

Economic Development and Community Growth in the 19th Century Midwest

How does a community's economic development become a civic responsibility?

In classical free-market economic theory, the “invisible hand” operates best when each person pursues their own best interests to maximize and distribute benefits. Therefore, the economy should be as free as possible from government interference. In practice, however, at all levels, the economy requires a public-private partnership to function. Debate over how much government and how unrestricted the private sector highlights challenges to the free market system.

Iowa and Competing Economic Philosophies

Iowa was first opened for U.S. settlement in the mid-19th century when two political parties with competing economic philosophies contended for power. The Democrats tended to represent small farmers who wanted minimal government interference and the lowest possible tax assessments. The Whigs tended to support government encouragement of economic growth through internal improvements like roads, support for a strong banking system and tariffs to protect American industries. Party lines in Iowa were not always in line with national leaders. Local communities benefited from the construction and maintenance of roads. There was strong support for federal land grants in the 1850s to railroads to four trunk lines from the Mississippi to the Missouri rivers. However, too many Iowans feared the power and instability of banks, and the first state constitution put strict restrictions on this aspect of the free enterprise system.

How one made money in a small town was not the only factor in the early equation. In many situations, improvements in living conditions depended upon community action outside of government. Churches, private schools beyond what the one-room school offered and social life were collective actions of the community, not the government. No matter how much an individual family earned, they could not enjoy a quality lifestyle if their community did not offer the desired opportunities. Civic engagement in addition to government activity was essential. That sometime meant volunteering and sometimes meant contributing financially to community events and projects.

Public-Private Partnership

Today, public and private initiatives are essential to maintain a healthy economy. Commerce cannot run without a solid infrastructure of roads and airports that the government maintains. In Iowa, community colleges train students at government expense to prepare for jobs in private industry. Government agencies match those looking for work with firms that want to hire them through workforce development programs and even provide direct grants or tax incentives to businesses that relocate in the state.

On the private side, local economic development organizations supported by public and private donations work hard to lure and retain private businesses. Local communities provide building sites and offer to expand utility services to new factories or office buildings. Development organizations promote quality in local schools, safety and recreation opportunities that will encourage business executives to think positively about the community.

How much should the government use taxpayer money to benefit private businesses? Why should private citizens invest their own money to support businesses in their communities? The answers lie in the close connection between the desire for quality of life amenities and the necessity for collective action to sustain them. Sometimes they can be achieved only through government action. Sometimes, it is more appropriate to work for them through private organizations. The dividing line between the two approaches has always been a point of controversy.

Supporting Questions

What geographic factors contribute to community growth and economic development?

- [Iowa Patriot Letter about Important Rivers for Settlement, July 18, 1839 \(Document\)](#)
- [Iowa and Wisconsin Territories Map, 1842 \(Map\)](#)
- [Des Moines Rapids of the Mississippi River Map, 1843 \(Map\)](#)
- ["Engineer's Report" in The Davenport Gazette, January 9, 1851 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Council Bluffs & Saint Joseph Railroad - Letter from M. Jeff Thompson, of St. Joseph," May 22, 1858 \(Document\)](#)
- [Bird's-Eye View of Council Bluffs in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, 1868 \(Map\)](#)
- ["Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa," 1875 \(Image\)](#)

How does economic activity affect community growth?

- [Sectional Map of Iowa, 1850 \(Map\)](#)
- [Population in Iowa in 1850 and 1860 U.S. Censuses, 1853/1864 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Stock in the M. & I.C.R.R.," February 24, 1854 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Railroad Jubilee at Rock Island," February 24, 1854 \(Document\)](#)
- [Parker's Sectional and Geological Map of Iowa, 1856 \(Map\)](#)
- ["River Items" Newspaper Article about Council Bluffs, Iowa, June 6, 1857 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Daily Southern Mail," June 20, 1857 \(Document\)](#)

How can governments assist with a community's economic growth?

- ["Navigation of Mississippi River" Petition, January 18, 1836 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad," December 20, 1849 \(Document\)](#)
- ["The Railroad" Newspaper Article, December 20, 1849 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Railroad Loan" Newspaper Article, June 6, 1857 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Mississippi and Missouri Railroad" Newspaper Article Part 1, June 20, 1857 \(Document\)](#)

How does economic activity affect community growth?

- ["Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting" Newspaper Article, February 24, 1854 \(Document\)](#)
- ["The Railroad Loan" Newspaper Article, June 6, 1857 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Mississippi and Missouri Railroad" Newspaper Article Part 2, June 20, 1857 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Railroad Meeting in Saratoga" Newspaper Article, May 22, 1858 \(Document\)](#)

*Printable Image and Document Guide

Additional Resources

Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary

The digital document from the Iowa Department of Transportation features an extensive history about the evolution of transportation in Iowa.

Rails Across Iowa

The website from Living History Farms looks at the continued history of railroads in Iowa.

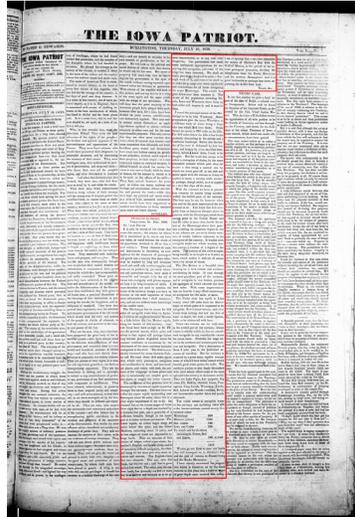
Railroads

This webpage from Iowa Public Television features many resources and historical text about railroads in Iowa.

Grenville Mellen Dodge

This webpage from the University of Iowa provides a detailed biography of Grenville M. Dodge, a prominent railroad engineer in Iowa.

Iowa Patriot Letter about Important Rivers for Settlement, July 18, 1839



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "Letter to My Dear Friend," *The Iowa Patriot*, Vol. 1, No. 7, pp. 1, 18 July 1839

Description

This letter, addressed to "My Dear Friend," was written for *The Iowa Patriot*. The writer described the important rivers for settlement in Iowa, with an emphasis on the Mississippi River. Burlington served as the territorial capital before it was moved to Iowa City in 1841.

[Full Transcript of "Letter to My Dear Friend"](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from "Letter to My Dear Friend"](#)

[Printable Excerpt of "Letter to My Dear Friend"](#)

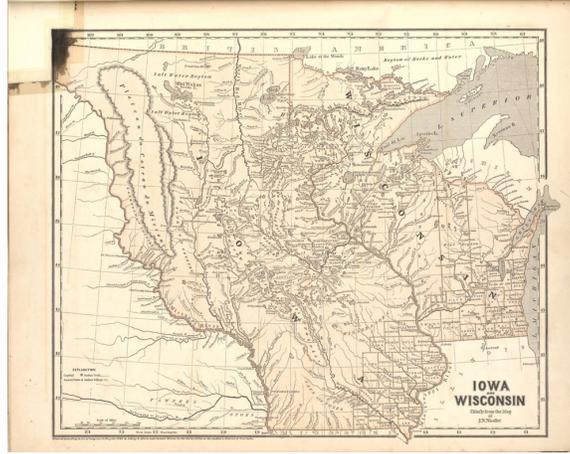
Source-Dependent Questions

- According to the author, why were the rivers in Iowa so important for settlement?
- Why was the author so concerned with the lower rapids on the Mississippi River?

Citation Information

"Letter to My Dear Friend," *The Iowa Patriot*, Vol. 1, No. 7, pp. 1, 18 July 1839. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Iowa and Wisconsin Territories Map, 1842



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Morse, Sidney E., Samuel Breese, and Harper & Brothers, "Iowa and Wisconsin," Morse's North American Atlas, pp. 33, 1842

Description

This map of the upper Midwest was included in an atlas of North America published between 1842 and 1845. The map highlights the Iowa and Wisconsin territories, both created in 1836. The Iowa territory had only been opened for settlement in 1836, following the conclusion of the Black Hawk War.

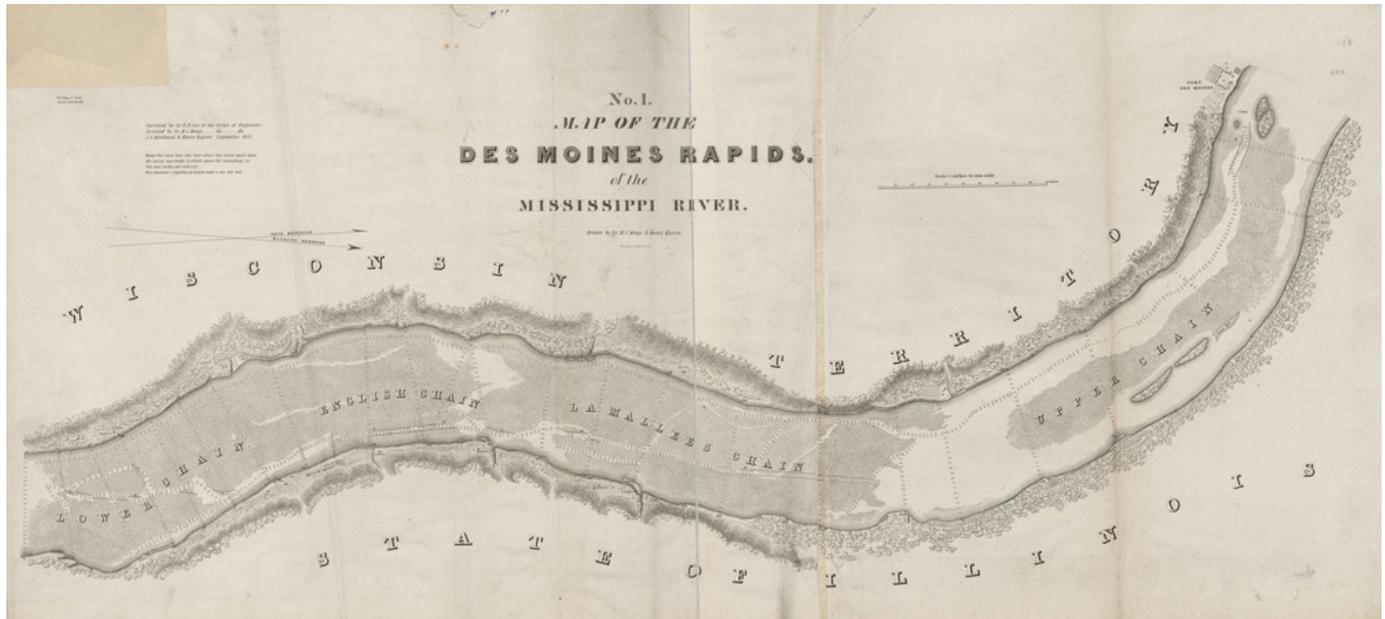
Source-Dependent Questions

- According to the mapmaker, what are the most important physical features of this region?
- What generalizations can be made about the impact of geography on early towns/cities in the counties of the Iowa territory?

Citation Information

Morse, Sidney E., Samuel Breese, and Harper & Brothers, "Iowa and Wisconsin," Morse's North American Atlas, pp. 33, 1842. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Des Moines Rapids of the Mississippi River Map, 1843



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "No. 1 Map of the Des Moines Rapids of the Mississippi River," *Collection of Maps, Charts, Drawings, Surveys, Etc., Published from Time to Time, By Order of the Two Houses of Congress*, pp. 187, 1843

Description

This map was part of a collection of maps, drawings and surveys of North America, the United States and the world in 1843. Everything in the collection was created on the orders of the U.S. Congress.

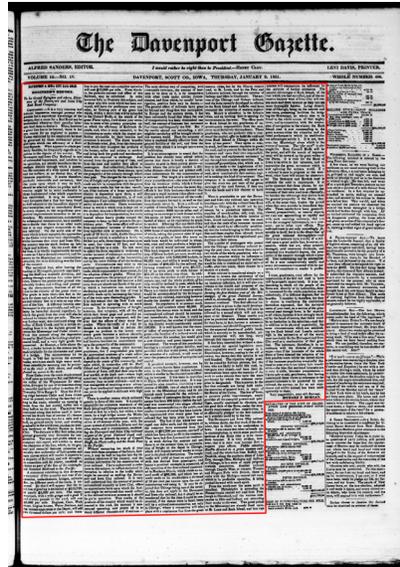
Source-Dependent Questions

- What was the primary reason for creating this map? Identify evidence from the source to support your answer.
- According to the labels and the key, when had Congress become interested in the Des Moines Rapids?

Citation Information

"No. 1 Map of the Des Moines Rapids of the Mississippi River," *Collection of Maps, Charts, Drawings, Surveys, Etc., Published from Time to Time, By Order of the Two Houses of Congress*, pp. 187, 1843. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Engineer’s Report” in *The Davenport Gazette*, January 9, 1851



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Morgan, Richard P., “Engineer’s Report,” *The Davenport Gazette*, pp. 1, 9 January 1851

Description

Richard P. Morgan was an engineer who surveyed the route for a railroad from Davenport to Iowa City. In this letter published in *The Davenport Gazette*, Morgan described the results of that survey along with some of the economic opportunities that were possible.

[Full Transcript of “Engineer’s Report”](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from “Engineer’s Report”](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Engineer’s Report”](#)

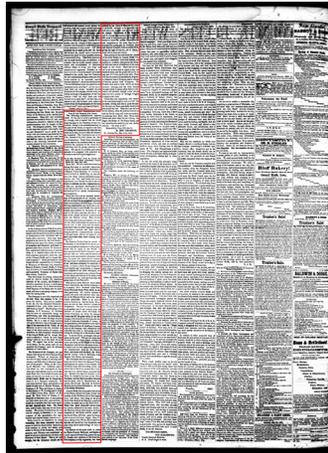
Source-Dependent Questions

- According to Richard Morgan, what were the two major reasons that made the route from Davenport to Iowa City so ideal for a railroad?
- Compare and contrast the description of Iowa from [The Iowa Patriot on July 18, 1839](#), to Morgan’s description from *The Davenport Gazette* on January 9, 1851. What was the major change from 1839 to 1851? What were the commonalities for both descriptions?

Description

Morgan, Richard P., “Engineer’s Report,” *The Davenport Gazette*, pp. 1, 9 January 1851. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Council Bluffs & Saint Joseph Railroad - Letter from M. Jeff Thompson, of St. Joseph,” May 22, 1858



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Thompson, Jeff, “Council Bluffs & Saint Joseph Railroad - Letter from M. Jeff Thompson, of St. Joseph,” *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 22 May 1858

Description

In 1857, Pottawatomie County in western Iowa voted to buy \$300,000 worth of stock in the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company to insure that the railroad would go through their city. An economic panic in 1857 kept the railroad company from starting work as they had promised, and so in the spring of 1858, some people began to promote a connection between Council Bluffs and St. Joseph, Missouri by railroad. This letter was written in response to a convention held in Council Bluffs to support the building of a railroad between Council Bluffs and St. Joseph, Missouri.

[Transcript of “Council Bluffs & Saint Joseph Railroad - Letter from M. Jeff Thompson, of St. Joseph”](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Council Bluffs & Saint Joseph Railroad - Letter from M. Jeff Thompson, of St. Joseph”](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- Why was the Missouri Valley so significant for settlement? Identify evidence from the source to support your answer.
- Compare Thompson’s description of the Missouri Valley to [Morgan’s description of the route for the Davenport and Iowa City Railroad](#) and [The Iowa Patriot’s description of the Mississippi River](#). What benefits did each find in physical characteristics of each region?

Citation Information

Thompson, Jeff, “Council Bluffs & Saint Joseph Railroad - Letter from M. Jeff Thompson, of St. Joseph,” *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 22 May 1858. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Bird's-Eye View of Council Bluffs in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, 1868



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Ruger, A., "Bird's eye view of the city of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie Co., Iowa," 1868

Description

This lithograph provided a perspective map of the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1868. The view of the city is from the southwest, looking to the northeast. The map included the physical features of the area as well as the built city.

[Transcript of the Bird's-Eye View of Council Bluffs Map](#)

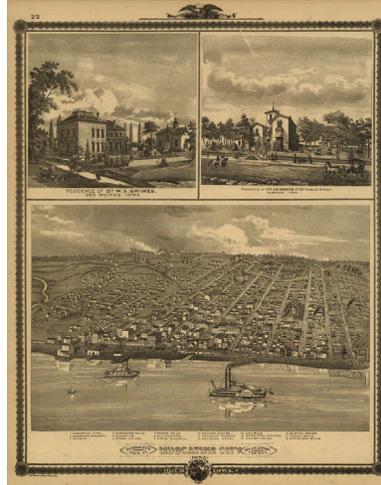
Source-Dependent Questions

- How did geographic features influence the settlement and growth of Council Bluffs by 1868? Consider location as well as the pattern of development. Use details from the lithograph to support your answer.
- How does the perspective of the lithograph shape the story of Council Bluffs' development? Consider if the perspective had been from the northeast looking southwest. Would the story of Council Bluffs' development been different? Use details from the lithograph to support your answer.

Citation Information

Ruger, A., "Bird's eye view of the city of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie Co., Iowa," 1868. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa,” 1875



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Andreas, Alfred T., “Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa,” 1875

Description

The bottom two-thirds of the page provide a perspective map of the city of Muscatine, which was located on the Mississippi River and was one of the important river towns from Iowa’s early history. This perspective map depicts the city in 1875 and was included in an atlas of the entire state of Iowa. The cost of publishing the atlas was underwritten through the sale of subscriptions. Those individuals who purchased a subscription had the location of their residences included on the township maps in the atlas.

[Transcript of the “Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa”](#)

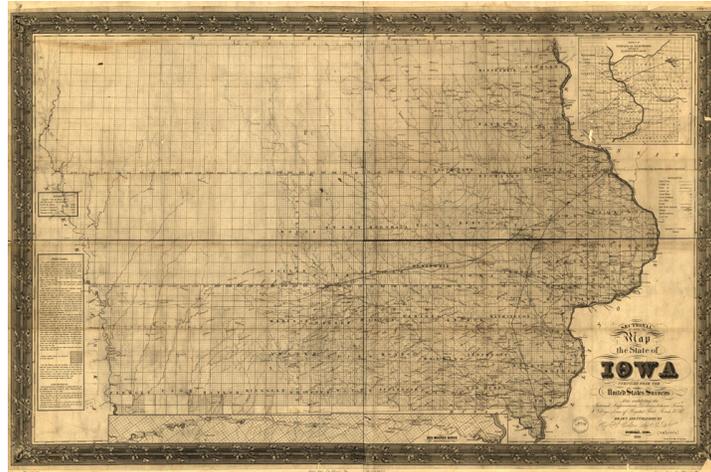
Source-Dependent Questions

- The view of Muscatine was from the Mississippi River looking west across the city. What geographic features influenced the development of Muscatine? Use details from the lithograph to explain your reasoning.
- Compare this image of Muscatine with the [lithograph of Council Bluffs](#). Do the stories of settlement told by these images support or refute the descriptions of [The Iowa Patriot](#) and [Jeff Thompson](#)? Explain your reasoning.

Citation Information

Andreas, Alfred T., “Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa,” 1875. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Sectional Map of Iowa, 1850



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Carleton, Guy H., "Sectional Map of the State of Iowa," 1850

Description

This map was drawn by Deputy U.S. Surveyor Guy H. Carleton. The map used information gathered during the U.S. surveys of Iowa. The numbering of sections was based on the Fifth Principal Meridian and its baseline (see note in lower left corner of the map). Carleton included additional information about the "improvements" to the state, which had been built as a consequence of settlement. Railroads were rapidly becoming an important feature in the nation's economic development, which may explain Carleton's inclusion of proposed railroads in the map.

Source-Dependent Questions

- According to this map, how was the settlement of Iowa progressing? Consider where it started and how it was moving physically across Iowa. Also consider where the largest populations were found. Refer to the [1850/1860 U.S. Census tables](#) to identify the locations with larger populations.
- What features were emphasized on this map and how would they contribute to economic growth?
- Using the [1850/1860 census data](#), locate the largest cities/towns in each of the counties bordering the Mississippi River. What is significant about their locations, and how would their locations have contributed to their growth?

Citation Information

Carleton, Guy H., "Sectional Map of the State of Iowa," 1850. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Population in Iowa in 1850 and 1860 U.S. Censuses, 1853/1864

TABLE II.—POPULATION BY SUBDIVISIONS OF COUNTIES.*

1.—APPANOOSE COUNTY.

Cities, towns, townships, districts, parishes, precincts, wards, hundreds, &c.	WHITES.			FREE COLORED.			AGGREGATE POPULATION.
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	
Caldwell	153	150	303				303
Centro No. 1.....	242	231	473				473
No. 2.....	106	77	183				183
No. 3.....	226	190	416				416
No. 4.....	37	28	65				65
Chariton	124	88	212				212

* No other counties are given in subdivisions by the marshals, and the subdivisions do not always make up the total of the county.

Courtesy of U.S. Census, "Table II: Population by Subdivisions of Counties," The Seventh Census of the United States, 1853 / "Table No. 3 - Population of Cities, Towns, &c.," The Eighth Census of the United States, 1864

Description

In 1840, the Iowa territory was included in the U.S. Census, but the county population totals were provided. In 1846, Iowa became a state, and beginning in 1850, population totals were provided for Iowa's cities and towns, as well as for the counties. The city and town populations were reported in four categories: male or female and white or "free colored."

[Transcribed Excerpts from Combined 1850 and 1860 U.S. Censuses \(preferred transcript\)](#)

[Full Transcript of 1850 and 1860 Iowa Population in the U.S. Census](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

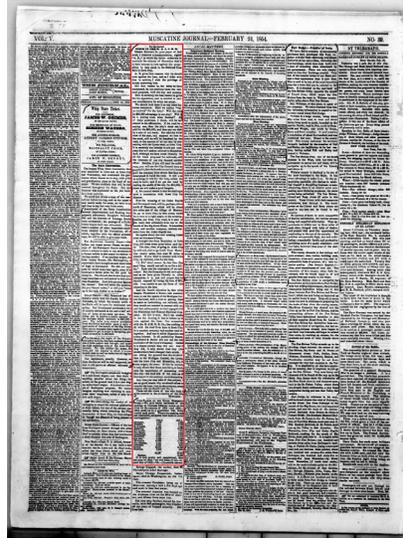
- What generalizations can be made about the growth of Iowa's towns and cities from 1850 to 1860? (Identify 3 generalizations.)
- Identify the town/cities with the most significant growth between 1850 and 1860. Being sure to consider factors like the geography, infer as to what contributed to the growth.
- What are some of the possible explanations for a significant difference between the number of men and women in a particular location?

Citation Information

1850 Census: "Table II: Population by Subdivisions of Counties," The Seventh Census of the United States, 1853. Courtesy of U.S. Census

1860 Census: "Table No. 3 - Population of Cities, Towns, &c.," The Eighth Census of the United States, 1864. Courtesy of U.S. Census

“Stock in the M. & I.C.R.R.,” February 24, 1854



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Stock in the M. & I.C.R.R.,” *Muscatine Journal*, pp. 2, 24 February 1854

Description

This excerpt from the *Muscatine Journal* includes a letter to the editor in regards to the proposal to build a railroad from Muscatine to Iowa City and a report on number of hogs packed on the upper Mississippi River. Hog production provided a means for farmers to get their crops to market in an economical fashion. Grain crops were fed to the hogs which were then slaughtered and processed into ham and bacon for sale in the major population centers of the eastern United States.

[Transcript of “Stock in the M. & I.C.R.R.”](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Stock in the M. & I.C.R.R.”](#)

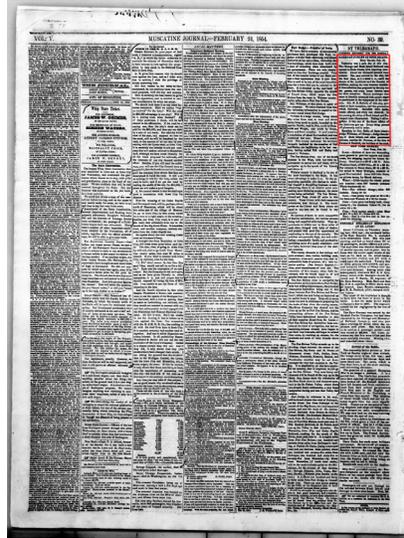
Source-Dependent Questions

- Why does the writer argue people should vote for the railroad loan even if the city of Muscatine was not able to sell its stocks for what it loaned to the company?
- Locate Muscatine (labeled Muscatine City) on [Guy H. Carleton’s 1850 map of Iowa](#). Why would the writer of this letter to the editor be opposed to Muscatine having an indirect connection to Iowa City through Moscow?
- What generalizations can be made about the report on the numbers of hogs packed on the upper Mississippi River? (minimum of two generalizations; hint: locate the cities on the map)
- Both the letter to the editor and the report on the number of hogs packed suggest a concern with being left behind. What evidence supports that statement?

Citation Information

“Stock in the M. & I.C.R.R.,” *Muscatine Journal*, pp. 2, 24 February 1854. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Railroad Jubilee at Rock Island,” February 24, 1854



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Railroad Jubilee at Rock Island,” *Muscatine Journal*, pp. 2, 24 February 1854

Description

As Americans settled the upper Midwest in the early 19th century, transportation to market was an important consideration. By the mid-19th century, railroads were becoming central to discussions of markets and transportation. This story from the *Muscatine Journal* describes the celebration that accompanied the arrival of the railroad connecting Rock Island to Chicago.

[Transcript of “Railroad Jubilee at Rock Island” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Railroad Jubilee at Rock Island” Newspaper Article](#)

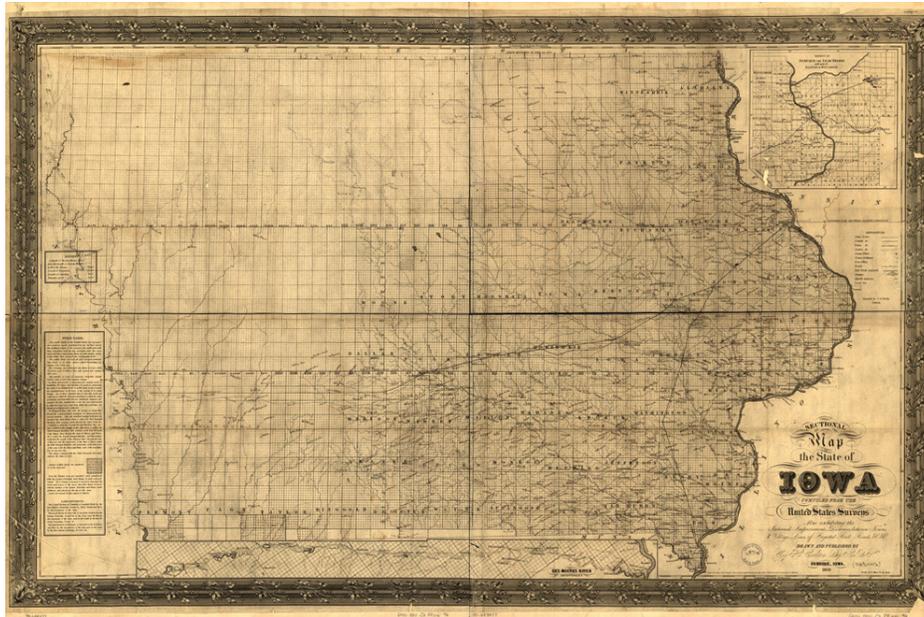
Source-Dependent Questions

- What evidence suggests that this was a major event?
- What does this event suggest about the importance of the railroads? Use evidence from the source to support your claim.

Citation Information

“Railroad Jubilee at Rock Island,” *Muscatine Journal*, pp. 2, 24 February 1854. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Parker's Sectional and Geological Map of Iowa, 1856



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Parker, Nathan H., "Parker's sectional & geological map of Iowa exhibiting her iron, lead, copper, coal and other geological resources and all rail roads completed in progress, and projected compiled from the U.S. surveys

Description

In 1856, when this map was published, Iowa was celebrating its 10th year as a state. Nationally, the number of people moving West was increasing, and Iowa was an attractive destination with its fertile soil and relatively good access to markets in the East. This map was created by Nathan H. Parker, who is identified as the author of *Iowa As It Is*, a "gazetteer for citizens of Iowa and a handbook for emigrants." On the right side of the map, three land agent companies were advertised: Parker, Dole & Co. (Clinton, Iowa), Parker & Gray (Lyons, Clinton Co., Iowa) and Parker, Gray & Davis (Sioux City, Iowa). Land agents actively recruited new settlers with advertising like this map and Parker's book.

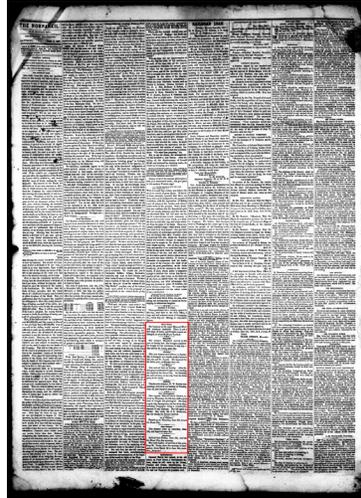
Source-Dependent Questions

- How do the features of Parker's map identify economic opportunities in Iowa and promote the settlement of Iowa? Consider both the physical features of Iowa and the human-constructed features.
- Compare this map to [Guy H. Carleton's 1850 map](#) and the [Iowa and Wisconsin territories map](#). How had transportation concerns changed in Iowa between 1845 and 1856? What evidence of that change can be seen in these maps?

Citation Information

Parker, Nathan H., "Parker's sectional & geological map of Iowa exhibiting her iron, lead, copper, coal and other geological resources and all rail roads completed in progress, and projected compiled from the U.S. surveys and personal reconnoissance," 1856. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“River Items” Newspaper Article about Council Bluffs, Iowa, June 6, 1857



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “River Items,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 6 June 1857

Description

Beginning in the mid-1840s, the Platte River Valley became an important avenue for settlers moving west to the Pacific coast. Council Bluffs located on the Missouri River just above the mouth of the Platte River became increasingly important as a jumping-off point for those westward bound settlers. These brief blurbs summarize steamboat traffic on the Missouri.

[Transcript of “River Items” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “River Items” Newspaper Article](#)

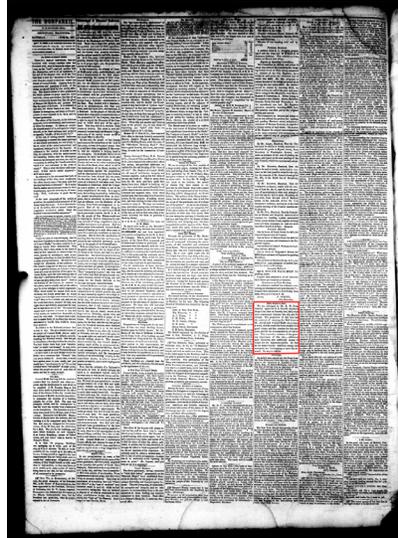
Source-Dependent Questions

- Why might the information in this source have been useful to someone living in Council Bluffs in 1857?
- How important was the Missouri River in Council Bluffs’ growth and economic development? Identify details that support your claim.

Citation Information

“River Items,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 6 June 1857. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Daily Southern Mail,” June 20, 1857



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Daily Southern Mail,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 20 June 1857

Description

This brief article announced a new contract for delivery of mail to Council Bluffs. The U.S. Constitution granted the power to establish post offices and post roads to Congress, so this would have been a federal contract.

[Transcript of “Daily Southern Mail” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Daily Southern Mail” Newspaper Article](#)

Source-Dependent Question

- Why would additional mail facilities and additional means of transit both reflect economic growth and promote new growth?

Citation Information

“Daily Southern Mail,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 20 June 1857. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Navigation of Mississippi River” Petition, January 18, 1836



Courtesy of U.S. Congress, “Navigation of Mississippi River,” Committee on Railways and Canals, U.S. Congress, 18 January 1836

Description

The Iowa territory was opened to settlement in 1836. However, settlement was already well established in Illinois. The Mississippi River was an integral part of the transportation network in the upper Midwest and was essential for connecting settlers in the region to eastern markets. This petition sent to Congress in 1837 described a major concern with transportation on the Mississippi River.

[Transcript of “Navigation of Mississippi River” Petition](#)

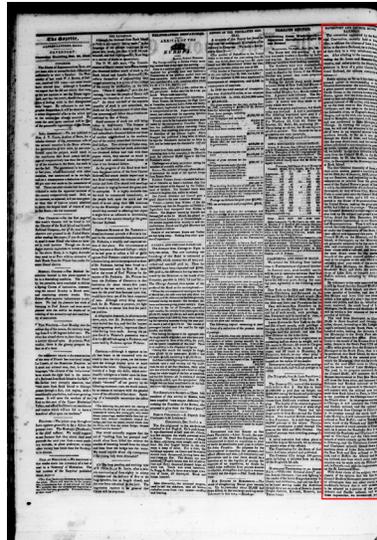
Source-Dependent Questions

- What was the issue identified by the petitioners and why did they think it was a problem?
- What did the petitioners want Congress to do?
- Predict some of the reasons why Congress would or would not support their petition.

Citation Information

“Navigation of Mississippi River,” Committee on Railways and Canals, U.S. Congress, 18 January 1836. Courtesy of U.S. Congress

“Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad,” December 20, 1849



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad,” *The Davenport Gazette*, pp. 2-3, 20 December 1849

Description

This article was published in *The Davenport Gazette* and it shared the results of an information meeting regarding the building of a railroad from Davenport to Iowa City. Constructing a railroad was enormously expensive, and a variety of methods were used to raise money, both public and private.

[Full Transcript of “Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad” Newspaper Article](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from “Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad” Newspaper Article](#)

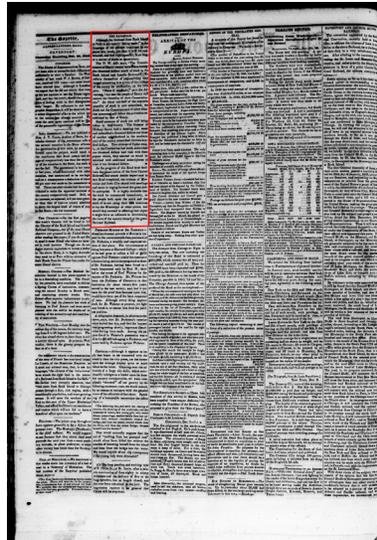
Source-Dependent Questions

- What method was Robert Lucas supporting for raising money to build a railroad across Iowa? Review [Guy H. Carleton’s 1850 map](#). How successful had these efforts been as of the publication of this story?
- What evidence did Lucas use to support public funding of this railroad?

Citation Information

“Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad,” *The Davenport Gazette*, pp. 2-3, 20 December 1849. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“The Railroad” Newspaper Article, December 20, 1849



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Railroad,” *The Davenport Gazette*, pp. 2, 20 December 1849

Description

In the first years of Iowa settlement, trade was oriented down the Mississippi River to St. Louis and New Orleans. With the advent of the railroad, Iowa communities began to look East. This story details efforts to raise money for the building of a railroad that would connect with a railroad planned from Peoria to Rock Island.

[Transcript of “The Railroad” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “The Railroad” Newspaper Article](#)

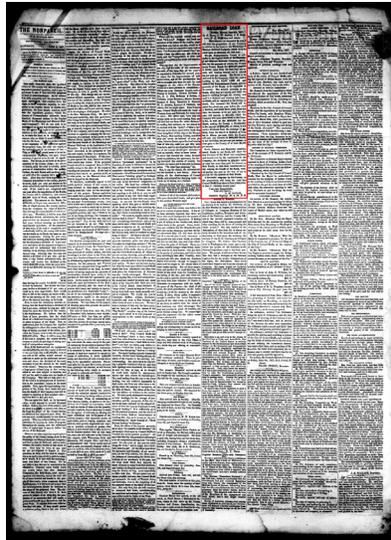
Source-Dependent Questions

- This article described another method of funding railroad construction. What was that method? Would you anticipate this method would be more or less successful than others? Why?
- Who were the different entities involved in raising funds for the railroad? Were they public or private?

Citation Information

“The Railroad,” *The Davenport Gazette*, pp. 2, 20 December 1849. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article, June 6, 1857



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Dodge, Grenville, “Railroad Loan,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 6 June 1857

Description

By 1857, the efforts to build railroads which had started in eastern Iowa almost a decade earlier had reached the western borders of the state. This letter from Grenville M. Dodge explained the benefits to Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County of choosing to help fund the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad. Grenville M. Dodge had lived in Council Bluffs since 1855 and was involved in surveying a route across Iowa for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company.

[Transcript of “Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article](#)

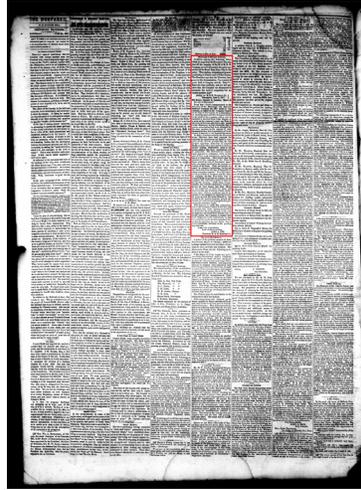
Source-Dependent Questions

- Grenville Dodge was encouraging the residents of Pottawattamie County to help fund the construction of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad in Pottawattamie County. How did he expect them to fund the money?
- According to Dodge, what benefits could the people of Pottawattamie County expect? What expenses might the people of Pottawattamie County expect if they chose to help fund the railroad?

Citation Information

Dodge, Grenville, “Railroad Loan,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 6 June 1857. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Mississippi and Missouri Railroad” Newspaper Article Part 1, June 20, 1857



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Mississippi and Missouri Railroad,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 20 June 1857

Description

Funding construction of railroads required support from multiple levels of government and a mix of public and private funds. The nature of railroads made the actions of any town or city of great interest to other towns or communities on the railroad’s proposed line. This letter from the president of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company to the mayor of Davenport was published in *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*.

[Transcript of “Mississippi and Missouri Railroad” Newspaper Article Part 1](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Mississippi and Missouri Railroad” Newspaper Article Part 1](#)

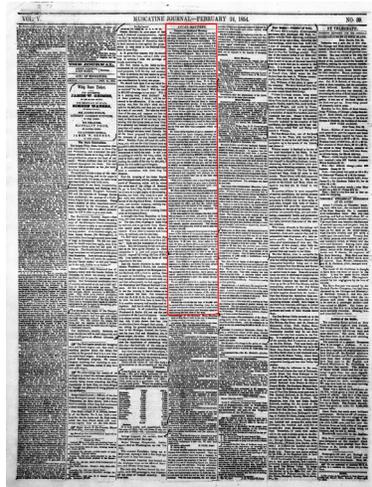
Source-Dependent Questions

- What had the city of Davenport done that resulted in this letter, and what did John Dix want Davenport to do?
- What methods of public funding had the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company already received? Who had authorized that funding? What additional method of public funding was Dix requesting? Who could authorize that funding?
- How does Dix’s request of the city of Davenport compare to the other news stories about railroad funding?

Citation Information

“Mississippi and Missouri Railroad,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 20 June 1857. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting” Newspaper Article, February 24, 1854



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting,” *Muscatine Journal*, pp. 2, 24 February 1854

Description

This article reported on a meeting held in Muscatine with the Lyons Iowa Central Railroad Company. The railroad company was seeking funding to construct a railroad from Muscatine to Iowa City.

[Full Transcript of “Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting” Newspaper Article](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from “Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting” Newspaper Article](#)

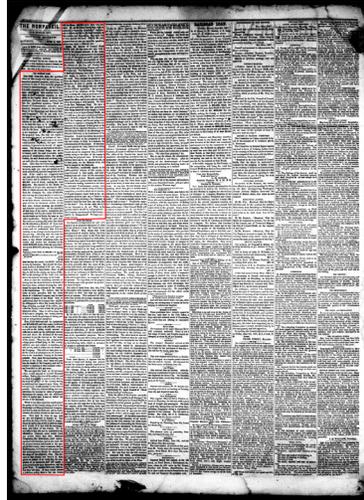
Source-Dependent Questions

- What arguments did Henry Adams use to convince the Muscatine citizens at the meeting to help fund the Lyons Railroad Company? In what ways would a railroad company benefit the people of Muscatine? What might be some of the arguments against building a railroad?
- What civic responsibility was referenced in this story? What specifically were Muscatine men supposed to do? How would supporting the railroad be an example of demonstrating civic responsibility?
- Henry Adams was a railroad company official. How would his use of the idea of civic responsibility affect men’s response to his argument? What would Adams gain if his argument was successful?

Citation Information

“Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting,” *Muscatine Journal*, pp. 2, 24 February 1854. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“The Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article, June 6, 1857



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Railroad Loan,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pg. 2, 6 June 1857

Description

In June 1857, Pottawattamie County had a vote on whether to purchase \$300,000 worth of stock in the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company to aid in the construction of that railroad through the county. By this point, the railroad had been constructed from Davenport to Iowa City, and the company was preparing to continue on to Des Moines and then to the Missouri River. Council Bluffs was not the only option on the Missouri River which created a sense of competition for the railroad. This editorial, published in Council Bluffs a week before the vote, detailed the argument in favor of the vote.

[Full Transcript of “The Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from “The Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “The Railroad Loan” Newspaper Article](#)

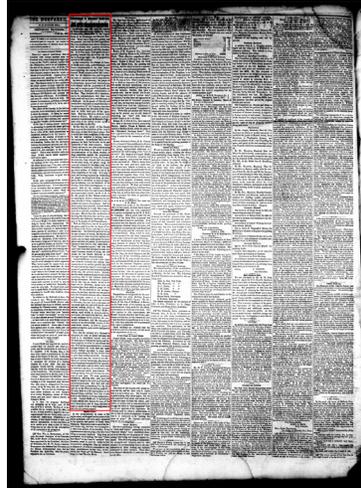
Source-Dependent Questions

- The editorial is titled “The Railroad Loan.” In actuality, how would the county of Pottawattamie be funding the railroad’s construction?
- The first half of the editorial addressed the major objection to the vote. What civic responsibility was used to argue against the loan? How did the editor refute that objection?
- The other objection to the loan was that the railroad would be built regardless of what the people of Pottawattamie County did. How did the editor use civic responsibility of the citizens of Pottawattamie County to argue against this second objection?
- Which aspect of the editor’s argument seemed stronger for motivating the people of Pottawattamie County to vote, the economic benefits of the railroad or the civic responsibility to the town, county, and country? Provide evidence to explain your reasoning.

Citation Information

“The Railroad Loan,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pg. 2, 6 June 1857. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Mississippi and Missouri Railroad” Newspaper Article Part 2, June 20, 1857



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “Mississippi and Missouri Railroad,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pg. 2, 20 June 1857

Description

On June 13, 1857, the people of Pottawattamie County voted to buy stock in the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company in the amount of \$300,000. This editorial, published the following week in Council Bluffs, celebrated that vote but then continued to look to the future of the city.

[Transcript of “Mississippi and Missouri Railroad” Newspaper Article Part 2](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Mississippi and Missouri Railroad” Newspaper Article Part 2](#)

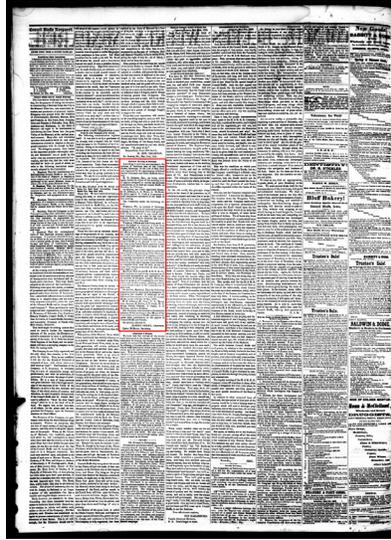
Source-Dependent Questions

- How did the editor interpret the outcome of the vote, and how did he think it set the people of Pottawattamie County apart from people in other counties, like Jasper County?
- What economic benefits for Council Bluffs and the county did the editor foresee? What role would those benefits have in the growth of Council Bluffs?
- The editor concluded with a call for certain kinds of men to come to Council Bluffs. What kinds of men did he want, and why did he prefer them over “speculators?” Is this another form of civic responsibility? Why or why not?
- Why would the editor use gender specific language in this article? Why are most of the sources from this time period directed at men?
- How would women’s perspectives and interests have overlapped with men’s? How would women’s perspectives and interests have differed? How could women demonstrate civic responsibility on these issues?

Citation Information

“Mississippi and Missouri Railroad,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pg. 2, 20 June 1857. Courtesy of Library of Congress

“Railroad Meeting in Saratoga” Newspaper Article, May 22, 1858



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Smiley, Robert, “Railroad Meeting at Saratoga,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 22 May 1858

Description

This news story provided an account of a meeting held at Saratoga in Douglas County, Nebraska. Despite the promises made in the summer of 1857 by the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company, little progress had been made on the railroad’s construction across Iowa, primarily because of the Panic of 1857. The M & M RR Co., like most other railroads in the country, had been unable to secure all the private funding needed for construction. By the spring of 1858, the people of Council Bluffs and in the surrounding area were increasingly concerned about when they could expect a railroad connection to the East.

[Transcript of “Railroad Meeting in Saratoga” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Railroad Meeting in Saratoga” Newspaper Article](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- What does this news story suggest about the relationship between communities that supported the railroads and the railroad companies? What expectations did the communities have of the railroad companies?
- Compare this account with the *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil* editorials of [June 6](#) and [June 20, 1857](#). What did the people of Council Bluffs and Saratoga expect for their communities, and what was their responsibility for achieving those expectations?

Citation Information

Smiley, Robert, “Railroad Meeting at Saratoga,” *The Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, pp. 2, 22 May 1858. Courtesy of Library of Congress