standing target of local editorials. In the Observer's view, all of those criminals with the foreign-sounding names should be rounded up and deported, and the only reason this had not been done was because of their powerful political cronies and stooges. The Observer admired Australia, a Dominion of the British Empire, because British subjects from India were denied entry on account of their race. Indeed, the paper said that the United States should follow suit and restrict immigration to those people from Canada and northwestern Europe and keep out "crooks and undesirables."⁷¹ An Observer article noted that the Farm Bureau itself supported selective immigration based on race and nationality.⁷²

Racial feeling gained local immediacy when, in the summer of 1931, a teenage Logan girl accused two black men of assaulting her. Investigation revealed that she had lied and that two Woodbine boys were responsible. In the meantime the two innocents had been jailed as attempted rapists. When the truth came out, the Woodbine boys were apprehended, but were only questioned and apparently were not jailed, and the girl was not prosecuted for bearing false witness. The two blacks had been told to get out of town and move on, presumably by the police or other local officials.⁷³

To modern readers this is an ugly side of the county and its newspapers, but it is important to keep in mind that these attitudes and situations reflected the tensions of the

1920s. It is still not uncommon for outsiders in any area to be viewed with distrust and apprehension, so people of radically different ethnic or national backgrounds would naturally be viewed with an even greater distrust bordering on hostility. As in other things, Harrison County was fairly typical of counties throughout the Midwest, and these views were widespread and common.

ENDNOTES

1. George F. Robeson, "The County and Elections," Applied History 4 (1925): 585.
2. Kirk H. Porter, "Definition of the County in Iowa," Applied History 4 (1925): 8.
3. Robeson, "The County and Elections," 585.
4. Kirk H. Porter, "Reorganization of County Government in Iowa," Applied History 4 (1925): 603.
5. Iowa Department of State. Iowa Official Register, 1919-1930 (Published by the State of Iowa, Des Moines), 200.
6. Jay J. Sherman, "Drainage Districts in Iowa," Applied History 4 (1925): 535.
7. Ibid., 536.
8. John W. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1968), 44.
9. Ivan L. Pollock, "The Administration of Highways in the County," Applied History 4 (1925): 416.
10. Ibid., 417.
11. Ibid.
12. Rebecca Conard, "The Lincoln Highway in Green County: Highway Politics, Local Initiative, and the Emerging Federal Highway System," The Annals of Iowa 52 (Fall, 1993): 354.
13. Iowa Official Register, 1919-1920., 152-153.
14. Pollock, "The Administration of Highways in the County," 421-422.
15. Ibid., 422-423.
16. Ibid., 424-425.
17. Earl S. Fullbrook, "County Welfare Work, " Applied History 4 (1925): 363-364.

18. Ibid., 363.
19. Ibid., 379.
20. Iowa Official Register, 1921-1922, 246, shows nine Republicans, two Democrats, and one not listed (independent?); 1923-1924, 217, shows all Republicans; 1925-1926, 212, shows ten Republicans and two Democrats; 1927-1928, 200, lists seven Republicans and two Democrats; 1929-1930, 189, lists seven Republicans and two Democrats; 1931-1932, 193, lists six Democrats and three Republicans.
21. The Logan Observer, October 23, 1930, p. 4.
22. Ibid., November 6, 1930, p. 1.
23. Richard M. Scammon, ed. America at the Polls: A Handbook of American Presidential Election Statistics (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965), 150.
24. Ibid., 162.
25. Ibid., 150.
26. Carl R. Burghardt, Robert M. LaFollette, Sr., The Voice of Conscience (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 1992), 101-105.
27. Ibid., 109.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 110.
30. Ibid., 111-112.
31. Ibid., 112.
32. Ibid., 111.
33. Ibid., 115.
34. Iowa Official Register, 1925-1926, 505.
35. The Dunlap Reporter, September 18, 1924, p. 6.

36. Ibid., October 16, 1924, p. 4.
37. Ibid., October 23, 1924, p. 1.
38. Burghardt, Robert M. LaFollette, Sr., 116.
39. Scammon, America at the Polls, 152.
40. Ibid.
41. The Little Sioux Hustler, September 16, 1920, p. 2.
42. The Logan Observer, January 9, 1930, p. 4, for just one example. Editorials linking prohibition with various moral failings were common during this period. That people who were against prohibition were guilty of these supposed moral failures was clearly implied many times.
43. Ibid., April 10, 1930, p. 1, for just one example.
44. B. Delworth Gardner, Plowing Ground in Washington (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1995), 10.
45. John D. Black, Agricultural Reform in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1929), 453-454.
46. James E. Boyle, Farm Relief (New York: Doubleday, Dorian and Company, Inc., 1928), 31.
47. Black, Agricultural Reform in the United States, 70-73.
48. Persia Crawford Campbell, American Agricultural Policy (London: P. S. King and Son, Ltd., 1933), 96-97.
49. The Logan Observer, October 11, 1928, p. 4.
50. Ibid., April 3, 1930, p. 4.
51. The Woodbine Twiner, January 8, 1920, p. 3, and The Logan Observer, January 8, 1920, p. 4.
52. The Little Sioux Hustler, April 30, 1920, p. 1.

53. Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1974), 257.
54. Ibid., 265-266.
55. Ibid., 266.
56. The Woodbine Twiner, March 22, 1923, p. 3.
57. The Dunlap Reporter, October 16, 1924, p. 4.
58. The Logan Observer, October 30, 1924, p. 1.
59. The editorial columns of the Observer in the months leading to the 1924 election contained any number of accusations against Brookhart, many of which were of a very personal nature. These editorial attacks generally made no attempt to present supporting evidence as they were the editor's personal opinions. Similar opinions are expressed in the editorials of the other papers utilized, but rarely with the same force.
60. Iowa Official Register, 1923-1924, 495.
61. Ibid., 1925-1926, 505.
62. Ibid., 1927-1928, 458.
63. Ibid., 1933-1934, 250.
64. Ibid., 57.
65. Sage, A History of Iowa, 54.
66. Gard, "The Development of Missouri Valley, Iowa to 1931," 65.
67. Charles W. Hunt, History of Harrison County, Iowa (Indianapolis, In.: B. R. Bowen and Company, Inc., 1915), 216.
68. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies: 1916, Part I., 261-262.
69. Thomas J. Morain, Prairie Grass Roots: An Iowa Small Town in the Early Twentieth Century (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 41-42.

70. The Logan Observer, April 1, 1920, p. 1.
71. Ibid., June 19, 1930, p. 4.
72. Ibid., December 25, 1930, p. 4.
73. Ibid., June 18, 1931, p. 1.

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Several conclusions can be drawn from the information presented in this work. The first and foremost is that the county was rural, and its economy, its major entertainments, and indeed its whole existence was based upon agriculture. This being true, it is inevitable that the farm crisis which developed in the decade was a serious blow to both farm and townspeople. Falling farm prices harmed town businesses, and the dramatic collapse of a number of banks were stark evidence of the economic interdependence of town and county.

Agriculture was influenced by a number of changes during the decade. Drastic reduction in farm income caused a shift in crop production as people tried to find other ways to earn a living. The amount of wheat grown in the county fell significantly, replaced by corn, which could be fed to hogs as well as people. This, in turn, allowed hog-raising to become a vital part of the county's economy. Along with this came a notable increase in fruit production.

Changing technology also shaped agriculture during this decade, not only in improved farm equipment, but also in the use of more efficient farming techniques. This can be demonstrated by the tireless efforts of F. B. Hanson, the County Agent. His promotion of new ways to raise hogs, new vaccines, chemical fertilizers and pesticides heralded basic changes in the profession.

Hanson's work with women and children mobilized the entire family into participating in agricultural activities. His organization of canning clubs and orchard maintenance seminars for women and animal raising clubs of various types for children introduced them to new skills which encouraged new opportunities for income, as well as increased feelings of self-worth in a period when both were desperately important to the county.

The worsening economic situation, the increasing availability of fast cars, and the golden opportunity for illicit gain provided by prohibition caused a general increase in the crime rate in the county. Many of the banks and businesses suffered burglaries during this troubled time. The growing sense of frustration bubbled over into sporadic interest in vigilante groups and organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, culminating just after the close of the decade in the desperate abandonment of the county's traditional political party in the hope that the Democrats could provide a resolution to the woes which the people had suffered during the 1920s.

Despite the bad economic situation, this decade was also a time of transition and material improvement for the county and its towns. New roads and highways were constructed and old ones were paved; new schools and bridges were built; gas for heating and cooking came into the county, and new forms of entertainment, such as movies with sound, were made available to Harrison County's citizens. Although many of these benefits were shared equally by rural residents and their urban neighbors, there were inequalities.

Improvements to major highways in the county and streets in the towns were a blessing to travelers and townsfolk but did little to help farmers still struggling with unpaved roads in the rural areas. The growing number of electrical appliances enriched the lives of those living in town, for the electrical power to run them was there to use. Yet rural electrification was only beginning at the close of the decade, so unfortunately, farm families did not have equal access to these appliances. Nevertheless, a sense of growth and expansion, if not outright prosperity, maintained itself into the next decade.

Finally, while it may be true that Harrison County was a fairly typical Midwestern agricultural county, this did not mean that local residents were in some way deprived of what was considered necessary for a good life. They could acquire all the latest fashions, newest vehicles, and for those with the electric power to run them, modern appliances. With radio they could keep in touch with outside events as well as any other people. Other entertainment and cultural pursuits, as well as more lucrative business opportunities, were only a short drive away in Council Bluffs or Omaha, and many people did travel constantly back and forth, as evidenced by the local notes columns in any of the newspapers.

Life for the citizens of Harrison County in the 1920s was representative of Iowa and the Midwest, from the concerns of agriculture, which was the foundation of the local economy, to the physical growth and improvement of the towns and the attendant problems this caused for the people. The economic and political worries, the new forms of entertainment, the improved roads and expanding horizons and problems brought by the

automobile were mirrored all over the region. Recognition of these realities will aid in the understanding of the county and its people, as well as give the reader a greater appreciation of the situation faced by the entire Midwest during this decade of remarkable change.

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