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An Invitation to Immigrants

At the first meeting of the Iowa Board of Immigration in April, 1870, a secretary was selected to prepare a pamphlet containing such information as will give to all who may desire to seek new homes in the West, a correct idea of the superior advantages which our young State offers to those who may be induced to come within her borders. That Iowa is not only destined to be, but already is [1870], a great and noble State, these pages, it is hoped, will show to all into whose hands they may chance to come. May their plain statement of facts prove a means of inducing thousands to find homes within the borders of Iowa.*

Iowa is about three hundred miles in length, east and west, and a little over two hundred miles in breadth, north and south, having nearly the figure of a rectangular parallelogram. These limits embrace an area of 55,045 square miles; or 35,228,800 acres. [Complete surveys give Iowa a

* These excerpts are taken from the pamphlet prepared by Secretary A. R. Fulton. Thirty-five thousand copies of *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants* were printed in English. Twenty thousand additional copies in foreign languages were published for distribution in Germany, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden. Most of the Scandinavian edition was burned in the great Chicago fire. — *The Editor*.

total area of 56,147 square miles, or 35,575,000 acres of land.] When it is understood that all this vast extent of surface, except that which is occupied by our rivers, lakes, and peat beds of the northern counties, is susceptible of the highest cultivation, some idea may be formed of the immense agricultural resources of the State.

The surface of the State is remarkably uniform, rising to nearly the same general altitude. There are no mountains, and yet but little of the surface is level or flat. The whole State presents a succession of gentle elevations and depressions, with some bold and picturesque bluffs along the principal streams. The western portion of the State is generally more elevated than the eastern, the northwestern part being the highest. Nature could not have provided a more perfect system of drainage, and at the same time leave the country so completely adapted to all the purposes of agriculture. Looking at the map of Iowa, we see two systems of streams or rivers running nearly at right angles with each other. The streams which discharge their waters into the Mississippi flow from the northwest to the southeast, while those of the other system flow toward the southwest, and empty into the Missouri. The former drain about three-fourths of the State, and the latter the remaining one-fourth.

One of the peculiar features of the topography of the northwest is the predominance of *prairies*, a name of French origin, which signifies *grassland*. It has been estimated that about nine-tenths of the surface of Iowa is prairie. The timber is generally found in heavy bodies skirting the streams, but there are also many isolated groves standing, like islands in the sea, far out on the prairies. The eastern half of the State contains a larger proportion of timber than the western. The following are the leading varieties of timber: white, black, and burr oak, black walnut, butternut, hickory, hard and soft maple, cherry, red and white elm, ash, linn, hackberry, birch, honey locust, cottonwood, and quaking asp. A few sycamore trees are found in certain localities along the streams. Groves of red cedar also prevail, especially along the Iowa and Cedar rivers, and a few isolated pine trees are scattered along the bluffs of some of the streams in the northern part of the State.

Nearly all kinds of timber common to Iowa have been found to grow rapidly when transplanted upon the prairies, or when propagated from the planting of seeds. Only a few years and a little expense are required for the settler to raise a grove sufficient to afford him a supply of fuel. The kinds most easily propagated, and of rapid growth, are

cottonwood, maple, and walnut. All our prairie soils are adapted to their growth.

Not all the resources of Iowa are on the surface. Every year is adding to our knowledge of, and attesting the importance and value of, our vast coal deposits. In some unknown age of the Past, long before the history of our race began, Nature by some wise process made a bountiful provision for the time when, in the order of things, it would become necessary for civilized man to take possession of these broad rich prairies. As an equivalent for the lack of trees, she quietly stored away beneath the soil those wonderful carboniferous treasures for the use and comfort of man at the proper time. The increased demand for coal has in many portions of the State led to improved methods of mining, so that in many counties the business is becoming a lucrative and important one, especially where railroads furnish the means of transportation.

During the last three or four years extensive deposits of peat, existing in several of the northern counties of the State, have attracted considerable attention. In 1866, Dr. C. A. White, the State Geologist, made careful observations in some of those counties, including Franklin, Wright, Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Winnebago, Worth, and Kosuth. Last year the writer hereof also visited the

counties named, and from personal observation is convinced that the deposits of peat are as extensive as represented by the State Geologist. It is estimated that the counties above named contain an average of at least four thousand acres each of good peat lands. The depth of the beds is from four to ten feet, and the quality is but little, if any, inferior to that of Ireland.

As yet, but little use has been made of it as a fuel, but when it is considered that it lies wholly beyond the coal-field, in a sparsely timbered region of the State, its prospective value is regarded as very great. Dr. White estimates that 160 acres of peat, four feet deep, will supply 213 families with fuel for upward of twenty-five years.

It must not be inferred that the presence of these peat beds in that part of the State is in any degree prejudicial to health, for such is not the case. The dry, rolling prairie land usually comes up to the very border of the peat marsh, and the winds, or breezes, which prevail through the summer season, do not allow water to become stagnant.

The surface of Iowa is generally drained by the rolling or undulating character of the country, and the numerous streams, large and small. This fact might lead some to suppose that it might be difficult to procure good spring or well water for domestic uses. Such, however, is not the case, for

good pure well water is easily obtained all over the State, even on the highest prairies. It is rarely necessary to dig more than thirty feet to find an abundance of that most indispensable element, good water. Along the streams are found many springs breaking out from the banks, affording a constant supply of pure water. As a rule, it is necessary to dig deeper for well water in the timber portions of the State than on the prairies.

Nearly all the spring and well waters of the State contain a small proportion of lime, as they do in the Eastern and Middle States. There are some springs which contain mineral properties, similar to the springs often resorted to by invalids. In Davis County there are some "Salt Springs", as they are commonly called, the water being found to contain a considerable amount of common salt, sulphuric acid, and other mineral ingredients.

Iowa is peculiarly an agricultural State. Whatever inducements she may at present, or in the future, offer to the manufacturer, the miner, or persons engaged in the various other pursuits of life, the essential fact remains that the true source of her rising greatness and prospective grandeur lies in the capacity of her soil to supply those staples absolutely necessary for the sustenance of man. To this, in a great measure, she owes her rapid

development in all those improvements and enterprises so essential to the comfort and convenience of her people.

The capitalist, foreseeing what the future is to bring forth, when her millions of unplowed acres have been brought into cultivation, hesitates not to invest his treasure in the building of railroads and in advancing other improvements, for he knows the investment will yield a rich return in due time. The husbandman has reason for his faith in Iowa, when she so rarely fails to reward him generously for the labor bestowed in the cultivation of the soil. Always true to the confidence reposed in her, she has never failed at the return of harvest to give her people bread. In some departments of agriculture, it is true, there may sometimes be a partial failure in particular localities, but such partial failure is usually compensated by a more generous yield in other localities of the State, and in other crops.

Scarcely one-sixth of the surface of Iowa has been brought into cultivation, and that, it may be safely said, hardly up to one-half of its producing capacity. Already we have over *two thousand miles of railroad* to carry away the surplus produce of this fraction of the aggregate area of our State. Iowa stands to-day in population, if not in wealth, as far advanced as either New York or

Massachusetts at the end of two hundred years from their first settlement!

The staple crops are wheat, corn, oats, barley, potatoes, sorghum, and hay. Wheat is a leading crop in every county. An average yield of fifteen or twenty bushels per acre is usual, and many a man has more than paid for his land and all expenses out of the proceeds of his first crop of wheat.

Corn is successfully raised in all parts of the State, but the southern portion is best adapted to it. Under favorable circumstances, the yield is from fifty to one hundred bushels per acre. The figures as returned in the census reports always include a large number of acres of what is called in the West, *sod-corn*, and are, therefore, not a fair test of the average of our corn crops. *Sod-corn* is raised by planting the seed in the sod the first year, and although it receives no cultivation, it sometimes produces from ten to fifteen bushels per acre. This crop, as well as all others, is raised with less than half the labor usually required on the worn-out soils, or among the stones and stumps with which the Eastern farmer has to contend. Our prairies admit of the use of all kinds of improved machinery, rendering all farm labor comparatively easy, as well as expeditious.

Timothy, red clover, blue-grass, as well as all

other tame grasses, flourish in all parts of Iowa where they have been introduced. In the newer counties of the State, the luxuriant and spontaneous growth of native grasses renders the sowing of tame grasses unnecessary, especially as the quality of the hay made of the former is scarcely inferior to that of the latter. In 1868, the report shows 602,316 acres of tame grasses, with a yield of 677,907 tons of hay from the same. The number of tons of hay made from wild grasses the same year was 1,059,117. The species of wild grass known as "blue-joint", is noted for its nutritious qualities, and grows luxuriantly on the prairies in the northern and northwestern portions of the State. It often yields over three tons per acre. The vast natural meadows in all the new counties of Iowa furnish every man an abundance of hay at the mere expense of labor in cutting and saving it.

The business of stock-raising is one of great importance to Iowa. All kinds of stock always find a sure and ready market, and at remunerative prices to the producer. Our railroads afford quick and easy transportation to the best markets of the East, and the farmer in possession of a herd of cattle, hogs, or sheep knows he can command the cash for them at any time. The farmer of southern Iowa, with judicious management, can hardly

fail to become independent from the profits on his hogs and corn; while the farmer of the northern portion of the State is equally fortunate in his superior advantages for raising wheat and cattle.

The location of Iowa centrally in the great valley of the Mississippi, between the two east and west extremes of the country, and between the two great navigable rivers of the continent, is peculiarly favorable. It is not dependent on the East alone to furnish a market for its surplus produce, for the mines of the Rocky Mountains and the regions west will send down to us their demand for meat and bread, and Iowa will be, in one sense at least, their Egypt. We will take their gold and send them our corn. Our railroads connecting with the Union Pacific and its branches, will furnish the means of transportation, and already the western portion of the State is deriving great benefits from the market of the mining districts.

This choice of markets will always result in great advantages to Iowa. When there is a demand at the East, and prices of provisions are high, Chicago, Milwaukee, and other markets in that direction will reach out their iron arms towards us. Nor is it likely that we shall long remain without a choice of the means of sending our surplus produce to Eastern markets, for the day is not distant when in all human probability we

shall have direct water communication from Iowa to the Atlantic by the proposed improvement of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers, opening a grand commercial channel to the Great Lakes, and thence to the sea-board. The South is also easily accessible, both by river and rail, so that Iowa may take advantage of a market in that direction when there is a scarcity there.

The opinion may prevail to some extent that the climate, especially of northern Iowa, is rigorous, and the winters long and severe. It is true that the mercury usually sinks lower than in the States farther south, but at the same time the atmosphere is dry and invigorating, and the seasons not marked by the frequent and sudden changes which are experienced in latitudes farther south. The winters are equally as pleasant and more healthful than in the Eastern or Middle States. Pulmonary and other diseases, arising from frequent changes of temperature and miasmatic influences, are almost unknown, unless contracted elsewhere. Winter usually commences in December and ends in March. The spring, summer, and fall months are delightful.

Iowa is noted for the glory and beauty of its autumns. That gorgeous season denominated "Indian Summer" cannot be described, and in Iowa it is peculiarly charming. Day after day, for weeks,

the sun is veiled in a hazy splendor, while the forests are tinged with the most gorgeous hues, imparting to all nature something of the enchantments of fairyland. Almost imperceptibly, these golden days merge into winter, which holds its stern reign without the disagreeable changes experienced in other climes, until spring ushers in another season of life and beauty. And so the seasons pass, year after year, in our beautiful and healthful Iowa.

The operation of our beneficent homestead law has given a large proportion of American citizens possession of the soil. This distribution of the landed proprietorships of the nation places in the hands of a free people the complete control of their own political and social destiny. In Iowa there is still room for many thousands more who may see proper to come and secure new homes at low prices on our broad rich prairies, with every reasonable assurance of health, wealth, education, and freedom for all who will only exercise ordinary industry. There is still in Iowa uncultivated land enough for three hundred and sixty thousand farms, of eighty acres each!

Now is the golden opportunity for young men of the crowded East, where the avenues of manly independence are already closed against them, to secure, with the limited means which they may

command, homes on the virgin soil of Iowa, where in a few years they may become wealthy, influential, and independent farmers. Remaining where they are, the great majority of them must live out their days as dependent laborers on the lands of others. It is for such now to choose whether it is best to remain tenants under exacting landlords, or become independent freeholders on far better farms of their own.

A very little capital will suffice to begin with now, but it will not do to wait long. It should be the ambition of every young man in this country to own at least a small tract of land. If he be inclined to agricultural pursuits, he should at least secure forty acres, which in Iowa may cost him two or three hundred dollars now, but that amount *in land* will in the end prove better to him than a thousand dollars in greenbacks, or even in gold! Some may deny the proposition, but the world will have it so, nevertheless, that land parchments are patents of respectability, if not of nobility, and entitle their owners to special consideration. Young men of the East, clerking in stores or toiling on other men's farms, look around you and see if this is not the case.

The following figures will give a general idea of the necessary outfit for working a farm of forty acres:

Team (oxen or horses)	\$150 to \$300
Wagon and yoke or harness	100 to 150
Plow	20 to 30
Cultivator and harrow	20 to 40
Other necessary implements	10 to 20
	—————
	\$300 \$540

For farming on a larger scale, a combined mower and reaper would be necessary. A good reaper is sufficient for cutting the grain on from 150 to 200 acres each season. It is usual for neighbors to unite in the purchase of a reaper and mower, and use it in common.

Persons coming to Iowa need not bring with them any of the machinery or implements necessary for farming, as everything in that line can be obtained here more cheaply than they can have them shipped from the East, and of a quality much better adapted to Iowa farming. The plow used by the Eastern farmer would not answer in the West. In every town here there are agents and dealers in all kinds of agricultural implements and machinery, from a threshing machine down to a hand-rake or garden hoe.

If it is contemplated to locate in a new and sparsely settled portion of the State, it may be advisable to bring a supply of choice garden and flower seeds. The good judgment of those coming West will suggest the propriety of introducing

such varieties of grains, fruits, vegetables, shrubs, flowers, and useful plants as may be easily brought along, not forgetting those things which will ornament and beautify their new homes. In grappling for wealth, or for the substantial of life, the finer sensibilities are not to be ignored.

Since railroads have penetrated to nearly all parts of the State, the difficulties of procuring building material have, in a great measure, disappeared. If the settler has his family with him, the first thing to be done, after securing his land, is to provide shelter for them. The manner of doing this, of course, depends upon circumstances. If he should locate where he can procure suitable timber, he may build a temporary cabin of logs; or, he may obtain pine lumber and nails at the nearest railroad station, and put up a small house in less than a week, at a cost of from \$50 to \$100.

A cheap but durable kind of thatched roof has just been invented and introduced by Mr. Lionel Foster, of Burlington, Iowa, which promises to diminish very materially the expense of building in our prairie country. It dispenses with all lumber in the roof, except rafters, the other materials used being straw or prairie grass, and a composition, of which coal tar is the principal ingredient. The cost of the material is said not to exceed \$1.75 per square of 100 feet. Cheap houses are also sup-

plied ready made, in Chicago, and shipped over the several lines of railroad to the various stations in Iowa.

If anybody who proposes to come West, and especially to Iowa, expects to be obliged to settle down among a set of unsophisticated ignoramuses, perhaps he may as well get rid of that illusion before coming. Our people are principally educated, energetic, and wide-awake people from other parts of the Union, and from the Old World. They sustain nearly two hundred and fifty newspapers and periodicals of their own, while they also contribute not a little to sustain the Eastern press.

Among our periodicals are several publications of high standing and wide reputation, especially those devoted to our agricultural, horticultural, and stock-raising interests. The "Iowa Homestead" published at Des Moines, by Gen. W. D. Wilson, sustains an influential position among the agricultural papers of the country. The "Western Pomologist", published by Mark Miller, Esq., of Des Moines, an experienced fruit-grower, is doing good service in educating our people in the science of pomology. We also have a monthly periodical published at Sigourney, Iowa, by J. H. Sanders & Co., called the "Iowa Stock Journal", which ranks with the best of that class of publications. The "Iowa School Journal" published by

Mills & Co., Des Moines, is a monthly compendium of the wisdom and experience of the best educators of the country; while the "Western Jurist", issued monthly from the same publishing house, stands high with the legal profession in this and other States.

The people of Iowa are a reading and educated people, although some of her men of professional and scientific attainments may be holding the plow or wielding the axe, and her most accomplished women busily engaged with the cares of the household. Many of the latter are as competent to write a treatise on some abstruse subject, requiring thought and research, as they are to discharge the duties incumbent upon them in the kitchen, the nursery, or the drawing-room. What other woman in America has attained the reputation of Mrs. Ellen S. Tupper, of Brighton, Iowa, as a writer on bee culture? Indeed, Iowa is not behind any of the eastern States in the general intelligence of her people, while some of her eminent scholars have already attained enviable reputations.

A. R. FULTON