



Upcoming Events

Farmers Market &

Music in the Junction

Thursdays

May 5 - September 29

May

- 07 Cinco de Mayo Festival
- 22 Valley Junction Arts Festival

June

- 05 Mustang Car Show
- 12 Summer Antique Jamboree

July

- 03 All Iowa Bash
- 15 Christmas in July Sidewalk Sale
- 16 Christmas in July Sidewalk Sale
- 30 Junkin' in the Junction
- 30 Jazz in July Season Finale

www.ValleyJunction.com

IHJ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Iowa History Journal welcomes letters to the editor about the contents of the magazine or Iowa history. They should be limited to 300 words. Iowa History Journal reserves the right to edit letters for length and language. Mail letters to Iowa History Journal, P.O. Box 65832, West Des Moines, Iowa, 50265, or email them to info@iowahistoryjournal.com. Letters must include your name, address and phone number.

READERS SUPPORT THE TEACHING OF IOWA HISTORY

(Publisher's note: I have received several letters and calls from readers regarding my Publisher's Perspective column in the January/February 2016 issue of Iowa History Journal, "Council to study, recommend changes to Iowa history education." All of them have been supportive of the council's role, of which I am a member, to reinstate the teaching of Iowa history in our statewide curriculum for students from elementary through high school. The following is a sample of some of those letters. I will share them with the council at our next meeting on May 3 and provide readers with an update in a future column.
- Michael Swanger)

I graduated from high school in 1966, during an era when Iowa education was on top of the heap. What has happened since? I believe a huge factor is a change in curriculum, to say nothing of discipline and expectations. Education in America is soft, period.

However, when one contemplates what has happened in Iowa over its history, there are many important aspects that should be included in a history course. Consider America's westward expansion to the Mississippi River and when a bridge was put across it near Rock Island, Ill., how it triggered rapid growth, aided by the Homestead Act. Then consider the Indian tribes that existed and how they were impacted. Before long, it was recognized on the East Coast that Iowa possessed some fabulously rich farmland. Add the historic movement of the Mormons from Illinois to the West, via Iowa and Missouri. And what about those World War II prisoners-of-war that provided labor in the fields when local boys were far from home?

One can't look at the future development of Iowa's economy without giving credit to all the inventiveness in agriculture, transportation, aeronautics and general conviction of finding a better way of doing something. The list of firsts is impressive and accounts for much fabulous growth in economic activity that cannot be ignored – if only it were publicized through a history class.

In addition, so many people are astounded when the roots of famous people in many fields include Iowa. Similarly, when Iowa leads the state rankings in any discipline, the publicity is cause for celebration.

This is all a reflection of my experience over these 45 years when I had bailed out of Iowa without knowing so much that I have since learned. And this has spurred my interest in more discovery every chance I get when I return to visit. *Iowa History Journal* has certainly ignited my desire to visit more places and museums throughout the state that provide information on subjects with which I was unaware.