At Home in the Heartland

How Midwesterners Got to be ‘Us’

TRACES Center for History and Culture
Images:

“Majority as minority” - German immigrants at New York’s early processing center, Castle Garden; 1866
1.a – top right (TR): Jacques Marquette with Native Americans on the Mississippi River; lower right (LR): Albert Miller Lea; bottom center (BC): 1718 French map of region that 120 years later became “Iowa”
1.b – left: 1872 map of main German settlement; (BC) 1860 citizenship certificate; (LR) English cottage
2.a – (TL): Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri and Pawnees, painted in 1821 by Charles Bird King; (TC): DM Register article, 2 March 1930; (BC/LR): Mason City doctor Edward Martin; wife was a nurse
2.c – (TC): 1871 temperance cartoon; (BC) ground-breaking for Belmond’s first public library, June 1916
3.a – (TC): Clear Lake beauty parlor, 1930s; (LL) soda jerk, 1939; (LR) 1941 WPA poster promoting milk
3.b – (TC): Belmond theater troupe, 1910s; (BC) sports car in Belmond; (LR) girl listening to radio, 1930s
4.a – (BC) Globe-Gazette article about Grafton, Iowa, farmer suicide; (LR) forced “penny auction,” 1930s
4.b – blacksmith shop & mill in Belmond; (BC) George Michael Luick on top of threshing machine, 1930s
5.a – Abraham Lincoln, 1846; (TR): Fred Luick was on Sherman’s “March to the Sea,” 1864; (BC) WWI-era
5.b – German ad promoting land in Nebraska; (TR) American Progress by German-born John Gast, 1872
6.a – (TC) Belmond post office, circa 1890; (BC) 1938 U.S. stamp commemorating Iowa’s territorial status
6.b – (TR) elevator & depot in Burchinal, Cerro Gordo County; (LR) early cars on Belmond’s Elder Bridge
7.a – (TL) darkest areas hardest hit by 1870s locust plagues—seen in (TC); (LL) covered wagon in blizzard
7.b – (TR) “Ox Day” picnic and early car in Thornton, circa 1910; (LR) Belmond man with garden produce
8.a – Thornton auto-shop ad showing Little Brown Church; (TC) 19th-century Quakeress; (LR) Franklin Co.
8.b – (TL) first capital, Iowa City; (TC) U.S. President Herbert Hoover; (TR) Roosevelt campaign ad, 1930s
9.a – (TL) Luick home in Hampton; (TR) Goodell train station; (LL & LR) scenes from Belmond, circa 1910
9.b – Depression-era scenes from Cerro Gordo County: 1933 farm-sale bill; (LR) farm rent check, 1936
10.a – report card, circa 1920; (TC & BC) from Belmond’s schools; (TR, CR & LR) from Thornton’s school
10.b – (TL) Bertha (Hadsall) & Nick Juhl wedding picture, 1917; (TC) George & “Lottie” (Campbell) Moorehead family, circa 1920; (R) Velma, Voral & Donald Luick, 1919: all from Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
Introduction

This exhibit explores social change over time, as seen in family-historical contexts. It asks how people of diverse backgrounds became an “us,” who we have been in the past; who we are today; and who we might yet become.

The Iowa that existed as little as 35 years ago is gone. Sweeping, long-term changes in the region’s agriculture, economy, technology, politics and its ethnic, age or other demographics have altered the ways we live. In the process we have lost old treasures even as we have gained new possibilities. This exhibit examines such changes.

Some seniors say they find it difficult to relate to youth who use technology and communication forms different from what was the norm a generation ago. Both seniors and parents cite a failure to transfer a sense of history—our cultural legacy—to younger Iowans. While not transferring practical information hobbles young people’s later job skills and economic performance, not transferring cultural information erodes their social skills. Cultural competency is the ability to understand how we became who we are, how we have changed over time—or not—and how humans change at all. It informs us how we behave as individuals, live together and govern ourselves.

At Home in the Heartland seeks to strengthen civic culture, accentuate enduring community connections and reinforce Iowans’ shared identity. It works from the premise that knowledge of the past sheds insight about the present and can impart wisdom for the future. It ponders what lies ahead even as it reviews what lies behind us.
The birth of a region: What is “Midwestern?”

The “birth” of the Midwest, of what would become America’s Heartland, took place in spring 1788. It was then that the U.S. Government began selling parcels of land in the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio—commonly known as the Northwest Territory, the area recently ceded by the British that they had held for 50 years west of Pennsylvania and north of the Ohio River, reaching west to the Mississippi and as far north as still-British Canada.

Indeed, the documentable birthday of the Midwest, both as cultural concept and per se, took place on Monday, 7 April 1788, with the arrival of the so-called First Forty-Eight (or “Founders of Ohio”) in Marietta. All men and mostly U.S. Army officers or veterans of the recent revolution, they had been specially vetted out of long lists of candidates, selected to initiate the new republic’s thrust into the northwest—as well as to push out of the lingering vestiges of Mother England’s recent rule. (Out of “propriety,” the U.S. Government let the first female pioneer, Mary Owen, join the men only three months later. No African Americans were included in the party, either.)

Comparable to today’s procedures to choose, say, space explorers set to start a Mars mission, the individuals approved by two of the Ohio Company of Associates’ co-founders, Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler, were to exemplify “high character and bravery, but also [be] men with proven skills necessary to build a settlement in the wilderness.” Not yet chosen to be president of the United States, former Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army that had fought for independence, George Washington said of these pioneers “I know many of the settlers personally, and there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community.”

Those who would set the tone and tenor at the core of the emerging new region were mostly New England Yankees and individuals from the Mid-Atlantic states—thus assuring, for example, that slavery would have no future north of the Ohio River or most of America west of the Mississippi, and, per the adopted
Articles of Compact, prohibiting primogeniture as well as discrimination on the basis of religion. That was “revolutionary.”

Dismissed in the jet age by unimaginative and uninspired, cocktail-sipping coastal inhabitants as “fly-over land,” that endless chessboard of farms and cookie-cutter towns streaming by below their plane windows embodies, in fact, the idea that an “enlightened,” democratic society can be scientifically propagated. While doing unimaginable damage to rivers and entire watersheds, dividing hill tops from their slopes, and depriving drivers from reaching their destinations over the shortest, most direct distance, the quadrant-measured distribution of land as of that first Federal land sale at Marietta, Ohio, reflected several pillars of the Age of Enlightenment.

A deist who defended ideas advanced by Quaker-raised Thomas Paine in that man’s best-selling broad-side, The Age of Reason, Thomas Jefferson had coined the then-radical concept that “all men are created equal,” penned the Declaration of Independence and founded the University of Virginia. Along with much of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, he established the formula of angular townships and counties that would replace the chaotic, confusing colonial property lines and borders that had come before. Poised to purchase gigantic Louisiana, but already standing at the threshold of an enormous expansion to the shore-hugging start of what soon would become a continental power, Jefferson oversaw first the surveying, then the platting of the Northwest Territory. Immediately a hallmark of the no-nonsense Midwest, the math genius from Monticello drafted a system meant to expedite the quick, efficient sale of land, which he intended to facilitate the spread of a yeoman-driven agriculture that, in his vision, would hold in check in perpetuity the urban-based tyranny of moneyed elites.

Thoughtful Tom’s revolutionary formula for setting up “model communities” in the newest reaches of the Anglo New World also allowed public space vital to the democratic process: It allocated central squares for courthouses or parks, with other land set aside for schools, libraries, post offices, fairgrounds, county farms or other communal needs. For over a century and a half, Jefferson’s template for a free society prevailed—and provided a tangible foundation for ideals of freedom.

—adapted from Tap Roots Betrayed: How Our Dreams Got Derailed in America, volume 3 in the pentalogy Oceans of Darkness, Oceans of Light by Michael Luick-Thrams
“This is the place”—really?

“Iowa”—with three-fourths of its letters consisting of vowels, the word rolls off the tongue with melodic ease, even though for most folks alive today it means little in itself. That meaninglessness, however, wasn’t always so.

When I was in fifth grade Mrs. Salisbury—whose towering, mid-Seventies hairdo was an updated version of what had been a “beehive” a decade or so earlier in the woman’s visibly manifold fashion career—read aloud to our class from Herb Hake’s Iowa Inside Out. Hake, a cartoonist by passion, became a radio-turned-television personality by coincidence, having been told during World War II to take over the Iowa State Teachers College’s [today: UNI’s] radio programming (done until then by now-departing students) or look for another job. He approached the Hawkeye State’s history with a folksiness that even this twelve-year-old noticed. One of the “truths” Herb peddled to us unsuspecting Iowa school kids during our weekly, curriculum-prescribed “Iowa history” class was that the word “Iowa” supposedly came from the Ioway language and meant “beautiful land” or “this is the place.” For forty years, I oriented my intellectual universe on that premise, having chosen to take... Herb Hake’s... fake... as gospel.

As with so much of the agenda-driven education we force-feed our youth in school rooms and church basements across the nation, being much-repeated, however, didn’t make it true. Current, academic research on the name’s lingual origins does, indeed, assign the source of my native state’s moniker to Native Americans—as is the source of twenty-seven of the U.S. states’ fifty names. According to one credible source “Iowa” was the French transcription of Ayuway, the name used by the Illini and Meskwaki tribes.
when referring to the Ioway. *Ayuway*, in turn, is said to be an alteration of the Dakota name for members of the same tribe, the *Ayuxba* (AH-you-khbah) or “sleepy ones.”

Whatever the true genesis of its name, even after so many years of living so many other places, doing so many “un-Iowan” things, to me Iowa has always felt like home. And, I’m not alone: Although my family spent years in Gold-Rush-era California, frontier Oregon, Dakota Territory and Missouri, it always returned to “the beautiful land.”

— adapted from *Tap Roots Betrayed: How Our Dreams Got Derailed in America*, volume 3 in the pentalogy *Oceans of Darkness, Oceans of Light* by Michael Luick-Thrams

![Image: Iowa Indians Who Visited London and Paris, 1839 by George Catlin](image)
Majority as “minority:” German-American culture after 1914

Most countries are led by elites—those who own large quantities of land and other natural resources or, in industrialized nations, commercial enterprises, factories and the energy companies that keep machines running. Financiers and media figures also belong to the elite. In some countries clergy and education administrators enjoy elitist power, too. In times of armed conflict, the elites running a warring nation often wage two battles—one against an alleged enemy, the other against internal forces that challenge those holding power and enjoying the privileges such power enables.

When 13 of England’s 17 North American colonies began a struggle for independence—for example—about a third of the colonists agitated for self-rule, a third remained loyal to the crown and the other third lacked a strong opinion. During the ensuing revolt “patriots” vied with “loyalists” for popular support. When the war ended, tens of thousands of dispossessed colonists returned to England or moved to Canada’s Maritime Provinces.

Eighty years later, during the Civil War, Federal troops occupied New York City and quelled Irish-immigrant-led, anti-African-American riots. In 1863 Congress enacted the Homestead Act in large part to lure discontented urban populations from Eastern cities to the isolated Midwest and West, thereby weakening popular opposition. Besides being an excuse to occupy Cuba, the Philippines and other lucrative far-flung territories, the Spanish-American War of 1898 provided convenient distractions from domestic woes as well as fanned patriotism among America’s many new immigrants, whose arrival alarmed earlier immigrant stock and put pressure on the existing status quo.
World War I gave Anglo-American East Coast elites a much welcome opportunity to “de-hyphenate” the nation’s growing number of ethnic groups and sow an Anglo-centric “Americanism” among recent newcomers. In particular, German-American communities in the Midwest long had concerned Anglo bankers, millers, railroad tycoons, merchants, politicians, publishers and others who resented and often feared the indelible influence of the U.S.’ largest ethnic group. “The War against the Hun” (a racist term for Germans during WWI) not only targeted Germany and its allies abroad, but facilitated an irrational campaign against domestic German culture. This assault on all things Germanic in the United States effectively extinguished almost all significant German-American organizations in this country. Up till then, they had played a major role in daily life for much of the population.

In 1900, Wisconsin—as an example—was home to some 700,000 German-born farmers, and more than 35% of all Iowans and Minnesotans had German ancestry. Cincinnati and Columbus, Louisville and St. Louis, Milwaukee and Bismarck also contained large numbers of German Americans. Despite a German-American majority, during the First World War, thousands of German-language newspapers, church services, schools, popular Biergärten (a primary target of the anti-alcohol Prohibition Act of 1919), music societies and sports clubs, civic organizations and other institutions across the Midwest disappeared during the anti-German hysteria stirred up by Anglo elites and used to strengthen their hegemony over America’s mainstream cultural fabric.

Anglo political consolidation during the same period included the forced removal of popularly elected German-American officials, and the formation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (the “FBI”), created in large part to monitor German Americans. Politicians fueled widespread distrust and dislike of German Americans by associating long-time German-American socialists with the ascending communists in Russia; the government’s response to the “Red Scare” consisted of many and repeated violations of civil rights, including mass arrests without charges or access to lawyers. Many “enemies of the people” were deported.
On the local level, in Iowa—for example—during the height of the nation’s anti-German rampage, towns like “Berlin” and “Germania” were renamed, respectively, “Lincoln” and “Lakota.” The state legislature outlawed the speaking of foreign languages in public—an act aimed at Iowa’s still-sizeable German-American population. Des Moines’ orchestra would not play the works of German composers—including those of musical genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, an Austrian.

Across the country, local German-American churches discontinued German-language services, and began the now-common tradition of flying an American flag in their sanctuaries. In some towns, German pastors were taunted by local bullies or, in newly-renamed Lincoln, forced to parade down Main Street, carrying an American flag and singing patriotic songs.

Standard German words like Sauerkraut and Dachshund were renamed “Liberty Cabbage” and “Liberty Dog;” Hamburger became “Salisbury Steak.” In the 1920s many new public schools—at that time a major assimilation force in American society—were built along faux Tudor designs, as were a large number of new houses; streets and suburbs laid out in this era typically were given distinctly British names. German-American families often Anglicized their names (as did members of other ethnic groups during the same time), and “Old World” trappings and traditions were quickly cast aside, to be lost forever.

When the Second World War broke out a generation later, little remained of German-American culture to suppress. Instead of targeting group behaviors and identities, then, the United States government attacked individual German Americans. After all, German-American culture effectively had ceased to exist after the Anglo-driven cultural pogrom during World War I.
MILLIONS OF ACRES

IOWA & NEBRASKA LANDS

FOR SALE ON 10 YEARS CREDIT

AT 6 PER CT. INTEREST AND LOW PRICES.

Only One-Seven of Principal Due Annually, beginning Four Years after purchase.

LAND EXPLORING TICKETS SOLD

and Cost Allowed in First Interest paid on Land bought in 30 days from date of ticket.

Address: GEO. S. HARRIS, LAND COMMISSIONER,
or T. H. LEAVITT, Agent Land Comm'r, Burlington, Iowa.
1.a - “Westward ho!” The enduring legacies of early settlement

The first Europeans recorded to have seen what one day would become “Iowa”—French explorer Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette—came in 1673 looking for waterways to access the resources of later-day “Louisiana” and for Catholic converts. Some 115 years later, Julien Dubuque came looking for iron ore—already tapped by the natives. Trappers and traders representing various European nations followed, so that by 1810 several trading posts lined the Mississippi River, with at least five French and English ones established on the Missouri River, too.

Napoleon Bonaparte had resumed control of Louisiana from Spain in 1800, which had held the territory for 37 years. After the young United States purchased Louisiana from France in 1803—as the ambitious general wanted to fund his Old World imperial aims—the land fell under American custody. U.S. Army captain Zebulon Pike mapped much of the inter-river region in 1805, but only the construction of Fort Madison in 1808 sealed military control.

Early surveyors played key roles not only in opening the region to pending settlement, but in casting its cultural molds. Documentably the first to use an ancient name for the future state, a 28-year-old dragoon from Tennessee, Albert Lea, helped measure and plat in 1838 what once constituted part of “Michigan” then “Wisconsin,” and later included parts of today’s “Minnesota” and the Dakotas. Albert Lea published his *Notes on Wisconsin Territory. The Iowa District*, in which he bestowed the land the name of a local tribe already assigned to a main river, the “Iowa.”
1.6 - “Out of many, [mostly] one:” Midwesterners’ ethnic roots

After the pre-American wave of French, Spanish and British transients (some with native wives or children), the next non-native settlers to the land between two of North America’s mightiest rivers consisted primarily of Yankees from New England or the Mid-Atlantic states, early Euro-American residents of the Ohio River basin and from the northern South. They came as soldiers, surveyors and only then as settlers. The latter group included squatters who extracted what natural wealth they could before titled landholders could be registered—and, whenever possible, demanded money for “improvements” such as a primitive cabin, initial garden patches and the like, before moving on to repeat the process a bit further west, always just ahead of the imminent wave of bona fide settlers.

After the first wave of American arrivals opened the territory for settlement, the second wave included founders first of towns, then of public institutions (governing bodies, churches, schools) and finally of private ones: stores, banks, professional services or other businesses, as well as various civic groups. At that point, “new Americans” from Europe poured into the recently platted farms and towns as they sought to build a New Canaan on the prairie. The largest group, the Germans, are now the ancestors of over a third (35.7%) of all Iowans, followed by Irish (13.5%), English (9.5%) and Norwegians (5.7%). Other early ethnic groups included Czechs, Danes, Dutch and Swedes. In miniscule numbers, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Jews cast small but enriching presences.
2.a - *Those from outside the mold: some minorities’ experiences*

The ability of groups of individuals to live together in harmony—or not—speaks volumes about a given culture:

At home on the prairies and woodlands of North America for over ten thousand years, once coercive numbers of non-natives arrived, they quickly pushed the indigenous inhabitants out of the region—or killed those who resisted. Still, early Euro-American newcomers quickly formed ambivalent attitudes towards the people they erroneously labeled “Indians”—reducing them to “savages” even while assigning to them attributes belonging to being “noble.”

Later, Southerner Albert Lea—a future Confederate officer—celebrated Iowa as being “forever free from the institution of slavery” and few early settlers supported human bondage. In fact, while it would take over a century to truly integrate African Americans socially, Iowa guaranteed freedom and equal rights early on—as reviewed briefly elsewhere in this exhibit. But, “having” legal civil rights did not always equate seeing them on a daily basis.

Some of the first large numbers of Hispanics came in the 20th century as migrant workers, mostly as seasonal farm laborers. Small numbers of Arabs or other Muslims trickled into the state, too, as did a few Asians. A more visible and successful minority consisted of first German, then Eastern-European Jews, who came initially largely as itinerant peddlers, then early dry-goods merchants and, later, bankers and professionals. While they were present, for much of the first 150 years of Iowa’s settlement gay men and lesbians remained mostly invisible yet reviled.
The President of The United States of America

Awards this certificate to

Mrs. Elmer A. Thams

in recognition of services rendered to the Nation and to your State on Registration Day, October 16, 1940

Awarded this 16th day of March 1941

For the President,

[Signature]

Director of Selective Service.
Different Iowans have understood being engaged in the society around them differently. In most cases, each one thought her or his activities were to the benefit of others or themselves, albeit the perceived “good” varied greatly.

While Catholic priests in frontier Iowa, for example, sought to convert the natives, Quakers in contrast shunned any missionary efforts; instead, they championed Native Americans’ rights and their well-being. Quakers and others later established “stations” on the Underground Railroad routes that crossed the southern half of the young state, and some of the Congregational abolitionists among them even followed fiery John Brown to Kansas or Virginia in the name of obstructing slavery. Around the same time, particularly women decried Demon Drink, to the point of going into saloons and hacking bars into splinters in an effort to drive menfolk out of “the clutches of the bottle.”

Even as some Iowans formed frontier vigilantes to catch or lynch accused criminals, others pushed for prison reform. As government officials strove over decades to raise standards for the state’s thousands of one-room or later consolidated in-town schools, parents—especially mothers—banded together to form Parent-Teacher Associations to assure improvement in their children’s academic ken. Some joined efforts to integrate immigrants, even as others joined a flourishing 1920s Ku Klux Klan to intimidate those not white, Protestant or “native-born.” One fraction preached international solidarity, in marked contrast to those who publically pleaded for isolationism.
The simple gift that lends the touch of friendship without the embarrassment of an obligation--

YOUR PHOTOGRAPH

The Thoe Studio
3.a - All in a day’s work: earning our keep

The characteristic industriousness of German and Scandinavian immigrants squared well with the stereotypic “Yankee ingenuity” of the initial New England settlers to weave a work ethic still ascribed to the Upper Midwest. In the Calvinistic worldview, hard work approached the value of Catholicism’s “good works” in attracting divine favor.

In any case, on the frontier those who did not work usually did not eat. Common admonitions included “There’s no disgrace in honest labor” and “If a job is once begun, never leave it ‘til it’s done; be the task, great or small, do it well or not at all.” In that cultural climate, what job one had was less important than how dedicated one was to it. One’s standing in the local community depended in great part less on how much one earned in one’s line of work than, rather, more on popular perceptions of how well one executed it. In a region where aristocratic titles had no meaning, a pervasive equalitarianism meant that few professions seemed “too low” to be dignified; instead, some were held frequently in contempt for being “too high”—like the workings of “slick” lawyers or “corrupt” politicians.

Until World War I, women were relegated to working almost solely inside the home; only after WWII did they move permanently into the work force in large numbers. Well into the 20th century, women earned significantly less than their male counterparts for comparable work and were denied a “living wage” even as sole bread earners. For both men and women, long stints of unemployment or, worse, “idleness” attracted private if not public scorn.
As even hardworking Victorians warned “All work and no play make Jack a dull boy,” our ancestors always found time for rest or recreation. On the frontier, free-time activities were largely simple and short-lived, given the harsh living conditions and lack of expendable resources well-equipped rest requires. “Bees” of all sorts—from husking to quilting to spelling—gave focus for group effort and achievement. Noisy shivarees thrown to fete newlyweds, ice cream socials held to pad church coffers, and barn raisings called to erect new farm buildings provided occasions to come together. Music provided the mood for many such gatherings; most people could at least sing or play a tune.

Later, after log cabins or, further west, sod houses yielded to purpose-built farms and crude settlements became established towns, late-19th-century leisure took on new dimensions. Increasing numbers of families had the means to have upright pianos in their homes, as well as an array of other musical instruments—even a gramophone. Books, magazines and newspapers became the norm in most households, and every county seat sought the means to erect a public library. Many towns boasted a grandly-named “opera house” or at least a place to stage plays or, later, show films. Bowling alleys, bars, restaurants and lively town parks made the list of must-have establishments.

The arrival of the automobile launched yet another wave of free-time activities, ranging from Sunday-afternoon drives for the whole family, picnics farther afield, Saturday-night necking for the young adults, and too much more.
YOUNG FARMER HANGS HIMSELF

Body of Schultz, Who Lived Near Grafton, Is Found by His Wife.

GRAPTON, Oct. 24. — Lloyd Schultz, young farmer, committed suicide this morning by hanging himself. He went after the cows and when he failed to return, his wife investigated and found his body hanging from a tree. He had been in poor health for some time and had encountered financial reverses, officials stated. He was recently at a hospital in Rochester, Minn., where physicians found his nervous condition to be the only aspect of ill health. Schultz, who was about 25 years of age, leaves his wife and three small children, the eldest of which is 4, his father and mother of Grafton and several brothers and sisters. He was farming the Schultz homestead a mile west.
4.a - Boom to bust and back: historical economic cycles

The Great Depression of the 1930s set the standard for contemporary perceptions of historic economic crises, but in fact undirected capitalist economies both create and feed on recurring cycles of boom and bust. In the past, “recessions” or “depressions” were called “panics”—and 19th-century America weathered many, including harsher ones in (for example): 1837, 1857, 1873, 1893, etc. Typically, a panic began with the collapse of a large company’s solvency, followed by dumping shares or a run on bank deposits, and ended with the discontinuation of planned projects and thus cancellation of contracts, large-scale unemployment, default on loans and, most stubbornly, hardship at the household level—for farm families meaning the risk of losing both a livelihood and a home, at once.

When stocks collapsed in late October 1929, rural America fell on its face—and the rest of the country fell with it. After modest regains in stocks in 1930, by spring 1931 any rallying on Wall Street couldn’t compensate for general economic conditions that by then were almost all in sharp decline. Between 1929 and 1933 the nation’s Gross Domestic Product declined by 46%; by 1933 one-quarter of the nation’s banks had failed. Under such chaotic, uncertain conditions, unemployment grew so quickly and so severely that by 1933 twelve million Americans—25% of the workforce—were without a job. In pockets across the country, one of three people had no work. In Iowa, bankruptcies skyrocketed—leading normally conservative, law-abiding farmers to protest, strike and rabble-rouse.
S. B. Mitchell,
THE NEW BLACKSMITH,
IN THE OLD SHOP AT THE MILL.
Will accommodate customers with horse-shoeing, plow repairing and all kinds of jobs at the
LOWEST STANDARD PRICES.
Wheat will be taken in exchange for work.
4.b - Bing, bang, bong—evolving technology: getting things done

When the first European Americans arrived in what would one day be “Iowa,” what they did not move with their own muscles got set into motion through those of oxen, horses or mules, or that of power generated by water, wood, coal, wind or sunshine. Accordingly, frontier technology tended to be a coarse affair, using crude machinery. Only later, with swelling population, expanding infrastructure and ever-more-refined mechanization, did technology in 19th-century Iowa develop into ever-increased complexity, effectiveness and profitability.

In the course of a lifetime, pioneers watched as one-row plows became antiquated by sleek steel riding plows, followed by a host of horse-drawn equipment equally advanced and efficient. Increased automation meant increased yields on the farm and swelling productivity in Iowa’s expanding industrial base—much of which then catered to either agricultural production or processing, along with fulfilling household needs (by producing washing machines, iceboxes/refrigerators, spices, woolens, buttons and the like). Any downturns in agriculture’s fortunes, however, necessarily meant subsequent slowdowns in farming-related industries. In turns, Iowa benefited and suffered from a lopsided dependence on large-scale agricultural production, which influenced the well-being of all.

Increasingly, both agriculture and manufacturing grew dependent on ever-larger concentrations of capital as well as petroleum-based inputs (both as fuel and as chemicals), and thus vulnerable to out-of-state fluctuations, too.
Other than the grisly Spirit Lake Massacre, Iowa has been spared the murderous “Indian wars” or various ugly Revolutionary or Civil War battles common in other states. It has not, however, been spared war’s long shadows.

When Iowa was declared a territory on the Fourth of July in 1838, the so-called Republic of Texas was not part of the United States. In 1846, the year of Iowa’s statehood, however, the U.S. went to war with Mexico to, among other goals, secure America’s annexation of what had been a Spanish province for some three centuries. For a fledgling political entity not yet a sovereign state, Iowa Territory sent a relatively large number of soldiers to join the brawl. When they returned, they brought myriad impressions back with them—including names they bestowed upon counties (e.g., Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Palo Alto). Their volunteerism, however, was only a dress rehearsal.

Fifteen years later, half-unsettled Iowa would send more men to Civil War military service than any other state, Union or Confederate. That extensive support for preserving the Union had several causes, including the German immigrants’ almost universal disdain for slavery and tendency to vote for the new Republican Party’s candidate, a lawyer from Iowa’s easterly neighboring state, Abraham Lincoln. Also, the general mobilization of 1861 spurred a wartime commodities boom that enriched Iowa farmers. And, Iowa governor Samuel Kirkwood fanned enlistment. Out of a total population of 675,000, some 116,000 men took up military duty, with more than 15,000 deaths.
5.6 - Following “Manifest Destiny:” the politics of westward expansion

“Iowa” became a political construct in the first half of the 19th century, exactly during the rise of the nationalistic “Manifest Destiny” credo that inspired much of a growing nation. Its advocates touted three main suppositions:

- The special virtues of the American people and their institutions;
- America’s mission to spread its institutions, thereby redeeming and remaking the world in the U.S.’ image;
- The irresistible destiny “under God” to accomplish this ordained duty.

The roots of the first theme, later known as American Exceptionalism, dated back to America’s Puritan heritage and thus complemented two-centuries-old ideals. One was Massachusetts Bay Colony’s John Winthrop’s, who in 1630 preached his famous “City upon a Hill” sermon, which called for the establishment of a virtuous community as a shining example to the Old World. In his fiery pamphlet of 1776, Common Sense, Thomas Paine revived the idea: “We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand...”

Many Americans unquestionably believed in such doctrines. Thinking of themselves as bringers of “civilization” and “freedom,” they exuded a subliminal sense of infallibility that not only inspired but allowed them to commit grievous wrongs, both to the North American landscape and to other people—to natives as well as other migrants.
Iowa captured the imagination of Americans early on. Painter-historian George Catlin spent many months in Iowa during his western tours. He made trips around it between 1832 and 1835, and described it as being “like a garden, wanting only cultivation, being mostly prairie. [...] It is located in the midst of the richest country on the continent. The soil is very productive, and beneath the surface are the great lead mines.” He also painted Iowa’s last natives. In his Notes on Wisconsin Territory (1838), surveyor Albert Lea wrote one of the first widely-sold books about “The Iowa District.” In it, he extolled the fertile river basin that settlers would find so appealing. In turn, amongst the somber recounting of the worst of their hardships, future settlers also wrote glowing reports to send back East.

Mail traveled slowly, taking weeks, even months to reach the most remote hamlets. Before the U.S. Post Office could catch up with the westward movement, settlers directed letters to be held at a trading center or mill, and retrieved post during sporadic treks to buy supplies or to have their first grain ground into flour. Some communities paid a resident a flat fee for fetching the mail for all subscribers—a role soon made moot by stagecoach routes, whose runs were often hampered or blocked all together by, seasonally, prairie fires, tornados, blizzards or mud.

First telegraphs, then telephones reached townspeople long before they did farm folk—who initially ran their own local telephone cooperatives. Full rural telephone access accompanied the rural electrification of the 1930s.
Central Pacific Railroad

First Class

Virginia & Truckee Railroad

RENO TO VIRGINIA CITY

Cheques to be detached by Conductor only.

Virginia

Goodman

Genl. Pass. & Tri-Agt C.P.R.R.

Cal P...V.T.

[Image: Old photos of railway stations, steamboats, and early automobiles.]
6.6 - Getting from here to there: forms of transportation

The first Americans crossed the great grassland between the two mighty rivers for thousands of years solely by foot or canoe. Only after Spanish explorers introduced horses did especially Plains tribes become skilled riders.

Beginning with French, then British and finally Yankee explorers, trappers and traders, European-Americans also utilized waterways as early pathways to discovery and extraction. Initially, some “Indian trails” became first ox-cart routes, then crude roads usable (at times) by wagons or stagecoaches. Increases in travel and mobility in general supported the establishment of ever-larger paddlewheel steamboats on the Mississippi, as well as on the Missouri. Riverboats fed both Iowa’s 19th-century economy and its cultural fare, for the likes of Mark Twain told of its shores.

Once settlements became more numerous and substantial, officials began to survey, then lay connecting “trunk roads” or, later, grant railroads the rights and land to crisscross the state with rail lines. In the late 19th century some communities built streetcar lines and, in the early 1900s, larger ones also established “inter-urban” lines to connect nearby points as early suburbs or leisure-time destinations. The arrival of the first automobiles shanghaied the excitement railways had enjoyed: Already by World War I, car ownership had become so affordable, by so many, that Iowa’s earliest highway authority began constructing the first paved road, from Mason City to Clear Lake. Around the same time, airplanes began to fly over the Hawkeye State, leading to laying the first runways.
PROGRAM GIVEN AT ANNIVERSARY

Belmond Celebrates 75 Years of Existence With Old Time Features.

BELMOND, Oct. 24.—Entertainment including old-time songs, accordion selections by R. H. Rierson and Ernest Haupt, violin selections by Lewis Luick and H. J. Brooks; vocal solos by William Nelson and Ralph Baker, harmonica selections by J. T. Helm, harmonica and guitar duets by William and Harry Genlow, selection on the homes by Dell Luick, music by Cooper's orchestra, songs by the M. E. male quartet, H. Nordhaw, the Rev. J. C. Buthman, Supt. H. J. Williams and H. J. Luick, provided ample entertainment at the Odd Fellows and Rebekah hall Friday night in Belmond's fifty anniversary celebration. Mrs. A. C. Lieuwen read "The Old Cabinet Organ." The Rebekahs gave the play "An Old Fashioned Party." The program was followed by a lunch and old time dance.
The first fairs in Iowa were Spartan forays into featuring initially the territory’s, then the new state’s agricultural prowess. The first “state fair” took place in Fairfield in 1854: In the 1870s, it followed Iowa’s capital when the seat of government shifted from Iowa City to Des Moines. All fairs combined commercial interests with agrarian arts such as livestock breeding, produce and grain cultivation, handicrafts, civics—and a great deal of food and fun.

Local county fairs tended to fail miserably or succeed shiningly. The Clay County Fair—an extreme example of the latter—arose from humble beginnings. Struggling to take root in a decade of repeated locust plagues, it was a “one day promotion by real estate agents. Their purpose was to display the products of the land in an effort to interest the public in the purchase of farms in this section. A farm, at that time, was little more than an undeveloped wild.”

Iowa native journalist-historian William Shirer complained about the “boosterism” typical of small-town Iowa in the 19th and early 20th century, which included parades meant to celebrate the ostensible occasion for the event, as well as to showcase a given town’s touted virtues and vitality. So, too, did centennial observances, outdoor band concerts, community picnics and sport competitions. Both school and church public events provided occasion for people to gather, to interact and to celebrate local ties. Until about World War II, Saturday nights offered “going to town” outings, when families flocked to their nearest Main Street to shop, eat, gossip, flirt or discuss the news.
Iowa’s climate, while usually beneficent to European-imitative agriculture and economies, has always delivered severe or bizarre weather that tried its people’s patience as well as stamina. Already “the season of 1858” was:

long remembered as one of the most disastrous to farmers of any experienced up to that time. Cold rains began early in April and continued through the month. Wheat and oats were sown late but the frequent rains of May caused them to make a rank growth and delayed corn planting. Much of the seed corn rotted in the ground. [...] The distress and destitution which prevailed among the farmers during this period can never be realized by those who were not among the sufferers.

Beyond irregular climatic “events,” normal weather occurrences over the past two centuries of American settlement have long taxed the populace’s ability to endure or at least cope: Arctic-cold winters, sweltering tropical summers and countless stressors in between; storms of biblical proportions, bouts of droughts, as well as those most archetypal Midwest phenomena—tornados and blizzards. Some Iowans have maintained that such extreme weather has molded Hawkeyes’ character to be resilient and strong. For sure, a limited growing season has meant that to thrive, one must work hard—literally “while the sun shines.” Summer’s diametric opposite, winter, tests Iowa’s people, too—and their backbones.
The Little Brown Church in the Vale

There's a church in the valley by the wildwood
No lovelier place in the dale;
No spot is so dear to my childhood
As the little brown church in the vale.

How sweet on a bright sabbath morning
To list to the clear ringing bell;
Its tones so sweetly are calling,
O come to the church in the vale.
Iowa’s native peoples did not know religion as such before the Europeans came; they embodied spirituality: Instead of focused on outward forms and a set liturgy, their view of the world arose from inner understandings.

In contrast, one of the two Europeans recorded to have stepped foot on “Iowa” soil, Father Jacques Marquette, came solely dedicated to converting souls to a Catholic-Christian worldview, set on fixed external forms. A century and a half later, when American settlers began arriving in large numbers, the vast majority of those with Yankee or Ohio-River-basin cultural origins brought Protestant-Christian views and values with them. It would be immigrants from Ireland and parts of the Germanic realm who would bring Catholicism to Iowa in large numbers. In fact, “Roman” congregations often came as pre-existing groupings, transplanted en masse and grafted onto the prairie.

Especially Methodist but also other circuit riders traversing the frontier sowed the seeds of Iowa’s later largest Protestant denominations. And, some immigrant ethnicities proved more receptive to their message than others: Germans in particular not only embraced Republicanism’s anti-slavery commercialism, but English-based reformist Methodism over the Lutheranism they’d brought with them from the Old World. Scots preferred Presbyterianism and the Dutch reformed Calvinism, even as the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes clung to their native Lutheranism.

For all sects, public religiosity seemed important, although there were quiet atheists in 19th-century Iowa as well.
8.6 - We the people: the conflicting faces of self-governance

Only a half century after the cessation of the American War for Independence against imperial England, the first Americans to come to what would become “Iowa” brought republican—so, anti-monarchial—assumptions with them, even if the degree of their democratic inclinations varied. Still, as inherited titles and, to some degree, even wealth meant little on the frontier, Iowans as a group grew to be egalitarian and, with economic development, predominantly middle class. In such a cultural climate, opportunities to advance, open to all, were seen as central to the prevailing social credos and inalienable. The state’s Supreme Court’s first decision (1839) rejected slavery and in 1884 it outlawed public segregation. The guaranteed right to a color-blind public education—confirmed early in the state’s history—and the success of state-supported scientist George Washington Carver reflected civic values that meant that African Americans could thrive much more here than even across the border in Missouri.

Women, too, fared well in Iowa: In 1847 the University of Iowa became the first public U.S. university to admit men and women on an equal basis. At the same time, civil rights for people of all skin color or ethnic backgrounds were not always respected: During the First World War, for example, the anti-German hysteria rampant at the time led state-level politicians to outlaw the speaking of foreign languages on the street or even on the telephone. It stopped teaching German at state schools; the Des Moines orchestra refused to play German composers’ music.
Every community wishes to be “special.” Already in the frontier era, Iowa towns cultivated purported or real uniqueness, as doing so had economic as well as social consequences. At one point, there were about a thousand recognized towns in Iowa—while another couple hundred already had been tried but had failed and disappeared.

Early land speculators often touted towns on paper—complete with business districts, schools, parks and other municipal amenities—long before a single building had been constructed. Still, such towns were advertised “back East” or even in Europe in hopes of selling lots sight-unseen and thus funding further development. Many proposed towns provided the focus of so-called county-seat wars, in which speculators or handfuls of existing residents vied to have their communities declared a county seat—and thus assure it would thrive, let alone survive. Sometimes, if a railroad company announced the laying of a line bypassing an emerging town, residents literally would pick up their buildings and move them a couple miles away to relocate the town next to a new rail connection to markets.

As the pioneer era passed and communities seasoned into recognizable entities of their own, local merchants, civic leaders, clergy, educators or others worked to advance their town’s common interests. Often, they erected classical-style public buildings (e.g. post offices, schools, band shelters, courthouses) that conveyed wealth, stability and “progress.” If they could, later chambers of commerce promoted local attractions or outstanding features.
Native-American tribes living long-term along rivers typically raised early strains of corn, vegetables and herbs. Already then, they benefitted from the land’s rich soil and ability to produce abundantly, almost without effort.

The European, then America settlers who displaced them realized before they dropped a single seed into the ground the land’s exceptional potential for agricultural production—both for home consumption and to market. The promise of deep, fertile, mostly treeless land on often flat planes attracted would-be farmers from as far as New England as well as the Old World. For the first pioneers, however, gardens and fields fed mostly only their own families, as the lack of trails or, later, the existence of mud-caked roads mostly impassable for wheeled vehicles made transporting crops almost impossible. Local “marketing” consisted of barter, as cash was rare on the frontier.

Once vehicular roads, then railroads connected even far-flung farms to markets in the larger Midwest region, on either coast and abroad, an ever-larger share of farm production was for off-site consumption. Self-sufficiency decreased and farm families grew evermore dependent on the whims of off-farm commodities prices as well as external inputs such as petroleum, chemicals, seeds, young livestock and other elements central to all aspects of farming. Increasingly industrialized agriculture, in turn, forever altered the land, as producers straightened streams, removed fences and groves, stopped letting land lay fallow or rotating crops, and reduced crops to corn and soya.
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Hancock County, Iowa.

"Educate the mind to think, the Heart to feel, the Body to act."

Report of: Donald Quick
Township of: Twin Lake
No. of School District: 1

Teachers

First Term: Drusilla Stramme
Second Term: Drusilla Stramme
Third Term: Drusilla Stramme

7th and 8th grade 1907
10.a - Learning for life: Iowans’ unwavering commitment to education

On the Iowa frontier, the earliest “schools” weren’t: They typically were crude log shelters—often without glass windows but rather with oiled paper over small holes—that housed simple lessons during the week and doubled as “churches” on Sundays. “Teachers” consisted mostly of older girls or young women who knew more than their young pupils; during harvest and planting seasons, most present were girls, with most boys busy in the fields. Local pioneer families “subscribed” to pay for an instructor, as in most cases there were no local tax rolls from which to fund education. Teachers often boarded with pupils’ parents or the local “school board” chair—and females were forbidden to marry or have children as long as they wished to continue in that role. Once more families moved into a given area and the first forms of organized government took shape, private tuition yielded to public education.

As settlement consolidated, the emerging churches required institutions where they could train clergy for their denominations, but also reach wider audiences by offering young adults religiously informed training. As of the middle of the 19th century, churches founded their own colleges: Cornell, Simpson, Morning-side (Methodist); Luther, Wartburg, Grandview (Lutheran); Central, Dordt (Reformed); Coe (Presbyterian)—to cite a few examples.

Parallel to secular efforts to educate the swelling numbers of young Iowans, the State Legislature set up public institutions of higher learning, notably tapping Federal land-grant acts to provide the means to operate universities.
The first Europeans to venture into today’s “Iowa” rarely brought family members with them: If they had any mates or dependents, they tended to be native wives or “mixed-race” Métis children. In contrast, once the frontier had been declared open for settlement, increasingly few newcomers came alone: The majority of long-term settlers came as family units or at least with relatives, friends or neighbors from “back East.” Whole towns seemed to uproot, then graft themselves onto the Iowa prairies—so that today such homogeneous settlement patterns created lingual uniformity from, say, Pittsburgh to Denver, as well as a cultural similarity across the entire Midwest. The pioneers took many place names with them, propagated generation by generation the length of the Heartland, so that today one can find clusters of (to cite one example) “Mount Vernon,” “[New] Lisbon” and “Jordan Grove [City]” in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa—transplanted by westward-pushing waves from shared home regions.

With high rates of infant and child mortality, couples typically gave birth to large families, in the hope that at least a few of their children would survive to support them in their old age. As Midwest culture solidified and prosperity spread, family size shrunk and often familiar ties grew weaker as individuals became less dependent on parents or other relatives. Once automobile ownership became widespread, along with paved or at least better-built gravel roads, mobility further eroded the home as the central focus of daily life and shifted its activities to larger towns.
footnotes and supplements:

4th exterior panel, entry side:

During a visit to the country for which he had fought to create, General Lafayette of France commented in May 1825 that the former officers among them were “the bravest of the brave. Better men never lived.” With even more ballyhoo, in 1852 the Ohio Historical Society president said of the First Forty-Eight:

So various and eventful lives as theirs have scarcely ever fallen to the lot of man. They were born under a monarchy,—fought the battle of Independence,—assisted in the baptism of a great republic,—then moved into a wilderness,—and laid the foundations of a State,—itself almost equaling an empire. These men not only lived in remarkable times, but were themselves remarkable men. Energetic, industrious, persevering, honest, bold, and free — they were limited in their achievements only by the limits of possibility. Successful alike in field and forest,—they have, at length, gone to their rest,—leaving names which are a part of the fame and the history of their country.

In observance of the centennial of Mariette’s founding (named after Marie Antoinette, the later-beheaded, Austrian-born French queen and, earlier, Revolutionary-War ally of the young U.S.), in 1888 Massachusetts Senator George Hoar orated “It was an illustrious band; they were men of exceptional character, talents and attainments; they were the best of New England culture; they were Revolutionary heroes.” While Hoar’s tribute in its totality bordered on blather, it alluded to enduring truths that had permanent influence on the American character.
As a 28-year-old topographer with the United States Dragoons under direction of Daniel Boone’s son “Captain Nathan,” Albert Miller Lea had surveyed southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. In his 1838 Notes on Wisconsin Territory. The Iowa District, or Black Hawk Purchase. By Lieut. Albert M. Lea, with Accurate Map of the District, he extolled the river basin that would lend its name to an entire state:

From the extent and beauty of the Iowa River, which runs centrally through it and gives character to most of it [the name “Iowa”] has been given to the District itself. The general appearance of the country is one of great beauty. It may be represented as one grand rolling prairie, along one side of which flows the mightiest river of the world, and through which numerous navigable streams pursue their devious ways toward the ocean. In every part of the District beautiful rivers and creeks are found, whose transparent waters are perpetually renewed by springs from which they flow. Many of the streams are connected with lakes, and nearly all are skirted by woods, often several miles in width, affording shelter from heat or cold to the wild animals of the prairies.

Documentably the first to use the ancient name for the future state, at a time when only a few thousand non-natives resided in what would become “Iowa,” Albert Lea felt confident in declaring:

The character of the population settling in this beautiful country is such as is rarely found in our new territories. With very few exceptions there is not a more orderly, industrious, energetic population west of the Alleghenies than is found in this Iowa District. For intelligence they are not surpassed as a body by any equal number of citizens of any country of the world.

The young man from Tennessee—who had graduated fifth of 33 cadets in the United States Military
Academy’s Class of 1831—also speculated on the region’s future political and economic fortunes:

This District being north of Missouri is forever free from the institution of slavery, by compact made upon the admission of that State into the Union. What would not Missouri now have been if she had never admitted slavery within her borders? The Mississippi River is, and must continue to be, the main avenue of trade for this country, but there is a reasonable prospect of having a more direct and speedy communication with the markets of the East. New York is now pushing her railroad from the Hudson to Lake Erie; it will then connect with one that is projected around the southern shore of that lake to cross Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, touching the foot of Lake Michigan in its route to the Mississippi River. This will place the center of the Iowa District within sixty hours of the city of New York. It is only a question of time when the business of this region will support such a road.

Unaware at the time of his prophesizing in the mid-1830s about Iowa’s future prosperities of his own future miseries in the mid-1860s as a Confederate officer destined to find his dying Union-Navy-officer son in a captured ship off the Texas coast, still-optimistic Lea wrote:

Some of the most beautiful country of the world is lying immediately west of this District. The Indians are now moving over to the Des Moines [River], finding the country [along local rivers, including the Iowa] no longer stocked with game, they are ready to sell. The pressure of settlers along the border has already created a demand for its purchase. The western boundary will soon be extended, and it is hazarding little to say that this district will have a population that will entitle it to admission among the States of the Union by the time the census of 1840 shall have been completed. Taking this District all in all, for convenience of navigation, water, fuel and timber, richness of soil, beauty of landscape and climate, it surpasses any portion of the United States with which I am acquainted.
George Catlin, who became a famous frontier painter-historian, spent several months in Iowa during his tours of the American West. He made trips around its eastern region about this time and described it as:

The whole country that we passed over was like a garden, wanting only cultivation, being mostly prairie. Keokuk’s village is beautifully situated on a large prairie on the bank of the Des Moines River. Dubuque is a small town of about two hundred inhabitants, all built within two years. It is located in the midst of the richest country on the continent. The soil is very productive, and beneath the surface are the great lead mines, the most valuable in the country.

I left Rock Island about eleven o’clock, and at half-past three I ran my canoe on the pebbly beach of Mas-co-tine [today “Muscatine”] Island. This beautiful island is so called from a band of Indians of that name, who once dwelt upon it, is twenty-five or thirty miles in length, without a habitation on it, or in sight, and throughout its whole extent is one great lonely prairie. It has high banks fronting on the river, and extending back as far as I could see, covered with a high and luxuriant growth of grass. The river at this place is nearly a mile wide. I spent two days strolling over the island, shooting prairie hens and wild fowl for my meals. I found hundreds of graves of the red men on the island. Sleep on in peace, ye brave fellows, until the white man comes and with sacrilegious plow-share turns up your bones from their quiet and beautiful resting place!

I returned to Camp Des Moines, musing over the loveliness and solitude of this beautiful prairie land of the West. Who can contemplate without amazement this mighty river eternally rolling its surging, boiling waters ever onward through the great prairie land for more than four thousand miles! I have contemplated the never ending transit of steamers plowing along its mighty current in the future,
carrying the commerce of a mighty civilization which shall spring up like magic along its banks and tributaries.

The steady march of our growing population to this vast garden spot will surely come in surging columns and spread farms houses, orchards, towns and cities over all these remote wild prairies. Half a century hence the sun is sure to shine upon countless villages, silvered spires and domes, denoting the march of intellect, and wealth’s refinements, in this beautiful and far off solitude of the West, and we may perhaps hear the tinkling of the bells from our graves.

7th interior panel:

According to early Spencer pioneer Harry Chamberlain, that first fair of October 1871 displayed

Two or three pumpkins, a few ears of corn, some needlework, bed quilts, and a small amount of grain. He couldn’t remember much more than these. He reminded us that there wasn’t very much to work with in those days. It was a fair, anyway, and the Clay County people were proud of what they had accomplished.

To view the entire quote, see chapter 28 of Benjamin Gue’s History of Iowa from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century (1903), available on-line or through inter-library loan.

Acknowledgments

Michael Luick-Thrams wrote the text for both the exhibit and booklet, as well as conceptualized the creation of the BUS-eum, the mobile venue for taking At Home in the Heartland: How Midwesterners Got to be “Us” around the American Heartland, on behalf of the TRACES Center for History and Culture. copyright 2015
Topics for reflection and discussion:

- **Iowa’s settlement:** What are some indelible influences from the state’s first settlers and early settlement? How did moving from one culture to another, or between different regions within this country, change us? What’s been gained through such processes; what’s been lost? How “should” new migrants be integrated?
- **Ethnicity and minorities:** What do our ethnic roots mean to us today: How do they affect or inform us? To what degree and how well are the rights or integrity of minorities acknowledged, secure and respected?
- **Social engagement:** In what forms of social engagement do you/r family participate? With what results?
- **Work and leisure:** What goods or services have our families provided others in order to make a living? How could “work” gain renewed value? Outside of work, what roles have entertainment, music and art, sports, travel, hobbies, civic engagement or other voluntary pastimes played in our families or individual lives?
- **Economic cycles:** How have our families responded to and been shaped by booms or busts; how might they be avoided? How have wealth, poverty, unemployment, education or career shifts altered our lives?
- **Technology:** What technologies enhance our lives—and which ones diminish it? Do we control its effects on our lives, or does technology more often dictate how we experience the world and live our lives? How have recent technological developments changed the ways we live, relate and govern as groups of people?
- **War:** How has the experience of war changed family members’ personalities, our communities and shared fates? How have we, through war, affected the lives of others? What is a “just” war—or an “unjust” one?
- **Ideology:** To what degree do ideologies help mold community consensus—or get in the way of finding it?
• **communication and transportation:** How do changes in communication or transportation alter our lives?

• **community celebrations:** How have fairs, parades, outdoor band concerts, picnics, sport competitions, and school or church events provided occasions for people to gather, interact and to celebrate local ties?

• **climate and weather:** How have seasonal climatic conditions dictated our ways of living? What freak weather “events” or natural disasters have visited our lives for a moment, but left long-term effects?

• **religion and culture:** How has religious belief or spirituality shaped our families or wider community? To what degree are differences in religious belief or religiosity respected—or not—in our community? Are there local religious bodies that desire to dominate or dictate local culture or politics? If so, how and why?

• **governance and local political culture:** To what degree can non-office-holding citizens influence our most immediate levels of government? What works well in local government and what works less well? What might be done to sustain what works well? How easily can things that don’t work well be changed?

• **community:** What distinguishes our community from those nearby of similar size and character? What works well in our community, what’s worth preserving and what measures might be taken to protect what works well? What works less than optimally, what “should” be changed or removed, and what collective measures might be taken to change or remove that which does not function optimally in our community?

• **agriculture:** What lasting influences—what behaviors, values, goals—has agriculture imparted onto our families and communities? How does the state of agriculture locally, across Iowa and the Midwest affect our abilities to thrive or even survive as families and as communities? What “should” be changed: How?

• **education:** Why has education played such a primary role in Iowa since the pioneers days? How has the quality of public education changed over time? What might be done to reform or strengthen it?

• **family and intimate matters:** How have the roles played by family changed over time? What have been some lasting legacies of unplanned pregnancies, marriage, divorce, patchwork parenting, non-traditional lifestyles, crime, aging and death in our families? What roles “should” family play in the future: Why?
We wish to thank the following organizations for their support:

- Humanities Iowa
- 125th Belmond Historical Society
- Scattergood Friends School & Farm
- Vander Haag’s Inc.
- Belmond Museum
- Belmond Museum
- Belmond Museum
- JRS Professional Photo Restoration
- Martha-Ellen Tye
- Decorah Historical Society
- Decorah Historical Society
- Winnebago County Historical Society
- Winnebago County Historical Society
- The Chester P. Luick Memorial Trust
- John K. & Luise V. Hanson Foundation

We wish to thank the following individuals: Issam Al Dabbas, Don Bancroft, Mary Bennett, Ulrike Bürgel, Sally Campbell, Issa Dabain, Mary Ehinger, Margaret Grgurić Smolik, CeCeile Hartleib, Joby Harvey, Hussam Khoury, Anthony J. Luick, Gary Luick, Phyllis Luick, Christian and Kai Mämecke, Ben Muff, Alan Nothnagle, Patricia Schultz and Jörg Seiler

For additional information, visit www.roots.TRACES.org
The American Heartland Over Time: A Regional Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% African-American</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Became a Territory</td>
<td>July 4, 1803</td>
<td>1,885,420</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>July 4, 1800</td>
<td>898,474</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>June 28, 1837</td>
<td>3,200,642</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>March 1, 1809</td>
<td>3,240,842</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>July 4, 1838</td>
<td>2,514,458</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>Aug 10, 1821</td>
<td>6,080,848</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>May 24, 1861</td>
<td>8,562,840</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>Mar 2, 1867</td>
<td>3,262,020</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>Mar 2, 1889</td>
<td>3,262,020</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>Mar 2, 1889</td>
<td>3,262,020</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Dakota</td>
<td>Became a State</td>
<td>Mar 2, 1889</td>
<td>3,262,020</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

This map shows the territorial and state formation of the American Heartland, highlighting key dates and populations for each state since its establishment.