State of Scott:

The “Free and Independent State of Scott” celebrations of the post World War II era had their roots in the Iowa temperance movement of the late 1880s. Davenport of the late 19th Century was a city of many breweries and taverns, and Scott County did not support the state’s efforts to pass a prohibition amendment. When an amendment was passed in 1882, it was the Kohler and Lange Brewery of Davenport that filed a lawsuit, managing to overturn the amendment on a technicality.

Two years later, the state bypassed the questionable constitutionality of prohibition legislation by strengthening existing laws to effectively block the sale of alcoholic beverages. The mayor of Davenport, Ernst Claussen, stated that the citizens of Davenport would not stand for this kind of infringement of their personal liberties. A local ordinance was passed in 1884 that allowed the sale of any ‘new’ kind of beverage. Local breweries produced and marketed their products under new names, and taverns and saloons cheerfully served ‘Mum’, ‘Hop Nectar’, and ‘Kentucky Blue Grass’ to their customers.

Seventy years later, the Davenport Chamber of Commerce decided to hold ‘State of Scott’ celebrations as part of a three year program to promote the city to both residents and tourists. These celebrations, which were held in 1946, 1947, and 1948, included parades, fireworks, beauty contests, and even the election of a ‘Governor’ and the appointment of ‘Senators’ from Scott County towns.