

Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Goodson Joseph Columbus Senator _____

Lived Dallas County, Iowa - served Superior Path, Dallas, Galva, Greene, Boone, Story, Marshall, Hardin, Pocahontas, Humboldt, Adair, Franklin, Cass, Boone, Hancock, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Emmet, Sherman, & North Carolina

1. Birthday and place 30 Sept 1812 Jefferson County, East Tennessee

2. Marriage (s) date place
Priscilla Coffin 11 Aug 1835 Washington County, Indiana

3. Significant events for example:
A. Business _____
B. Civic responsibilities _____
C. Profession Farmer

4. Church membership Methodist Episcopal

5. Sessions served 4th General Assembly 1852

6. Public Offices
A. Local Justice of the Peace; school director; county board of supervisors; probate judge; 15th president of Booneville Cemetery Association, 1875
B. State _____
C. National _____

7. Death 16 Feb 1895 near Booneville, buried Booneville Cemetery, Booneville, Iowa

8. Children William Newton; Sarah Ann (Mrs. James D. Clayton); Selas Jasper; Jacob Marion

9. Names of parents Joseph and Ann (Peck) Goodson

10. Education _____

11. Degrees _____

12. Other applicable information _____

- At age 4 he moved with his family from Tennessee to ^{Washington County} Indiana
- He came to Dallas County, Iowa in 1846 and was one of the earliest settlers of the county, settling near the New Market River
- Brought family in 1847.
- In 1879 he owned 300 acres of land in Boone Township
- Wife, Priscilla, died 11 Aug 1883, also buried in Booneville Cemetery, Booneville, Iowa, born Aug 1817 in Tennessee, probably Capt. Orchard
- The first school in Boone Township was taught by Priscilla Goodson.
- He and Priscilla were of the original membership of the first church organized in Boone Township in 1848.
- Later he was foremost in building Fairview Church, called Fairview because of the location of the building.
- They later became members of the Methodist Church.
- He was one of 11 children.
- Wife Priscilla's parents were William and Mary (Bancroft) Coffin.

ANOTHER PIONEER GONE.

On the 16th day of February occurred the death of J. C. Goodson at the age of 82 years 4 months and 16 days, at his home in Boone Township, Dallas County. He was not thought to be seriously sick until a few days before his death, although he had not been in his usual robust health for some time. It was thought he had fully recovered from a second attack of influenza, but when a physician was called, which was done so soon as he was confined to his bed, he was found to be suffering from bronchitis. During the two weeks that he was confined to his bed bright disease was also developed in connection with his other disease.

He was for several days of the opinion that he could not recover and talked to the children of himself, and was fully cognizant of the fact that his condition was precarious. Throughout his sickness there was a marked disposition of cheerfulness and a perfect satisfaction, not a murmur of complaint, other than when he was in great pain. Occasionally he would ask that something be done to relieve him, always satisfied that everything possible was being done to effect his recovery.

He retained full possession of his faculties and was conscious and recognized as well as in health, his friends when they called to see him, passing away peacefully and without a struggle or an apparent twitching of even a muscle. His funeral was preached by Rev. Lippincott, at the M. E. Church in Booneville, on Sunday afternoon, and his remains were laid to rest beside his wife, Priscilla, who had preceded him some 12 years.

As the deceased was one of the early pioneers of western Iowa a short history of his life may be of interest to his many friends.

J. C. Goodson was born in Tennessee in the year 1812; when four years of age his father and family moved to Washington county, Indiana, where he

these changes will be for the better. All Record readers will be interested in the following article by Stoupton Cooley, Secretary of the American Proportional Representation League, 22 Fifth Ave., Chicago, taken from the last issue of the Single-Tax Courier, published at St. Louis:

When proportional representation was first mentioned a few years ago, there was but a handful of persons in this country who even knew what the subject was, and only a part of these cared enough about it to give it their active support. But like the Australian ballot it needed only an introduction to the public to make its own way. Coming as it did before the public immediately after the agitation for the reform ballot, it had to await the disposal of that question, but as soon as the reform ballot was disposed of, it came forward as a practical and necessary reform. In these few years proportional representation has come into the front rank of real reforms, and, if the signs fail not, it will be the first adopted. * * *

A party with a few representatives in congress commands much more respect from the country at large than one with no representation at all; and just as that representation grows the respect increases.

Again, if the representation in congress is kept in proportion to the votes polled by the people, that representation furnishes an accurate measure of the progress of reform, rising or falling as the number of its advocates increases or decreases. * *

The election of 1894 resulted in a poll of 11,281,525 votes, of which the republicans cast 5,427,124, democrats 4,292,089, populists 1,354,722, prohibitionists 182,728, while 24,182 were scattering. The result was the election of 245 republicans, 101 democrats and 7 populists. Or, in other

Washington, Indiana, where he was married to Priscilla Cecilia in August 1835. He continued to reside in Washington county until 1845, when he came to Iowa, selected a location, and returned for his family and moved to Iowa in 1847. He located in Boone township, Dallas county, built a log house, and some years afterward a frame, and in 1876 built a large frame house where he resided until his death.

At the election in 1849 he was elected Probate Judge, and served until the office was abolished in 1851; in 1852 he was elected as a representative to the 4th General assembly. In 1873 he was elected a member of the board of supervisors of his county. He many times occupied other township offices.

In all his official service he was conservative in his opinions and actions and devoted to what he believed to be to the best interest of his constituents.

In church matters he and his wife were two of the six constituting the original membership of the first church organization in Boone township; this was in 1848. He was afterwards one of the foremost in the building of "Fairview Church," the name being suggested by him on account of the prominent location of the building. Priscilla, his wife, taught the first school in Boone township, which was very soon after they settled in Iowa. The school was taught in their house, and long before the day of churches, or school houses, meetings were often held by the ministers of the Methodist church, of which he and Priscilla were or afterwards members.

His family have been one of notable longevity, and his is the eighth death of eleven brothers and sisters. The oldest of the three survivors, Sophia Decker, 81, resides in Florida, the next, Rhoda Lumley, 79, in Madison county, Iowa, and the youngest of the family, Rev. J. P. Goodson, 75, in Kentucky.

The four children of their marriage, N. W. Goodson, a farmer of Madison county, Sarah A. Clayton, living near Van Meter, in Dallas county, S. J. Goodson a farmer in Dallas county, and J. M. Goodson, a lawyer in Boone, Boone county, were all present with him during the last few days of his illness and rendered every possible aid.

There are living eleven grand children and fourteen great grand children. Thus closes a life that has been long in years, useful, energetic and aggressive. His was a life that is a worthy example in every particular, worthy of following by any person, and a sure guide to a better future and everlasting life beyond.

election of 245 republicans, 101 democrats and 7 populists. Or, in other words, the republicans, with 48.1 per cent. of the total vote, elected 68 per cent of the congressmen; the democrats, with 33.1 per cent. of the vote elected 29.2 per cent. The populists with 12 per cent. of the vote, elected 2 per cent of the representatives while the 1.6 of the prohibitionists secured no representation at all. Thus we see that the republicans who are in a decided minority as regards the vote, yet have an enormous majority in congress. The same result is seen in the present congress in which the immense majority of democrats was secured with only 4 per cent of the popular vote. It can thus be seen that these parties would be unable to ride rough-shod over the canons of decency and common sense. The party caucus would be wholly ineffectual in restraining discussion and honest, independent action.

But this is among the least of the advantages of proportional representation. By destroying the districts and electing men from the states at large in proportion to the votes polled by the several parties, a different class of men would be brought into parliament. The small man of the small district would make way for the large man of the state. Not only that, the voters would be able to elect particular able man they wish. Such a thing as the defeat of a man like Johnson, McKinley and Will would be out of the question. The position of these leaders would be so secure that they would be wholly independent of the petty interests which dominate politics in particular districts. They could work for what they consider the broad basic principles of public policy, in the full assurance that there would be no

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Family Group Sheet

Husband: Joseph Columbus Goodson

Born: September 30, 1812 in: Jefferson Co., East Tennessee
Married: August 11, 1835 in: Washington Co., IN; Book C, page 42
Died: February 16, 1895 in: Boone twp Dallas Co., IA
Father: Joseph Goodson
Mother: Ann Peck

Wife: Priscilla Coffin

Born: August 1817 in: TN, probably Crab Orchard
Died: August 11, 1883 in: Dallas Co., IA
Father: William Coffin
Mother: Mary Duncan

CHILDREN

1 M	Name: William Newton Goodson Born: May 11, 1836 in: Salem, Washington Co., IN Died: March 19, 1910 in: Madison Co., IA Married: December 24, 1859 in: Dallas Co., IA Spouse: Martha Ann Clayton
2 F	Name: Sarah Anna Goodson Born: February 17, 1837 in: Bedford, IN Died: June 19, 1924 in: Van Meter, IA Married: August 01, 1858 in: Booneville, IA Spouse: James D. Clayton
3 M	Name: Silas Jasper Goodson Born: July 18, 1849 in: Booneville, Dallas Co., IA Died: in: Van Meter, IA
4 M	Name: Jacob Marion Goodson Born: August 07, 1856 in: Booneville, Dallas Co., IA Died: 1946 in: Des Moines, Polk, IA Married: 1874 Spouse: Anna B. Hibben

Joseph Columbus Goodson

Source:	
Born:	September 30, 1812
in:	Jefferson Co., East Tennessee
Source:	Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 1875, by A.T. Andreas, 520, J.C. Goodson Dallas Co, Boone Township, sec 22; farmer, born Jefferson Co East Tenn came to Iowa 1847. Patrons Iowa State Atlas. As a patron, Joseph Goodson would have furnished the information contained and probably purchased a copy of the Atlas prior to publication.
Died:	February 16, 1895
in:	Boone twp Dallas Co., IA
Source:	
Relationship with Father:	Joseph Goodson -
Relationship with Mother:	Ann Peck -
Reference number:	

Address and Phone(s)	
Street 1:	
Street 2:	
City:	
State or province:	
Zip or postal code:	
Country:	
Phone(s):	
E-mail(s):	

Medical

Height:
 Weight:
 Cause of death:
 Source:

Medical Information:

Source:

Burial 1:	Booneville Cemetery, Dallas Co., IA: 82y 4m 16d
Source 1:	
Burial 2:	Joseph (on top), Joseph C. Goodson died Feb 16, 1895 aged 82y. 4m. 16d., rear stone "J.C."
Source 2:	
Burial 3:	May 24, 1875 First President of the Booneville Cemetery Association when incorporated.
Source 3:	
Census 1:	1840 Washington Co, IN p325 as Jos Jr
Source 1:	
Census 2:	1840 Washington Co, IN, p325
Source 2:	
Elected 1:	Justice of the Peace
Source 1:	
Elected 2:	Bet. 1849 - 1851 Probate Judge of Dallas Co. Office abolished 1851.
Source 2:	
Elected 3:	Bet. 1852 - 1853 State Representative, 4th IA Assembly, Capital at Iowa City. Democrat.
Source 3:	
Elected 4:	1873 Dallas Co. County Supervisor
Source 4:	

Family Group Sheet

Husband:	Joseph Columbus Goodson
Born:	September 30, 1812
in:	Jefferson Co., East Tennessee
Source:	Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 1875, by A.T. Andreas, 520, J.C. Goodson Dallas Co, Boone Township, sec 22; farmer, born Jefferson Co East Tenn came to Iowa 1847. Patrons Iowa State Atlas. As a patron, Joseph Goodson would have furnished the information contained and probably purchased a copy of the Atlas prior to publication.
Died:	February 16, 1895
in:	Boone twp Dallas Co., IA
Relationship with Father:	Joseph Goodson - Natural
Relationship with Mother:	Ann Peck - Natural

Burial:	Booneville Cemetery, Dallas Co., IA: 82y 4m 16d
Census:	1840 Washington Co, IN p325 as Jos Jr
Elected:	Justice of the Peace
Emigration:	1847 Indiana to Dallas County with the first party of settlers
Immigration:	1816 From Tennessee to Indiana with parents
Occupation:	Farmer with 300A in sec 22 in 1879
Property:	1879 300 acres sec 22 Booneville twp, Dallas Co
Religion:	Trustee of Methodist E. Church which first meet in their home

Address and Phone(s)	
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Medical

Notes

JOSEPH C. GOODSON AND FAMILY, Van Meter Centennial History 1970, (with corrections)
J.C. Goodson was born in East Tennessee in 1812 and with his parents moved to Indiana in 1816. He came to Dallas County, Iowa in 1847 and was among the earliest settlers, the first settlement having been made the previous year. He owned 300 acres of land in Section 22 in 1879, and held offices of Justice of Peace, School Director, Probate Judge 1849-1851, elected Trustee in 1873, and was elected Representative in 1852 and 1853. He was married in 1835 to Priscilla Coffin who was also born in Tennessee. She was the daughter of William Coffin and was the first school teacher in Dallas County. Greenbury Coffin was the son of William Coffin, brother-in-law of John Wright. They were among the first to build log cabins in 1846. William Coffin was the first death in the county and was buried in the Booneville Cemetery in the winter of 1846-47. In 1851 at a quarterly conference meeting held in Des Moines, J. C. Goodson was one of the trustees elected to purchase a lot in Adel for use of the M. E. Church. He also was named and served as Class Leader. J.C. Goodson and his wife Priscilla were among the first members of the first church in the township (then Boone), a Methodist Episcopal. In 1879 it was the only church in the township and was named by J. C. Goodson the "Fairview Church". Prior to this time services were held in the home of J. C. and Priscilla Goodson and were instructed by them. Later a new church building was built in Booneville and the name Fairview was dropped.
J.C. and Priscilla Goodson were the parents of the following: William Newton, Sarah Ann, Silas Jasper, Jacob Marion.
William Newton Goodson was born in Salem, Indiana May 11, 1836 and died March 19, 1910, in Madison County and buried in the Clayton Cemetery. He had resided on his farm four and a half miles southeast of Van Meter from 1861 to his death. He received a deed from the Government to this land. He married Martha Ann Clayton December 24, 1859. She was the daughter of Benjamin and Sarah Cazort Clayton and was born in Bedford, Indiana, January 16, 1835 and died May 16, 1916 near Van Meter and was buried in the Clayton Cemetery. Six children were born to this union: Sarah, born Aug. 22, 1861. Died Dec. 28, 1878, unmarried. Thomas born Aug. 27, 1863. He drowned in the Raccoon River near Booneville, Iowa July 20, 1879. Era Festus and Ezra, twins born Sept. 1866. Ezra died in infancy. Era died July 15, 1951. William Estus born June 15, 1871 and died Sept. 13, 1967. Elmer died May 1868. William E. Goodson was married to Nettie Swallow in 1894 and lived on the Newton Goodson farm until 1906 when they moved to an adjoining farm where they lived until his retirement in 1960. Then they moved to Van Meter where they celebrated their 71st Wedding Anniversary in 1965. Nettie Swallow Goodson was one of the early school teachers at the Clayton School. They were the parents of six children: Merrill who died in infancy, Wilma Robinson, Roscoe S., and Pearle Johnson, Van Meter; George

Emigration:	1847
Source:	Indiana to Dallas County with the first party of settlers
Immigration:	1816
Source:	From Tennessee to Indiana with parents
Occupation:	Farmer with 300A in sec 22 in 1879
Source:	
Property 1:	1879
Source 1:	300 acres sec 22 Booneville twp, Dallas Co
Property 2:	1856
Source 2:	380 Acres, original land entries 1850- 51- 53- 54, sections 22,26,31,34.
Religion:	Trustee of Methodist E. Church which first meet in their home
Source:	

Family Group Sheet

LeRoy, who was killed in a railroad crossing accident, and Mildred Bailey now living in Kansas City, Missouri. Wilma was married to Gilbert Robinson. Mildred married Alvan E. Bailey, and to this union were born: Beverly Ann who married Robert C. Lang, Shawnee Mission, Kansas; Robert Alvan who married Carol Neely, Kansas City, Mo.; Rosco S. married Grace Freeburn and to this union was born: Robert Willian, who married Marguerite Felier, Park Forest, Illinois. Duane Roscoe who married Doris Cutler, Adel; Pearle married Gilbert F. Johnson and to this union were born: Sheryl Ann, Des Moines and Sharon Ann who married Edmund C. Hansen, Des Moines.

Era F. Goodson was married to Mary Moore and five children were born to this union: Jasper Earnest, deceased; William Marion., deceased; Annie Ella who married Willard Reed, Ruthven; John Lee who served his country in World War 1, and farmed most of his life near Van Meter; Ethel May who married Cecil Aldrich, and later Clint Wright, Lake City, Iowa.

Jasper Earnest married Katherine Stump, and to this union was born: Anna Rose Lennan, Des Moines and Era Ernest, Des Moines.

William Marion married Florence Smith and to this union was born: John Henry, Kansas City, Mo.; Lucile who married Robert Graves, Winterset; Myrtle who married George Cuckie, Clare, Iowa; George, unmarried, Van Meter; and Robert who married Mary Ann Kirkegaard and lives near Emmetsburg.

Annie Ella and Willard Reed were parents of. Russell, Emmetsburg; Mary Sweet, Ft. Dodge; and Helen married Bill Imes, Dickens.

John Lee married Florence Stump and to this union was born: James, Van Meter; Louise who married Earle Powell and later Arnold Nelson, Polk City; Betty who married Raymond Burger, Waukee; Carl, Macksburg; Don, deceased; Luetta who married Louis Ray, California; Berniece Hupp, Van Meter and Junior, Adel.

Ethel and Cecil Aldrich were the parents of: Paul who married Ruth Brittain, Van Meter; Earl married Verna Kuyper, Algona; Walter, Des Moines; Floyd married Doris Knoll, Mason City; Don married Arlene Stevens, Emmetsburg.

After the death of Mary Moore Goodson, Era was married to Rosa Murry in 1921, they lived in Van Meter until their deaths.

The death of Joseph Goodson is recorded in Dallas County death book 1 p94. Cause of death was bronchitis, with old age and chronic Brights Disease. Birthplace was listed as Lousville, KY; however he himself listed E. Tennessee as his birthplace in the state atlas and all census.

Marriage Information	
Wife:	Priscilla Coffin
Married:	August 11, 1835
Beginning status:	Married
in:	Washington Co., IN; Book C, page 42

Marriage Notes

Family Group Sheet

Wife:	Priscilla Coffin
Born:	August 1817
in:	TN, probably Crab Orchard
Died:	August 11, 1883
in:	Dallas Co., IA
Relationship with Father:	William Coffin - Natural
Relationship with Mother:	Mary Duncan - Natural
Burial:	Booneville Cemetery, Dallas Co., IA
Occupation:	First school teacher in Dallas County
Address and Phone(s)	

Medical**Notes**

Marriage information confirmed by Coffinquest on the Internet.

Death recorded in Dallas County death book 1 p27. Cause of death was Intercussiption. Birthplace was listed as Indiana, which may not be correct.



Source: Iowa Territorial And State Legislators Collection Compiled By Volunteers And Staff At The State Historical Society Of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

The Little Wagon Train from Indiana to Iowa
by Gerald M. Graves 12 July 2002

In 1847 a little wagon train of settlers came from Washington County, Indiana to Dallas County, Iowa near present day Booneville. This is a brief description of those involved. Some accounts say they were the very first settlers in the county and other accounts give that distinction to others. There is no known leader, but family ties played a big part in the participants. The closest settlement was 14 miles away at little Fort Des Moines. They started a river ferry south of Booneville and there are several stories about travelers passing by headed West to settle or to the California gold rush. Many Mormon handcarts from Iowa City went past their cabins headed to Utah.

They settled 1-2 miles north of present highway F-90 to have access to streams and springs as well as the needed timber closer to the river. Some built their cabins on the south slope of the hillside for protection from the north winter winds and above the flood level of the river. In August 1852 a Boone post office was established, but did not have a permanent location until it located in Booneville when the village was established 20 years later in 1871.

The "Emigrants Guide and Directory" described the route of the Northern Road from Dubuque to Fort Des Moines and Council Bluffs. At Fort Des Moines the Des Moines Valley Road and the Iowa City Road also intersected. From Fort Des Moines west it was 6 miles to "Jordan's". Today this would be the Jordan House 1 block east of Fuller Rd. and Grand Ave in West Des Moines near Jordan Creek. The current house built ca. 1850s is now a museum owned by the West Des Moines Historical Society. The next landmark was "Boon's Ferry, 8 mi; corn, hay and bacon for sale here". If travelers did not cross the Raccoon River here, the next landmark was "Clark's Ferry, 3 mi"; which would have been near present Van Meter. The railroad was built in 1868 and Van Meter started then. The old road was probably near present day Booneville Road close to the hills on the north side of the river valley because the F-90 route closer to the river wasn't built until the 1930s.

Probably the first settlers in Dallas County were brothers Daniel and Lewis Stump (fall 1845) west near Van Meter. I find no relationship to the other settlers until the third generation. Their sister Mary and brother John joined them in 1846. Another first settler was Levi Wright (1846), who built a cabin west of Van Meter near the forks of the Raccoon River west of Van Meter. He had lived in Illinois for the 12 years prior to coming to Dallas County and does not appear to be related to the John Wright of Booneville described next. Levi did have a son named John.

The next to come was John Wright. He married Sarah (Sallie) Coffin in 1832 in Indiana. His wife was sister-in-law of J. C. Goodson. He came out in the winter of 1845; then returned to Indiana. He brought his family, his father-in-law William Coffin, and his brother-in-law Greenberry Coffin back with him in March 1846. John Wright also was on the first grand jury for the county. In 1849, he was appointed a road commissioner to locate the first official road across Iowa through Dallas Co and Adel. The first church service in the county was held in his cabin with a black preacher from Des Moines in 1846. In June 1849, he was a party in the first court case in the county. He was a skilled elk hunter. He and his family were not living in Dallas County for the 1850 census and a Coffin family history reports they went to California, probably with the gold rush.

William Coffin was a Quaker blacksmith born in North Carolina in 1771. His parents were part of the famous Nantucket Island Coffins and had moved to NC that year. As an adult William spent a few years in East Tennessee before moving to Washington County, IN. His father had moved there in 1823. William and Greenberry also spent time further north in Indiana. His brother or cousin Nathaniel is listed on the 1820 census for Washington Co living near the Goodson family. He was 74 when he came to Iowa. He holds the distinction of being the first settler to die in Dallas County, that same year (1846). His stone

John Johnson was married to Priscilla Coffin's older sister Nancy, who was born in TN. They were married in 1828 in Washington County, IN. Children on the trip were William 16, Wiley 13, Mary 11, Sarah 10, Elizabeth 8, Jacob 6, Sematha 4, Deborah 2, & Rebeca 2. Jessie and Archibold were born in Iowa. Wiley and his new wife were still living with the Johnson family in the 1856 census. Johnson Creek is crossed twice in the first couple of miles on the highway from Booneville north. Their cabin was on the west side of the creek near the current Old Booneville Rd.

William Davis Boone was born in Boone Co, OH and learned tanning in Harrison Co, IN. Harrison County is immediately south of Washington County and originally included the area of most of Washington County. His parents were among the early settlers of Ohio. In 1833 he married Susannah Fransley. He started the ferry across the river straight south of Booneville. They built a home completely from walnut trees encircled with porches where the Victorian Ingham farmhouse stands at the south end of the Napa Valley sub-division. J.C. Goodson operated the ferry part of the time. William died January, 14, 1855. George Gresham was executor of his estate, which included 2,300 acres. Silas Jasper Goodson would be executor of Susanna Boone's estate in 1898. Son Joshua was 13 years old at the time of the journey to Iowa. Children Florida 10, Francis 9, Sarah 7, Martin 8, Julian 3, and Margaret 1, came on the trip. Baby John died in route to Iowa and was buried along the trail. Mary and Elizabeth were born in Iowa.

Ambrose Lane was born in Washington Co, IN and is listed there in the 1830 census. He was missed in the 1850 US census in IA and IN, but has Boone Township land entries in 1850 and 1851. The 1856 census lists Sarah Lane as coming to Iowa in 1848. She owned 170 acres and son Wiley owned 80 acres. Wiley would have been 14 in 1848. Sophia 12, Eliza 10, & Newton 7, were the other children on the trip. Possibly there was an another son that did not come to Iowa. Ambrose died October 26, 1851 at age 50 and is buried in the Booneville Cemetery. Newton took over the farm with his mother.

In 1856, Boone Twp had 73 houses with 80 families with 462 people. The county had grown from 164 people in 1847 to 300 in 1852, to about 3,800 in 1856. In 1847 Iowa had only 1/3 of the counties laid out and collected \$5,732 in State taxes.

The Des Moines River was reported 120 yards wide and easily fordable at Ft. Des Moines. Steamboats came to Des Moines during high water until 1862 when the railroad arrived. A great deal of money was spent on locks and dams on the Des Moines River in hopes of enlarging steamboat service in the 1850s.

Fort Des Moines was built in the spring of 1843 at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers. A steamer and keelboat brought building materials up river. It had a storehouse, barracks, hospital, officer quarters, stables, and sutlers house. The Fort was manned by 45 infantrymen and 50 dragoons (light calvary). It was mostly empty in 1846 after the Indians had been removed from the area.

Children's ages are from census information and are approximate at the time of the trip.