

River Towns

- 1. Salubria** was settled in 1839 by members of Boston's First Society of Free Enquirers. The town flourished as a center of enlightened thought but slowly faded with the passing of its most famous resident, Abner Kneeland.
- 2. Harrisburg** was platted below the mouth of Indian Creek by Stephen Park Harris in April of 1840. It hosted a store and a ferry to Farmington. John Davidson, who in 1842 purchased the first lots sold, lived there until he died in 1886.
- 3. Watertown** was founded by William Kendrick, an early Justice of the Peace in Van Buren County. The plat was filed in the Courthouse, then in Farmington, in May of 1837. The site has been continuously occupied since its founding.
- 4. Plymouth** was surveyed in April of 1842 for John & Edward Colton. Later, the Lawrence Coal Co. expanded and resurveyed the town as Lawrence. From 1864 to 1865, the Lawrence Hotel became the Iowa Soldier's Orphans Asylum founded by Annie Turner-Wittenmyer.
- 5. Palestine** was settled by unknown parties before 1837. The Congressional Survey that year showed it was partly located on Reserved School Lands that could not be sold. This doomed the town and the balance of it was bought by Philip R. Rice with financing from Robert Cummins.
- 6. New Lexington** was platted by Isaac Reed in 1837 when the area was in Des Moines Co., Wisconsin Territory. It was home to Dr. James Turner, the Phrenologist, who with the help of others, robbed the grave of Chief Black Hawk and almost sparked a war.
- 7. East Vernon** was platted in October of 1857 by the physician, Gideon S. Bailey. Bailey, active in both business and politics, was a co-founder of the Bentonsport Academy and was elected to the Iowa Legislative Council in 1840.
- 8. South Bentonsport** was platted by Isaac Reed and Henry Smith in June of 1837. It was the home to a flouring and woolen mill. The pottery started there by James Clark and Claiborne Lea would later become the Dickson Pottery. The town was renamed **Vernon** in 1852.
- 9. Benton's Port** was platted in March of 1836 by Sanford, Church and Sullivan. In 1839 H. P. Graves replatted it for the Bentonsport Association. The dam

shared with **South Bentonsport** was completed in 1843 and powered mills in both towns. The Green Paper Mill located here was the first West of the Mississippi.

Oakland adjoined Bentonsport on the East. The town was platted by Samuel E. Paine in 1857. The station and stockyards for the Keokuk, Fort Des Moines & Minnesota Railroad were located in this town.

10. Jacksonville was a short-lived pioneer town known from an 1837 Road Viewing Report. This was probably the source of the "Jackson's Bank" coal "esteemed" by the blacksmiths in Bentonsport.

11. Columbus was platted by John R. Sparks in June of 1837. It once housed a distillery and was the place of the first indicted murder in the county. It was eclipsed by **Bentonsport** with its dam and mills. The Eli McKinney family were the last ones to leave **Columbus** in 1857.

12. Rockport was a pioneer village located at the mouth of Rock Creek. It is known from the 1837 Congressional Survey and from the 1856 speech by Judge George G. Wright's "Our Town" speech before the Keosauqua Library Association.

13. Rochester was platted in March of 1837 for M. D. Strong, J. S. Willis and William Corriell. After legislation naming it the County Seat was vetoed, Rochester competed with other early towns in the election for County Seat but lost to the **Van Buren/Desmoines City** combine known today as **Keosauqua**.

14. Desmoines City was platted by Russo King in 1839 but it was based on the survey William Duncan and Asa Wetherbee made before April of 1837. The dam and the water-powered mills along with A. W. Harlan's store were the heart of the town. It is now part of **Keosauqua**.

15. Pleasant Hill was surveyed for John Purdom in July of 1850. The Purdon Place Hotel and the Pleasant Hill Christian Church are known from the deed records. The town is now part of **Keosauqua**.

16. Van Buren was platted by James Hall for the Van Buren Company in May of 1837. In August of 1838, an instrument was filed in the County Recorder's office merging the towns of **Van Buren** and **Desmoines City** into **Keosauqua**.

South Van Buren was surveyed for James Hall as a sole proprietor in August of 1839. When the plat was filed in February of 1840, the town was called **South Keosauqua** in line with the **Desmoines City** and **Van Buren** merger into

Keosauqua.

17. Rising Sun was platted in 1839 as two separate towns with the same name divided by the Chequest Creek. John Clayton platted the North part of the town and A. B. Williams and John Groom platted the South part. By 1842, both parts were called **Pittsburg**.

18. Philadelphia was surveyed for John Pattchett in 1839 but the plat was not filed until the Spring of 1850 when he left for California. He settled in Napa County where in 1858 he established its first commercial winery.

19. Portland was platted in February of 1838 by Robert Legett and others like John Tolman, the long time Indian Trader. It was home to a steam flouring mill and the Rambo Pottery located on Clay Street. In 1883, Portland was renamed Leando after Leander Rambo.

20. Douds Station was platted by Elias & David Doud in January of 1867. It extended from the station of the Des Moines Valley Railroad down to the Des Moines River intersecting the paper town of **Alexander**. Today this area is known as **Douds**.

Alexander was platted by Nathaniel Tolman, Edmund Boyer, Wm. J. Pope and Benjamin Parker in February of 1840. No deeds for this town were ever filed in the County Recorder's Office.

21. Independence was platted by George Stump and Josiah Allison in September of 1851 but the town never developed until the Keokuk, Fort Des Moines and Minnesota Railroad arrived in 1858. In May of 1882, the town was renamed **Selma**.

22. New Market was surveyed for A. J. Davis in 1849 and the plat was filed in December of 1851. It was commonly called Black Hawk City after Chief Black Hawk. Davis built a mill and distillery East of town which he operated until 1866 when he moved West and went into mining.

23. Iowa City was surveyed in July of 1839 for John Tolman, Peter Avery and others. When the plat was filed in August, the "City" was replaced with a blank space. In 1848, William Avery and Daniel S. Clark expanded the town to the Davis county line and formally named it **lowaville**.