

## Correspondence of Henry O'Reilly

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organized a congregation and took charge of its spiritual interests. At Utrecht the services of this congregation were held in a building which formerly was the property of the Roman Catholics of the Clerisy (the Jansenists).

On a tour through Europe in 1907, the Misses Sara and Hanna Nollen, granddaughters of Rev. Scholte, visited Utrecht and there found the pulpit in which he preached, standing in its old place. They obtained possession of it and caused it to be transported to Pella, Iowa, thence to the Iowa State Historical Building in Des Moines.

It will commemorate not only the great life of Rev. Scholte but the lives of thrift, patriotism and intelligence of all the band of his compatriots.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY O'REILLY.

The Des Moines Navigation and Railroad Company was an important institution in Iowa affairs from 1854 to 1858. The principal actor in its earlier affairs was Henry O'Reilly. A volume of autograph letters written to and from the Des Moines Valley by him and members of his family in 1854, 1855 and 1856 has been acquired by the Historical Department. More extended attention will be paid to these in the ANNALS at a later time.

Just now it is sufficient to note that his communications in 1856 are sometimes written on stationery bearing the following:

THE "DEMOINE NAVIGATION AND RAILROAD COMPANY."  
ORGANIZED MAY 6, 1854.

UNDER THE CODE OF IOWA, FOR FIFTY YEARS, WITH POWER OF CONTINUANCE.

Endowed with the Lands and Franchises accruing from grants made  
by the Governments of the United States and of the  
State of Iowa.

Its chief object is to improve the Demoine Valley, extending 520 miles from the junction of Illinois, Missouri and Iowa, through Iowa, into Minnesota:

By slackwater Navigation, for Steamers of the largest class navigating the Upper Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers, and by Railroading through any part or all of the Demoiné Valley, or to connect that Valley with any part of the surrounding States and Territories, as may be deemed advisable.

This Company is endowed with the Lands and Franchises (including the Navigation Tolls and Hydraulic Rents) accruing from grants made by the United States Government and by the Government of Iowa, for the improvement of the Demoiné, as connected with the Navigation of the Mississippi Valley and of the Lake Country, and as set forth in the contract between Henry O'Reilly and the State of Iowa—of which contract, this Company has the assignment.

The "principle place of business" is Ottumwa in Iowa, with an Office in New York. The Capital is fixed, for the present, at three Millions of Dollars, in shares of \$100 each. The Stock is chiefly owned by parties largely interested in various lines of Railroads now extending between the Atlantic, the Lake Country, and the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

The Directory consists of Edwin C. Litchfield, Orville Clark, John Stryker, Henry Ten Eyck, and Alvah Hunt, of the State of New York—Elisha C. Litchfield, N. P. Stewart and Porter Kibbee, of the State of Michigan—and Henry O'Reilly, of the State of Iowa.

The officers are—Orville Clark, President—Henry O'Reilly, Secretary—Alvah Hunt, Treasurer.

Of the reports on the construction none give a clearer idea than the following:

Ottumwa, November 19, 1856.

To the President of the Demoiné Navigation and Railroad Company:

Sir: In accordance with your instructions, I have prepared an estimate of the cost of completing the slackwater navigation of the Des Moines River, from its mouth, on the Mississippi, to Fort Des Moines, (Raccoon Fork) and herewith present the same:

The estimate contemplates improving the present channel of the river, from the Mississippi to St. Francisville, a distance of about twelve miles without locks. It is proposed to remove the snags and trees from the present bed of the river, and deepen the channel in several shoal places, by dredging and confining the water by means of wing dams, in its lower stages, to a narrow channel. From St. Francisville to Fort Des Moines, the estimate is based upon building locks and dams. The locks are estimated as stone locks, and the dams as timber and stone, with wooden abutments on the side of the river opposite the locks.

The present state of the work: Since the 1st of August we have had a party at work, with the proper tools and fixtures, clearing

snags and trees from the channel of the river below St. Francisville; they have cleared a channel wide enough for the passage of steam-boats from the Mississippi to near the Big Yellow Banks, a distance of about six miles, and we are now going on vigorously with the work beyond that point.

We have also built a most substantial Dredging Machine, which is at work excavating channels through the bars on the lower part of the river. It is intended to keep the snagging and dredging going on until the river is closed by ice. If the fall and winter are open, it is expected to clear the snags from the channel as far as St. Francisville, by the opening of navigation in the spring.

At St. Francisville the coffer dam is built, and the excavation of the pit nearly completed. The water-sills of the lock are in, and the masonry started. A large amount of materials are now delivered, and the work is being prosecuted with vigor.

At Belfast, the second lock, the walls are now built above high water, and can be completed early next season. The work has been energetically prosecuted during the low water of this year.

At Croton, the third lock is now in working order, though it is one of the short locks, and will eventually have to be lengthened, and some additional work done to the dam.

At Farmington, the fourth lock, the walls are built to nearly their full height, and there is stone enough prepared to furnish them.—It was expected to finish this lock this season, but owing to the sickness during the months of August, September and October, the contractors were not able to keep the requisite force at work to complete it. It can be finished early next season, and the dam can be built during the low water of next summer.

At Bonaparte, the fifth, and Bentonsport, the sixth locks and dams are in navigable order, though the locks are short, and will eventually have to be lengthened and the dams require some more work to complete them.

At Keosauqua, the seventh lock, the masonry is well started, and with proper energy on the part of the sub-contractors, the work can be completed and brought into use by the time of the June rise of the river to this place.

At Pittsburg, the eighth lock, the coffer-dam is now in, but I have been unable to get any masonry laid this year.

At Litchfield, the ninth lock, the Masonry is started, and it is hoped that it will be completed early next year.

At Orville, the tenth lock, the masonry is started and it is hoped that it will be completed next year.

At Iowaville, or Jordan's the eleventh lock, we had to change the location of the lock a short distance, to get a good foundation. The

masonry of the lock is started, and nearly all the materials for the lock are prepared and it is expected to complete it early next season.

At Alpine, the twelfth lock, the foundation for the lock is now about prepared and the masonry can be started early in the spring.

At White Breast, the coffer-dam is in and the foundation for the lock is nearly prepared.

Below Alpine a very large amount of materials is now prepared and there will be no difficulty in procuring all the balance that will be required to complete the work on this part of the line, during the coming winter.

The water in the river has been low this season, but the workmen have been very sickly. Some of the time more than one-half of our men between St. Francisville and Ottumwa have been sick at the same time, and for a short time nearly all of the men were sick at once. This sickness has very materially retarded the work.

Respectfully yours,

EDW. H. TRACY,  
Chief Engineer D. N. & R. R. Co.

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