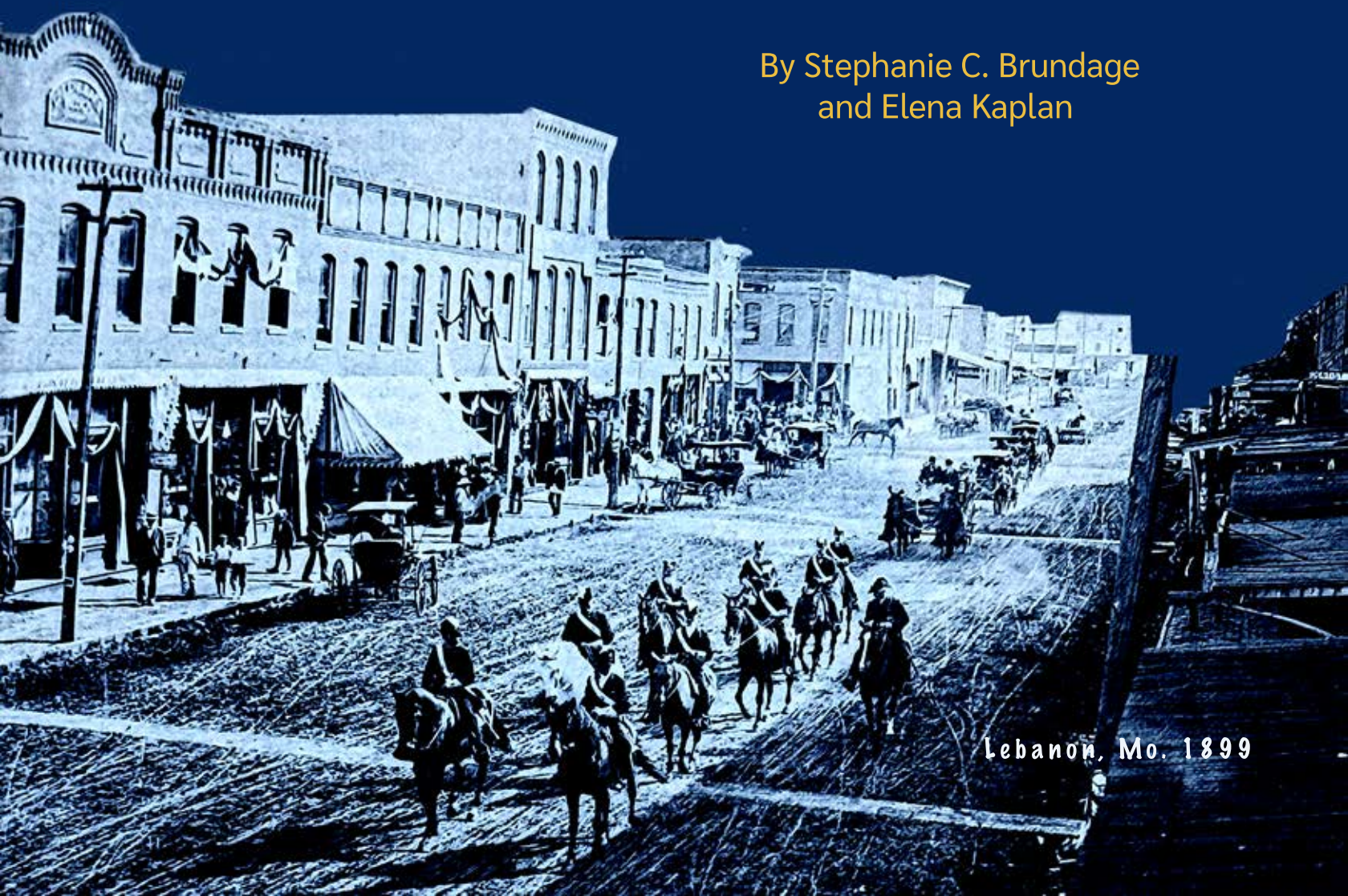
Tracing the Footsteps of Our Ancestors

The Ancestry and Life of David Earle Brundage and Helen Cooke Sayles Brundage

By Stephanie C. Brundage
and Elena Kaplan



Tracing the Footsteps of Our Ancestors



The children and grandchildren of Abel and Sarah Jones visiting the old homestead in Elk Grove, Illinois in about 1900



Helen Brundage's grandmother, Susan Jane Jones Sayles is third from left. From left to right: Susan's son, Harold Fiske Sayles; Susan's daughter, Emma Morris; Susan; her brother, Mark Morse Jones; Mark's wife, Alice Daniels Jones; Susan's sister, Mary Ortensia Jones Page; Mary's daughters Kathryn and Clara Page. Top window: Martha Elizabeth Richards Jones, wife of Mark's son, Frederick.

Tracing the Footsteps of Our Ancestors

The Ancestry and Life of
David Earle Brundage
and
Helen Cooke Sayles Brundage

With a focus on their ancestors
who migrated from New England
to the Midwest

Stephanie C. Brundage and Elena Kaplan

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Helen Cooke Sayles Brundage



David Earle Brundage

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Preface

For most of my life, genealogy seemed tedious. Charting birth and death dates and building a family tree were not of interest to me. But it had been to my father and great grandmother. I had the family tree my father, Robert Brundage, assembled from his grandmother's data and knew that he had only been able to trace the Brundage line to Herman, but not to the immigrant Brundage of the 1600s. My father, unfortunately, died soon after retiring and before he had the time to travel to New England to dig up more history. I also had a wonderful book on the Rockwell-Jones families that my grandmother, Helen Sayles Brundage, had passed to all of her grandchildren in the 1960s – carefully stored away in my file cabinet for decades.

History was the most boring subject for me in school, but it started to come alive after I retired and decided to try to trace the Brundage line further back. I traveled to Vermont in 2016 and visited Orwell, where I looked at property records and found the land that my 4th great grandfather, Peter Hall, had owned when the town was newly founded. I visited Fort Ticonderoga and saw how it overlooked the Vermont countryside that became Orwell after the American Revolution. I also visited several other towns in the area in search of Herman's parents. Although I was unsuccessful, this adventure sparked a desire to know more and to link genealogy to the history of our Nation.

Another trip took me to Bethany, New York. Herman and Cynthia Brundage had settled there, raised their children, and participated in founding a church and a village. Researching the land records for that township and county was fascinating. I also took a boat ride on the Erie Canal and learned much about the improved transportation to the west that stimulated much of the western migration.



Next came the great Midwest Tour of 2024. My daughter, Elena, and I used the Rockwell-Jones book, Ancestry.com, and other resources to chart a course from Meadville, Pennsylvania, west through Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois, to Iowa, tracing the path our ancestors had followed in the mid-1800s. In Iowa, we explored the communities on the banks of the Mississippi River where they first lived. Then we headed west to where they migrated in the later 1800s as settlements expanded, including the frontier town of Guthrie Center. On our trip, we learned a lot about our ancestors and found some of the actual buildings where they lived and worked.

This book is our attempt to document what we have learned about our ancestors and provide that knowledge to future generations. I want to



The Erie Canal at Lockport, New York

Preface, continued

acknowledge others who have documented our family history. First my father, Robert Sayles Brundage, who made a family tree from information that his grandmother, Carrie Davis Brundage, had collected over the years. Second, Nettie Jones and Ruth Morris who compiled the book, The Rockwell – Jones Families in America in 1962, containing wonderful memoirs from my great great grandmother, Susan Jones and her sister, Mary. Also my grandmother, Helen Sayles Brundage, for distributing that book to all of her grandchildren. Third, my sister-in-law, Theresa Greene Brundage for assiduously recording details of the descendants of Herman Brundage. Their work over the years provided the base on which we have been able to build the research detailed in this book.

Stephanie C. Brundage



My lifelong interest in history resulted in my going down a genealogy rabbit hole during my mid-20s. Because of this, my Aunt Teri Brundage gifted me a copy of The Rockwell-Jones Families in America. It sat on my shelf for about 25 years until Thanksgiving weekend of 2019 when I happened upon it, and having some time, finally gave it a good read. I knew it included a detailed family tree, but I didn't know it included two beautifully written autobiographies by sisters Susan Jane Jones Sayles and Mary Ortensia Jones Page. They were enthralling, with detailed descriptions of their 1837 journey west as children in a covered wagon, growing up on the frontier in Illinois, and eventually settling in Iowa. I was shocked to realize that I had midwestern ancestors -- I only knew about the New Englanders who had traveled south to Maryland. A trip to Illinois and Iowa was now on the bucket list. Meanwhile, my mother had been researching the Brundage family, who had similarly migrated west through New York and Michigan.

In August 2024, we started a two-week journey in Meadville, Pennsylvania, and then headed west across Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa, following the footsteps of our ancestors and visiting towns, graveyards, libraries, and county offices along the way. While we had done a lot of research in advance, there were numerous fortuitous moments throughout the trip. In the library in Guthrie Center, Iowa, we found a 1910 diary with entries about the death and funeral of my great, great uncle Albert Ennis Sayles. In Urbandale, Iowa, we found the actual late 1800s office in which my great, great grandfather, Edward Sayles, practiced law -- it had been moved to a recreated rural village museum. At the historical museum in Elk Grove, Illinois, we found the photograph of our ancestors standing in front of the circa 1844 Abel Fiske Jones home -- the photo on the frontispiece of this book. The museum uses it to show school children what an early homestead looked like. And my favorite thing was finding, in the basement of the library at Grinnell, evidence of my great grandparents' college romance in the form of the line "B is for Brundage, who now Sayles the sea" on a page entitled the Freshman Alphabet in an old yearbook. I hope you enjoy this compilation of all we have learned.

Elena Kaplan

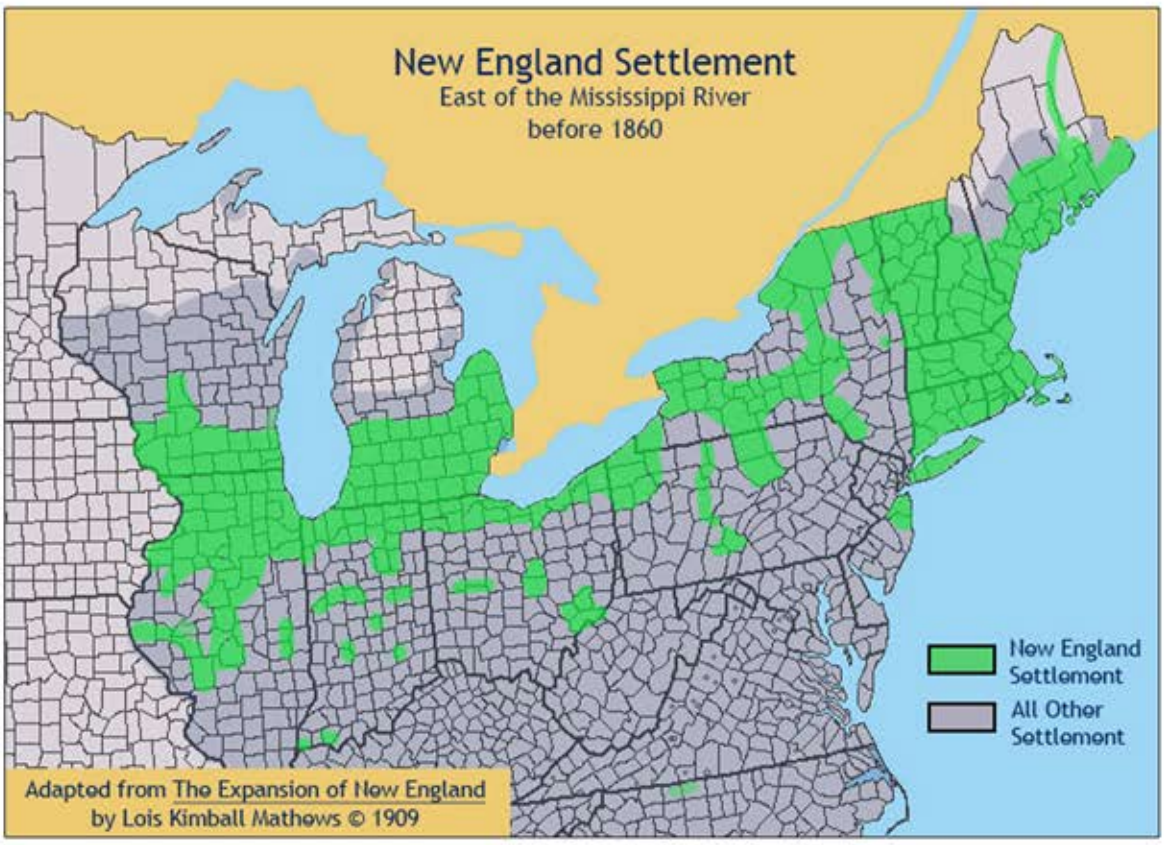
Introduction: Migration to the Midwest

The ancestors of most of the families described in this book, such as the Sayles, Rockwells, and Brundages, immigrated from England during the Great Puritan Migration of 1629-1640. As described in the book, *Albion's Seed*, by David Hackett Fischer (Oxford, 1989), 80,000 English men, women, and children fled from intolerable conditions when Puritan members were purged from the Anglican Church. They fled to Ireland, the Netherlands, and the West Indies; and approximately 21,000 sailed to Massachusetts. There, the Massachusetts Bay Colony formed a very strict Puritan society that was less tolerant of religious diversity than England. Immigrants who had differing religious views fairly quickly moved to Rhode Island and Connecticut.

According to the book, *American Nations*, by Colin Woodard (Viking Penguin, 2011), the early Yankee settlers held many values that they continued to hold dear and carry with them as they migrated to the west. First, the values of literacy and education. Each person was expected to read the Bible for themselves. Second, the values of family and occupation. The settlers were middle-class craftsmen and yeoman farmers who moved together as families without highborn nobles or indentured servants. Last, the value of participatory democracy. Each town governed itself without kings or bishops. Local control spawned a faith in government run by and for themselves. We will see examples of these values in practice as we look at the lives described in this book.

By 1700, the descendants of the original immigrants totaled about 100,000 "Yankees" and they occupied large segments of southern New England, eastern New Jersey, and Long Island, New York. During the 18th century they settled in New York's Hudson River Valley, Vermont, New Hampshire, coastal Maine, and central New York as far west as Ithaca and Elmira. By 1800, their numbers totaled about one million people.

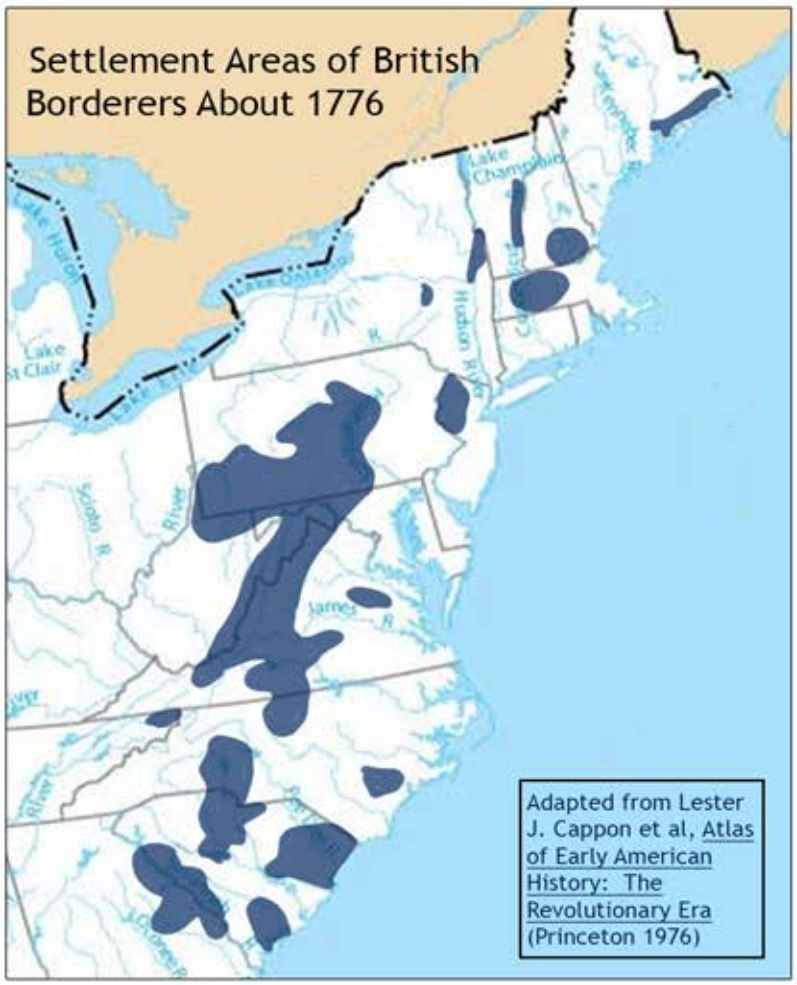
According to the research center at the Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, Vermont, migration from Vermont into the American Midwest began in earnest in the early 19th century. Droughts, wars, economic struggles, depleted farmland and forests, diseases, religious missions, and an adventurous spirit were all motivating forces leading many to seek their fortunes elsewhere.



According to the book, *The Expansion of New England*, by Lois Kimball Mathews (Houghton Mifflin,1909), by 1860 the bulk of New England settlements east of the Mississippi River were in an east-west belt north of the Ohio River through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, as shown in this map.

Migration to the Midwest

The opening of the Champlain Canal in 1823 and the Erie Canal in 1825 stimulated trade, opened new markets for farmers, and offered more expeditious routes for travel to the midwestern territories. When the State of New York under Governor DeWitt Clinton was building the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo, it was called the "big ditch" by its detractors; but, the project paid for itself in a few years and markedly lowered the cost of travelling and shipping goods. It opened up a route for immigrants to move to the Great Lakes Region and settle from Western Pennsylvania all the way west to Illinois, bringing explosive growth to that region. Interestingly, the canal bypassed Lake Ontario, strategically discouraging trade with Canada. A traveler who headed west on the Erie Canal, once arriving at its endpoint of Buffalo, New York, could then transfer to a steamer on the Great Lakes for easy transit to Erie, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; or Chicago, Illinois. Additional canals were built to connect more distant towns with the Great Lakes.



The Armstrong branch of the family was part of a later wave of immigrants arriving in America in the period from 1718 through 1775. This group has been called the "British Borderers" as they came from the border counties of southwest Scotland and northwest England as well as Northern Ireland. These immigrants usually came in family groups and averaged 5,000 people per year coming in through Philadelphia and other ports on the Delaware River. The Quakers of Philadelphia did not look with favor on these new immigrants and strongly encouraged and assisted them to move west to what became known as the "backcountry." They went on to settle upland regions of New England, southwestern Pennsylvania, western Maryland, and Virginia, as well as settlements in various areas in North and South Carolina as shown in this map.

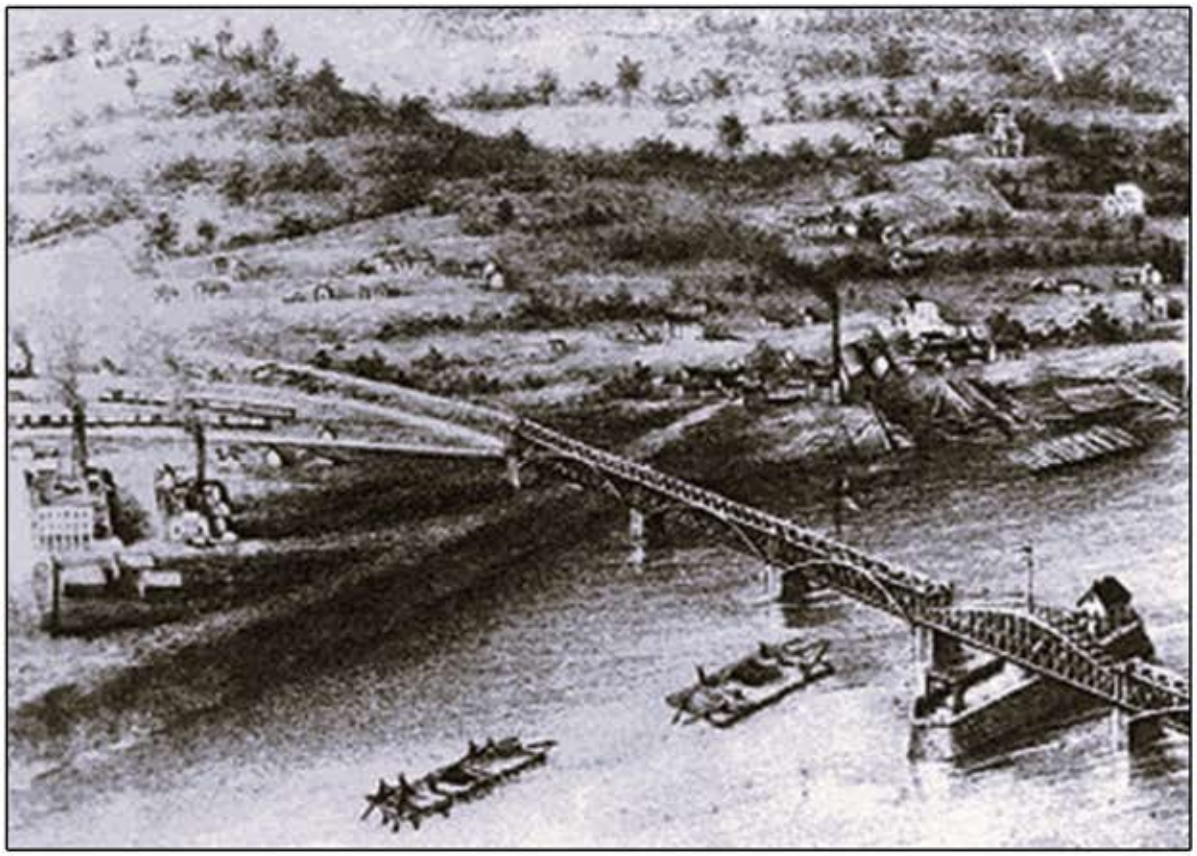
The backcountry settlers were described as being more migratory than other groups. They quickly settled the southern highlands from Maryland south to northern Georgia and also moved west to settle in the southern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Their descendents moved west to settle in Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, and eastern Texas.

Migration to the Midwest

When the families described in this book moved to Iowa, they first settled along the Mississippi River in the towns of Davenport and Lyons. In the late 18th century, this region was settled by French and Spanish explorers who traveled up the Mississippi River and established outposts to trade with the indigenous people. The Blackhawk War and subsequent treaty of 1833 opened the land in eastern Iowa to European immigrants. In the early years, settlement was restricted to along the navigable rivers, those being the Mississippi and the Missouri.

The Mississippi River formed a barrier for travelers because crossing was only possible by ferry boat until the first railroad bridge was built from Rock Island, Illinois to Davenport, Iowa in 1856. Westward expansion of settlement further into Iowa was highly dependent on building the railroads. In 1856, Congress made a large grant of lands to the States to aid in the building of railroad lines. The State of Iowa donated the lands it received to various companies for the construction of five great trunk lines crossing it from east to west. These companies had sufficient land to build the railroads as well as adjoining land to sell to prospective settlers. The expansion of the railroads in Iowa led to dramatic growth in its population in succeeding years.

In exploring the ancestors and lives of D. Earle and Helen Sayles Brundage, we first trace the migration of their ancestors, beginning in New England, with subsequent generations moving west until Earle and Helen come together in Iowa. The final section traces their lives as they move for work and for family.



Rock Island Bridge, 1856