

A Pictorial History of

# Southeast Polk County, Iowa

*“A Community of Communities”*

compiled by  
The Southeast Polk Historical Society

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**Barbara Trulin Bolt**



**Helen L. Radeke - Typist**



**Gloria Vermie**



**Freda Ballard Clark**



**Wayne Taylor**



**Dorothy De Votie Taylor**



**June Barron**



**Vesta Patterson Skinner**



**Amy Bishop Paye**



**Jan Smith - Chairperson**



**Lillian Packer Smith**

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Kirk Barron

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Susan Stoner  
Vivian Meyer

Layout  
Jim Paye  
Mary Kennedy

Cover Design  
Scott Stuart

Aerial Photography  
Bill Dennis "Capt. Jack"

Bookkeeping  
Sharon VanderSchel

Advertising  
Altoona Herald  
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Thomas Mitchell

"When the history of Mitchellville and its pleasant and intelligent people is written, one of the brightest pages therein will be devoted to a recital of the generous and honorable deeds of him who founded it . . ."

Thomas Mitchell was born at Claremont, New Hampshire, March 3, 1816. He remained in that state employed as a farm hand and at the paper mill, for \$11.00 per week. When he was nineteen years old, he left for Springfield, Vermont, where he worked for the next four years. He was an over-the-road book salesman for the Springfield Paper Company. In 1840, he came to Iowa and worked for a short time in Keosauqua.

At the age of twenty-five, he married Miss Elmira Swift of Thetford, Vermont. She was a pioneer woman of great willingness and fortitude, who bore the trials of frontier life. For three months after she came to this county, she did not see another white woman. Her life ended in 1860. She was mourned by her husband and four children. Orrin, the eldest, was with the Eighth Iowa Cavalry and died of exposure in the Civil War. Mary A., was born in 1844. After her marriage to H.R. Hoxie, she moved to Tylor, Texas. Charles M., born in 1850, married Lizzie DeLong and also moved to Tylor, Texas. Walter A., born in 1857, died at the age of twenty-two.

In 1844, Thomas settled with his wife and child at Camp Creek. With the help of his brother Henry Mitchell and Eli Trullinger of Trullinger's Grove, he erected

three 18 x 20 ft. cabins. These houses were under the protection of Capt. Allen, who was in charge of the Garrison at the Fort Des Moines. These houses were used as an inn by emigrants traveling to and thru this area. It was during these early days that he became known as "Uncle Tom." The title was given in affection, for the many caring deeds shown his family and travelers who stopped at the Inn.

### Billy Moore's Story

In 1848, I walked from Keokuk to Des Moines, to assume a new job as a clerk with B.F. Allen. The first night in this county I slept at Uncle Tom's. At this time, all I had was 30¢. It was 15¢ for a night's lodging. At suppertime, I was hungry, but since there was no extra money, I told Tom I was sick and went to bed early. The next morning I passed up the breakfast table, once again saying that I was sick. Finally, with some encouragement, I told Uncle Tom that in fact I had no extra money for meals. He insisted that I sit and eat. Then, he pulled a silver dollar from his pocket, saying it would cost 25¢ to ferry across the river. Billy refused the money, but for a "sick" boy, he sure ate a hearty breakfast. Some forty years later, Uncle Tom did not pass up the chance to "dun" Billy in front of others. He claimed, "This man owes me 50¢ for a meal he ate forty years ago."

By the year 1845, Mitchell knew every white man in the county. He was also acquainted with the "Red man." At this time, 1,000 to 2,000 Indians were in the neighborhood. There was an Indian village just west of Colfax on the Skunk River. Here lived Poweshiek, Chief of the Fox Tribe. For a time before the treaty sending the Indians further west, these Indians were welcomed and farmed on some of Mitchell's land.

In 1864, he moved to the Apple Grove area, where he claimed 1,080 acres of uncultivated government land. Later he cultivated it into fine farm land.

Thomas Mitchell's home was a gathering place. Billy Moore, goes on to state, "Uncle Tom's house was always opened to visitors. Often we would get up parties during the winter months, and go out to their house and have dances, big sleigh loads of us. In the early days when the snow came, we young folks, Hoyt Sherman, Mr. Tidrick and Mr. Casady would get out the wooden sleds and would start early in the evening for Mitchell's home. They hardly ever knew we were coming, but it was just the same." Thomas Mitchell was a sincere but fun-loving family man. An early recollection by Judge Parker was: Charles Van was a blacksmith. He and Mitchell had been friends for years. Their wives, however, had never met. Charles Van decided to bring his wife to meet Mrs. Mitchell next trip. First, he and Mitchell schemed; each would tell his wife that the friend's wife was "dreadful

# Mitchellville

hard of hearing." Each, however, assured his own wife that the wife of the other was so good natured, aside from the annoyance of straining one's lungs, she would get along splendidly with the other. When the visitors arrived the next morning, Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Van could be seen throwing their arms around each other and screaming their greeting. Mr. Mitchell and his co-conspirator could be seen fleeing from the wrath to come.

The list of accomplishments and honors achieved by Thomas Mitchell is a lengthy one. Some of his more endearing endeavors are as follows: He was a charter member of the Republican Party of Iowa. From 1846 to 1848, he served as Sheriff of Polk County. For six years, he served as Commissioner (Supervisor). In 1875, he was elected to the Iowa General Assembly and served for two years. In 1878, he was in the State Senate. In Mitchellville, he was founder and president of the Merchants National Bank. He helped found and was a life-long supporter of the Universalist Church in Mitchellville. Mitchell was active in the "underground railroad," the route which enabled Blacks to escape to freedom. In 1873, he donated the land and 5,000 dollars to establish the Seminary. It was an institution of advanced higher education. In 1880, it became the State Industrial School, and Mitchell became resident member of the Board of Trustees. In 1856, he founded the town of Mitchellville, the city which bears his name and in whose welfare he always manifested the deepest interest.

On Sunday, July 15, 1894, at 2:00 p.m., his spirit took flight, and a courageous life was ended. He had been ill for several months with affliction of the kidney. It is known that on the day of his death, he arose from his bed and went for a ride in the country. It was not long after their return home, that his wife stepped into another room to get his medicine. When she returned, he was asleep — indulging that sleep which knows no waking side.

His funeral was attended by many noted persons. The Universalist Church was surrounded by mourners who listened for the spoken words through the open windows. A special train arrived from Des Moines carrying eighty passengers to the funeral. Rev. Keys spoke from First Corinthians 15:35-49. After the funeral, the casket was placed on the church lawn under the trees; many took the opportunity to view, for the last time, their friend and fellow Christian. He was buried in the Mitchellville Cemetery.

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

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

The immediate cause for the rise of the town was the prospect of a railroad coming through. This is the founder's own story: "In 1853, the Rock Island Railroad was surveyed; then known as the M & M Road (Mississippi and Missouri Railroad). It was surveyed by Granville M. Dodge and Peter A. Dey; one, General Dodge, and the other, Commission Dey of today. It was thought, at that time, that the Road would be built to Des Moines in two years. The Company made the proposition to the different counties through which it was intended the Road should run, that if the counties would aid the Road with Bonds to the amount of from fifty thousand dollars for the weaker counties and to two hundred thousand for the stronger counties, they would put the Road to Des Moines by January 1, 1857. With that expectation, some of the counties voted Bonds, but the hard times set in and that caused the Company to suspend the building further west for a time, but the hope of the Road had induced some settlers on to the prairie.

"Mr. Tracy suggested that Section Two would be a good place for a station and he would make one there when the Road was built. With that idea, Messers Swoford and Jones of Wayne County, Indiana, and Thomas Mitchell laid out a town on Section 2, 79, 22 in 1856 and it began to settle up."



Plat of Mitchellville, Section Two, Beaver Township, as it was laid out in 1856. Original plat is in the Polk County Courthouse.

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

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

By the time the population reached 200 in 1861, there was quite a row of houses. From log cabin to frame dwelling house represents a step up in the material

culture of our forefathers, but the improvement had more to do with the exterior than with the interior. One of the houses, which was perhaps twenty-four feet long and sixteen feet wide, had walnut siding and hard oak inside. It had two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The remaining members of a family of seven children still wonder how and where they all slept in that four room house!

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

### Businesses

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

William Sweeney put up a store in 1857-58. It was a general country store. E.J. Valentine owned it later and moved it to the new town.

Wilson Jones, Joseph Shissler, Jeremiah Spofford and Thomas Mitchell built a hotel known as the Mitchell House. For the size of the town, it was considered quite large. Mr. Mitchell never kept the hotel himself. One writer thought a man by the name of Mr. George McGrew was the first proprietor. The building was later moved to the new town and was known as Humphrey's Hotel. In connection with the hotel was a barn, where changes of horses for the stagecoach were kept.

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

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

If you want to know the exact location of Mitchellville in Iowa, the old Rock Island Depot carried this sign on the east side: "One hundred and fifty miles to Davenport" and on the west side of the depot, "One hundred and fifty miles to Council Bluffs."

Thomas Mitchell and his second wife, Ann Mattern (his first wife died in 1860) bought a thousand acres of land and platted the town on May 24, 1864. Lots were sold for \$20.00 with the stipulation that no liquor be sold on the premises, an agreement that held long after Mitchell's death in 1894.

Thomas Mitchell gave the land for the Mitchellville Cemetery, which was platted in 1870 and fenced in 1872. In 1878, sixty-four persons were buried there; Charles Smith, son of W.O. and Hulda Smith, was the first grave in the new cemetery.

Mitchellville was incorporated in October 1875. N.W. Cram was elected Mayor; E.L. Field, Recorder; and William S. Jones, I. Heashie, George D. Moore, J. Mequery and M.S. Kimball, Trustees. The first meeting of the Council was held October 21, 1875; and on the 25th another meeting was held, at which time a cast-iron ordinance postively forbidding the sale of ale, wine and beer was unanimously adopted. To do this more effectively, all of the southwest quarter of Section 13 of Beaver Township was included in the site, making 640 acres in the whole town. The northwest quarter of Section 13 takes in the Des Moines Valley Depot and all of the stores there. At the same meeting, James H. Storms was elected Marshall.

Eighteen eighty-five is the approximate date of the dedication of the Mitchellville (Reichard) Park. The land for the park was given by Thomas Mitchell. The dedication of the park was on the third of July, and there was a



Reichard Park in the early 1900's. Note the two-story bandstand among the trees.

crowd estimated at 4,000 for the all-day celebration. Entertainment was provided by the Mitchellville cornet band and by a chorus of local residents. L.D. Llewellyn, superintendent of the "Reform School," gave the dedicatory address. He praised the benefactor, J.P. Reichard, who had evidently provided the two-story bandstand. Mr. Llewellyn, in his address, spoke of the chain fence surrounding the park and announced that an artesian well would soon provide adequate water supply for years to come. He visioned, and rightly so, Fourth of July celebrations in the park, where the newly planted trees would soon provide cooling shade. He didn't anticipate the shrill whistles of Rock Island steam engines coming up the grade from Colfax, which would drown the voice of the orator of the day.

Mitchellville has a beautiful, well-kept park today, with lots of shade, clean water, playground equipment and facilities for any kind of gathering. A shelter house has replaced the double-deck bandstand. And now, after ninety years, family reunions, club picnics and celebrations still find the Mitchellville park inviting and a credit to the community.

### Mitchell Seminary Mitchellville Training School

The town of Mitchellville has always been a quiet, restful village, but the villagers were not idle by any means. They were very interested in education.

# Mitchell Seminary

CLASS OF '80

## COMMENCEMENT.

Mitchellville, Iowa, Friday Afternoon, May 21st, 1880.

THERE IS DIGNITY IN LABOR.

## PROGRAMME.

### DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC.

OVERTURE.....Orchestra.

#### PRAYER.

1. A Song Without Words, No. 12.... Mendelssohn—1809.

2. La Polonaise, Op. 40, No. 1..... Chopin—1810.

3. SONATA, Op. 111..... Beethoven—1770.

4. Erl Koening de Schubert..... Liszt—1811

5. La Rigolette de Verdi..... Liszt—1811

HATTIE THERESA COUGH.

### ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT.

OVERTURE.....Orchestra.

SALUTATORY.....

D. E. HOLMES, Chester Center.

ESSAY....."Blind in One Eye."

C. M. LOVELL, Nevada.

#### ORCHESTRA.

ORATION....."The Future of American Literature."

WM. GARDNER, Greencastle.

#### ORCHESTRA.

ESSAY....."Alpine Heights."

S. M. RUSSELL, Mitchellville.

ORATION....."Cromwell."

D. E. HOLMES, Chester Center.

#### ORCHESTRA.

VALEDICTORY.....

WM. GARDNER, Greencastle.

#### ORCHESTRA.

### AWARDING DIPLOMAS.

#### ORCHESTRA.

#### BENEDICTION.

Since many of the faculty members for the Seminary came from the state of New York, the southwest part of Mitchellville has always been called "New York" by the local people.

After one year of school, it became so popular that it was necessary to make some addition to the advantages offered the first year. Some of the subjects taught that year were: music, mathematics, science, languages, elocution, English, penmanship, drawing, vocal and instrumental music.



The Mitchell Seminary built in 1872. The building was later bought by the State of Iowa for use as a reform school for girls.

In the early 1870's, the Universalist Church founded a Seminary on the out-skirts of the town, which brought an interest in higher education to the community. The people of Mitchellville were so ambitious about the school that they began to hold classes in the Universalist Church before the building was erected.

July Fourth, 1872, the cornerstone of the Seminary was laid as a part of the Fourth of July Celebration. It was a grand affair with the Masonic Lodge of Des Moines using their impressive ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone.

As the ceremony progressed, the stone (inscribed with the name and date and carrying currency and other items of interest, such as a copy of The Des Moines Register) was lifted by a derrick and lowered into place, while the local band played appropriate music.

Pupils came from surrounding communities to attend the Seminary and, with the faculty, occupied the upper floors of the building as living quarters. The lower floor was an assembly room with a platform at one end.

Students from the local town school would come to listen to lectures on physiology and other subjects, and although they were not tuition pupils, they had the benefit of the Seminary instruction. These lectures were held in the assembly room and much of the local entertainment was also given in this room.

# Mitchell Seminary.

## LOCATION.

Mitchell Seminary is located in Mitchellville, a thriving town on the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, exactly midway between Davenport and Council Bluffs, and 16 miles east of Des Moines. It is also a station on the Keokuk and Des Moines Railroad. It is centrally located and is easily accessible from all parts of the State.

The town is beautifully situated and contains a moral and intelligent population. There is not a saloon in the place. The inhabitants are peace-loving and law-abiding, and take an active interest in the welfare of the students, and in the prosperity of the Seminary.

## THE BOARDING DEPARTMENT

Is in the Seminary Building. Young ladies can be accommodated with handsomely furnished rooms and good table board at the low rate of \$4.00 per week, including lights, fuel and the washing and ironing of eight ordinary pieces. Each boarder is expected to provide one bed comfort, a full change of sheets and pillow cases; also towels, napkins, and toilet soap. Articles to be washed should be plainly marked.

Good board can also be had in private families at reasonable rates. Gentlemen can rent rooms in private houses, and table board will be furnished in the Seminary at \$2.50 per week. Arrangements can be made for self-boarding and for clubbing by addressing the Principal.

### Executive Committee:

HON. THOS. MILDRETT, President

J. B. SAGE, Secy.

HON. B. F. GLENN, Treas.

Rev. A. VEDDER, Corresponding Secy.

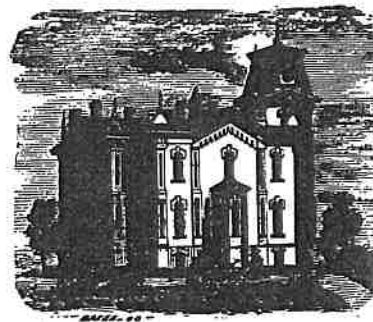
## APPARATUS.

A fine set of Mechanical, Electrical, Magnetic, Galvanic, Astronomical, and general Philosophical Apparatus has been recently added to the advantages of the Seminary.

## CABINET.

A good collection of Minerals and specimens of Natural History will be placed in the Institution during the year.

The apparent increase of the Tuition comes from adding one month to the Academic Year. The rates of tuition remain the same, although the advantages of the Seminary have been greatly increased by the addition of Cabinet and Apparatus.



# Mitchell Seminary

Mitchellville, Polk County, Iowa.

ELMORE CHASE, M. A., PRINCIPAL.

## CALENDAR FOR 1877-8.

Fall Term, 16 weeks, begins Sept. 3, 1877.

Winter Term, 14½ weeks, begins Jan. 2, 1878.

Spring Term, 8½ weeks, begins April 15, 1878.

## TUITION PER ANNUM:

Common English,	\$20 00
Higher English,	25 00
Ancient and Modern Languages and Book-Keeping,	30 00
Instrumental Music, (24 lessons)	12 00
Use of Piano, (2 hours per day)	2 50
Each extra hour,	1 50

All bills must be paid at the beginning of each term.

Due allowance will be made, and all money justly due students will be refunded.

[Journal Print, Newton, Iowa.]

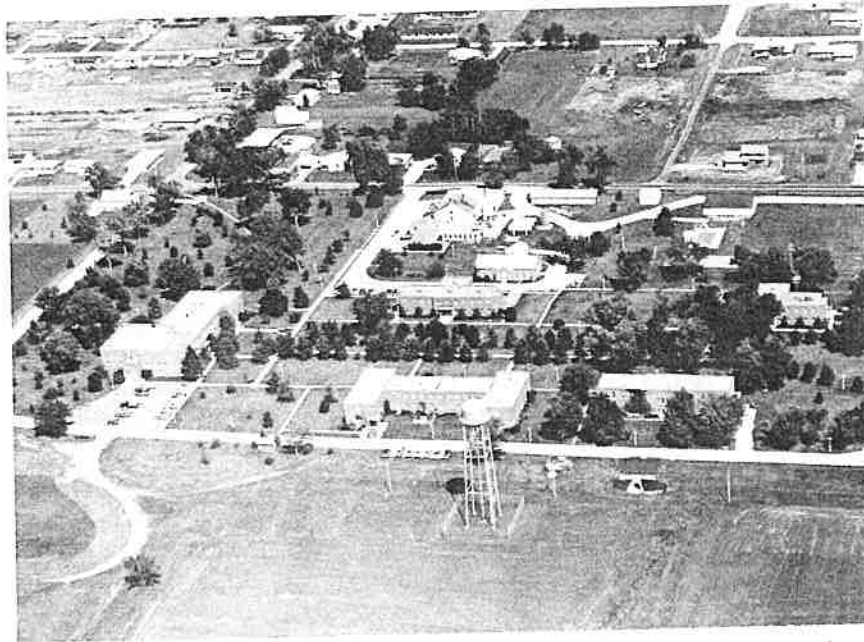
## COURSES OF STUDY:

FALL TERM	WINTER TERM
COM. ENG. BRANCHES,	COM. ENG. BRANCHES,
ALGEBRA,	PHYS. GEOGRAPHY,
BOOK KEEPING,	BOOK KEEPING,
ENGLISH HISTORY,	ALGEBRA,
PHYSIOLOGY,	RHETORIC,
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY,	ROMAN HISTORY,
GEOMETRY,	GEOMETRY,
MENTAL PHILOSOPHY,	ENGLISH LITERATURE,
ASTRONOMY, (Lectures)	MORAL PHILOSOPHY,
ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES.	ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES.

### SPRING TERM

COMMON ENGLISH BRANCHES, U. S. HISTORY, CIVIL GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL ECONOMY, CHEMISTRY, GREEK HISTORY, ZOOLOGY, BOTANY, BOOK KEEPING, ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES.





The Mitchellville Training School facility in 1980.

Superintendent, and plays and musicals were given for the public.

Changes are necessary to mark the March of Progress, so the old has given way to the new in the physical aspect of The Training School for Girls. In 1948, Cottage Three (Seminary) was razed in order that a new modern Administration and School building could be erected on its site. Then in 1956, the Chapel, which had served for almost 60 years, was declared unsafe and was razed. Cottage Two was the next to go, but before a single brick could be removed, blueprints of a fine modern duplex to house forty girls and the necessary staff, were being studied and in the summer of 1961, the new units (Cottage Two and Cottage Three) were occupied.

The purpose of the Mitchellville Training School is to provide a specialized program of care, education and treatment for delinquent youth. The clients have a history of disruptive behavior in both living and classroom situations, and a history of multiple placements outside of the home. Because of this, a firm, consistent, well-defined program is necessary for effective treatment. The standards for care, education and treatment are high and the school is committed to provide the most effective program possible for its clients. The staff continually reviews, monitors, analyzes, evaluates and modifies the program so that it can better serve the clientele.

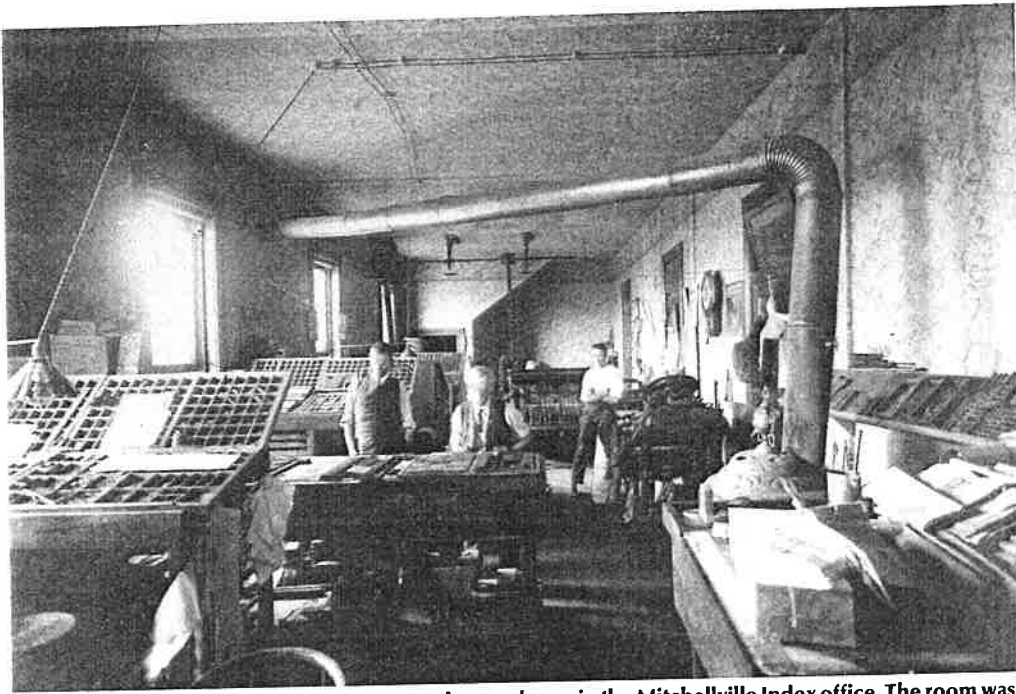
### Churches

The Universalist Church in Mitchellville was built in 1862 on land also given by Thomas Mitchell. The Christian Church was built in 1873. The Methodist Episcopal

Church was first established in the old Mitchellville in 1855, and moved to the new town in 1876. The story was told that the Christian and Methodist churches were so close that in the summer, when the windows were open, you could hear the Methodists singing "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?" and the Christian choir would be singing "No Not One, No Not One." The first edifice for the Congregational Church was erected in 1878, and the present structure with its beautiful stained glass window, was built in 1903. Churches were vital to the lives of pioneers, and the churches of Mitchellville through the years, have given stability and comfort to her citizens. Each church building has been enlarged and improved, and the church bells still ring out on the Sabbath morning. The Universalist Church is now under the supervision of the Polk County Conservation Commission, and is open for tours by appointment.

### Newspapers

What gives a town a feeling of importance more than a hometown newspaper? September 2, 1878, W.S. Doud published the "Little News." It was a monthly and the subscription was ten cents a year. In 1880, E.T. Cressey published the "Mitchellville News," and in 1882, E.P. Marmon came from Ohio to become the editor of the "Mitchellville Index." He continued until his death in 1913. His son, Charley, published the paper for two years and then sold it to H.C. Marmon and his son, "Ham," in 1915. In 1932, the Index was sold to Campbell Printing Company of Des Moines. J.C. Mason of the Altoona Herald bought the subscription list and the Index was



Eau Marmon, Charley Marmon and Lee Butler are shown in the Mitchellville Index office. The room was upstairs in a building on the northeast corner of 2nd Street N.E. and Center Avenue. The building burned in 1891, so the Index moved across the street to the southeast corner of the same intersection and continued printing out of an office over Pearson Hardware.

printed, as it is today, in Altoona. Martin Blesz became publisher after the death of J.C. Mason, and Gordon Gill now combines the Mitchellville Index with the Altoona Herald and includes Bondurant and Runnells news pages.

### Underground Railroad

In 1859, Thomas Mitchell moved to a farm north of Mitchellville, and since it was on a stage route, it was known as Mitchell's Tavern. It also served as an underground station for slaves that were being moved to Grinnell, then on to Canada and freedom. From an article written by George Mills for the Des Moines Register in 1956, we have this account:

"A wagon crossed the Des Moines River and stopped at Isaac Brandt's house. Brandt was in the yard and said 'Hello.' The driver responded by grasping his right ear between thumb and finger. That was the underground signal. Brandt asked, 'How many?' The driver held up four fingers. Brandt looked under the corn stalks in the wagon and saw four shivering passengers. The driver was the famed John Brown. Brown and his passengers continued on to 'Uncle Tommy' Mitchell's, also a station."

### Fires

Fires were always hard on a new town. The first recorded major fire in Mitchellville was on July 1, 1887. It was of such major proportions that a special newspaper was put out on July 2, 1887:

**FIRE!**

Six Buildings Destroyed  
Loss \$12,000 to \$15,000

At about 11:30 o'clock last night, the cry of "fire!" called our citizens from their beds to the one hundred block of Second Street N.W., on the south side, where fire had been discovered in the rear of W.P. DeLong's hardware store. The building being of frame, the flames spread with lightning rapidity, and in spite of the herculean efforts of the people, six buildings were destroyed: Frame storeroom on the corner belonging to Geo. D. Moore; frame building owned by F.A. Dunham, and used furniture store; a two story brick veneered building owned by C.M. Braden and occupied as a stove and tin store; a two story brick veneered owned and occupied by W.P. DeLong as a hardware and implement house; two store brick veneered building, owned by Mrs. Anna Shaffer of Altoona; two store frame building owned by Dr. T. Seems, the upper story being used by him as office. Although badly scorched, his residence was saved.

At this writing (3 a.m.) we cannot get a correct estimate of the loss, but it will be from \$12,000 to \$15,000 with \$6,000 to \$8,000 insurance.

The attaches of Ringling Brothers Show were among the first on the scene, and rendered valuable aid in fighting fire and carrying out goods.

Moore's and Dunham's goods were saved.

The goods were all carried out of Miss Fay's store, the bank, post office, Pinney's, East's Barber Shop, Fay's Law Office, and Schakelford's Shoe Shop — the latter building was pulled down.

Several thousand cartridges exploded in DeLong's store.

The glass fronts in the business houses on the north



The 1904 fire destroyed the Opera House, Jones' Clothing Store, a dry goods store and the meat market. The fire was fought by bucket brigade, using water from the town well.



After the 1904 fire, The Jones-Miller Building was built. It housed a meat market, general store, Al Miller's City Bank and Jones' Clothing. The building is located on the north side of 2nd Street N.W. and houses Johnson's Hardware.

side of the street were badly cracked by the heat.

The chemical engine was sent down from Des Moines, but was not unloaded.

Mrs. Shakelford broke in the front door of the Christian Church and rang the bell.

On March 25, 1891, the Reichard block was destroyed by fire with a total loss of \$11,000. The location was on the corner of Center and Second Street N.E. Destroyed on the first floor were Reichard's Drugstore and Cook's Grocery. On the second floor, the Index office, Woodman Lodge, the Mayor's office, the dental office of Mr. G.B. Hibbs and all the seats from the park that were stored there.

"The City building fell in at 5 o'clock; great is our bucket brigade; the Index presses, weighing 1,500 and 1,100 pounds, respectively, fell through to the cellar with

a mighty crash."

On December 2, 1904, the north side of the corner of Center and Second Street N.W. burned. The fire destroyed the old Opera House (Andrews Hall), the J.H. Jones' Clothing Store, and the meat market.

In the early nineteen hundreds, the Pritchard Opera House and the Nicholson Hardware Store burned. These were located on the east side of Center Avenue, just north of the railroad tracks.

Fire alarms were cries of FIRE, church bells and later a bell on a post back of the town building; then sirens were used. Fire fighting was done by bucket brigades, then a hand drawn cart with the hose loaded on it. Usually six men could pull it to a fire. In 1925; chemicals were loaded onto a truck and were used to fight fires. Finally, modern fire trucks came into use, and now a

modern rescue unit accompanies the fire trucks to fires.

Fire chiefs have included Walter Seiberling 1928, Elda Barrett 1929, Chas. Craig 1930, George Bean 1932, Luther Porter 1933, Russell Reynolds 1934-36, Earl McClannahan 1937-49, Melvin Vandehaar 1949-69 and, recently, Carroll Shissler and Lynn Weber.

Firemen in 1980 are: Jack Ballagh, George Ballard, Bob Chittenden, Randy Cory, Jim DeCamp, Dan Duus, Bob Harris, Bill Humphrey, Johnny Johnston, Russ Juhl, Gary Lawrence, Dan Lawson, Mark McCoun, John Melohn, Larry Morrill, Bob Porter, Floyd Seiberling, Bob Simmons, Hugh Stone, Jeanne Utterback, Lee Waldorf and Lynn Weber.

### Banks

Mitchellville had a bank in 1884. This was their advertisement: "Bank of Mitchellville, O.J. Dutton, banker. Good notes and mortgages bought. Steamship tickets to and from Europe." Banks that followed were City Bank, Citizens State Bank and Farmers Savings Bank. Bankers and cashiers were S.J. and S.P. Oldfield, Gene Grissmer, J.W. McCurnin, A.D. Miller, F.E. Roberts and son "Curly," Frank and Clara Moss, R.P. and Lone Blake, and today, A.E. Chittendon, of the Farmers Savings Bank.



### Post Office

When Thomas Mitchell was living in the Apple Grove area in 1846, he was postmaster. The mail was brought to him by a man or boy on horseback, and it was the only place mail could be received in Beaver and surrounding townships.

When Rural Free Delivery was started in Mitchellville, there were four carriers for four routes. Some of the carriers were Newt Kelly, Billy Palmer, John Keeley, Hattie Goddard Bailey, Rollin Whitaker and Charles Lacey. When it was two routes, Chas. M. Craig and C.C. Patterson were the carriers and drove what they sometimes called their "Puddle Jumpers." Today, Max Woods carries the entire route to which has been added delivery to



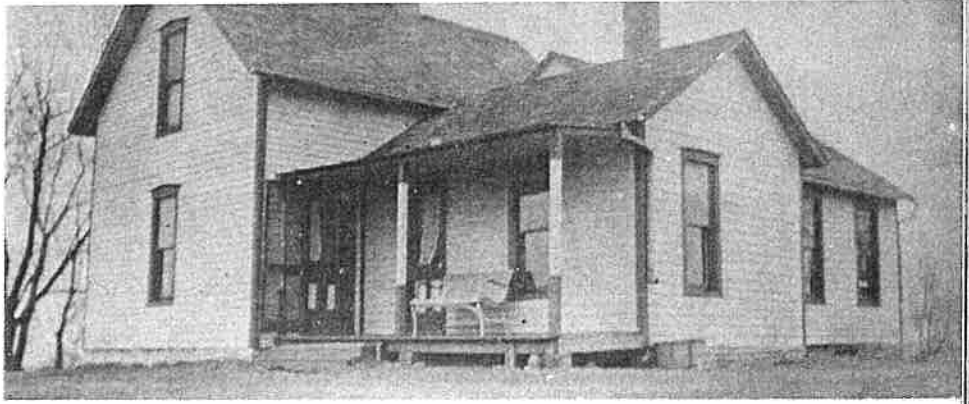
The interior of the Mitchellville Post Office in 1912. Charley Marmon, postmaster, is on the left. The mail carrier, C. Kelley, is in the middle. John Ault is on the right.



The Osgood home at 200 Center Avenue S. is now owned by the Jim Kennedy family. Amanda Osgood is seated in front of the house.



The Seiberling family home at 501 Center Avenue N. is now owned by the Harry A. Redman family.

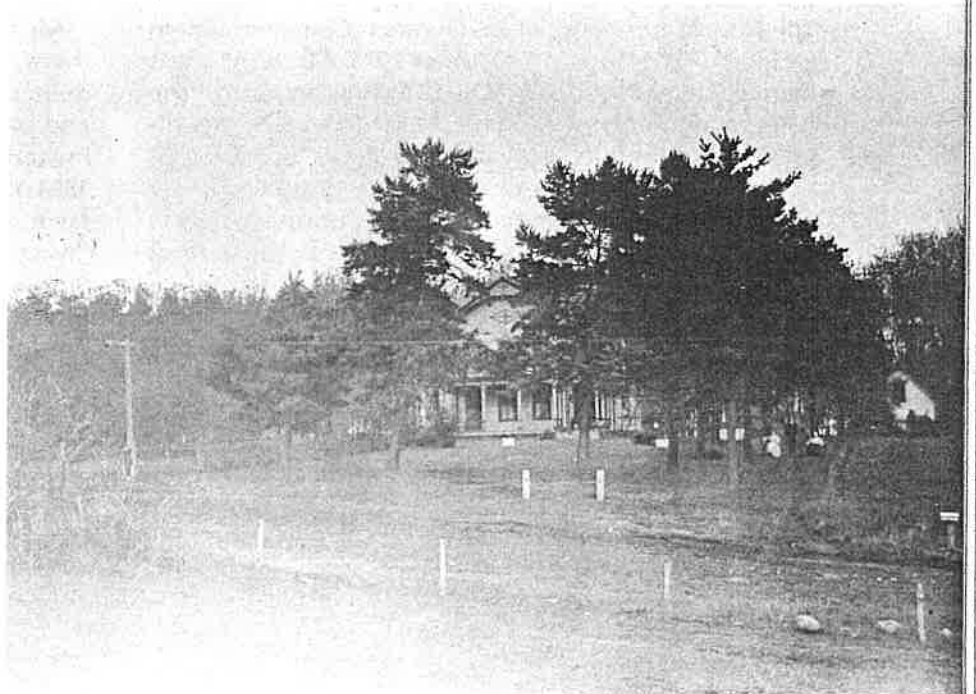


The DeWitt Mason home was built in 1860 on what is now N.E. 58th Avenue west of Mitchellville.



The Whitaker home at 4th Street N.W. and Center Avenue N. in 1914. Left to right are: John Goddard, Ruth Whitaker, Emma Whitaker, Mary Whitaker Meader, Howard Whitaker, John Whitaker, Harold Lee Whitaker, Roland Whitaker and Bill Stewart, the hired man.

The Heydon house was built in 1881. Note the mud road which became Highway 6.



"cluster" boxes in Mitchellville. The substitute carrier is Janis Jondall.



### Floyd Bishop Named National Postmaster For 1970

Floyd Bishop, postmaster at Mitchellville for 32 years, was honored by being named National Postmaster Of The Year at the National Postmasters' Convention held at St. Louis, Missouri, in October 1970. Mr. Bishop was named State Postmaster Of The Year in April. The national winner is selected from a list composed of postmasters honored in each of the 50 states. The award is primarily based on services to the postal system.

For more than three decades, Mr. Bishop has served the community of Mitchellville, with a population of 1,302, often working without adequate help or equipment. For two years, he served as a lobbyist in Washington, D.C. for the National League of Postmasters to promote improved postal operations. Mr. Bishop vigorously pushed for Federal approval of a 40-hour work week and raises in salary schedules. Both were approved shortly after Mr. Bishop returned to Mitchellville from lobbying in Washington, D.C.

## Opera Houses

People always liked to be entertained, and in 1885, Andrews Hall was the first Opera House in Mitchellville. It was on the second floor of a brick building on the northwest corner of Center and Second Street. It had an outside stairway on the east side of the building. Traveling shows, such as a Tom Thumb wedding and "The Terrible Cherry Sisters," appeared at Andrews Hall, as well as dances, fancy balls and political speakers. Local plays (one was "The Deestrisk Skule"), Christmas and community programs were also enjoyed here. William Wearmouth gave a Grand Ball in the Opera House July 4, 1887. Dancing tickets were \$1.00. The fire of December 22, 1904, destroyed the Opera House and only memories of happy hours of entertainment remained.

Woodmen Hall and Pritchard's Opera House served for socials, church suppers, class plays and community gatherings until time and another fire took its toll.

## Entertainment and Social Life

In 1880 and in 1885, the Mitchellville Cornet Band gave concerts for new uniforms. The Index reported, "The music was spirited and Mitchellville has one of the best bands in Central Iowa." Also from an Index, "On Saturday night, the band boys wore their new lamps on their hats for the first time and several are mourning ruined hats as a consequence." James Craig was the band leader and twelve young men made up the first band: Frank, Oscar, Bert, Ed and Charley Craig; Frank and Will Lightner; C.E. Starks; Jake Workman; George Leonard; Wallace Moore; Arthur Sharp and Wallace Leonard. The band played in homes, for church socials and suppers, for Memorial Day and July Fourth observances. One year in January, they marched to the cemetery in a funeral procession, playing for a deceased member of the band.

Music was an essential part of any community and there are records in the early 1880's of Glee Clubs, Mandolin Clubs and orchestras, piano recitals, vocal recitals and parties to which the young men of the community invited the lady of their choice. Here is an example in 1884 of how one young man at least tried to win his girl's favor. He had this request printed and mailed to her: "Miss Zerelda Worth, may I have the pleasure of seeing you home this evening? If so, keep this card; if not, please return it. P.S. If I can't see you home, may I sit on the fence and see you go by?"

There were church socials, Halloween parties, New Year's dances and Literary Clubs. Many old calling cards have been found that show the ladies went calling, especially on New Year's Day. Rooms were small in most houses, but that did not hinder large dinner parties,

## GRANDPA'S BIRTHDAY.

THIS CHARMING OPERETTA WILL BE GIVEN BY  
*Miss Patterson's Class,*  
 Assisted by  
*Misses WINGATE AND ROBINSON,*  
 of Des Moines, and  
*Miss GERTIE FLOWER, of Mitchellville,*  
 in  
**ANDREWS' HALL, MITCHELLVILLE,**  
 On  
**TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 6th, 1879.**

### PART FIRST.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY.....  
*Miss Patterson.*

TRIO....."O, Restless Sea."  
*Miss Gertie Flower, Mr. C. E. Wingate and  
 Miss Patterson.*

DUET....."Jesus, Love of My Soul."  
*Miss Patterson and Mr. C. E. Wingate.*

SOLO....."Switzer's Farew."  
*Eddy Patterson.*

VIOLIN SOLO AND ACCOMPANIMENT.....  
*Mr. R. Robinson and Miss Patterson.*

### PART SECOND.

OPERETTA....."GRANDPA'S BIRTHDAY"  
*Grandpa, G. K. Patterson; Alice, Millie  
 Seems; Little Maid, Birdie King; Little  
 Claudie, Kendall E. Cressey. The Class  
 Carrie Commons, Dora Commons, Clara  
 Cressey, Mattie Cressey, Dotty Patterson,  
 Bell Patterson, Eddy Patterson,  
 Charley Sternberg, Ida Seems, Sarah  
 Brown, Della Hatcher.*

SOLO....."Magnetic Waltz Song."  
*Miss Patterson; Violin Obligato by Mr. R.  
 Robinson; Accompanist, Miss Flower.*

MAY POLE DANCE.....  
*Charley Patterson and Millie Seems, Max &  
 Tumbleton and Mattie Cressey, Eddy Moore  
 and Dotty Patterson, Eddy Patterson and  
 Carrie Commons.*

DUET....."The Fishermen."  
*Miss Patterson, and Mr. Wingate; Accompanist,  
 Miss Flower.*

News Print.

MITCHELLVILLE, IOWA.

## Grand Cotillion Party.

Andrews' Hall, Feb'y 13th, 1880.

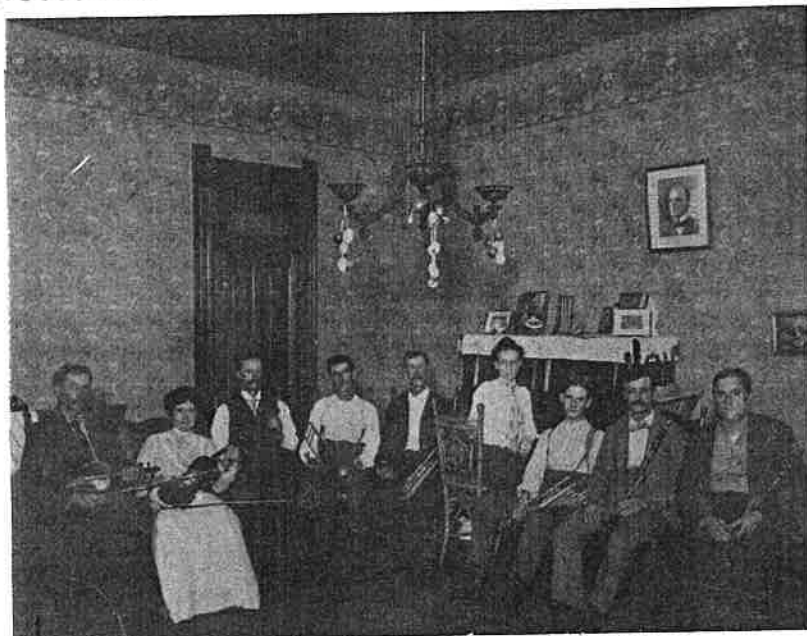
The Company Of Yourself And Ladies Solicited.

### COMMITTEES.

Invitation, John Reed, Joseph Hopkins.	Reception, N. B. Clark, John Reed.	Floor, Joseph Copper, N. B. Clark.
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DANCING TICKETS, \$1.00. SPECTATORS, 25 Cts.

Music by the "NEWTON BAND."



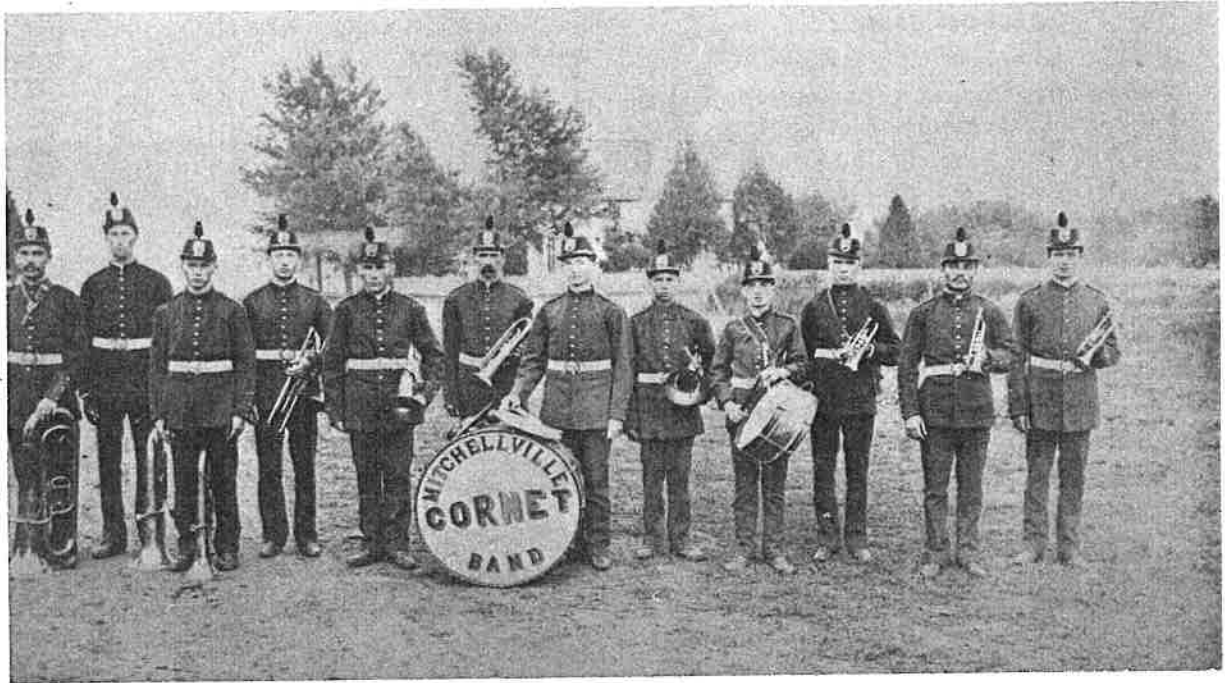
The Mitchellville Orchestra practicing in the Means House in 1899. Left to right: Charles Craig, Minnie Wilson, Emerson Griffiths, Bob Wilson, Frank Craig, Eunice Wilson Sharp, Asa Jim Marmon, John Keeley, Lew Buckley.



The Cornet Band of 1898. Front row: unidentified, Louie Archer, Guy Oldfield, unidentified, Ed Corbin, Oscar Craig, Frank Craig. Middle row: Reed, unidentified, John Keeley, Asa Marmon, unidentified, Shake Ford, unidentified, unidentified. Back row: unidentified, Jock Reed, Charley Craig.

anniversary observances and square dances. Social life was important in the days before the automobiles, movies and TV.





The Mitchellville Cornet Band in 1885. Left to right: Bill Lightner, Frank Craig, Bert Craig, Colonel Starks, Oscar Craig, James Craig (leader), Jake Workman, George Leonard, G.O. (Wallace) Moore, Arthur Sharpley, Frank Lightner, W.M. (Wallace) Leonard.



Mitchellville Glee Club in 1885. Back row, left to right: Bill Lightner, Zo Herrick, Edd Gadd, Carrie Commons, C.E. Starks, Mary Gadd. Front row, left to right: Gertie Flowers Grismer, Millie Seems, Lyman Bates, Della Hatcher.

### Fraternal Organizations

In 1854, Isaac Brandt organized the Friends of Temperance with fifteen members in Mitchelltown. Crystal Lodge of the Masonic Order was chartered in Mitchellville in 1872, and Thomas Mitchell was the first petitioner for the degrees. In 1878 another temperance group

called the AOUW organized with twenty-five members. In 1886, Elm Camp #121 Modern Woodman, which offered insurance, came into being in Mitchellville, followed by Maple Leaf Camp of Royal Neighbors. Silver Star Chapter #219 Order of the Eastern Star received their charter and held their first meeting in April of 1897.

On March 31, 1898, IOOF #363, with thirty-four members the first year, became part of the fraternal life of Mitchellville. Garcia #425 of the Rebekah Lodge, an affiliate of the Odd Fellows, was started October 20, 1890. Fraternal organizations have played an important part in the growth of Mitchellville. The bonds of fraternal love have made for a closer relationship of neighbor to neighbor and friend to friend.



The Dr. Seems home on 2nd Street N.W. Dr. Seems practiced medicine from 1874 to 1904.

## Doctors

The first doctor in Mitchellville was Dr. Simenton. Dr. H.D. Halderman took over Dr. Simenton's practice in 1878 and practiced until 1884, when Dr. Simenton returned to Mitchellville. Mrs. Halderman was a sister of Jane Addams, founder of Hull House in Chicago. Jane was a patient of Dr. Halderman for a year in Mitchellville while she recovered from back surgery. The Haldermans lived in the house which is now the home of Mrs. Alice Miller Pearson, at 103 Third Street N.W.

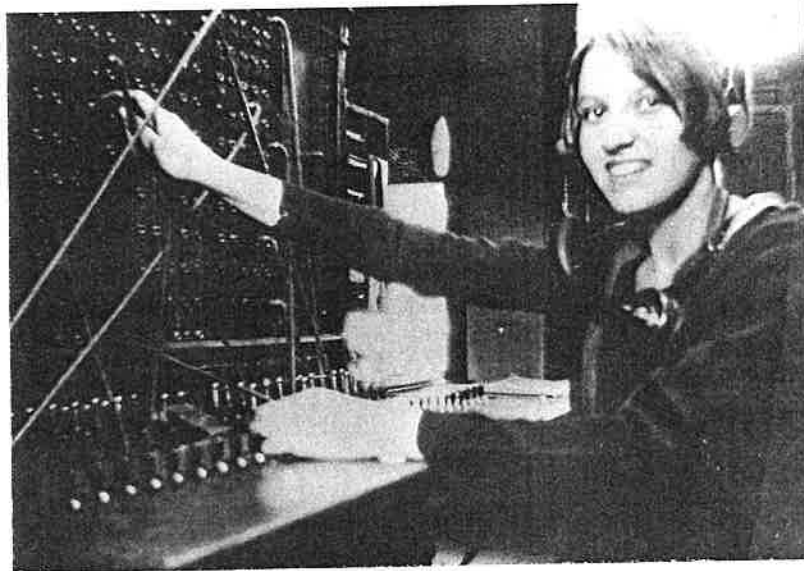
Dr. Seems came to Mitchellville in 1874 while Dr. Simenton was still practicing. In 1884, doctors in Mitchellville included Dr. W.D. Monett; Dr. T. Seems, "Chronic Diseases of the Eye a Specialty," and Dr. B.T. Gadd, "Chronic Diseases a Speciality." Young Dr. G.B. Hibbs was practicing in 1891. In following years, the doctors were Dr. Gallord Seems, Dr. A.H. Leonard, Dr. G.S. Marquis, Dr. Edwards, Dr. Ellen Ferengul and Dr. Royal Anspach.

Dentists originally came to Mitchellville from Des Moines or Newton for two days a week. Later resident dentists were Bradner, Stephens, Frank, DeFrance, Vance, Summers and Wilson. Also, in the "Little News" of 1878, I. Henshie advertised "Dealer in Dry Goods and Drugs, Prescriptions put up at reasonable prices, and Condition Powder, weighs 10 ounces, 25 cents."



Ila Seiberling Champion and Vera Churchill in the telephone office in 1932.

Alta Riddle Glenn at the switchboard in 1925.



## Telephones

The first telephone in Mitchellville was installed in 1884 by S.J. Oldfield. The system connected his home with his jewelry store. He also used this telephone to call his daughter Maude, who was attending Lombard College in Galesburg, Illinois. In 1902, C.C. Keister and a partner from Grinnell, Iowa, organized a telephone system that included Mitchellville, Altoona, Runnells and Prairie City. Early stockholders were J.B. Uhl, Asa Plummer and Bert Patterson.

The first telephone office was on the east side of Center Avenue on the second floor. Then it was moved to the west side of Center Avenue. Northwestern Bell bought out the local firm and built a telephone office on Second Street N.W. with the operators having the switchboard and living quarters on the first floor and the equipment in the basement. Murray Sanburn, having worked for Northwestern Bell in Des Moines, moved to Mitchellville in 1920 and was "Wire Chief." The area now includes Bondurant and Valeria. The first poles were set by hand.

All of the equipment is gone now and the old office is rented as an apartment. The dial and touch tone systems and all kinds of fancy telephones have replaced the old crank phone and "Number Please."

Mitchellville phone operators were Maude Palmer, Julia Mann, Opal Stuart, Ethel Keister, Vivian Henney, Dorothy and Mary Butler, Eva Trimble, Grace and Alice Keister, Vera Seiberling, Marie Bishop, Mary Whitaker, Mary Riddle, Lillian Riddle, Alta Riddle, Doris Hibbs, Ollie Stamm, Dolly Taylor, Florence Garrett, Katie Gibbons, Gertrude Marmon, Jennie Bell and Dorothy Sanburn.

### Markets in 1886

Corn - 28½ cents  
 Oats - 22 cents  
 Wheat - 50 cents  
 Four tin-types for 50 cents at Brown's Gallery  
 Cash at Barlow's Store bought 14 pounds of sugar for \$1.00  
 Dark sugar - 18 pounds for \$1.00  
 Coffee (roasted) - 8 pounds for \$1.00  
 Prints - 6 cents per yard  
 Gingham - 8 to 12 cents per yard  
 Ladies Kid Shoes - \$1.50 to \$3.00

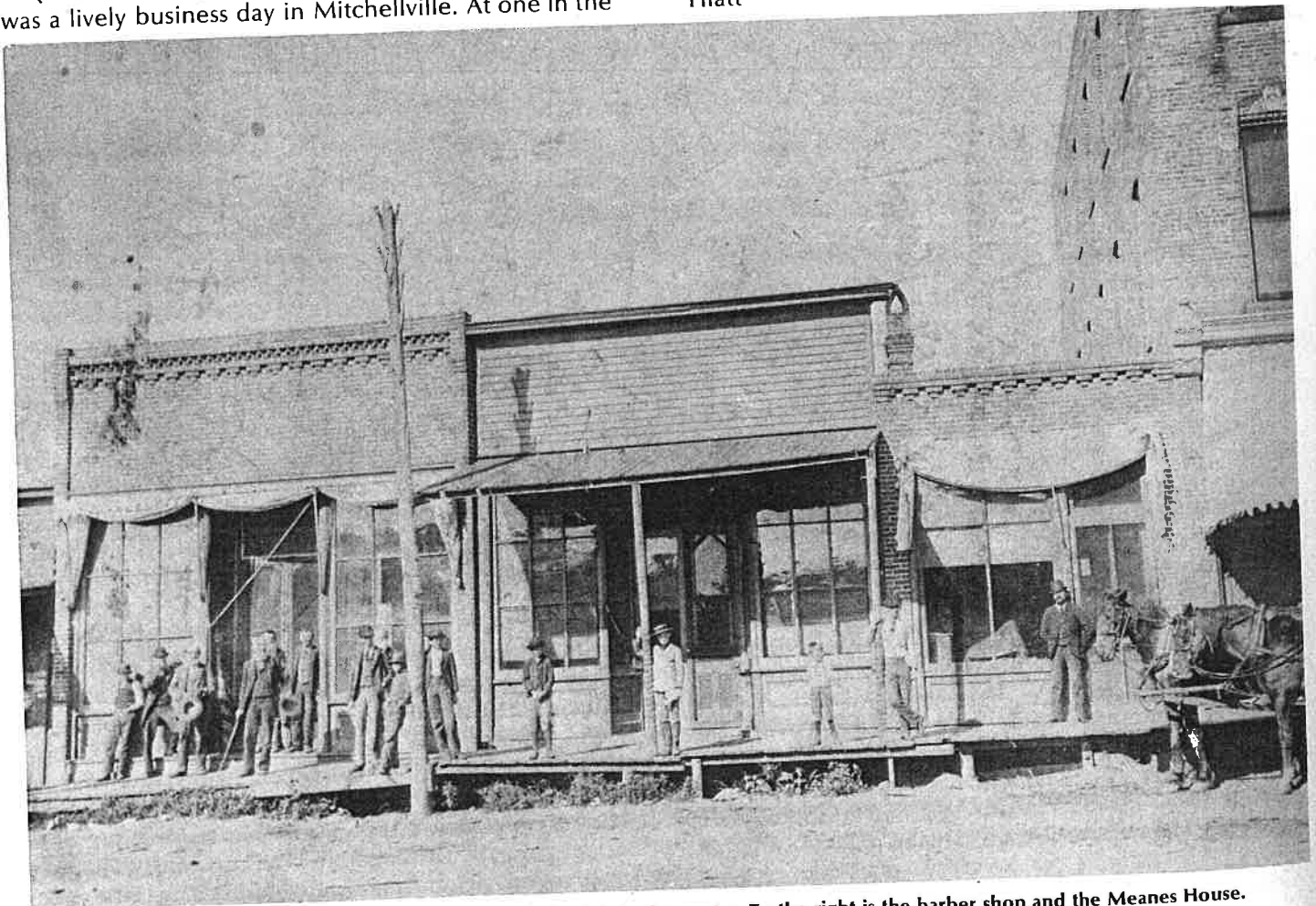
Quote from an 1887 Mitchellville Index, "Saturday was a lively business day in Mitchellville. At one in the

afternoon, we counted 70 teams on the street, coming and going all the time."

### The Year of 1894

From the December 26th edition of the Mitchellville Index can be gleaned a list of businesses and their proprietors and clerks. E.P. Marmon, editor, took his readers on a stroll around town to wish his business counterparts a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. He begins with Dr. F. Seems on the south side of Second Street N.W.

Mr. C.M. Braden - tinner  
 Messers Booth and Shaffer - drugs  
 Mr. W.P. DeLong - hardware  
 Mr. F.A. Dunham - furniture and undertaking  
 Mr. George Moore - dry goods; Mr. Bert Patterson, clerk  
 Miss Eve Fay - millinery and dressmaking; Assistants - Miss Ida Boyd and Mrs. Tillie Andrews  
 Mr. O.J. Dutton - banker  
 Mr. S.J. Oldfield - postmaster and jeweler; Assistant - Gene Grismer  
 Mr. J.W. Morse - books and stationery  
 Mr. S. Pinney - harness shop; Assistant - Mr. Charles Hiatt



The west side of Center Avenue N. in 1886. The bank is in the center. To the right is the barber shop and the Meanes House.



Starks Grocery was in the Meanes House building. C.E. Starks was the owner from 1896 to 1906, when Nate Tanner bought the store. Prince, the delivery horse, is hitched up to the wagon. Mr. Tanner is at the store entrance and Mr. Starks is in front of the window.

Mr. William Bellairs - harness shop  
 Dr. B.T. Gadd  
 Mr. John Cloughley - shoe shop  
 Mr. John Fay - lawyer  
 Mr. C.L. Henney - Justice of the Peace, Notary Public  
 Mr. E.A. Shackelford - shoemaker  
 Mr. B.F. East - barber  
 Mr. W.W. Hedges - livery barn; Assistants - William Woods and William Rutherford  
 Mr. George Fry - Fry House and Lodging  
 Rock Island Depot - Mr. A.J. Kibby, agent; Miss Alice Kimball, day operator; Mr. Lyman Bates, night operator; Mr. Frank Hadder, apprentice telegraphy  
 Messers Kimball and Mitchell - lumberyard  
 Mr. A.B. Copley - corn and grain  
 Mr. S.S. More and Son - grain elevator; Assistant - Mr. W.E. Palmer  
 Tracy's Grocery - Mr. and Mrs. A.C. Tracy  
 Mr. A.M. Morrison - wagon and carriage shop  
 Mr. George Larimer - blacksmith  
 Mr. A. Carson and son "Bush" - furniture  
 Mrs. E.E. Ellis - millinery and dressmaking  
 Mr. L.W. Cannon - hardware; Assistants - Mr. I.L. Commons and Mr. Jonathan Blyer

Messers Frank Lightner and A. Duncan - "Most important enterprise - Steam Flour Mill"; Assistant - Mr. Will Lightner  
 Mr. Robert Ball and Mr. C.T. Martin - contractors and builders; Employees - Mr. William Goodall, Mr. S.H. Daniels, Mr. N. Ball and Mr. Jean Copley  
 Mr. D.H. Reichard - drugstore and books  
 Upstairs: Dr. W.D. Monett; Mr. George Copley, Attorney, Township Clerk and Secretary of the School Board; W.J. Rankin, insurance  
 Downstairs: Mr. George Staples - wagons and carriage shop; Assistant - Jake Bowman; "Paints 'em red or whatever color you will."  
 Waltz and Son - skilled workers in iron and steel  
 J.H. Jones - only exclusive clothing, boots and shoes; Assistant - Mr. D.C. Russell  
 Flowers and Hickox - Ohio Grocery - "Best appointed grocery in town. Mrs. Mary Russell sells her baked goods here."  
 Mr. J.M. Hatcher - grocer  
 S.S. Moore and Son - dry goods  
 Mr. H.T. Riler - dry goods and notions  
 Mr. D.F. Clayton - restaurant

Uncle Moses Brown – blacksmith shop  
 Mr. T.P. Daniels and Mr. J.W. Hay – wagon makers  
 Mr. J.S. McCrory – buying and selling grain -  
 Mr. C.A. Towers – elevator, cribs, grain, coal; Assistant –  
 Mr. Charles Scott

### Lighting

The date of the first street lights in Mitchellville is not known, but Ed Lightner, carrying a ladder and a can of kerosene in the early 1900's, made the evening route to the lamp posts and lit the corner lamps, retracing his steps in the morning to turn them out. Simeon Jefferies, as a junior in high school, was the first keeper of the gas lamps, seventy years ago. Each lamp was a separate unit placed in the center of each intersection, about every two blocks, for a route of approximately two miles. The system was similar to the Coleman portable camp lights of today. During the "light of the moon," the lamps were not in operation. Maurice McCurnin followed Simeon as lamp lighter.

In 1902, George T. Gibson got permission to put up poles and lines to give Mitchellville electric lights. The power came from the Inter Urban. Gibson was followed by Hawkeye Light Company and Hall Electric, before Iowa Power and Light Company came to serve the town in 1923. Mitchellville received gas service July 29, 1954.

Homes were first lighted with a single bulb hanging from the ceiling, and the Saturday morning chore of cleaning the kerosene lamps, washing the chimneys, and trimming the wicks was cheerfully given over for the turn of a switch.

### Small Businesses in 1900

The Spaders took in washings. Let's be honest about it — Mrs. Spader washed; he delivered in his little wagon. Hucksters peddled vegetables from their gardens. The Rambo's had a little canning factory, and Mrs. Rambo sold soap door to door. Seamstresses were called in to "sew you up" for spring or fall. Some of these were Lida Bechtell, Millie Seems Jones, Etta Case, Emma Bean and Jennie Kane. Margeret Darling Walker taught piano and voice and composed sheet music, such as "When the Spanish Flag Went Down." Other piano teachers were Gertie Grismer, Millie Seems and Virginia Henney. At the Creamery, operated by Bill DeLong and later by George Phillips, you could buy butter, cream and fresh buttermilk. The Creamery always smelled so fresh and good. Mary Russell had a bake shop in her home. Mrs. East had a greenhouse. Cindy Crawford did washings and house cleaning. Mrs. Airlie Irish was noted for her embroidery, as was Eliza Thompson. S.R. Rooker operated a brick and tile plant. In 1883 he advertised, "No better brick made in the State." The Herb brothers did cement work. Jake Bowman hung paper and painted signs. Hiram Ford built cement sidewalks. John Bellairs did paper hanging and painting. There were also carpenters, handy men and hired girls. All were enterprising citizens of the early days of Mitchellville.

### Hotels

In 1888, The Meanes House was active in Mitchellville. It was located on the second and third floors of the three story brick building on the southwest corner of Center Avenue and Second Street N.W. The building has been razed, and the Village Laundry now occupies the space. Mrs. Meanes, the proprietor, rented rooms and served meals to traveling salesmen. She also served dinners to fraternal and social organizations. In 1890, Crystal Lodge of the Masonic Order rented the third floor. Mr. Meanes bought and sold livestock. Their daughter, Lenna Meanes, became a prominent doctor in Des Moines.

The Lightner House, which also took in roomers and served meals, was located just north of the Rock Island Depot on Center Avenue. When traveling salesmen ceased to travel the Rock Island Railroad, rooming houses and hotels went out of business; but in their day, they made an important contribution to the town.

### — Turned Loose —

Lump Hunkers says some fellers drive like they didn't care how long it would take the undertaker to fix them up.

Time Gasolines On—Taxes are CUT—into bigger chunks for us to pay.



The Meanes House was on the second floor of this building, which was known by the same name. On the third floor was the Masonic Lodge. On the first floor were the C.E. Starks Grocery, the Citizens State Bank and the Oldfield Jewelry Store.



A brick and tile company once operated on what is now the Allen Fick farm west of Mitchellville. S.R. Tyler and the late Tyler Rooker were the owners.



The Town Building was on the northeast corner of Center Avenue N. and 2nd Street N.E., where J and K's Grocery is now. Note the well in the middle of the intersection.

### Town Well

There is a deep well, now cemented over, at the intersection of Second Street and Center Avenue. You and your car pass over it without knowing you are riding over a bit of Mitchellville history. At the time of the 1887, 1891 and 1904 fires, bucket brigades used the well for water to try and save many business houses and homes. The well

was fenced, but water troughs were placed on the sides so horses coming into town or the dray and delivery horses could be watered. It was also the source of water for business houses and some residents. How well the well served the town of Mitchellville for over half a century!

The year was approximately 1903, when the "Reform School" was turned into a melee of shouting, rioting young women. Furniture, windows, crockery . . . anything that wasn't nailed down was thrown and broken, and inmates were scattered all over town. Starting in the evening, the riot lasted almost all night. Local citizens tried to quiet the disturbance, but were met with obscenities, garbage and refuse thrown in their faces. A special car was sent out from Des Moines on the Inter Urban, bringing the Polk County Sheriff, the Chief of Police and deputies from Des Moines, who rounded up the ring leaders and took them to the Polk County Jail. Merchants guarded their stores all night to prevent looting, and all houses were locked and dark. The complaint was regarding the food being served. A new

Superintendent was soon appointed at the school, but that night was one Mitchellville didn't want repeated.

## BILL OF FARE.

GIRLS' DEPARTMENT I. R. S.

### SUNDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, fried bacon, gravy, potatoes and coffee.  
 DINNER—Bread, pork baked with beans, codfish, gravy and potatoes.  
 SUPPER—Sandwiches, with cake or pie.

### MONDAY.

BREAKFAST—Hot cakes, butter and syrup, potatoes and coffee.  
 DINNER—Biscuit and butter, mashed turnips, apple roll with dressing.  
 SUPPER—Bread, coffee or tea, tomatoes and ginger bread.

### TUESDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread and molasses, fried mush and coffee.  
 DINNER—Bread, beef soup, stewed onions, rice pudding.  
 SUPPER—Bread and butter, or bread and milk, peach sauce.

### WEDNESDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread and butter, coffee, fried haminy, hash from previous day's dinner.  
 DINNER—Bread, pork and beans, steamed apple dumplings with dressing.  
 SUPPER—Bread, baked potatoes and gravy.

### THURSDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, coffee, fried bacon, apple sauce.  
 DINNER—Beef soup, corn bread, butter, pickles, fried onions.  
 SUPPER—Bread and milk, fruit.

### FRIDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread and tea, rice with sugar, salt fish.  
 DINNER—Vegetable soup, meat stew with dumplings, corn bread.  
 SUPPER—Bread and molasses, baked potatoes and gravy.

### SATURDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread and milk, fried potatoes and sauce.  
 DINNER—Bread, bean soup, stewed onions and pudding.  
 SUPPER—Bread and butter, fish, dried apple sauce, and kettle tea.

Mitchellville Index Print.

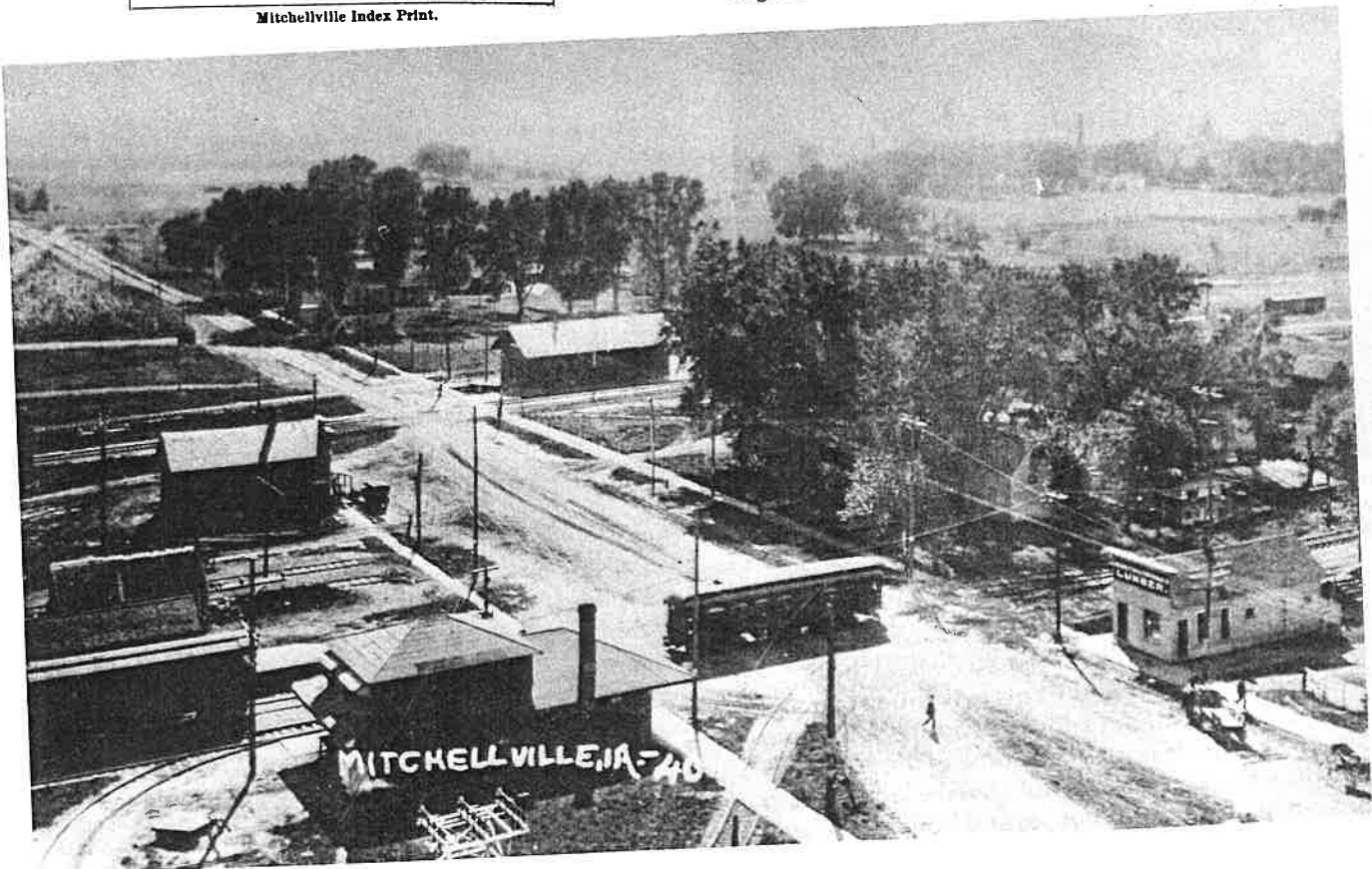
## The Rock Island

The town of Mitchellville was built on the main line of the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad in 1864. The freight and passenger service, for years, was a means of shipping, mail service and transportation. During the prosperous years and before the automobile, the Rock Island ran heavy passenger trains pulled by huge steam engines. You could leave Mitchellville at eight a.m. and arrive in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at eight the following morning.

The mail from the east came in around noon, and from the west at four p.m. You could always tell by the Post Office patrons if the train was in, as they gathered in the lobby of the Post Office, watching their boxes for mail. Sacks of mail from the mail cars were placed in a cart and pushed up the street to the Post Office by local manpower. Many a man and boy was glad for this job. Dray wagons brought the freight to the local stores. George Woodward and his dray team had this job for many years.

It was a sad day when the passenger trains were no longer useful, and the steam engine gave way to the deisel. Cattle cars are no longer seen and the shipping of grain is a problem today.

A view looking south on Center Avenue in the early 1900's. The Inter Urban is crossing the street. To the left is the depot. South of that is Charlie Craig's grain office. On the west side of the street going south was the D & P Lumber Company, the Rock Island Depot and the Osgood house. The Training School is in the background to the right.



Charles Jones, son of William and Emily Jones (early residents of Mitchellville), was born in the vicinity of Mitchellville in 1858, and in 1914 became general manager of the southern lines of the Chicago Rock Island lines. At the 70th Anniversary (1852-1922) of the Rock Island line, a memorial tree was planted on October 10th, and a plaque placed beneath it which read, "In affectionate memory of Charles W. Jones, who by his industry, courage and loyalty through every vicissitude, singly aided in the development of the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railway into a great transportation system devoted to Public Service." The tree and stone bearing the plaque were placed in an area north of the Rock Island Depot. The plaque is gone, but Charles Jones made Mitchellville proud. The Rock Island has declined, but the long trains, the whistles, excursions, and the hobos who who hopped off of freight cars for a handout, will be long remembered.

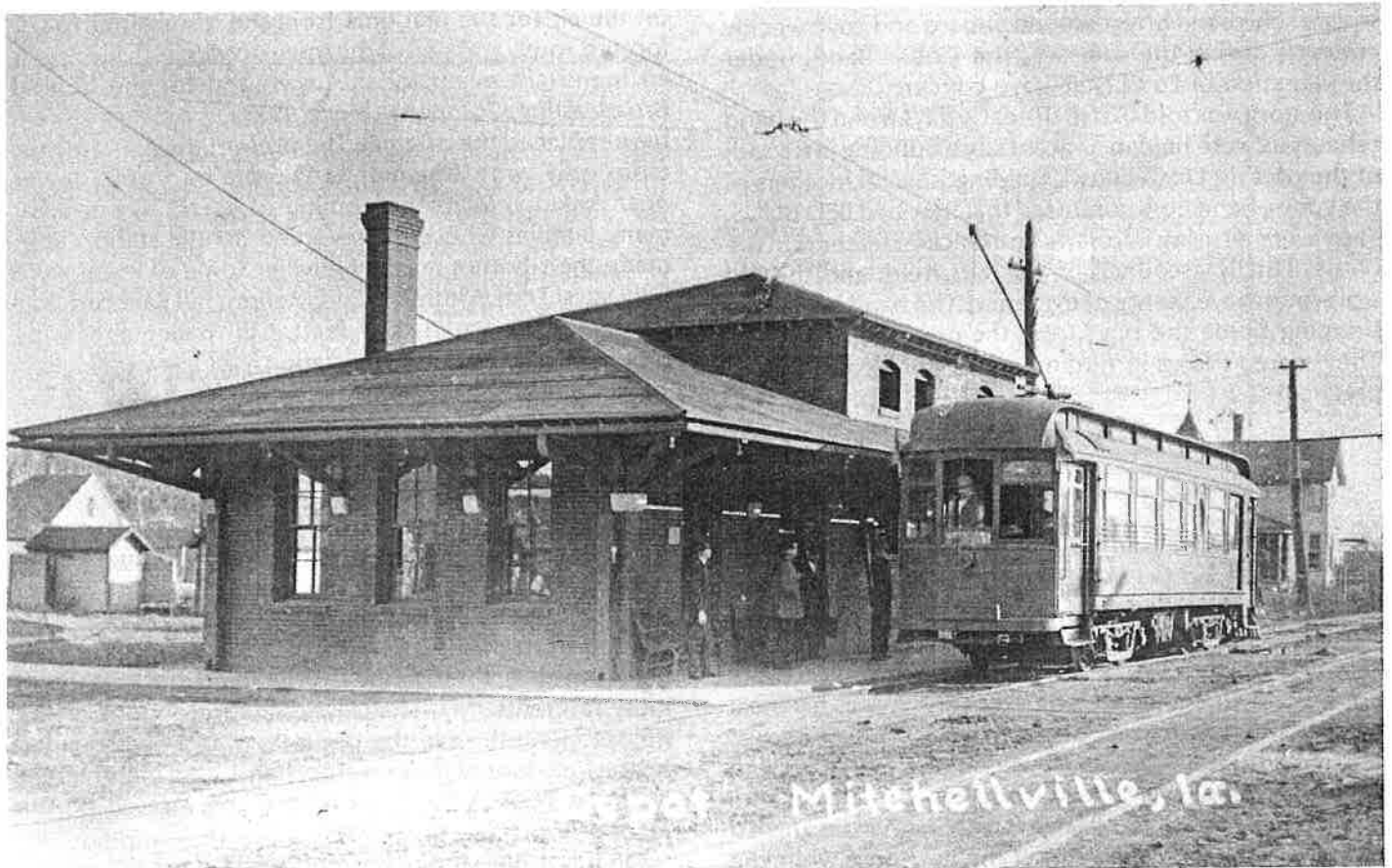


### Farmers Institute

The Farmers Institute was an occasion each winter that Mitchellville was very noted for. This usually three-day event brought not only the the town and country people together, but also farmers from the neighboring communities.

There were competitive classes for samples of corn, oats, wheat and clover seed. Soy beans, at that time, were practically unheard of. Also, there were classes for different age groups of horses. These were usually brought in for only one day to be judged. But the real excitement was in the culinary department, where the ladies contested for the ribbons and prizes with their cookies, cakes, pies, breads and candies. A visitor's greatest achievement was to coax a recipe from one of the winners, especially one lucky enough to win the purple ribbon. The judges for all classes came from Ames College for a small fee.

The Institutes at Mitchellville and other towns were at their heights in the early 1900's with such prizes (other than ribbons) as washing machines, hay loaders, gasoline engines, tools, plows, corn planters, crates of oranges, shoes, overcoats and other items. A treadmill to pump water was also given one year; however, the goat or the buck sheep was not included to operate it. These prizes were solicited and generously given by the local merchants and many by the stores in Des Moines.





Each year a business meeting was held and officers elected to sponsor and carry on the next year's Institute. During January 9-12, 1929, L.H. Robinson was President; R.C. Seiberling, Vice-President; Earl McClannahan, Secretary; and Ralph Stevenson, Treasurer. In the Farm Department (crops), Gerald Pearson and William Ryan were superintendents; in Hogs, Noel Tucker, Tom Manley and William Vandelaar were superintendents; and in Poultry, Chas. Griffiths and J.B. Griffieon were superintendents. The Domestic Science superintendent was Mrs. Clarence Pearson, and the assistants were Mrs. Asa Lee, Mrs. Roy DeVotie and Mrs. M.E. Black. The judge was Miss Kidder.

Local businessmen who donated cash or trade for prizes that year were Denniston-Partridge, Ryan Service Station, Mitchellville Index, Barrett Brothers, Soutter's Auto Company, Bert Carson, Seiberling Garage, McBurney Grocery, Sinclair Oil, D.E. Gettys, Chas. Renfro, E.F. West, Leo Perry, J.G. Walton, Russell Cafe, Jenkins Garage, Winner's Drug, Frank Zigler, Dr. Edwards, J.L. DeLong, Chas. Bishop and Sons, Citizens State Bank, Farmer's Bank, L.E. Ragan, Andy Trimble, Dr. Marquis, Phil Rooker and H.J. Berkey.

### Band Concerts

On band concert night in Mitchellville, a hay rack with a platform on it was wheeled out from its hiding place behind the town building and placed in the town square. The band boys climbed aboard and gave weekly concerts during the summer. The Colfax Band, under the direction of Ed O'Neil, gave concerts, too.

The story was told that in the early days when the band rehearsals were held in a vacant store building just south of the present Odd Fellows building, several mothers of the young band boys confessed that they had BED BUGS. They were all using kerosene and chicken feathers in the battle. Finally a council of war was held, and the old storeroom gave plenty of evidence. The band boys were bringing home the bugs from the old rehearsal room. They weren't long in finding a new room in which to practice!

### The Old Ice House

Mitchellville had an ice house for many years in a building just north of where the Johnson Hardware Store is today on Second Street N.W. Ice was cut from the Skunk River or from available streams during the winter and stored in sawdust for summer use. Mote Brown had charge of weighing out the ice, as his meat market was nearby, on Second Street. Later, ice was obtained from a little ice house on Second Street and Urban Gosselink was one of the Mitchellville boys who had charge, as well as Vincent McClannahan and Ed Craig. A.H. Drach would stay at the ice house while the

boys went to lunch. So, you took your little wagon or whatever, and hauled home your own ice.

### Commercial Gardens

In 1920, a Mr. Beebe had a large gladiola garden in the north part of Mitchellville. His project was to sell bulbs as well as flowers, and he sent the bulbs by parcel post all over the United States, and to some foreign countries. Paul Tucker followed Beebe in raising glads, and had a little greenhouse on Sixth Street N.E.

Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Carter had a beautiful Iris garden on Second Street N.E., and sold bulbs and flowers. They had tours of the garden from local and out-of-town visitors.

The Don DeVoties have been noted for their Hemorcallis gardens, first on Elm Street, and now on Mitchell Avenue S.E. The DeVotie gardens have attracted visitors from other states and they, too, have tours for garden clubs when the lilies are in their multi-colored glory. C.C. Patterson and John L. Carter enjoyed raising glads and showing them for blue ribbons at flower shows.

### Mitchellville on the Map

"The air is yours." On April 21, 1933, WHO Radio went on the air for the first time from the transmitter tower located south and east of the town of Mitchellville. It was an important event for the town and for the Central Broadcasting Company. Since 1933, two other towers have replaced the original. The present tower is used for radio only, with Channel 13 TV coming from a tower near Ankeny. With the coming of WHO to our area, many families whose men worked for the station have made their homes in Mitchellville. Some of these were Bill Davis, Tom Wildman, Cliff Mellon, Bill Sanburn, Ray Palmer, Gene Stuart, Roy Pratt, Cliff Bailey and many others connected with the station.

### Celebrations

In any small town, there is always something to celebrate. History shows that one of the first and biggest celebrations was the dedication of Reichard Park in 1885. On the third of July, a crowd of 4,000 people came to hear speeches, listen to the Cornet Band and a chorus of local residents. I.D. Llewellyn, Superintendent of the Reform School, gave the dedicatory address, standing on the first floor of the two-story bandstand in the center of the park. The band and chorus performed on the second floor.

On July 4, 1894, there was another all-day celebration.

"At eight a.m. the procession will form on West Second Street and promptly at nine a.m. will march to the Park in the following order: Vandalia Martial Band, first section of the Hoodlum Brigade, Santiago Martial Band, second section of the Hoodlum Brigade, Bicycles and The People." Morning exercises at the Park were under the supervision of the President of the Day, the Honorable Thomas Mitchell. Dr. G.B. Hibbs read the Declaration of Independence. Judge Chas. A. Bishop was the orator. Miss Ola B. Miller read a poem, then everyone adjourned for a picnic dinner.

Afternoon activities included a foot race, obstacle race (prize \$3.00), apple eating race, a baby show and a program of toasts and responses. The Maple Leaves baseball team of Des Moines challenged Mitchellville for a purse of \$25.00. Admission to the grounds was 10 cents. In the evening was a "Magnificent display of fireworks."

Rivalry between towns such as Altoona, Colfax, Runnells and Valley Junction as to the prowess of their baseball, football and, later, basketball teams always provided entertainment and feuds. In 1894, on July 4th, the Mitchellville baseball team played the Maple Leaves of Des Moines: "Game will be called promptly at 2:30 p.m. that it may close at a reasonable time."

Games played on Memorial Day brought down the wrath of citizens and the Editor of the newspaper said it was as bad as playing on Sunday! There were no Sunday games, but some ambitious players would go to adjoining towns, get on the team and play under an assumed name.

And where were the baseball and football fields? In a pasture north or south of town within walking distance, and with cattle and horses mingling with the spectators, and town girls fighting visiting girls with hat pins!

Jack Jefferies, shoemaker, used scraps of leather to nail on cleats for the boys' shoes. Each boy had to buy his own pants and wear whatever colored sweater he owned. No subs were ever needed unless a player had to be carried off the field; then the sub was picked from the spectators.

Memorial Day was always observed in Mitchellville, not as a celebration, but as a tribute to veterans. In 1890, everyone walked to the cemetery. The program was under the direction of War Post #17, G.A.R. It was an honor to be a flower girl or boy, and in 1890, twenty-five children marched to the cemetery "to decorate graves of departed comrades." Then they marched to the park for exercises of singing, speeches and the reading of the Honor Roll, which in 1890 was for only eleven Civil War veterans.

Word of the Armistice, November 11, 1918, reached Mitchellville about seven a.m. Church bells, the school bell, the fire bell and the whistle at the Training School aided in spreading the good news. That evening, people from town and country gathered to snake dance around a huge bonfire. Dancing and singing and shouting went

on all night. Impromptu parades would start, and on the Friday following Armistice, four young Americans carrying flags led a parade through town.

## MEMORIAL DAY! MAY 30, 1888.

PROGRAM OF EXERCISES BY  
**WAR POST NO. 17, G. A. R.**  
-+AT+  
**MITCHELLVILLE, + IA.**

The procession will form on Second street at 9 o'clock, sharp, under command of F. W. Hickox, Officer of Day, and Jas. Walter and Jas. W. Jones, Aid de Camps, and march direct to Reichard Park in the following order:

Color Bearer,  
Mitchellville Band,  
Warr Post No. 17, G. A. R. and other Old Soldiers.  
Sons of Veterans,  
Flower Girls and Boys.  
Committee having charge of flowers,  
School Children,  
Orator and Chaplain.  
Choir and others who are on program for exercises,  
Citizens of country and town, on foot.

### EXERCISES AT PARK.

Song.....	By the Choir
Invocation.....	Rev. J. G. Sabin
Song.....	Choir
Poem—"The Iowa Volunteer".....	Etta Hedges
Song.....	Choir
Poem—"....."	Altha Seiberling
Song.....	Choir
Oration.....	By GEN. A. J. BAKER
Music.....	Band
Reading Roll of Honor.....	Jas. E. Moller, Adjt
Song—"America".....	Choir and Audience

Form in same order as before and march to the Cemetery.

### AT CEMETERY.

Strewing flowers by the following named Flower Girls and Boys:

Mattie Rooker,	Harry Moller,
Olie Miller,	Abe Hedges,
Edith Miller,	Edwin Keeley,
Sadie Seiberling,	Forest Swift,
Amy Rooker,	Al. Miller,
Ettie Seiberling,	Harry Seiberling,
Katie Jones,	Johnny Mitchell,
Amy Moller,	Charlie Seiberling,
Florence Simonton,	Fred Jones,
Agnes Ball,	Edwin Mitchell,
Mabel Sadler,	Robby Rooker,
Louie Cottrell,	George Curry.

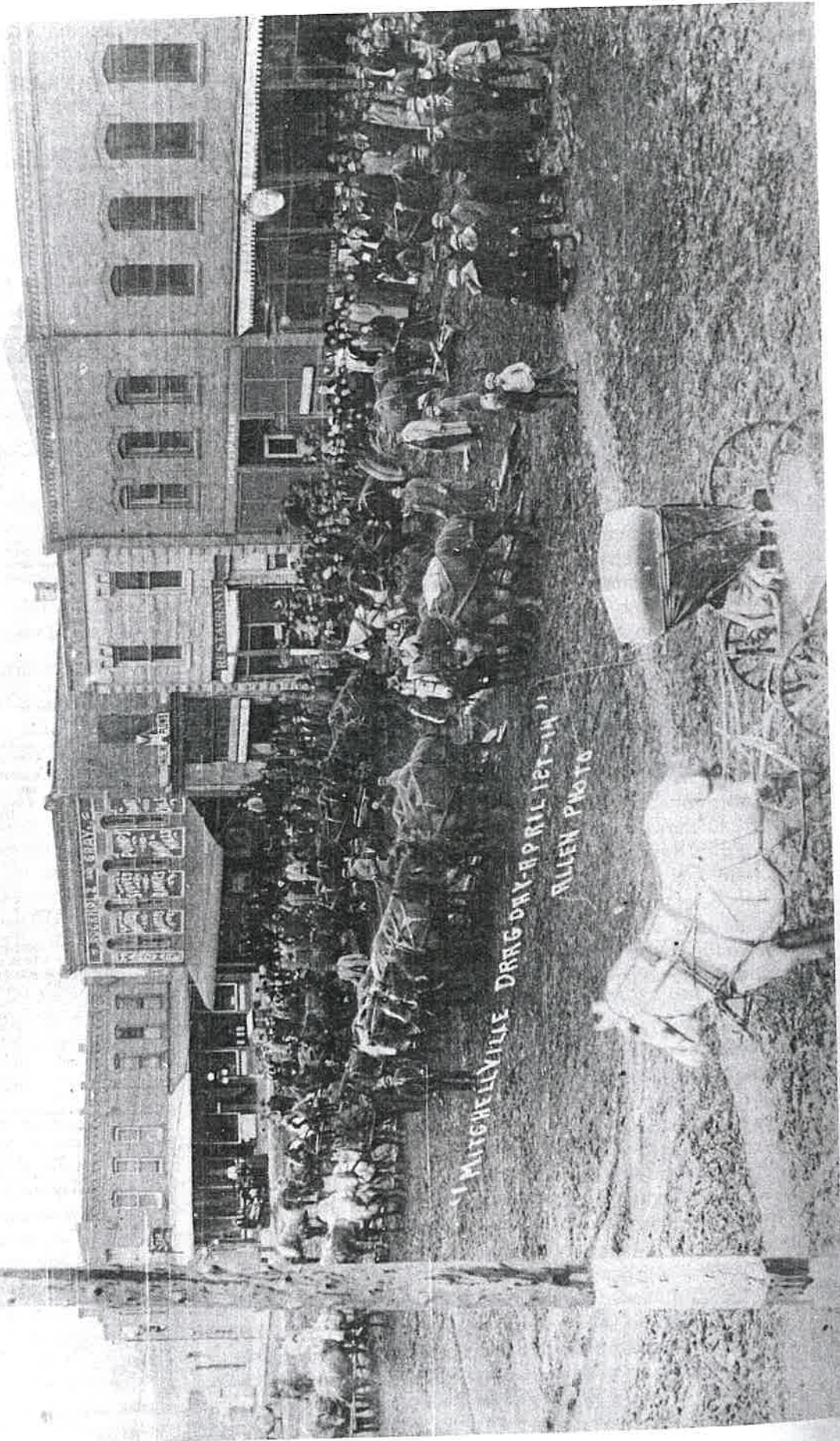
### SONS OF VETERANS.

Albert Moller,	Fred Seiberling,
Phil Rooker,	Crate Rooker,
Harry Sadler,	Harry Boyles,
Charlie Miller,	John Keeley,
Claude Hickox,	Harry Russell,
Gailard Seems,	Willie Rooker,
Tommy Mitchell,	Marion Walter,
Charlie Voss,	John Curry,
Ralph Curry,	Frank Ressler,
James Cottrell,	

### ROLL OF HONOR.

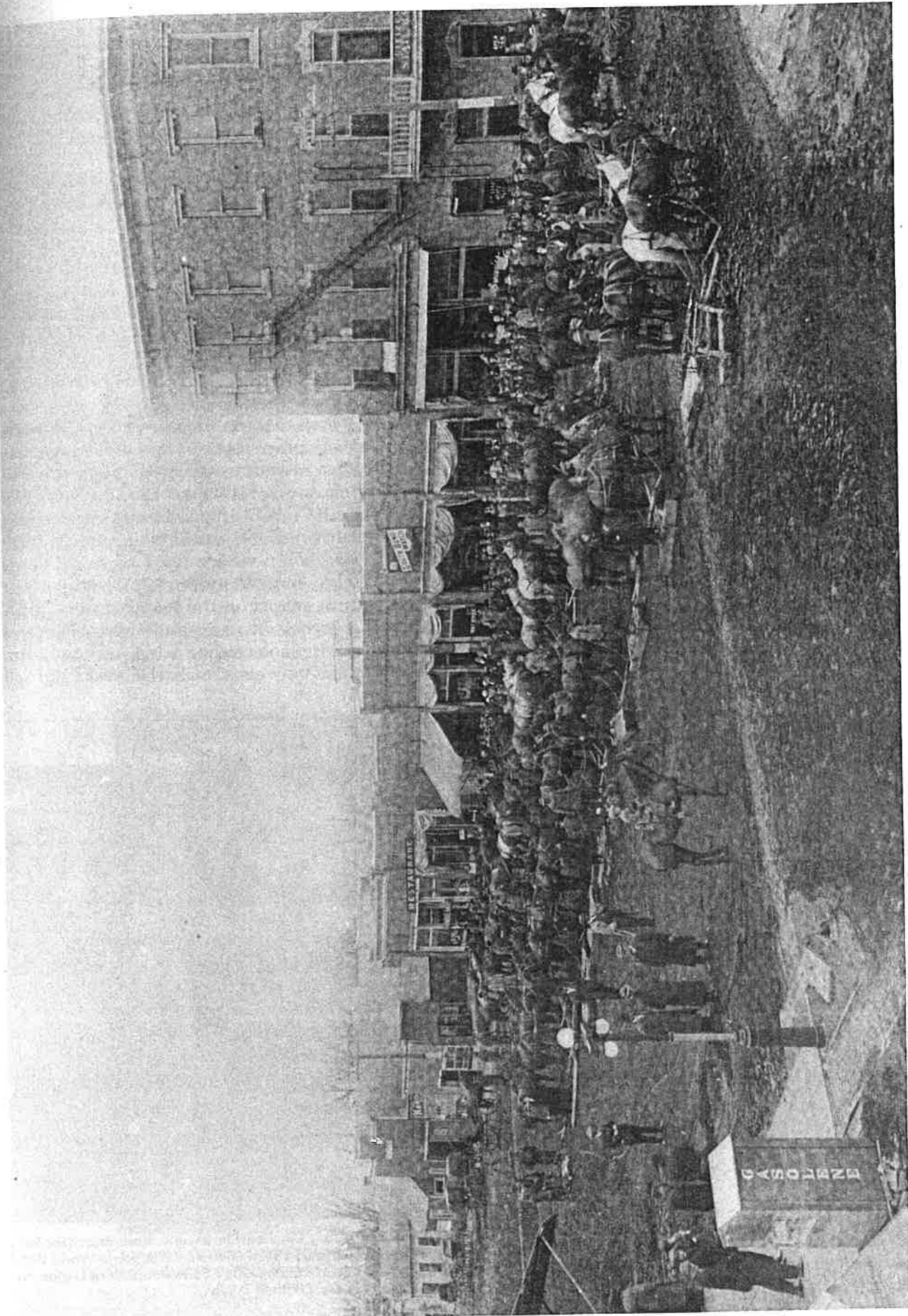
WILLIAM WARR, 4th Iowa Cavalry. Died in July, 1872.  
WM. H. MATTERN, 23d Iowa Infantry. Died January 23d, 1864.  
MATT. F. BOYLES, 124th Illinois Infantry. Died April 12th, 1874.  
JOSHUA W. MARMON, 182d Ohio Infantry. Died October 28th, 1875.  
LEWIS FLETCHER, 23d Iowa Infantry. Died April 10th, 1875.  
MILES D. MATTERN, 47th Iowa Infantry. Died August 27th, 1864.  
HEZ. STEPHENS, 2d Illinois Cavalry. Died December 16th, 1875.  
ORISKANY F. MITCHELL, 8th Iowa Cavalry. Died March 8th, 1864.  
EDWIN MITCHELL, 2d Iowa Infantry. Died October 19th, 1863.  
JOSEPH SADLER, 124th Illinois Infantry. Died January 2d, 1864.  
J. W. BREWER, 37th Wisconsin. Died July 5th, 1865.

INDEX PRINT.



MITCHELLEVILLE DRAG DAY - APRIL 1ST - 1914  
ALLEN PHOTO

April 1st, 1914



Drag Day, April 1, 1914, Mitchellville, Iowa. Winner of the contest was Blanch Ellerton, who received one ton of coal and 50 lbs. of axle grease as her prize. Her sled was made by her father. Blanch married Mr. Ellerton, the owner of her team, Kate and Sport.

September 1919 was the big Armistice Celebration with W.A. Kennedy, President; George Grinstead, Treasurer; and Bert Carson, Secretary. A tent, 66 by 94 feet, was placed on Center Street, just north of Second Street. Various programs, a wrestling match, band concert and a football game entertained a big crowd. There was a free movie and a free banquet, which honored the returned veterans of World War One. Free lunches were served to 1,500 people and 66 servicemen attended the evening banquet held in the Congregational Church, with Everett Martin as toastmaster. Mitchellville had lost only one serviceman, Fred Oldfield, who drowned during training at Camp Pike, Arkansas. It was a celebration of gratitude for boys who came home.

The very first meeting of Oldfield American Legion Post #155 was on September 17, 1919. From the very beginning, it was an active Post. Just a month after the Armistice Day celebration, the members sponsored another event. This was "Wood Chopping and Clean Up Day," on Friday, December 12, 1919.

There was a shortage of coal and an over-abundance of dead and dying trees in the park. The men of the town gathered to chop down the trees and saw them into chunks suitable for firewood. The firewood was to be distributed to the townspeople.

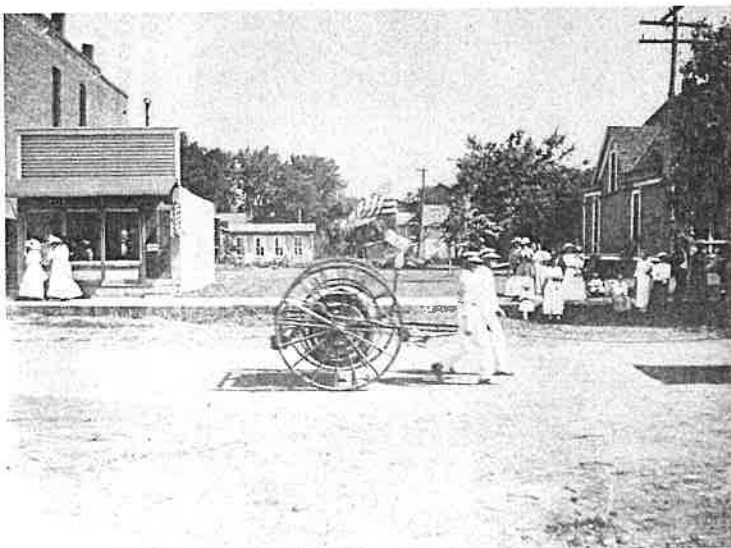
Everett Martin seemed to be determined to outlast the other workers. He stood for hours at one end of a two-man saw, no matter who came to take over the other end. Everett just kept pushing and pulling and ignoring all offers of help.

The ladies of the town served a lunch at noon, and coffee during the afternoon.

Through the years, Mitchellville has observed many Armistice Days with proper ceremony. Oldfield Post has taken part in many Armistice Days, although it is not likely the enthusiasm of 1919, their first fine year, can ever be surpassed. Probably the saddest Armistice Day ever to occur in Mitchellville was on November 11, 1920 when funeral and burial services took place for Percy Woodward. Young Percy Woodward survived the war despite dangerous service in the fledgling Air Corps. After his discharge, he had become an Air Mail Pilot and was killed when his plane crashed during a snow storm over the mountains between Omaha, Nebraska and Salt Lake City, Utah.



An all-girl band was organized during WWI to keep spirits bright at home.



This picture of the July 4, 1915 parade shows the north side of Second Street N.E.



Sam Oldfield and wife - Mitchellville Jewelry Store merchant for a number of years. A cousin to Fred Oldfield, serviceman World War I, who lost his life while in training. The Oldfield American Legion Post #155 was named for the Oldfield family.

## Centennial!

In 1956, Mitchellville had a Centennial celebration that lasted three days, July 20, 21 and 22. Planning for the event started on August 3, 1955 at a meeting of the Thomas Mitchell Historical Society. A general committee, known as the Steering Committee, was appointed with John L. Carter, Chairman, which consisted of men and women from Mitchellville and surrounding areas. Articles of Incorporation were drawn up and filed with the Secretary of State, making everything legal. The Charter was issued to "The Mitchellville Centennial Corporation." Subcommittees were appointed, the dates set and Mitchellville was ready to celebrate one hundred years of being a town.

A kick-off dinner at the park on the evening of July 18th gave the Centennial chairman and committees an indication that the celebration would be a success. People came in their Centennial costumes and the park was crowded. The food had to be stretched a bit, but everyone was in a gala and expectant mood. That night, Marlene Taylor, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Taylor, was named Queen. She presided over each day's activities.

The park was an ideal place for the daily programs, food stands and concessions. A huge platform with a backdrop of an Iowa scene, painted by a young lady from the Training School, provided adequate space for a Rock and Roll Dance on the evening of July 19th, and for musical contests, speakers and politicians who came to expound during the festivities.

Friday morning on the square, there was a flag raising. The invocation was given by Reverend Paul McDade, with a welcome by Mayor Raymond Uhl. That morning, there was also a program on the school grounds for children with Kiddie Kapers and a Pet Parade. There were speeches at the park, a flower show and style show at the schoolhouse in the afternoon; judging of the Sisters of the Swish at the park in the evening; ending with a Pioneer Dance and one successful day of the Centennial was over.

Saturday, at eleven a.m., the big parade with forty entries of bands, horses, covered wagons, floats and bicycles wound its way from the schoolhouse on Elm Street to the park via Third Street N.E. Huge crowds watched and applauded the floats, horse-drawn vehicles, a circuit rider and numerous bands. Judging was difficult. Cameras clicked along the route to make a permanent record of a successful part of the Centennial.

School reunions were held at the schoolhouse at noon, and the afternoon was given over to speeches and races. In the evening, the Brothers of the Brush were judged, and the second day of the celebration was over.

Sunday morning there were church reunions with basket dinners, and music and a horse show in the afternoon. Sunday evening the Pageant "Ballad of the Old Home Town" was performed on an outdoor stage



Centennial Queen candidates included, back row: Nadine Anthony, Carleen Bauer, Marlene Taylor, Martha Goddard, Shirley Voegtlin and Linda Craig. In front row are: Janice Irons and Ann Anspach.



Organizations, such as the Methodist Church, provided good things to eat.



Clarence and Emeline Pearson stand in front of the covered wagon they drove in the parade.



When Governor A.B. "Happy" Chandler (right) of Kentucky arrived in Mitchellville Saturday to speak at the Centennial celebration, he found most of the men sporting fancy beards. Just to make sure they were real, he reached over and tugged at Bill Kane's. Others standing by were: (front row from left) Wilmer Vermie and Lloyd Meader. Second row: Howard Meader, Kane, Alva Pyle. Back row: Mel Radeke and Arno Edler (hidden by hat). Register and Tribune.

Merle Reynolds riding shotgun on front seat of stage coach; Karen Reynolds and John Allen Gosselink riding inside; others unknown.



Norman and Ann Pearson and Reverend Kenneth and Bonnie Hyaden model what was worn to church in 1856.



A crowd of 2,000 gathered to witness the pageant.

Fannie Brown Simpson, Elsie Craig, Marge Marmon and Floyd Quaintance at the pageant.



In the sequence "A Golden Tomorrow Ahead," the Girls Training School gave a precision drill. The girls were directed by Darlene Kluter.





Marlene Taylor reigned as Centennial Queen.



C.A. Fox depicted the circuit riding clergyman in the parade.



Mrs. Blanch Lehmkuhl rode a horse made of tires in the parade. You may recognize the horse which usually sits outside the Holt Tire Company in Des Moines.



Towns from the area participated in the Centennial Celebration. The Altoona Lions Club, under the direction of Wilbur Yount, came in the form of the "Liddle Cherman Band."

Flags waved in the breeze along the parade route.

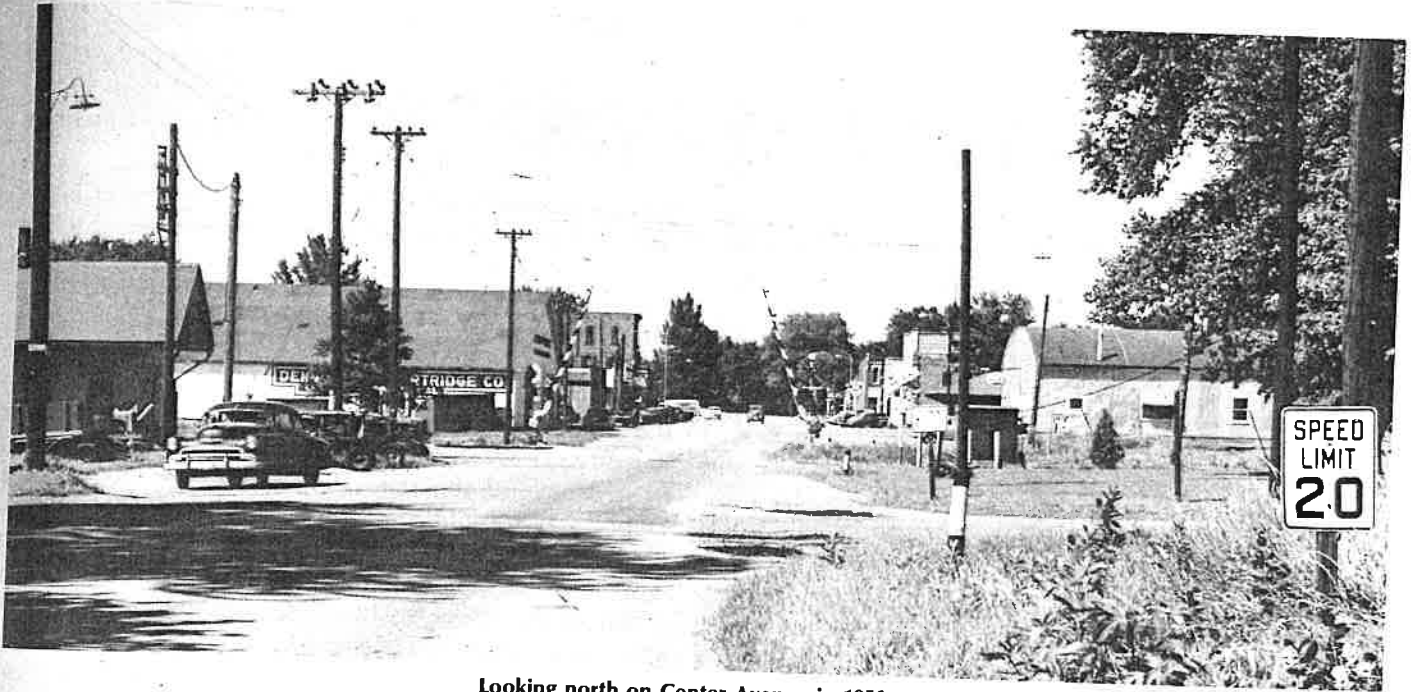


Harvey White entered the oldest car in the parade.

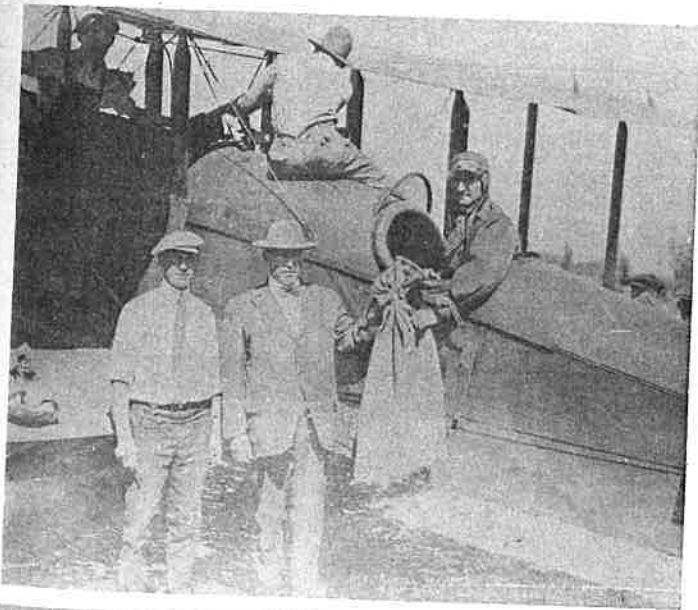


erected south of town on land belonging to the State Training School. The lay of the ground formed a natural amphitheater, and more than 2,000 paid one dollar to watch the history of Mitchellville unfold, as a cast of one hundred local people took part. The backdrops of the stage depicted six scenes and had been painted by volunteers. The scenes started with the log cabin of

Thomas Mitchell and ended with Youth giving in song and drill the promise of the future. The weather was ideal, the crowds terrific and the Centennial came to a close. To keep the history of Mitchellville in mind, Miss Lois Craig had her book, **The Village on the Prairie**, ready for sale during the Centennial.



Looking north on Center Avenue in 1956.

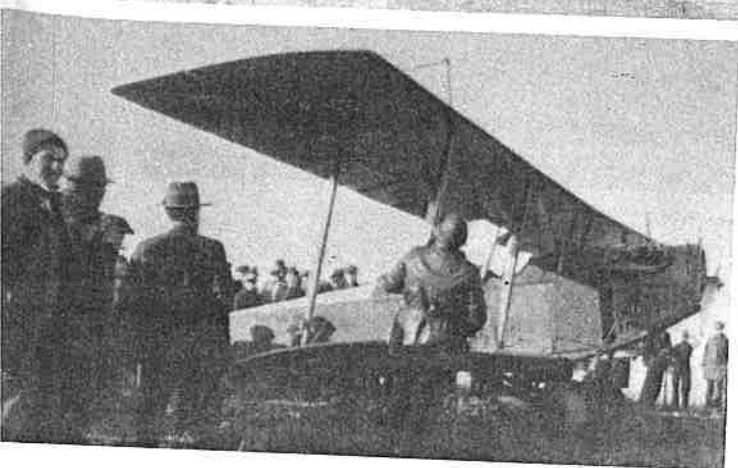


### Percy Woodward, Air Mail Pilot

Percy Woodward, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Woodward of Mitchellville, was killed when his plane crashed during a snowstorm over the mountains between Omaha, Nebraska and Salt Lake City, Utah in November of 1920. Percy was in the Air Corp during World War I and, upon being discharged from the service, accepted an assignment as pilot for the first air mail between New York and San Francisco. Later his flights were made between Omaha and Salt Lake City. He carried the first air mail on this route and met his death as he flew into a blinding snowstorm. His remains were brought back to his hometown of Mitchellville, and the services were held on Armistice Day, November 11, 1920. He was buried with military honors in our cemetery.

Percy Woodward about to deliver the first mail transported by air.

About 1920, Percy Woodward landed his plane in a field on the north side of Highway 6, north of the WHO tower. He took passengers for rides until the plane failed to clear a fence. The plane was damaged, but no one was hurt.



## Class of 1927

(This episode, written for the Class of 1927 when they observed their Fiftieth Anniversary, is included in the history of Mitchellville since it shows the business houses in 1927.)

It is 1927 and we have come to attend the graduation exercises of the Senior Class of Mitchellville High School. It is still early so we have time to circle the square and visit some of the business houses flourishing in 1927. Let's start with the Dr. G. Seems home, where Miss Ida, my first school teacher lived with her sister, Millie and brother, Dr. Gallaird Seems. Dr. Gallaird uses his father's old office, east of the home, for his office today. Bush Carson has his second-hand furniture store next door. How well I remember falling head first into some bed springs he had left standing against the side of the building in front of the store. They had fallen down during the night across the sidewalk. Bert Carson's store, furniture and undertaking, was next. He is the Mayor of Mitchellville and author of Spikersville News. He is a good citizen and has a good store. Then there is Winner's Drugstore; old-timers remember it as Reichard's Drugstore.

Now, a large door opens to a stairway leading to the second and third floors of the three-story brick building on the southwest corner of Second Street N.W. and Center Avenue. Apartments and Dr. Marquis are on the second floor. In the early twenties, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll

Roberts and Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Patterson lived in the apartments over the Citizens State Bank, and the Harold Marmons lived over the drugstore. A burglar alarm system connected the Bank and the Roberts' apartment.

One night the alarm went off and there were six scared people. "Curley" Roberts put his hat on the end of a broomstick and held it out the door. No one shot. It was a false alarm caused by a short in the wiring.

The Masonic Temple is on the third floor of the building, and Citizens State Bank is on the first floor on the corner. A small shop in the west room was Hershbergen's Jewelry and the optometrist shop.

Turning south along the west side of Center is Leo Perry's Grocery, Dura Gettys, the barber, Mrs. McBurney's small grocery, which was formerly a hat shop with Miss Calder as proprietor, the Post Office and the Index office, where Henry Marmon and family published the Index. Next is Killheffer's Drugstore, which he later moved to the northeast corner of the square. Crossing the alley, we come to Dr. Edward's office, then Elda Barrett's Garage. Denniston and Partridge Lumberyard is next. North of the railroad tracks is the Rock Island Depot. Ray Templeman is the agent. The Bishop brothers have a garage south of the depot, where Carl Bishop is working on one of his many inventions.

Across the street is Charley Craig's grain and coal



Hershbergen Jewelry

office, where we pay our coal bills. The Barrett Brothers have the elevator, then we come to the Inter Urban depot, where Glen Bowers is the agent.

What, in 1980, is the Legion Hall gives us some memory problems. W.H. Kennedy's Drugstore had gone, and T.J. Crawford had a meat market there for a while. Dr. Frank, dentist, is on the second floor and the Franks live in the apartment.

Stairs lead up to the Odd Fellows Hall. H.C. Alvord has sold out his store to Ben Gorman of Mingo, who started the Farmer's Exchange. Carl Barrett continued as manager until he moved to Bondurant. A hardware store is on the south side of the first floor.

Across the alley to the north, the Nickolson Hardware Store and Pritchard's Opera House have burned and new buildings have been erected. Etta Patterson has her cafe in one of the buildings. Henry DeWild and Frank Zigler have a harness and shoe repair in the next building.

Walton's Implement and Hardware is on the corner with the Woodman Hall on the second floor. Rumor has it that members of the Class of 1927 roller skate in Woodman. Ernest West has a tin shop in the rear of Walton's Store. He does plumbing and sells bicycles.

The Town Hall, which houses the fire fighting equipment, comes next. Chemicals which could be loaded onto a truck are used to fight fires, and sulfuric acid is used to replenish the chemicals. W.E. Seiberling is the fire chief. The water tower and fire alarm bell are back of the building. The Legion and the Auxiliary meet upstairs.

Across Second Street N.E., Dick Russell has his restaurant. The Movie Theater is on the corner. Doris Drach plays the piano for the westerns and the love scenes of the movies, and Don Tornquist runs the machine. On the second floor are insurance and law offices, and Jennie Kane, seamstress, has her shop there.

Going north on Center is Renfro's blacksmith shop, then Soutter's Garage, where George Bean works.

On the northwest corner of Second Street N.W. and Center Avenue is the Farmer's Savings Bank. A small library is in a room to the north. Charlotte Pritchard helps Bessie Griffiths in the library. West of the bank, Craig and VerSteeg Meat Market is next. A little ice house gives Ed Craig and Urban Gosselink the job of hauling ice. The telephone office is last on our tour, and who is at the switchboard is hard to tell.

Ministers in Mitchellville in 1927 are: A.E. George, Methodist; Roy V. Hughes, Christian; O.G. Colegrove, Universalist; and H.J. Thornton, Congregational!

Janitors in the public school are: Billy Palmer, Ed Lightner, George Phillips and Ed Porter. They are hauling out the bandstand, getting ready for the Saturday night band concert. It is time to walk down tree shaded streets

# Perry's I. G. A. Store

Mitchellville, Iowa

PHONE 6 FOR FREE DELIVERY BEFORE 9:30 A. M.

**SPECIALS - Saturday - Monday March 9 - 11**

**Sugar** Fine Granulated . . . . . 10 Lb. Cloth Bag **49c**

ROBINSON'S 1 lb. can . . . . . 19c	SHRIMP, wet or dry, No. 1 cans . . . . . 2 for 23c
ROBINSON'S 1 lb. can . . . . . 10c	18 K GRAPE FRUIT HEARTS, No. 2 cans . . . . . 2 for 29c
NEW SPAGHETTI, 1 lb. . . . . 5c	Red A COFFEE, lb. . . . . 19c
NEW SPAGHETTI, 1 lb. . . . . 10c	Brown Betty COFFEE, lb. . . . . 25c

**Carol Flour 49 Lb. Bag \$1.79**

APRICOTS, choice dried, lb. . . . . 27c	Swans Down CAKE FLOUR, pkg. . . . . 27c
RAISINS, choice seedless . . . . . 2 lb. 17c	CAMAY SOAP . . . . . 5 bars 23c
PRUNES, Santa Clara, 40-50's . . . . . 2 lb. 21c	P & G. Giant Bars . . . . . 5 bars 23c
Baker's Premium CHOCOLATE, 1/2 lb. . . . . 21c	Palmyre SOAP . . . . . 5 bars 23c

**Super Suds 1 pkg. free with two at 3 in all while they last 19c**

DRIFT . . . . . 2 pkgs. 27c	WHEATIES . . . . . 2 pkgs. 23c
DIAL TOBACCO . . . . . 2 for 18c	IGA CAKE FLOUR, pkg. . . . . 25c
SIR WALTER RALEIGH . . . . . 2 for 23c	Carol TOILET TISSUE . . . . . 6 for 25c
Carol PEANUT BUTTER, 12 oz. jar . . . . . 11c	IGA CREPE TISSUE . . . . . 3 for 17c

**Crackers Daisies 2 Lbs. 17c**

CHEESE, Wisconsin Long Horn, lb. . . . . 21c	BANANAS, hard yellow . . . . . 3 lbs. 23c
LARD, pure, lb. . . . . 18c	LETTUCE, large heads . . . . . 2 for 15c
OLEOMARGARINE . . . . . 3 lbs. 46c	Ben Davis APPLES . . . . . 8 lbs. 25c
CRISCO, 1 1/2 lb. can . . . . . 31c	GRAPE FRUIT . . . . . 6 for 25c

**TRADE THE I. G. A. WAY AND SAVE!**



The Rock Island Depot



Walter Seiberling stands in front of the gas station which was located on the corner of First Street N.W. and Center Avenue N.

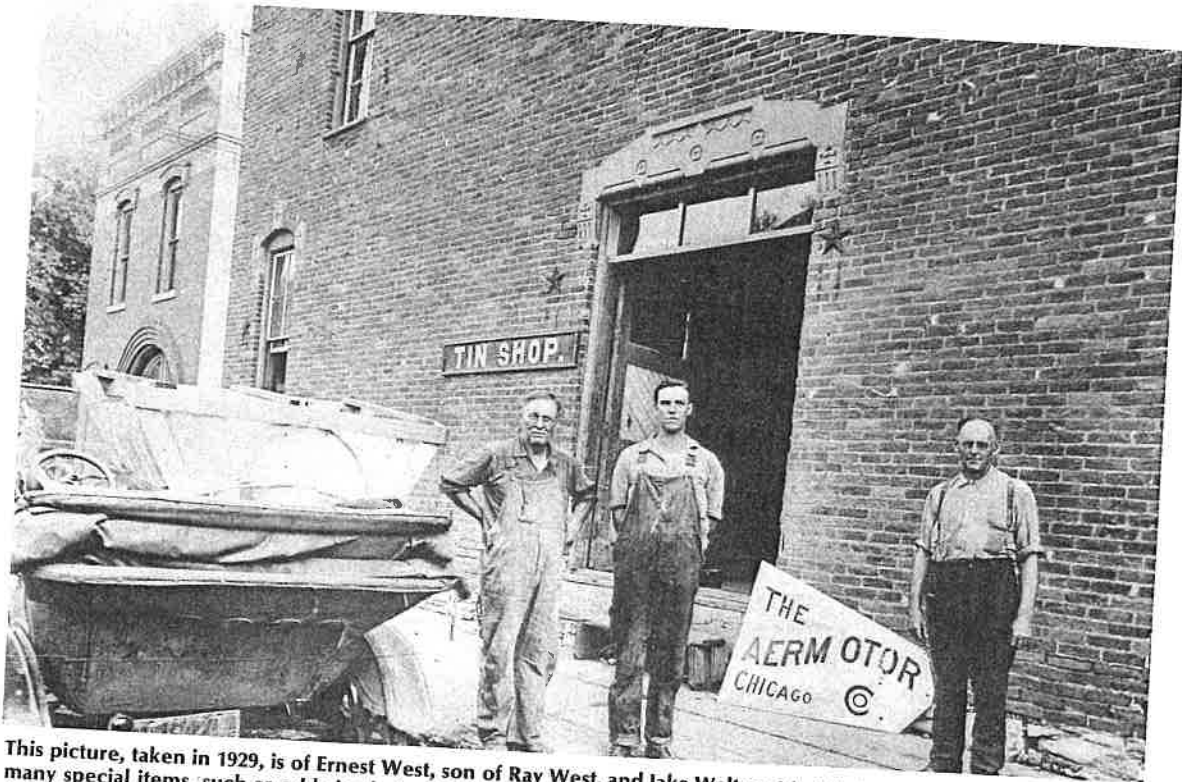


Where the Masonic Lodge Hall is now located was once the Crawford Meat Market, owned by Terrance J. (T.J.) Crawford and his brother John Crawford. The picture (taken in 1915) is of their father, Joe Crawford, who helped his sons in the meat market. They did their own butchering, curing of meat, made their own sausage, wieners and bologna. Free samples were given out on cooking day. They bought the animals from the nearby farms and drove them to the confinement pen, where they had their own slaughter house. It was located just

north of the Mitchellville Cemetery on County Line Road. Since there was no refrigeration in 1915, ice boxes were used to keep their meat. A pond was made to provide the ice. They made their own ice blocks and packed them in sawdust in an icehouse located near the pond. The pond was located just west of Mitchellville, on ground now owned by the Wayne McCoy family. Much ice was cut and hauled in from Skunk River, too.



The Alleman Hardware Store was operating in the 1920's. Left to right are: Ed Alleman, Ernest West, unidentified man and Frank Romans.



This picture, taken in 1929, is of Ernest West, son of Ray West, and Jake Walton. Mr. West owned the tin shop. He made many special items, such as odd-sized pipes for furnaces, drip pans and mended tinware. He installed plumbing and furnaces, pulled and repaired pumps, and erected windmills.

of Mitchellville to the high school, where we will watch the Class of 1927 receive their diplomas. We give them our best wishes and hope they all can come back to observe the 50th Anniversary in 1977.

### The Plowing Match

In 1939, Herb Plambeck, Farm Director for radio station WHO, had an idea of a state-wide plowing match, where farmers would be "King for a Day" and agriculture would be in the national spotlight. The manager of WHO, Joe Mahland, agreed with Herb and offered the backing needed to go ahead. The State Department of Agriculture, Iowa State College, the Grange and the Farm Bureau all expressed enthusiasm for a State Plowing Match. Four hundred farmers signed an invitation to hold the match in Mitchellville. A farm owned by Mrs. Ida Patterson, where the Farmers Savings Bank is now, was chosen for the site. C.C. "Cob" Glenn, manager of the Iowa Agricultural Conservation and Stabilization Office, was named General Chairman.

Four classes were to compete: open class for men using two- or three-bottom plows with tractors; a similar class for horse-drawn plows; a boys' class and an Old-Timers' Division.

On September 23, 1939, the Corn Belt Plowing Match drew 8,000 spectators to Mitchellville. There were eight entries in horse class, eleven in the tractor class, and four in the boys' class.

In the walking plow class for men 70 or older, 79-year-old Jess Bane of Bondurant was first. W.W. Pearson, 83, paternal grandfather of C. William "Bill" Pearson, was second. Bill's maternal grandfather, C.E. Starks, 78, "Put aside his hand-carved walking cane to enter the walking plow-contest, but failed to place." Twenty-five year old Bill, driving his four Percherons (Mary, Mollie, Sing and Mart), using a two-bottom plow, placed third. Bill, now 65, was a contestant in the 40th National Plowing Match near Marshalltown, August 26th, 1979. Again, he placed third in the state. This time he drove a 1975 Massey-Ferguson 1105 diesel tractor, and a five-bottom 16-inch plow. He also won the safety award; so Mitchellville, after forty years, was again represented. C.C. Glenn was also called to be one of the starters, and Herb, instigator of the first plowing match, was very much a part of the 1979 match.



C. William "Bill" Pearson guides his team, Mary, Molly, Sing and Mart at the 1939 National Plowing Match near Mitchellville.



Bill Pearson, center, and co-winners of 1979 Plowing Matches.

### Mitchellville Businesses – 1980

- Adams & Sons Masonry
- Apple Grove Orchard Apple House
- Bay Window Lounge Restaurant
- Beukema Grain Hauling
- Billings & Gage Manufacturing
- Bob & Frankie's Restaurant
- Brose Excavating Contracting
- Capps Antiques
- Central Truck Refrigeration Service
- Chittenden Insurance Agency
- Den-Mark Marble
- Ed's Cycle Repair
- Farmers Savings Bank
- Four Seasons Hair Care
- Gene's Radio & TV Service
- J & K Super Valu
- Jacobson Construction
- Johnson Hardware
- Ken & Sharon's Cafe
- L and M Arcade and Pizza
- Mitchellville Village Center of Care
- Mitchellville Barber Shop
- Mitchellville Co-op
- Mitchellville Public Library
- Mitchellville Salvage Co.
- Moffitt Funeral Home
- Patterson Insurance Agency
- Perry & Weber's Co-op Service
- Pub
- Redman & Sons Feed Lot
- Reynolds Sinclair
- Ryan Welding & Manufacturing
- Smallfry Preschool-Daycare
- Smith Variety
- Smoke Craft
- Stanbrough Realtors
- Stroup Beauty Shop
- Tom's Auto Body
- Norman Veatch Insurance
- Village Laundry
- Vos Brothers Law Firm
- WHO Transmitter

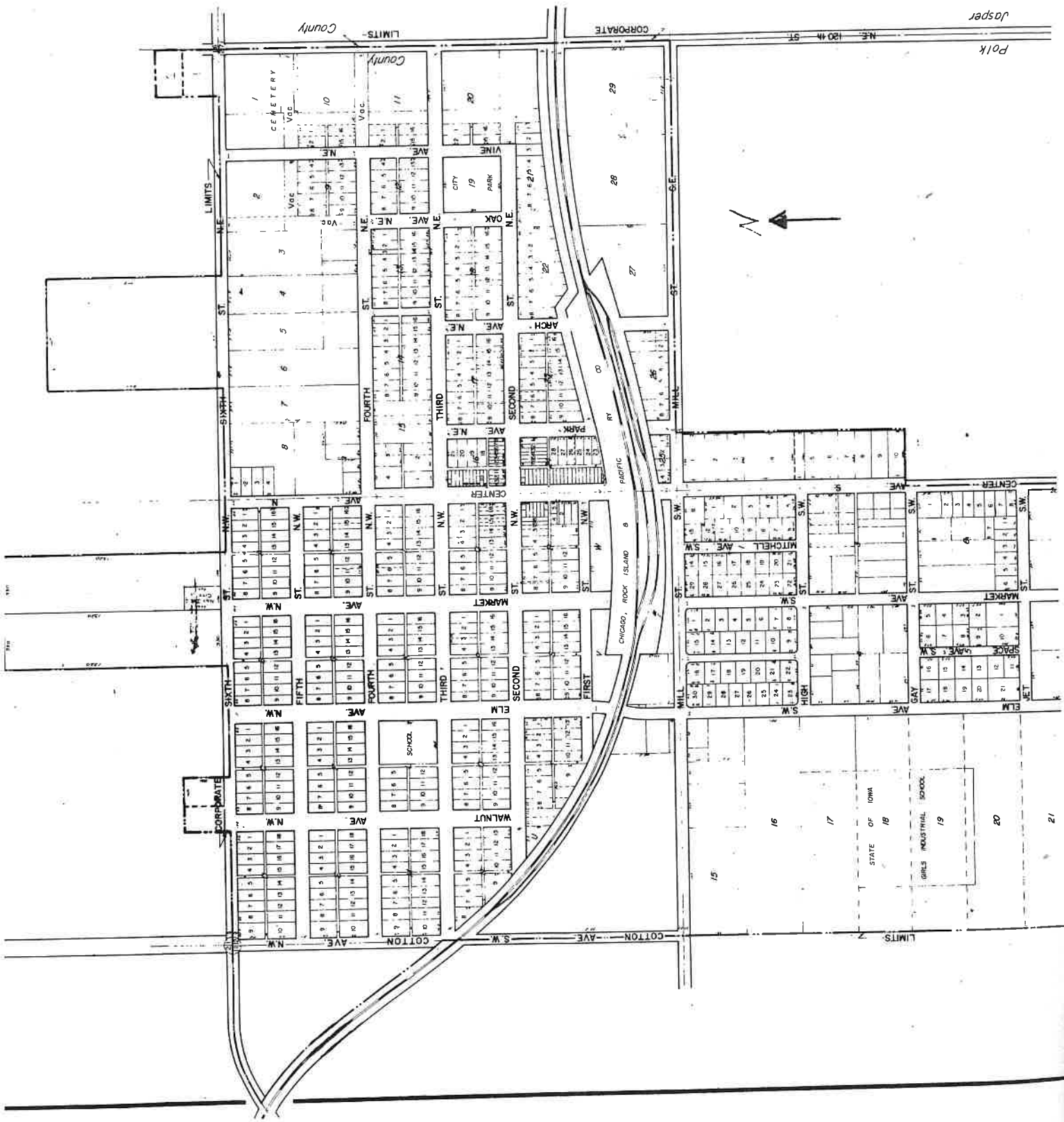
### Mayors of Mitchellville

- 1891 George W. Copley
- 1893 Mary H. Davis
- 1894 George W. Copley
- 1895 C.H. Keeley
- 1896 Fremont Butler
- 1897 F. Seems
- 1898 George W. Copley
- 1899 F.W. Swearingan
- 1902 A.T. Fields
- 1903 Guy Lee
- 1906 A.H. Leonard
- 1910 S.J. Jefferies
- 1911 T.J. West
- 1912 W.A. Porter
- 1916 Albert Carson
- No records until 1929
- 1929 Albert Carson
- 1932 L.E. Ragen
- 1938 Fred Hockett
- 1942 Paul Arvidson
- 1944 R.M. Uhl
- 1948 E.L. Coventry
- 1954 R.M. Uhl
- 1958 E.L. Coventry
- 1960 R.M. Uhl
- 1962 E.L. Coventry
- 1964 Lester Killinger
- 1968 Raymond Uhl
- 1972 James Hay
- 1974 Lester Killinger
- 1976 James Hay
- 1980 Dallas Patterson



Mitchellville Cemetery





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Jasper



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# CITY OF MITCHELLVILLE

## POLK COUNTY, IOWA

