

"IOWA HISTORICAL MOMENTS"

FACT SHEETS

VOLUME 1

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"IOWA HISTORICAL MOMENT" FACT SHEET

A PROJECT OF KDSM-TV (DES MOINES), KCRG-TV (CEDAR RAPIDS), THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA, & THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AMELIA JENKS BLOOMER

Amelia Jenks Bloomer was born May 27, 1818 in Homer, New York. When she was 17, Amelia taught school. Two years later she became governess for the children of Mr. and Mrs. Oren Chamberlain. During this period she met Dexter Chamberlain Bloomer, a Quaker from Seneca Falls, New York, who was one of the editors of the weekly newspaper *Seneca Falls Courier*. They married in Waterloo, New York, in 1840.

During the next few years Amelia wrote articles for various newspapers on the social, moral, and political issues of the time. She also attended an important temperance meeting in Seneca Falls in 1848. Organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the meeting concerned the property and voting rights for women.

In 1848 the local temperance society decided to publish their own newspaper, the *Lily*. Amelia Bloomer was the editor; her husband claims that she was the first woman to be editor and publisher of a U.S. newspaper. During 1849, Elizabeth Cady Stanton became a columnist in the *Lily*, influencing Amelia to work for women's rights, as well as for temperance. In 1850 Amelia Bloomer became acquainted with Susan B. Anthony. That year she also attacked, in the *Lily*, the Tennessee legislature for declaring that women have no souls, and thus have no right to hold property. From then on the newspaper devoted as much space to articles on women's rights as it did to temperance.

The February 1851 issue of the *Lily* was the first to mention the new style of dress with which her name came to be associated. The new style came to Amelia's attention through Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whose visiting cousin dressed in short skirts and Turkish trousers. Elizabeth adopted her cousin's costume, and so then did Amelia Bloomer. The *New York Tribune* printed an article, which was widely copied, calling the new costume the "Bloomer Costume," and using such words as Bloomerism, Bloomerites, and Bloomers. The name stuck. Amelia Bloomer became famous. She wore the costume at home, at church, for lectures, at parties, and at the office. She said that she "... found the dress comfortable, light, easy and convenient, and well adapted to the needs of my busy life."

Amelia Bloomer wore the costume until after she moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa. In 1865 she wrote to a friend about her reason for reverting to ordinary dresses. "I found the high winds which prevail here much of the time played sad work with short skirts when I went out, and I was greatly annoyed and mortified by having my skirts turned over my head and shoulders on the streets. Yet I persevered and kept on the dress nearly all the time till after the introduction of hoops. Finding them light and pleasant to wear and doing away with the necessity for heavy underskirts (which was my greatest objection to long dresses), and finding it very inconvenient as well as expensive keeping up two wardrobes — a long and short — I gradually left off the short dress." She added, "It was not at my husband's dictation, by any means, but was my own voluntary act."

Until her death, Amelia Bloomer gave hundreds of speeches across the country on such subjects as temperance, women's rights, and women's education. She died on 30 December 1894 and is buried in Council Bluffs' Fairview Cemetery.

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BUXTON, IOWA MONROE COUNTY

Buxton was one of many Iowa towns founded by railroad companies or their subsidiaries that flourished briefly and then disappeared. Although its historical moment was relatively short, it holds a special place in Iowa's heritage.

Founded in 1900 as a company town for workers in the mines of the Consolidation Coal Company, Buxton was located about 15 miles southwest of Oskaloosa. Buxton was never incorporated because that would have meant some loss of control by the company, which built houses, stores, recreational facilities, and even churches for its workers who lived there. What most struck the fancy of Iowans who knew about or visited the town was that at its peak more than half of its nearly 5,000 residents were black. They lived and worked side by side with the town's white residents in what seemed to many at the time — both black and white — an almost idyllic life. A black newspaper in Des Moines called it "the colored man's mecca of Iowa." Unfortunately, it was not long before the company chose to cut back on production in the Buxton mines, and in 1923 it abandoned the community, which gradually disappeared. All that remains are a few ruins in a field in southern Iowa, near the junction of Mahaska, Marion, and Monroe counties.

Buxton was not typical of the black experience in Iowa, as former residents quickly learned. When jobs disappeared along with the company that built and ran the town, black residents scattered to Iowa cities such as Des Moines, Ottumwa, Cedar Rapids, and Waterloo, where they experienced the full force of discrimination so typical of the black experience in the rest of the country. However distorted by time and intervening circumstances, the image of Buxton as a haven for black people lives on in the memories of its former residents and in the imaginations of those with whom they have shared their story.

Other Facts

- **Population:** 1905, 4,921; 1915, 4,518; 1925, probably fewer than 100

- **Annual income of workers in Buxton, 1914:**

Physician	\$3,000	Mine engineer	960	Farmer	900
Lawyer	1,600	Miner	499	Farmhand	260
Minister	980	Railroad worker	1,162	Carpenter	712
Teacher	490	Telegraph operator	700	Domestic	201
Merchant	1,060	Barber	355	Blacksmith	925
Store clerk	700	Midwife	250	Day Laborer	462

- **Racial and ethnic distribution:**

	1905	1915
Black	55.0%	40.0%
Slovakian	2.0	4.8
Swedish	3.0	1.9
English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish	2.0	2.2

- **Birthplace of black residents:**

Virginia	33.0	27.0
Iowa	24.0	41.0
Missouri	8.9	8.4
Alabama	6.6	3.7
Tennessee	4.8	2.9

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Note: In addition to these printed sources, there exists a Buxton Club, a group of former Buxton residents who live in Des Moines. For more information about the Buxton Club, contact Chrystal Peavy, 5425 Aurora, Bldg. 10, Apt. 300, Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

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CEDAR ROCK (THE LOWELL WALTER HOUSE)

- The limestone bluff at a bend in the Wapsipinicon River has long been called Cedar Rock. The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house built on that bluff overlooking the river thus became known as "Cedar Rock."
- This was the first and most elaborate of seven houses designed in Iowa by the internationally famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright. He also designed the river pavilion (boathouse), the front gate, the curving driveway approach, a ceremonial fire pit, and a fountain.
- It is unusual that all the furniture and accessories — including the carpet, draperies, and even the lamp shades — were also designed or selected by the architect.
- The house was constructed between 1948 and 1950 at a cost of over \$125,000. The general contractor was Kucharo Construction Company of Des Moines.
- Materials used in building the house included: concrete (for the roof with its wide, upturned eaves and the heated floors), glass, brick, and walnut wood from Missouri.
- The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. It is considered an architecturally important house for Iowa as well as the nation.
- Like all seven Iowa houses designed by Wright in what is known as the "Usonian" style, the Walter House has neither a basement nor an attic. Built-in furniture and carefully organized storage areas are important elements of the design. Some ceilings are low while others are tall with high windows on all sides. ("Usonian" was a word Wright coined as a variation on "United States"; it describes the later, simplified version of his prairie-style house.)
- One innovation in this house is the use of a prefabricated bathroom module called the "Stan Fab Unit Bath." This consisted of a white porcelain tub, toilet, and swiveling sink, within walnut-lined walls of two small, skylit bathroom spaces. This is the only Wright-designed house known to have these bath units.
- The owner, Lowell E. Walter, was a native of Quasqueton who founded and ran the Iowa Road Builders Company of Des Moines until 1944. When he died in 1981, the property was left to the State of Iowa.
- The house was featured in two national magazines. Wright's design proposal appeared in the June 1945 issue of *Ladies Home Journal*. The completed house was shown in the January 1951 issue of *The Architectural Forum*, which was dedicated to Frank Lloyd Wright's work.
- The house and grounds are owned and operated as a museum by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Public tours are conducted from May to November.

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EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Effigy Mounds National Monument was established to preserve an important collection of prehistoric Indian burial mounds. It is located five miles north of McGregor, Iowa.

- Established in 1949, the monument contains nearly 1,500 acres — or about two square miles — and is administered by the National Park Service.
- There are 191 mounds. Of these, 162 are conical or linear mounds. The most significant, however, are the 29 effigy mounds in the form of bears and birds. Only in southern Wisconsin, and adjacent areas in Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa, do such effigy mounds exist.
- The most striking effigy is the Great Bear Mound, which measures 70 feet across the shoulders and forelegs, 137 feet long, and 3 1/2 feet high.
- The oldest mounds date from the Red Ochre Culture, about 2,500 B.C. The other major culture represented is the Hopewell. These people are thought to have lived in the area from about 100 B.C. to 600 A.D.
- The culture that made the effigies occupied the land from a time that overlapped the Hopewell Indians until some time before the 14th century, when the area was home to the Oneota Indians.
- While European-Americans were present in the area since the late 1600s, the mounds were not investigated until 1881, when Theodore H. Lewis and Alfred J. Hill undertook a survey of the mounds and produced maps that show the mounds that still remain today as well as those destroyed before the monument was established.
- Visitors to the monument can stop at the visitors center and museum to learn more about the history of the mounds and to see exhibits of Indian artifacts removed from the mounds.
- Visitors can also hike 11 miles of wooded trails through the monument.
- In addition to its valuable archaeological treasures, the monument contains an interesting variety of wildlife and vegetation that represent a biological community not found anywhere else in the National Park system.
- The area also boasts beautiful panoramas of the Mississippi River valley.

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FORT ATKINSON

In 1840, the United States government pressured the Winnebago Indians of Wisconsin to cede their ancestral lands and move to northeastern Iowa. The land they were removed to was located along the Turkey River in Winneshiek County, within what was called the Neutral Ground. The Neutral Ground was a 40-mile-wide buffer zone established by a treaty in 1828 to keep peace among the Sioux, living in what is now southern Minnesota, and Iowa tribes to the south — the Sauk, Mesquakie, and Ioway. But peace did not come. The federal government hoped that placing the Winnebago between the tribes would bring stability to the area.

Brigadier General Henry Atkinson brought in a company of infantry to establish a military camp, which was later named Fort Atkinson in his honor. Troops were needed to protect the Winnebago from the other tribes, to prevent any Winnebago from returning to Wisconsin, and to keep out European American settlers. In 1841 a company of dragoons — mounted infantry — joined the other troops.

With the addition of the dragoons, the camp's living quarters became inadequate. Atkinson received the approval of the federal government to construct a temporary fort. The site selected was on a limestone bluff near the Turkey River about 50 miles west of the Mississippi. Most of the buildings were built between 1840 and 1842 out of logs and limestone quarried from the area. The fort was unusually elaborate for one that was supposed to be temporary. In fact, an army inspector general visiting the garrison in 1842 was angered by the time and money spent on the fort. In his opinion, no temporary fort should cost more than \$500. Fort Atkinson had already cost \$28,000 and another \$5,000 was needed to complete it.

The fort was never once attacked and daily life in the garrison was uneventful. Soldiers spent their days building the fort, cooking, gardening, caring for the animals, standing guard, and performing many other routine duties. One task the men did not perform was laundering clothes. This was done by women — usually wives of enlisted men. At any one time there were usually more than 150 people living at Fort Atkinson.

In 1848 and 1849 the Winnebago were removed to the Crow Wing reservation in Minnesota. The Mesquakie tribe had pushed farther west and south, and the Sioux would soon be removed. Thus, there was little need to maintain mounted troopers at the fort. After only nine years of use Fort Atkinson was abandoned. It rapidly fell into disrepair as settlers stole doors, windows, and hardware. In 1855 the War Department sold the damaged buildings and within a few years settlers had bought the land. Eventually all but a few stone buildings were altered or destroyed.

In 1921 the State of Iowa acquired the fort site. Later, research and archaeological surveys made reconstruction of some of the fort possible. In 1968, the fort was made a State Preserve. Today, visitors can see a collection of china, glassware, and other excavated artifacts now housed within the Fort Atkinson museum. The fort also hosts an annual celebration in September — called the Rendezvous — where fort life of the 1840s is reenacted and the public can sample food and crafts from the period.

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ABBIE GARDNER SHARP CABIN
ARNOLDS PARK

One of the few violent conflicts between settlers and Native Americans in Iowa occurred near Arnolds Park in what became known as the Spirit Lake Massacre. Although its significance has been exaggerated it remains one of the best-known events in Iowa history. The Spirit Lake Massacre has spawned much historical research and speculation. Perhaps the most well known of these stories is that of Abbie Gardner and her family.

Abbie's father built a small cabin at Pillsbury Point on the shore of Lake Okoboji in 1856. At the time, the Gardner family and their neighbors were the first white settlers in the area. In March 1857, 38 settlers — including Abbie's mother, father, and four siblings — were killed by members of a Wahpekute band of Sioux (Dakota) Indians. Unharmed, Abbie spent three months in captivity before being released for a ransom that consisted of two horses, 12 blankets, two kegs of powder, 20 pounds of tobacco, and 70 yards of cloth. What is usually omitted from popular accounts about the uprising is that the settlers had previously mistreated the Native Americans. For example, the Indians had tried to barter for food because they were starving, but the settlers were uncooperative.

Returning to the cabin 34 years later, Abbie Gardner Sharp lived there until her death in 1921. She operated the cabin as a tourist attraction where she sold souvenirs and copies of her book, *History of the Spirit Lake Massacre*. Largely through Sharp's promotion, Gardner Cabin became a landmark ingrained in Iowa's lore.

In 1959 the State Historical Society of Iowa took possession of Gardner Cabin and has since restored it to resemble its approximate 1856 appearance. Inside the cabin visitors can see furnishings typical of pioneer life during the period. Near the cabin stands a monument dedicated in 1895 to the memory of those killed in the uprising. There's also a one-acre park, and a visitors center with exhibits of local artifacts, all of which give a sense of what life was like in a frontier settlement in mid-19th century Iowa. Gardner Cabin was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

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IOWA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

HERBERT CLARK HOOVER

Born in West Branch, Iowa, on 10 August 1874, Herbert Hoover was the second of three children in a Quaker family. Herbert's father was a blacksmith who died when Herbert was six years old. His mother died three years later, after which he went to Newberg, Oregon, to live with an uncle.

At age 17 Hoover entered Stanford University, graduating four years later with a degree in engineering. After graduation, Hoover worked for various mining firms — first in Australia, later in China. In 1899 he married Lou Henry, a native of Waterloo whom Herbert had met when they were both geology students at Stanford. From 1901 to 1908, Hoover worked in London for a British mining firm, which sent him traveling across the world. He acquired great wealth and a worldwide reputation in his profession.

President Woodrow Wilson called Hoover home after the outbreak of World War I to become U. S. Food Administrator. After the armistice, the Allied "Big Four" leaders appointed him director of relief and rehabilitation to help Europe's postwar food shortage and famines. When Hoover returned to the U.S. in September 1919, some friends launched a campaign to give him the Republican nomination for president. Hoover failed to get the nomination, but the new Republican President Harding appointed him Secretary of Commerce.

In 1928, Hoover received the Republican presidential nomination overwhelmingly on the first ballot at the national convention. During his campaign Hoover only made seven speeches, emphasizing prosperity, farm relief, and the protective tariff. He also supported prohibition. Hoover won with a larger popular vote (21,430,743 to 15,016,443 over Democrat Alfred E. Smith) and a larger electoral vote (444 to 87) than any other president. Unfortunately, Hoover's administration was dominated by an economic depression following the stock market crash in 1929. His opponents criticized him for his "trickle down" theory based on the idea if government aided big business at the top, business would then create more jobs and relieve unemployment. The major issue of the 1932 election was the depression, which Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt used to defeat Hoover (22,821,857 to 15,761,841 popular votes, 472 to 59 electoral votes).

Despite his loss, Hoover remained active in the Republican Party until the end of his life. He also wrote several books about his political experiences. He died in New York City on 20 October 1964.

HENRY AGARD WALLACE

Henry Agard Wallace was born 7 October 1888, Adair County, Iowa. In 1895, his grandfather, known as "Uncle Henry" Wallace, editor of newspapers in Winterset, bought the periodical that became *Wallace's Farmer*.

Henry A. — like his father Henry Cantwell Wallace — graduated from Iowa State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts and was editor of *Wallace's Farmer*. Henry A. was also a noted crop geneticist, and developed the first hybrid seed corn for commercial use. With two friends he founded Pioneer Hi-bred Seed Corn Company, one of the largest suppliers of hybrid seed corn in the world.

In 1933, Wallace was appointed U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and was a leader in shaping farm policies for the New Deal. In 1940 he was nominated for Vice-President, for Franklin D. Roosevelt's third term. They won the election, but Wallace was replaced as vice presidential nominee in 1944 owing to friction over disagreements about foreign policy. He was later appointed Secretary of Commerce, a post he held until 1946. At that time Wallace became further opposed to America's foreign policy, particularly in regard to the Soviet Union.

This dispute led to the formation of the Progressive Party, which named Wallace their candidate for president in 1948. Although Wallace received more than one million popular votes, he won no electoral

votes. After his defeat he returned to his post as editor of the *New Republic*, a position he had held since 1946. He spent the remainder of his life in New York, conducting experiments on plant genetics, and public speaking on agriculture and foreign policy topics. Wallace died in 1965.

The Wallace birthplace in Adair County, near Orient, still stands, and a marker to Henry A. is featured in a county park near the site.

JAMES BAIRD WEAVER

James Baird Weaver, who ran for president twice for two different political parties, was born 12 June 1833 in Dayton, Ohio. His family moved to the Iowa Territory in 1842, settling in Davis County, near what is now Bloomfield.

By 1852, Weaver had begun to study law in Bloomfield, and in 1855 he entered Cincinnati Law School. He graduated the next year and opened a law practice in Bloomfield.

Weaver ran for a number of offices over the next several years and was elected to Congress in 1878. In 1880 the Greenback Party — which eventually merged with the Democratic Party — nominated him as its candidate for president. He received more than 300,000 votes in the general election but received no electoral votes.

He was elected to two more terms to Congress before he was once again nominated for the presidency — this time by the Populist Party in 1892. Though he lost again, more than one million voters favored him — about 8.5 % of the vote — and he won 22 electoral votes.

Although Weaver remained active in national politics, the last political office he held was that of mayor of Colfax, Iowa. He was elected in 1901.

James Baird Weaver died on 6 February 1912. Three years later the town of Bloomfield dedicated Weaver Park in his honor.

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IOWA STATE CAPITOL DES MOINES, IOWA

History

In 1870 there was a contest to decide the design of Iowa's state capitol. An ad calling for submissions of architectural plans appeared in several local and national newspapers. A state commission selected two plans from the 14 submitted, agreeing to combine elements of both into one plan. J. C. Farrand of Des Moines and Alfred H. Piquenard of Chicago submitted the winning designs.

Ultimately, several architects would have a hand in designing the capitol. The project was initially directed by Piquenard, as architect, and his Chicago supervisor, John C. Cochrane, who acted as superintendent. Piquenard traveled to Europe to study its classical architecture, bringing these influences to his capitol design. He died in the middle of the project, and his assistant, M.E. Bell, replaced him. Bell was later replaced by Des Moines architect W. F. Hackney, who finished the project.

The thirteenth Iowa General Assembly designated \$1.5 million for the capitol, stipulating that local materials and talent be used whenever possible. This was meant to both lower costs and to highlight Iowa's abundant resources. Construction began in 1871. Unfortunately, the stone foundation cracked during the winter and had to be removed. A second foundation was laid in 1873. The building was completed in 1886 at a cost of \$2,873,295. In 1902 the capitol was repaired and modernized. Improvements included the installation of electricity, elevators, and a phone system. A fire two years later damaged several offices and chambers that had to be restored. Repairs, improvements, and the purchase of artwork raised the total cost to about \$3.3 million.

Architecture of the Capitol

Iowa's capitol is one of 12 similar structures built during a period (1865-1890) sometimes called the "Gilded Age of State Capitols." Our capitol was one of the earliest and most influential of this period. Most of these capitols, including Iowa's, took their basic design from the national Capitol — particularly its dome, portico, rotunda, and wings. The form was symbolic of American bipartisan democracy.

In addition, most of these capitols were lavishly adorned with marble, stained glass, exotic wood, and gilded domes. Two ideals of the era — the importance of community (fostered by the Civil War), and the desire for personal achievement — were represented within and around Iowa's capitol by its murals, sculptures, and other artwork. The structure's ornamentation derived from classical Greek and Roman motifs. Thus, the Iowa state capitol was designed to inspire patriotism and pride by wedding the ideals and resources of its citizens to the great cultures of the past.

- The diameter of the dome measures 80 feet. It has been gilded four times and its gold is 1/250,000 of an inch thick.
- This is the sixth capitol in Iowa, and the third since Iowa became a state. It's the second one to be located in Des Moines.
- There are 398 steps from the ground to the top of the dome.
- There are 29 varieties of marble used in the capitol — 22 foreign and seven domestic.
- The exterior materials include sandstone, limestone, and granite.

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IOWA'S EXPOSITION PALACES

Once, there were palaces in Iowa. They were made, not from stone, but from the products of the state's rich land — corn, coal, flax, and blue grass. These palaces were erected as temporary showcases at fairs and expositions held to highlight the major products of the area. The palaces were usually huge, elaborate structures, sometimes taking up one city block. Elements of Romanesque and Moorish architectural styles were often prominent in the palaces, which were typically constructed of lightweight wood and chicken wire and then covered and ornamented with corn or whatever the area's dominant product was. Inside the exposition palace was a flurry of activity — bands played, operas wailed, speeches droned, and local citizens displayed their handmade and homegrown goods. National celebrities often visited the palaces.

Below is a list of Iowa's exposition palaces.

CORN PALACES, SIOUX CITY

All five of Iowa's corn palaces were built in Sioux City.

■ The first one opened 3 October 1887. Located at the northwest corner of Jackson and Fifth streets, it was 100 feet high, and covered 200 square feet. Its architecture was generally Moorish in style. President Grover Cleveland visited the palace on his honeymoon. These materials were reportedly used to construct the palace:

300,000 feet of lumber	15,000 bushels of corn
5,000 bushels of Indian corn	500 pounds of carpet tacks
3,000 pounds of nails	1,500 pounds of small brads
2,500 feet of rope	500 pounds of small wire
3,500 yards of colored cloth	

The total cost, not including donated labor and materials, was \$28,000.

■ The second palace opened 24 September 1888. Located at the northeast corner of Pierce and Sixth streets, the palace was one-quarter block square, 100 feet high. Visited by Iowa Governor William Larrabee, its architecture contained Richardsonian Romanesque elements.

■ The third one opened 23 September 1889. Located at Pierce and Jackson streets, it contained elements of both Richardsonian Romanesque and Gothic architecture, and had a tower 180 feet high.

■ The fourth palace opened 23 September 1890. Located at the northeast corner of Pierce and Sixth streets, its architecture featured Moorish Revival architecture.

■ The fifth palace opened 1 October 1891. Located at Pierce and Jackson Streets, it was one block long, and its main dome was 200 feet high. Architecturally, it resembled the United States Capitol, with a striking Richardsonian Romanesque arched entrance.

COAL PALACE, OTTUMWA

■ Iowa's only coal exposition palace opened in Ottumwa on 16 September 1890. Located on Main Street, it was 230 feet long and 200 feet high. Its architecture featured Romanesque elements. Its total cost was \$30,000. Exhibits honored the coal-producing counties in Iowa. Noted visitors included President Benjamin Harrison, Governor Horace Boies of Iowa, William McKinley, Carrie Chapman Catt, the Gilmore Band of the West from Pella, and Barnum's Circus. The operas "Powhatan" and "The Mikado" were performed. The coal palace reopened in 1891, but was torn down after that year's festival ended.

BLUE GRASS PALACES, CRESTON

■ Iowa's only exposition palaces built of blue grass were built at the county fairgrounds in Creston. The first one opened in 1889. The second one opened on 21 August 1890. It was a city block long, with a central tower 120 feet high. Among the exhibits were a life-sized Newfoundland dog and a horse, both made of blue grass; a sheep made of oats and wheat; a life-sized horse made of red clover heads; and a display of 76 kinds of wood native to Fremont County. The Blue Grass Palace reopened in 1891 and 1892, after which it was abandoned.

FLAX PALACES, FOREST CITY

■ Iowa's only exposition palaces made of flax were built at the county fairgrounds in Forest City. The first opened in 1890. It was rebuilt in 1891, and recovered in 1892 and 1893. The 1890 building was 158 feet long, with 3 towers. Forty machines wired strands of flax into small bundles and then wove them into yard-long panels that were trimmed so that only the flax heads showed. Local boys received 3¢ per yard for the work. Admission was 35¢ per person, and 11,000 people visited on one day.

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"IOWA HISTORICAL MOMENT" FACT SHEET

A PROJECT OF KDSM-TV (DES MOINES), KCRG-TV (CEDAR RAPIDS), THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA, & THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IOWA'S FRESHWATER PEARL BUTTONS

The first freshwater pearl button industry in the United States began in Muscatine, Iowa, when John Boepple began making buttons in his home. Boepple, a German immigrant, traveled to the Midwest searching for a freshwater shell to rival the mother-of-pearl found in ocean shells.

The mussels abundant in the Mississippi River near Muscatine provided this source. Iowa's button industry quickly boomed. By 1905 the state was second nationally in button production, and by 1910 Iowa had 70 pearl button factories.

Workers gathered mussel shells from the rivers with long rakes. Then they steamed, soaked, and cleaned the shells, discarding the meat. Next, they cut blanks from the shells, and then carved, polished, and drilled holes to finish the button. Finally, they either boxed the buttons or sewed them to cards for sale.

Working conditions in Iowa's button factories were no better than those of other industries in the first decades of this century. Soaking vats, where clam meat decayed from the shells, contained putrid, poisonous water. Workers complained of throat and lung diseases caused by the heavy dust spewed from cutting and polishing machines. Muscatine workers protested these conditions, and other issues such as hours and wages, in a 15-month strike during 1911-1912. This strike ended with few changes in labor conditions. Not until 1933 did a new button workers' union succeed in improving the working conditions.

Iowa's pearl button production peaked around 1916. By the 1930s it had seriously declined owing to several factors: depletion of mussel beds by over-fishing, competition from foreign manufacturers and plastic buttons, and, perhaps most important, changes in fashion that required fewer buttons.

Timeline

1891 - John Boepple's first button production
1884 - steam-powered machines
1907 - Congressional study of decline in mussel population
1910 - 3,172 button workers report 60-72 hour work weeks
1910 - 25 button factories in Muscatine
1916 - peak of Iowa's button industry
1923 - tariff enacted against competition from Japanese freshwater pearl buttons
1930s - button industry in decline

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IOWA'S NEW DEAL MURALS

From 1933 to 1943, public art flourished in Iowa. During that period several New Deal programs financed public art in the state. The programs varied slightly but all were intended to both support unemployed artists and provide art for the general public by commissioning murals for public buildings.

Many of Iowa's New Deal murals were painted in a style known as *regionalist*. Regionalism, an art movement of the 1920s and 1930s, emphasized realistic portrayals of local people and settings. Regionalism represented both a revolt by many artists from the dominant influence of Europe and the eastern United States, and a practical solution to the depression-era reality that trips abroad for inspiration were no longer affordable. Iowan Grant Wood, through his Stone City art colony, encouraged his students to adopt this style; he influenced many of the artists who were later to paint Iowa murals. Wood served as the state director of the Public Works Art Project (PWAP), the first of the New Deal programs to be funded.

Another Iowan, Edward Rowan of Cedar Rapids, was assistant director of a later program, the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture, which financed most of the murals in the state. Iowa's unusually high number of murals may have been the result of Rowan's prominent position.

NEW DEAL MURALS IN IOWA (Those in parentheses are destroyed)

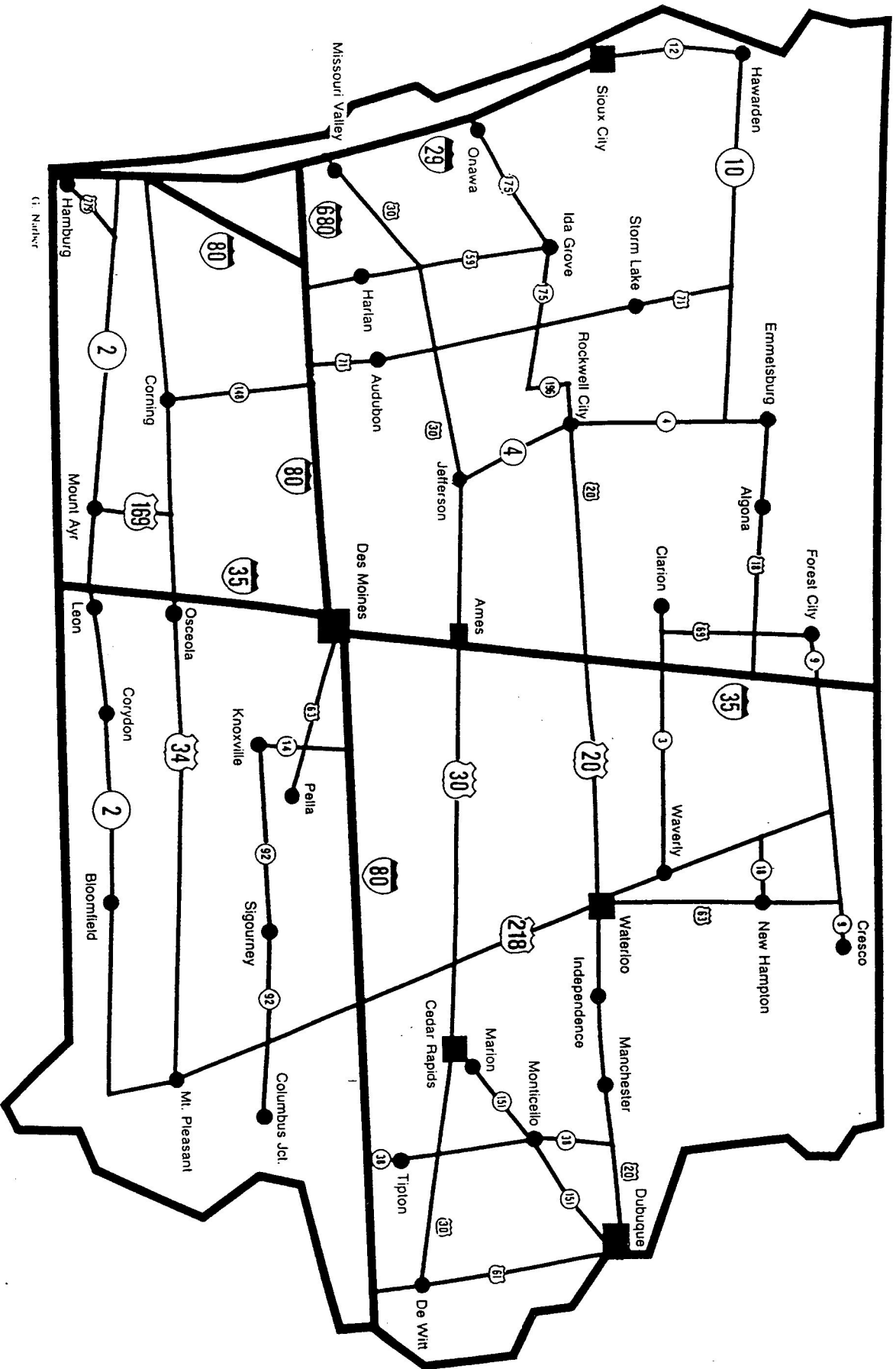
Algona Post Office - Daily Bread by Francis Robert White (now in American Legion Building)
Ames Post Office - Evolution of Corn by Lowell Houser
Ames ISU Library - When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follows by Grant Wood, et al.
Audubon Post Office - Audubon's Trip Down the Ohio and Mississippi - 1820 by Virginia Snedeker
Bloomfield Post Office - Autumn in Iowa by John Sharp
(Cedar Rapids Federal Court - Law and Culture by Francis Robert White, Harry Jones, Don Glasell, Everett Jeffrey)
Cedar Rapids Harrison School - Transportation by William Henning
Clarion Post Office - by Paul Faulkner
Columbus Junction Post Office - Lovers Leap by Sante Graziani
Corning Post Office - Band Concert by Marion Gilmore
Corydon Post Office - Volunteer Fire Department by Marion Gilmore
Cresco Post Office - Iowa Farming by Richard Haines
(Iowa State Fairgrounds [Des Moines] - by Dan Rhodes and Howard Johnson)
Des Moines Callanan Jr. High - by Glen Chamberlain and George Grooms
Des Moines Public Library - A Social History of Des Moines by Harry Jones, et al.
DeWitt Post Office - Shucking Corn by John V. Bloom, Jr.
Dubuque Post Office - Early Settlers of Dubuque by Bertrand Adams and Early Mississippi Steamboat by William E. L. Bunn
Emmetsburg Post Office - Wildlife Conservation by Lee Allen
Forest City Post Office - Evening on the Farm by Orr C. Fisher
(Hamburg Post Office - Festival at Hamburg by William E. L. Bunn)
Harlan Post Office - The Farmer Feeding Industry by Richard Gates
Hawarden Post Office - Hunters by John Sharp
Ida Grove Post Office - Preparation for the First County Fair, Ida 1872 by Andrene Kauffman
Independence Post Office - Postman in Storm by Robert Tabor
Jefferson Post Office - The New Calf by Tom Savage
Knoxville Post Office - Pioneer Group at the Red Rock Line - 1845 by Marvin Beerbohm

Leon Post Office - Rural Free Delivery by Criss Glasell
 Manchester Post Office - Iowa Farm Life by William Henning
 Marion Post Office - Communication by Mail by Dan Rhodes (now in Marion City Hall)
 Missouri Valley Post Office - Iowa Fair by Francis Robert White
 Monticello Post Office - Iowa Landscape by William Palmer
 Mount Ayr Post Office - Corn Parade by Orr C. Fisher
 Mount Pleasant Post Office - Mt. Pleasant in the Forties -Town...-College, and... -Farm by Dorothea Tomlinson
 New Hampton Post Office - Breaking the Colt by Tom Savage
 Onawa Post Office - Erosion and its Control by Lee Allen
 Osceola Post Office - The Arrival of the First Train by Byron Ben Boyd
 Pella Post Office - Hollanders Settle in Pella by Byron Ben Boyd
 Rockwell City Post Office - Summer by John Sharp
 Sigourney Post Office - Indian Harvest by Richard Olsen
 Sioux City East High School - Indian Council, The First Cabin and Arrival of the First Teacher by Herman O. Myre (now in Sioux City East Jr. High School)
 Sioux City Central High School - Arrival of the First White Settler, Council Oak and River Traffic and the Fur Trade by Rollin E. Beard (now in Castle on the Hill)
 Storm Lake Post Office - Storm Lake by Dan Rhodes (now in Storm Lake Public Library)
 Tipton Post Office - Cattle by John V. Bloom, Jr.
 Waterloo Post Office - Holiday and Exposition by Edgar Britton (now in Waterloo Public Library)
 Waverly Post Office - A Letter from Home in 1856 by Mildred Pelzer

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LOCATIONS OF MURALS IN IOWA



"IOWA HISTORICAL MOMENT" FACT SHEET

A PROJECT OF KDSM-TV (DES MOINES), KCRG-TV (CEDAR RAPIDS), THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA, & THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IOWA'S "POULTRY QUEEN"

Traditionally, Iowa's family farm has operated as a partnership involving all members of the family, with women playing a significant part. In addition to handling the arduous domestic chores, producing the family's clothing, and helping in the fields, women on early Iowa farms often worked to bring in extra money. One of the most common ways women earned cash was by raising chickens and selling eggs. "Egg money" was often vital to a family farm operation, especially if the year's crops were disappointing.

One of Iowa's most successful poultry raisers was Rebecca Johnson of Maxwell. She began raising chickens, ducks, and turkeys in the 1880s. She studied how incubators operated and experimented with ways to improve them. Eventually, she developed an incubator alarm that went off if the temperature inside the incubator got too hot or too cold. She was one of the first Iowa women to receive a patent for an invention.

Farmers frequently asked her for advice about how to raise chicks. In response, she wrote a book called *How to Hatch, Brood, Feed and Prevent Chicks from Dying in the Shell* in 1905. Among the bits of advice she offers in her book: "The eager, active, hungry hen is the profit maker. Lazy chickens, like lazy people, are worthless."

In 1908, *Wallace's Farmer* magazine wrote a series of articles about Johnson, giving her the nickname "poultry queen" because of her expertise in the subject.

A generation later, small family businesses like Rebecca Johnson's had almost disappeared with the coming of the large-scale poultry industry.

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THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

- The Lincoln Highway was the first transcontinental highway for cars in the United States. Stretching from New York to San Francisco, it passed through Iowa and eleven other states.
- The Lincoln Highway was named for President Abraham Lincoln.
- The idea for the highway is credited to Indianapolis 500 founder Carl Fisher, who in 1912 called it the Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway.
- In Iowa, the Lincoln Highway was little more than a dirt road between towns. After a rain, it became an impenetrable river of mud.
- Many early cross-country travelers fell in love with Iowa's landscape. Wrote one traveler: "Nowhere in the world have I felt more perfect harmony between earth and man than among the farms of Iowa, no more comfortable space and spiritual freedom between man and man."
- In 1919, Eisenhower and the first Army Transcontinental Motor Convoy dramatized the need for a mobile military. They stopped in Mamie Doud Eisenhowers' hometown of Boone, which was on the Lincoln Highway.
- Other Iowa communities along the highway included: Council Bluffs, Missouri Valley, Carroll, Denison, Jefferson, Marshalltown, Ames, Nevada, Belle Plaine, Mount Vernon, and Clinton.
- Travel along the Lincoln Highway grew quickly thanks to the affordable Model T, and the rising popularity of camping and vacationing by car.
- By 1925 a national highway numbering system was established that's still in use today. Officially, the Lincoln Highway no longer existed when it became part of U.S. 30. But many still affectionately referred to the route as the Lincoln Highway. In fact, the Lincoln Highway Commission (a national group that helped Iowa lobby for paved roads) had 3,000 concrete markers placed along the route. The marker was a red, white, and blue emblem with a large "L" in the center. People were fond of the Lincoln Highway because to them it was a symbol of America's robust spirit of freedom and patriotism.
- Today, the alert motorist can still see remains of the old highway — concrete highway markers, faded advertisements, early tourist camps with tiny cabins, an out-of-the-way garage or diner. With the help of old road maps, atlases, and guidebooks, finding and following Iowa's Lincoln Highway can be a fascinating adventure.

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MATTHEW EDEL BLACKSMITH SHOP
HAVERHILL, IOWA

Named for its German immigrant owner, the Matthew Edel Blacksmith Shop opened in Haverhill (near Marshalltown) in 1883. Edel operated the shop until his death in 1940, after which the Edel family kept the shop in the order and condition that its founder maintained.

Edel himself produced most of the tools to carry out a blacksmith's duties, which included forging, repairing farm implements, and shoeing the horses of local farmers — activities that took place in the front half of the shop. In the rear half Edel did woodworking, wagon work, and manufactured tools that he himself invented. Among his inventions on display are a "dehorning clipper" he patented, a wedge cutter, a nut pliers, garden hoes, and various styles of iron cemetery crosses. He advertised these products and sold them through the mail.

The layout of the shop remains virtually as Edel designed it; the tools are where he left them. It's as though the blacksmith just stepped out for a moment. When Edel purchased the property it consisted only of a small two-story wood-frame house with a summer kitchen. He converted the house into a blacksmith shop, making several additions and alterations over the years. The shop took on its present form in 1915 when he added a car garage onto the west end of the building.

The Matthew Edel Blacksmith Shop and residence thus preserve both the life of an Iowa artisan and the record of a rural trade important in 19th and early 20th-century Iowa.

OTHER FACTS:

- Matthew Edel was born in Germany in 1856. He moved to this country in 1873. In the late 1870s he moved to Iowa; he lived briefly near Iowa City before settling in Haverhill.
- In 1983 the Edel Blacksmith Shop was entered on the National Register of Historic Places.
- In 1986 the Edel family donated the shop to the State of Iowa.
- The SHSI administers the shop, while the Historical Society of Marshall County manages it.

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MESQUAKIE SETTLEMENT

The Mesquakie are one of the most important American Indian groups in Iowa history. They are also one of the few Indian tribes in the country to have purchased land after being removed from it. Known more commonly as the Fox, or the Sac and Fox, they call themselves Meskwahki, translated as "Red Earths" or "Red Earth People."

In 1845, after United States government treaties forced the Mesquakie to leave Iowa, the tribe was removed to Kansas. In 1856, a band of five Mesquakie, led by Maminiwanige, returned to Iowa to search for a place to live. Homeland was important to the Mesquakie, as it is to most Native Americans, because their spiritual and religious beliefs were intertwined with the land itself. To be removed from their homeland was to lose touch with their deities and sacred places.

The Mesquakie managed to raise enough money from the sale of ponies to buy 80 acres of timberland on the Iowa River in Tama County. Governor James Grimes championed the Mesquakie's return to Iowa, and pledged that they could live here in peace. Thus, the Mesquakie, unlike American Indians who lived on federally owned reservations, owned the land they lived on.

Today, with additional purchases of land, the Iowa Mesquakie homeland has grown to over 2,000 acres. They have contributed greatly to Iowa's cultural heritage and diversity. Each August since the early 1900s, the Mesquakie settlement at Tama has been the site of a powwow celebration that has entertained and edified generations of Iowans.

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MONTAUK HISTORIC SITE
GOVERNOR'S HOME, UNION SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND CLERMONT MUSEUM
CLERMONT, IOWA

Built in 1874, the home of Iowa's twelfth governor, William Larrabee, Montauk is set among a forest of 100,000 pine trees and overlooks the Turkey River Valley and the town of Clermont. Larrabee, a powerful and popular man, was one of the founders of the Republican party in Iowa and served as governor for two terms — from 1886 to 1890 — after 17 years as a state senator. He died in 1912.

A world traveller, Larrabee filled his elegant 14-room mansion with souvenirs from his many trips. Among the original furnishings to see at Montauk are Tiffany lamps, Wedgwood china, Italian statues, German clocks, Mexican onyx tables, paintings, and thousands of books.

Montauk was donated to the State of Iowa in 1976, 11 years after Larrabee's daughter, Anna, died at the age of 97. Anna had lived there all her life, maintaining the mansion much as it had been when her father was alive. Indeed, it is a "living home" — you can easily imagine what it was like for a single family to have lived there for more than 100 years, each generation leaving its own imprint upon William Larrabee's indelible design.

OTHER FACTS:

- The mansion was built of brick molded of native clay and kilned at Clermont.
- Montauk was named by Larrabee's wife, Anna, for the lighthouse at the eastern end of Long Island, New York, that guided her seafaring father home from whaling voyages.
- Crowning Montauk's roof is a "widow's walk" — like those used by the waiting wives of captains to watch for a ship.
- On the 46-acre grounds are statues of Civil War heroes. The barn, workshop, creamery, laundry, well house and ice house have also been restored.
- Two other state historic sites, administered by the State Historical Society of Iowa, are located in Clermont. These are:
 - **The Union Sunday School** — Built in 1858 it houses the largest Kimball pipe organ existing in the United States. The organ, a gift from Larrabee, was built in 1896 and was completely restored in 1980. Annual organ concerts are held in the church.
 - **Clermont Museum** — Originally a school that Larrabee built in 1912, it featured an innovative second-floor museum. In 1970 Larrabee's granddaughter, Julia Allen, moved the museum to its current location in the former Clermont State Bank building. Collections on display include china, crystal, coins, fossils, and seashells, plus Native American artifacts.
- Montauk and the Union Sunday School are both on the National Register of Historic Places.

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For more information about this and other historic sites, please write or call Sites Coordinator,
State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, 515-281-7650.

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THE STEAMBOAT BERTRAND

- The Bertrand was built in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1864 at a cost of approximately \$65,000.
- The steamboat, which measured 161 feet from prow to stern, was 40 feet wide and weighed 215 tons.
- The Bertrand was an upper Ohio class sternwheeler of the mountain packet type, designed for navigating the shallow waters of the upper Missouri River.
- The Bertrand sank on its maiden voyage from St. Louis to Fort Benton in the Montana territory.
- Part of the steamboat's structure and some of its cargo were recovered soon after the sinking.
- The 4 1/2 foot-deep hold of the Bertrand hull was crammed when it left St. Louis. The cargo included: 450 steel flasks of mercury (weighing 176 pounds each) about \$4,000 in gold and silver coins, and possibly 5,000 gallons of whiskey and other consumer goods destined for Montana merchants.
- The value of the lost mercury alone at today's prices would be about \$250,000.
- The hull of the Bertrand was covered with 30 feet of sand.
- Among the items found in the cargo were glassware, lanterns, matches, gunpowder, picks, shovels, axes, plows, stoneware crockery, Howitzer shells, miners' hats and boots, men's clothing, baby shoes, toys, canned peaches, cherries, peanuts, and almonds.
- It took more than four years to clean, study, and catalog the more than 2 million artifacts that were recovered. The stored artifacts take up almost 100,000 cubic feet in the DeSoto Bend Visitor Center, located near the Missouri River in Harrison County.
- Parts of the steamboat are on display in the Cargo Gallery of the Visitors Center. Before the Bertrand was discovered, little technical data and only a few artifacts existed from America's 19th-century river transportation era.
- The Bertrand was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 14, 1969.

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TERRACE HILL
DES MOINES, IOWA

History

Terrace Hill began as the dream house of Des Moines banker and investor Benjamin Franklin Allen. Allen came to Fort Des Moines in 1848, and by 1866 he was wealthy enough to build a mansion for his family on the west side of the Des Moines River. He hired the well-known Chicago architect, William W. Boyington, to design the house, and a landscape gardener from Buckingham Palace to design the lawn. The cost of building and furnishing Terrace Hill was at least \$250,000. Today, that cost would be several million dollars.

In 1868 Terrace Hill was completed and the Allen family moved in. Early the next year the Allens held a housewarming party, described then as "the most elaborate bash in the State's history." The party cost over \$10,000 and was attended by many of Iowa's and America's wealthiest and most influential people. A reporter noted that the guests "dined on oysters, boned turkey in jelly, two twenty-five pound fruitcakes and ice cream sculpted into likenesses of George Washington."

The Allen family did not stay long at Terrace Hill. In 1875 Allen's business ventures failed and he went bankrupt. In 1884, Frederick M. Hubbell bought Terrace Hill for only \$55,000. Hubbell became one of Iowa's richest men, making his fortune in life insurance, railroads, and land investments.

The Hubbell family lived in the house for 73 years. During that time such modern conveniences as electricity and a swimming pool were added to the mansion. But by 1957 the huge mansion was considered impractical for private use and the last Hubbell moved out.

Terrace Hill stood empty for over 14 years. In 1971 the Hubbell family donated the mansion to the State of Iowa to be kept as a monument to the people and times that created it. Throughout the 1970s admirers of Terrace Hill, including the Terrace Hill Society, worked hard to raise money for its renovation. In 1976 the third floor was converted into a private residence for the governor's family. Meanwhile, renovation of the rest of the mansion continued. Great care was taken to give the home a late-19th-century appearance. In 1978 the restoration of the first floor was completed and the home was opened to the public for tours.

Architecture of Terrace Hill

Terrace Hill is recognized as one of the country's best examples of the Americanized Italian, or Second Empire, style. The mansard roof, the tower on the north front, the elaborately carved mouldings on the windows, and the bracketed balconies and canopies are among the typical elements of this style that adorn Terrace Hill.

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THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS AT FORT DES MOINES

One of the most unique and significant contributions to the war effort in World War II in Iowa was the establishment of the WAC training center at Fort Des Moines. This was the first time that the U.S. armed services allowed women to join.

- During World War II, thousands of women enjoyed new opportunities to obtain jobs not available before. Like private industry, the military was shorthanded and decided to allow women to join the service to fill a number of noncombat roles, thereby freeing more men for combat and other jobs then considered unsuitable for women.
- In 1942, 6 months after Pearl Harbor, the Women's Auxiliary Corps — which became the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WACs) in 1943 — was established by Congress. Fort Des Moines was chosen as the first site for training. Military planners felt that the old cavalry post could quickly handle expansion to hold 5,000 people. Besides, converting the stables into barracks for the WACs would be easy!
- Des Moines was also picked because planners felt it would present no significant race problems in a segregated military. Black women did join the WACs; for a while, they had separate barracks and service clubs.
- The army also took over the Hotel Savery in downtown Des Moines to handle the overflow of personnel coming into Des Moines. WACs liked to relax at Babe's restaurant.
- The army built 173 buildings to house about 6,000 women and staff. The officers were trained at first by men, and later by women.
- Women trained for a variety of jobs. Of the 600 military occupations at the time, women were deemed qualified to learn some 400 jobs. The most common jobs were: cooks; radio operators; supply positions; military police; driving and maintaining vehicles; and clerical, personnel, and administrative positions.
- When the first women recruits arrived in Des Moines in the summer of 1942, the national press was on hand to record the historic event. The army was determined to show that WAC training was serious business. The press and public, however, were curious about such frivolous matters as the color of WACs' underwear (it was olive drab).
- Warner Brothers shot a film at Fort Des Moines called "Women At War."
- Fort Des Moines acquired several nicknames, including WAC Island, West Point for Women, and Petticoat Corps.
- 65,000 women trained there. Other WAC training bases later opened in Florida and Georgia.
- The WACs published a newsletter, *WAC NEWS*, to boost morale and aid recruiting. They also had two bands. One was designed to help in recruiting, and toured nationally with such big bands as Tommy Dorsey's. Another band was used for formal ceremonies, such as playing before visiting dignitaries.
- Only a handful of the buildings used during the WAC days still stand today.
- The WAC experiment (WAVES were navy personnel who trained elsewhere) was a success. Many WACs were shipped overseas; some staffed General Eisenhower's headquarters during the North Africa campaign. Other WACs were transferred to numerous outposts and forts in the U.S. Observers concluded that WACs served effectively and made a significant contribution to the American war effort. The WAC does not exist today because women are fully integrated, in noncombatant roles, into the military.

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