

Greetings from

DES MOINES, IOWA

DES MOINES

The Heart of Iowa

In 1673, those two intrepid voyagers and explorers, Marquette and Joliet, conducted the first recorded interviews, held in Iowa, between white men and Indians, on the banks of the Des Moines river. After 170 years, the United States Army, in 1843, established Fort Des Moines as one link of a protecting chain across the frontier of America. Two years later the Sac and Fox Indians relinquished their rights and the territory was opened to white settlers.

The first ferry crossed the river at this point two years later. Gold seekers passed through Fort Des Moines on one of the main immigrant trails to California. By 1851, according to the newspaper in Des Moines of that day, "most of those who came now remain, satisfied they can find no better country"—a statement which has held true for the succeeding century.

In 1857, "Fort" was dropped from the name and "Des Moines" emerged, to become, a year later, the Capitol of Iowa. The present Ft. Des Moines, located just south of the city, is comparatively new in the historical sense. It was established on land purchased by citizens and given to the government in 1903. It soon became America's largest cavalry post.

During the Civil war, nearly 100 Des Moines women petitioned Gov. Stone, asking to take the places of business and working men, to enable them to enlist in the Union Army. It is fitting therefore, in our time, to see Fort Des Moines welcome the first contingent of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, and thus become the first "Home of the W.A.A.C."

Since July, 1942, thousands of feminine patriots have been inducted into the Service "for the purpose of making available to the national defense the knowledge, skill and special training of women of this nation." From this training center Corps members have gone to duty overseas, to posts, camps and garrisons throughout the country in an ever increasing number. After regular Army training, with their lives regulated by the cannon, the bugle and the top sergeant's whistle, they have taken over non-combatant jobs to release men to the fighting fronts.

Des Moines as seen today is Iowa's chief commercial city. With a population of 184,000, its parks, beautiful residential sections, represent the best in modern America. Over half of its citizens own their homes, the highest percentage of all American cities.

Its 72, grade, junior high and high schools, have an average attendance of 28,000. In addition, there are many other institutions of learning, with Drake University the most widely known. Drake University's new field house and stadium are the scene of many of America's outstanding events in collegiate sports.

Iowa's 60-year old Capitol building on the east side of Des Moines, is surrounded by an 85-acre park. Within the Capitol are priceless collections of paintings and relics of wars of other generations of Americans. The state historical department has its own building nearby. In it is an even larger display that is rich in the lore of the state. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, erected over 50 years ago, like the Capitol building itself, can be seen from all parts of the city.

Dividing the east and west sections of the city, the Des Moines river flows southeastward to join the Father of Waters, the Mississippi, at Keokuk. Here in the heart of the city the progressive citizenry has created a Civic Center of surpassing beauty, the landscaping and architectural show place of the entire state. On the east bank are found the Federal Court building, Memorial Armory, City Hall and Municipal Court building. On the west bank lie the Public Library, the Post Office and the Coliseum. Civic plans for other buildings of outstanding character will be added after the interruption caused by our national emergency.

Des Moines is the home of 43 insurance companies, most of them national in their activities. With over a hundred other companies represented here, Iowa's capitol city has long been known as the insurance center of the west.

For relaxation, Des Moines offers a wide selection of parks, playgrounds, golf courses and swimming pools, so placed that one or more is easily accessible from any place in the city.