

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](mailto:info@iowahistoryjournal.com). Letters must include your name, address and phone number.

#### LETTERS POUR IN ABOUT TEACHING IOWA HISTORY

(Publisher's note: This is the third consecutive issue of Iowa History Journal in which we are devoting the entire editorial space allotted for Letters to the Editor to publish viewpoints 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." Letters continue to pour in from readers who support the efforts of the new Iowa History Advisory Council, of which I am a volunteer member, with the shared hope that Iowa history will be taught to students across the state in grades K-12. The volume of letters that Iowa History Journal has received regarding this topic is unprecedented and inspiring. Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to send them. - Michael Swanger)

After reading your column about the new Iowa History Advisory Council and its goals in the January/February issue of *Iowa History Journal*, I was reminded how little I learned about our state's history in school. It wasn't until I started reading books and *Iowa History Journal* that I began to realize what I missed growing up. Sadly, I suspect I'm not alone.

Keep up the great work with your magazine and the council! - T.J. Mills, Council Bluffs

I so enjoy *Iowa History Journal*. I especially enjoyed the January/February issue about teaching history. I am worried that our school systems are going to lessen our young people's exposure to history with the budget challenges.

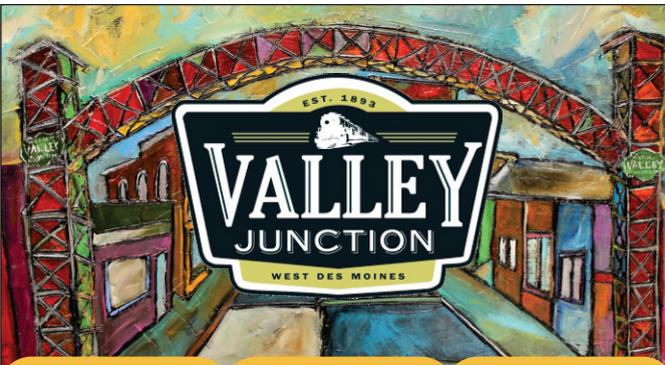
Also, your article about the mobile University of Iowa history museum was excellent (Volume 8, Issue 1, Historical Happenings, "Climb aboard the Mobile Museum to learn science and history). I visited it twice on RAGBRAI last year. I would be interested in visiting with them about acquiring it for our community.

Thank you for all your good work. - Paul V. Fitzgerald, Forest City

When the January/February issue of *Iowa History Journal* came out, a high school friend called and said that I must contact you. We had a great Iowa history school experience and she wanted me to share it with your Iowa History Advisory Council.

Our Perry Middle School social studies teacher, Chris Christianson, brought Iowa history to us in a fun and real way that many of us seem to remember and that's important.

Connie Mansfield Barton of Newton said, "We learned what each large city in Iowa brought to the state, such as



## Upcoming Events

### *Farmers Market & Music in the Junction*

Thursdays  
May 5 - September 29

### *September*

- 11 Fall Antique Jamboree
- 18 Felsen Tribute Car Show

### *October*

- 14 Fall Gallery Night
- 23 Pumpkin Walk

### *Sip & Shop*

Thursdays, October 6 - November 10

### *5th Street Flicks*

1st Sundays, October - March

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## IHJ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

the main industry. We learned about what crops grew best. For our own town of Perry, we explored the two railroad lines that came through, provided jobs and serviced commerce throughout the state.”

She remembered the huge notebooks we put together during the course and some still have them. We perused newspapers and magazines for stories that had nuggets of Iowa history and compiled them. The thicker, the better. What that did was not only bring us up close and personal to Iowa history, but it also brought us close to our local and then-statewide newspapers. The newspaper part doesn't happen with most of today's students.

If we could find descendants of any Iowa history players, Mr. Christianson invited us to write to them and get feedback. I wondered if a *Des Moines Tribune* columnist, Elizabeth Clarkson Zwart had Clarkson ancestors, who were players in Iowa history. I wrote to her, which impressed her highly. She wrote me a lovely letter about her ancestors which had a treasured place in my big notebook.

When I became a journalist years later and was hired by the *Des Moines Register & Tribune*, I sought her out and mentioned my junior high letter. Amazingly, she remembered it and became a treasured colleague.

I truly believe that the Iowa history class I had affected my career. As a writer, I always seek the historical touches in many stories.

My husband, Tom, grew up in the Waterloo area. He remembers drawing maps of Iowa's progression into statehood through various territories. His class also studied industry and economy, because Waterloo was strong on meat packing and farm equipment manufacturing.

Another classmate, Marcia Gardner DeWitt, attended middle school in Dawson before coming to Perry for high school. She recalls having a weekly TV class on Iowa history those two years. She, too, made a notebook of historic events in Iowa, such as the Kate Shelley Bridge, moving the state capital from Iowa City to Des Moines, the Herbert Hoover Birthplace, early governors, statehood, riverboat/ferry business, the Mormon migration westward and others.

When my friend, the late Linda Stofer Murphy, got her first teaching job in California, she had to sit out a semester to take a course on California history, which was required of all teachers. I don't know if that requirement still exists, but I do know that my California grandsons have to do a huge project on the 21 structures that make up the California Mission Trail. Students “adopt” one of the missions and create history notebooks, models, even Power Point presentations on them. It becomes a family affair. That could happen with various Iowa spots, it seems.

Thanks for reading my thoughts, Michael. Best wishes on your committee's important task. - Carol McGarvey, Des Moines

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