

# MUSEUM EXHIBIT GUIDE



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MUSEUM  
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STATE HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM OF IOWA



## WELCOME TO YOUR STATE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF IOWA

Welcome to the museum. You're at the best place to learn about Iowa history! Like any museum, it can be overwhelming, especially for first-time visitors. This informative guide is designed to help you and your group make the most of your visit.

- **Fast Facts** – Find additional information to enrich the stories told within each exhibit.
- **Exhibit Maps** – Use the maps to navigate the exhibits. The numbers match the exhibit highlights. Exhibit entrances/exits are marked on the map with ◀▶.
- **Artifact Spotlights** – These artifacts represent each exhibit's overall theme. Ask your group to examine the objects closely and use the provided questions to start discussions.
- **Exhibit Questions** – Use these questions to start conversations about the exhibits.
- **Exhibit Scavenger Hunts** – See if you can spot each item!

## INSIDER TIPS

- **Take Your Time.** Iowa wasn't built in a day, so don't rush through the exhibits. Take your time to view the objects and read the labels.
- **Use the Artifact Spotlights.** If you're short on time, focus on the Artifact Spotlights to make the most of your visit.
- **For Young Historians.** The "Hands-on History" exhibit space is designed for families with young children. School groups are not allowed in this space.

## MUSEUM MANNERS

Museums are unique places, like libraries or school classrooms. Museum manners are helpful ways to ensure you have a wonderful (and safe) time at the museum. Please follow – and politely enforce – the following museum manners during your visit.

- **Remain Engaged.** Be engaged and ask questions during your visit.
- **Stay With Your Group.** Young historians must stay within eyesight of an adult during their visit.
- **Walk, Don't Run.** For your safety, do not run in the museum or jump on the staircase.
- **Inside Voices.** Speak softly, like you are in a library, and respect other visitors by being quiet while in the museum.
- **Hands to Your Side.** For the safety of our objects, do not touch any objects or cross any barriers while in the museum.
- **No Food or Bags.** Food, drink and large bags are not permitted in the exhibits. Please leave them at the Information Desk.

## IF YOU'RE HERE WITH A SCHOOL GROUP

- **Divide Into Small Groups.** If you're here with a larger group, split up into smaller groups and choose different routes to avoid crowding in the exhibits.
- **Be a Role Model.** Set a good example by following and enforcing museum manners.
- **Connect and Encourage.** Be active and engaged with students. Encourage learning, demonstrate curiosity and foster conversations about history.
- **Supervise.** Students are not allowed to explore the museum without adult supervision. Students must always be within eyesight of their adult chaperones at all times.

If students' behavior disrupts other visitors or museum exhibits in any way, our staff may ask your group to leave the exhibits and stay in the atrium during the rest of your group's visit.

## 1st Floor Exhibits



Mammoth:  
Witness to Change



Delicate Balance



Civics in Action



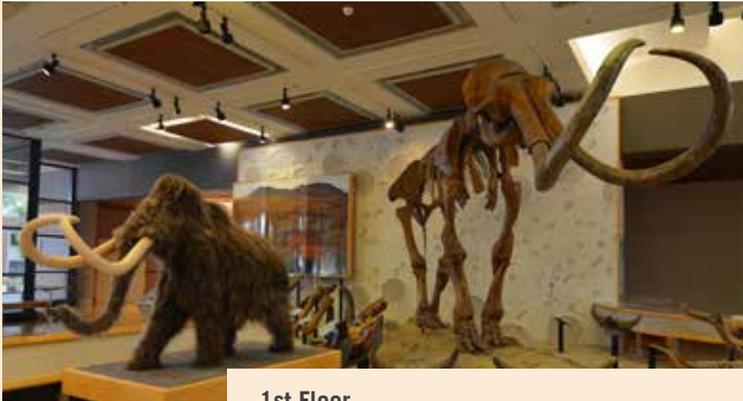
Iowa History 101



Iowa and the  
Civil War



Iowa's  
People & Places



1st Floor

## MAMMOTH: WITNESS TO CHANGE

### FAST FACTS

- Mammoths were herbivores and ate almost 500 pounds of plants every day.
- Male woolly mammoths weighed up to six tons, which is equivalent to about three cars!
- Like their elephant relatives, mammoth families followed a matriarch (a female who is the head of a family or tribe). A matriarch's death could be a disaster for the rest of herd.
- Mammoth bones were discovered near Oskaloosa, Iowa in 2010. It was the first time multiple mammoth skeletons were found at one site in the Midwest.
- Mammoths disappeared from Iowa about 10,000 years ago, around the same time as many other animals, such as ground sloths and giant beavers.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 The Des Moines Fossils

The Hebior Mammoth on display was found with its skull crushed and its bones in piles. Some of the bones have marks, and stone tools were found near the piles. What do you think happened to the mammoth?

### 2 Mammoth Tusks

Mammoth tusks were very long, sometimes measuring 15 feet. Why do you think tusks were important for the animal's survival?

### 3 Mammoth Tooth

Mammoths went through up to six sets of teeth in their lifetimes, some sets lasting only two or three years. Notice the size of this mammoth's tooth. Why do you think mammoths went through so many sets of teeth? Why were their teeth so large?

### 4 Mammoth Cast

The large skeleton is a reproduction cast made from mammoth bones found in Wisconsin. What can you learn from a full-scale model like this?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- What do you think was the greatest threat to mammoths: disease, predators, climate change or something else? Why?
- Based on what you see here, where do you think mammoths would live if they were still around today? Why?



## EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Mammoth hair
- Arrowheads
- Hafted knife
- Cyclops image
- Mammoth shoulder blade

## 1st Floor Exhibits



Mammoth:  
Witness to Change



Delicate Balance



Civics in Action



Iowa History 101



Iowa and the  
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Iowa's  
People & Places

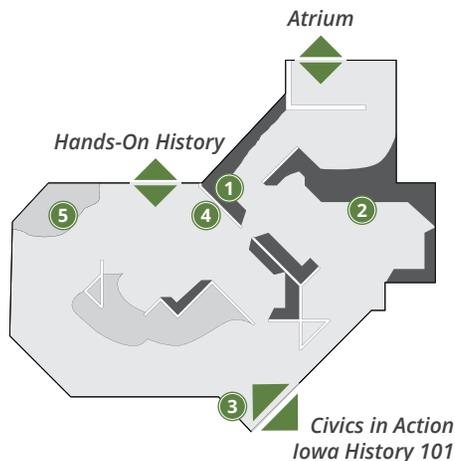


1st Floor

## DELICATE BALANCE

### FAST FACTS

- Iowa has produced many influential conservationists, including Ding Darling, Louis Pammel, Aldo Leopold and Ada Hayden.
- In the late 19th century, there were almost no deer in Iowa due to overhunting and habitat destruction.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Crinoids

Crinoids are marine animals that live underwater and are close relatives to the starfish. What do you think Iowa looked like when these crinoids were alive almost 5 million years ago? How has the state's geography changed?

### 2 Millstone

Water was very important to early Iowans, just like it is today. Why did early Iowans settle near water? How did they use water differently than Iowans do today?

### 3 Black Bear

Many different animals have called Iowa home over the years, including this black bear. Currently, no black bears make Iowa their permanent home. Why would animals need to find different places to live over time?

### 4 Ding Darling Cartoons

Art can influence people's opinions. How effective do you think Ding Darling's cartoons were in changing society's opinions about conservation? Why?

### 5 Bison

Historically, when Indigenous people in Iowa hunted bison they often used the entire animal. In what different ways could a bison be used? Think creatively.

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Think about the objects you use every day. Are any of them made with natural resources found in Iowa? Which ones?
- What do you think was the most important natural resource during Iowa's early statehood? What do you think is the most important now? Why?
- How do you think Ding Darling and Aldo Leopold's work influenced future conservationists?



### EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Buffalo headdress
- Woman's swimsuit
- Piece of gypsum
- Wagon wheel
- Jack Musgrove wood duck decoy

## 1st Floor Exhibits



Mammoth:  
Witness to Change



Delicate Balance



Civics in Action



Iowa History 101



Iowa and the  
Civil War



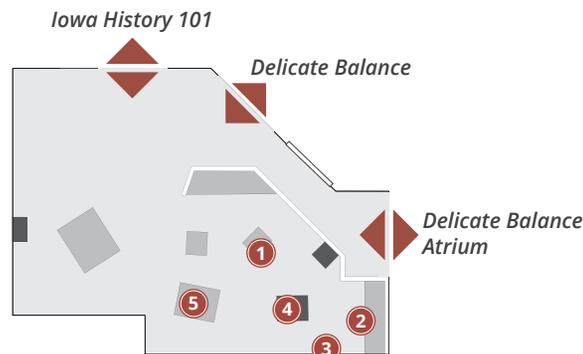
Iowa's  
People & Places



## CIVICS IN ACTION

### FAST FACTS

- In 1869, Julia C. Addington was the first woman elected to public office in Iowa and one of the first women elected to public office in the United States when she was elected superintendent of schools in Mitchell county.
- Former Iowa governor Terry Branstad holds the record as the longest-serving governor in United States history. He served as governor for over 22 years between 1983–1999 and 2011–2017.
- Carolyn Pendray, of Maquoketa, was the first woman elected to the Iowa legislature in 1928. She served in the Iowa House until she was elected to the Iowa Senate in 1932.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Meskwaki Bracelet

Many different groups, including American Indians, have fought for the right to vote since the founding of the United States. Why do you think it is important that everyone has the right to vote?

### 2 Edna Griffin Portrait

Iowan Edna Griffin inspired change through her landmark court case against Katz Drug Store. What are some ways you can influence change like Edna Griffin?

### 3 Iowa Caucus Project Brochure

For generations, Iowans have gathered together to caucus in various locations across the state to choose their preferred presidential candidates. Do you think it is important to be the first state to vote their choice? Why? Are there any drawbacks going first?

### 4 Woman's Christian Temperance Union Bank Box

This bank box was created by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Iowa. Temperance, the idea of limiting alcohol, was heavily debated throughout Iowa history. Why do you think the issue of temperance was important to some voters?

### 5 Voting Machine

This voting machine, featuring privacy curtains, was used for many years in a Des Moines restaurant to conduct informal political polls. Why do you think privacy is important when voting?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- How would you describe an active and engaged citizen?
- In what ways can you participate in civics everyday?
- What is your favorite story from the exhibit?
- How can we all become more active citizens?



## EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Iowans of Action wall
- Americanos Todos* poster
- BlackBerry phone
- Tippecanoe Club political ribbon
- RCA-Victor television and stand

## 1st Floor Exhibits



Mammoth:  
Witness to Change



Delicate Balance



Civics in Action

101

Iowa History 101



Iowa and the  
Civil War



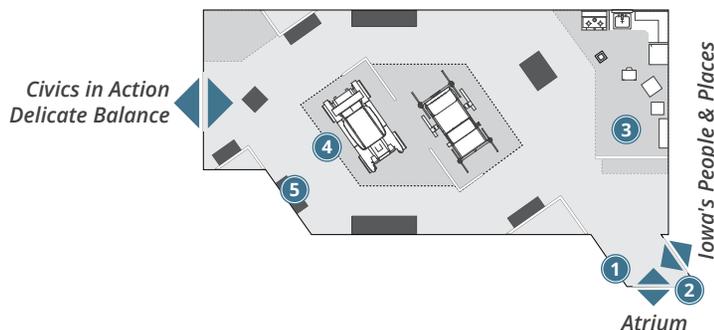
Iowa's  
People & Places



## IOWA HISTORY 101

### FAST FACTS

- Two First Ladies were born in Iowa: Lou Henry Hoover and Mamie Doud Eisenhower.
- The Red Delicious apple was developed in an orchard in Peru, Iowa. The apple you can buy in a grocery store today is very different from the original version.
- In 1869, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that women should be allowed to practice law. Iowan Arabella Mansfield became the first female lawyer in the country.
- The United States' first successful electric car was built by William Morrison of Des Moines in 1890.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Alexander Clark Portrait

Alexander Clark of Muscatine founded Iowa's first African American military regiment and succeeded in removing the word "white" from the state constitution's requirements for voting. Why was that important?

### 2 Population Graph

Examine the graph showing the cultural background of Iowans in 1920. How have immigrants and their cultures shaped Iowa? Why do you think these groups moved to Iowa?

### 3 1939 Radio

Before television and the Internet, radio was one of the main sources of entertainment in Iowa. What do you think life would be like without Internet and television? How do you think electricity changed life for Iowa farmers?

### 4 1917 Electric Car

By the early 1900s, some wealthy Iowans drove cars powered by steam, gasoline or electricity. How is this 1917 car different from the carriage on display? How is it different from and similar to modern cars?

### 5 Peggy Whitson's Flight Suit

In 2017, Iowan Peggy Whitson broke the record for the most days spent in space by an American: 665. Looking at her flight suit, why do you think it has so many pockets? What other things would impact its design?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Because of Alexander Clark's work, Iowa courts integrated schools 86 years before the U.S. Supreme Court reached the same conclusion in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. How do you think Iowa's decision influenced the rest of the country?
- Iowa has both urban and rural areas. In the past, how was life different for children in cities and farms? Do the same differences exist today?
- In your own words, what does it mean to be an Iowan?



## EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- 1998 iMac computer
- The Secret of the Old Clock* novel
- 1900 ice skates
- 1940s mining pick
- Charlie Wittmack's snow boots

## 1st Floor Exhibits



Mammoth:  
Witness to Change



Delicate Balance



Civics in Action



Iowa History 101



Iowa and the  
Civil War



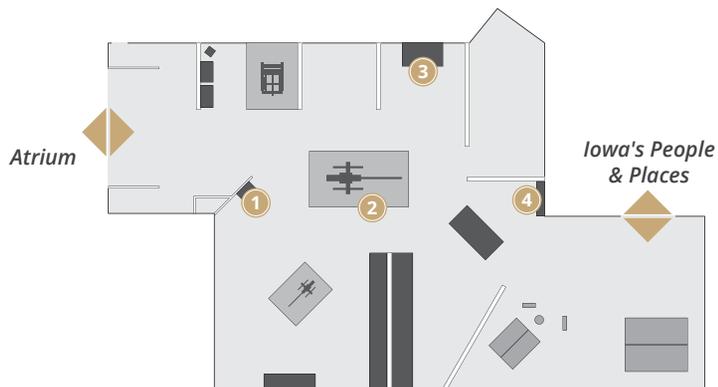
Iowa's  
People & Places



## IOWA AND THE CIVIL WAR

### FAST FACTS

- An estimated 76,534 soldiers from Iowa fought in the Civil War. Of those, 13,169 lost their lives in the war.
- Iowan Annie Wittenmyer helped create “diet kitchens” to prepare food safely for soldiers. She also established homes for orphans after the war and became the official State Sanitary Agent of Iowa (an early version of the Red Cross).
- General Grenville Dodge of Council Bluffs built one of the largest spy networks in the Civil War. He also helped develop the first transcontinental railroad.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Decision, “In the Case of Ralph,” by Chief Justice Charles Mason

Ralph, an enslaved man from Missouri, had promised to pay his master \$550 for his freedom but did not pay. Ralph’s case was the first ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court, and Ralph won, gaining his freedom. Why was the ruling important to Iowa’s history? How did it shape Iowa’s role in civil rights?

### 2 Section of Tree

The battle at Chickamauga, Georgia, claimed the second-highest number of casualties (wounded and deaths) of the Civil War. Look at the ammunition in the cases next to the cannon and trunk. Can you match any objects with pieces lodged in the tree? Based on the tree trunk and ammunition, describe how a Civil War battlefield would have looked.

### 3 Battle of Fort Donelson Diorama

Voltaire Twombly was the last member of the color guard (assigned to carry the flag) to survive the battle at Fort Donelson and the first Iowan to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. Why were battle flags important to Civil War soldiers on the field?

### 4 Section of Prison Wall

Samuel Byers, a member of the 5th Iowa Infantry, escaped from a Confederate prison and wrote the lyrics for Iowa’s official state song. How do you think being a prisoner of war affected his opinions about the conflict?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Compare your life at home to a soldier’s life at camp. How is it the same or different? Would you have enjoyed living in a camp? Why or why not?
- How did the war change life for Iowans?



### EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- General Belknap uniform
- Wooden crutches
- Model 1847 Grimsley saddle
- Dominoes
- “Battle Cry of Freedom” sheet music

## 1st Floor Exhibits



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Witness to Change



Delicate Balance



Civics in Action



Iowa History 101



Iowa and the  
Civil War



Iowa's  
People & Places

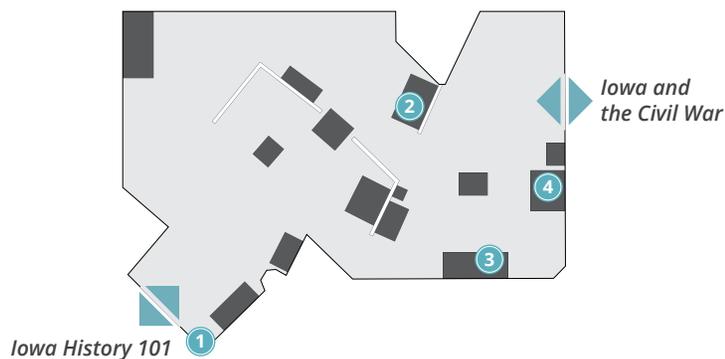


1st Floor

## IOWA'S PEOPLE AND PLACES

### FAST FACTS

- In 1783, Julien Dubuque reached an agreement with the Meskwaki and the Spanish that allowed him to mine lead near present-day Dubuque.
- The U.S. Congress created the Territory of Iowa on July 4, 1838. Iowa became a state on December 28, 1846.
- In 1867, the first railroad from the Mississippi River to the Missouri River was completed.
- Famous composer Antonín Dvořák wrote one of his most famous pieces of chamber music while staying in Spillville, Iowa in 1893.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Wacochachi Print

This artifact has been called “one of the earliest Native American narratives on paper.” It helps tell the story of the Meskwaki and arrival of early European settlers. The drawing was created by Wacochachi and given to George Davenport. Why do you think this piece was created and what does it represent?

### 2 Medical Bag

This black leather bag held medical supplies for Dr. Edward Carter, who worked for a time in the integrated coal mining town of Buxton, Iowa. Why do you think doctors were an important part of a coal mining community?

### 3 Justice Neuman's Robe

Linda Neuman wore this black robe while sitting on Iowa's highest court. She was appointed to the Iowa Supreme Court in 1986 and served as the first woman justice in the court's history. Why do you think Neuman's appointment to the court was viewed as an important event?

### Hmong Story Cloth

- 4 This colorful textile was created by Shoua Her and tells the story of a Hmong immigrant's journey to the United States. Her family came to Oskaloosa, Iowa in 1976. Looking at the story cloth, can you follow the story it is telling the viewer? What images can you see?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Many of the objects in this exhibit tell the stories of everyday Iowans. If you had to select an object to tell your story in an exhibit, what would you choose? Why?
- What is your favorite story told in the exhibit? Why?
- There are many stories to tell over 13,000 years. Are there any stories or people from Iowa's past that you think should be included within the exhibit? Why or why not?



### EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Dutch language Bible
- “Votes for Women” sash
- U.S. Navy WAVES cap
- Frog figurine

## 2nd Floor Exhibits



You Gotta Know the Territory



Riding Through History



Hollywood in the Heartland



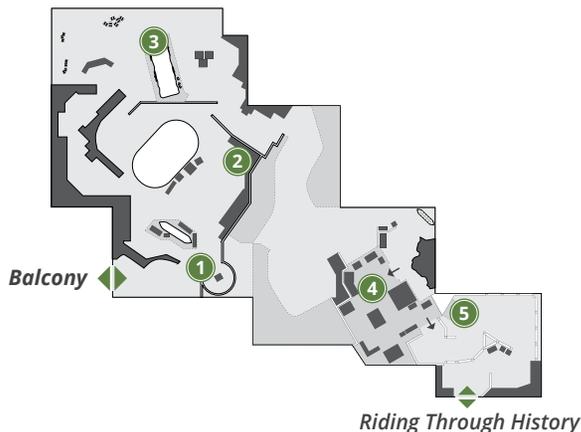
Visible Vault



## YOU GOTTA KNOW THE TERRITORY

### FAST FACTS

- Iowa became a state on December 28, 1846.
- After being removed from Iowa Territory, the Meskwaki tribal members pooled their government annuity payments and sold their property. With the consent of the state government, they purchased land in Tama County in the 1850s.
- Iowa has had three capital cities since becoming a territory: Burlington, Iowa City and Des Moines.
- Robert Lucas was appointed the first territorial governor. Ansel Briggs was elected Iowa's first state governor in 1846.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Meskwaki Feast Bowl and Spoon

The Meskwaki people often served food at religious gatherings. In your family, what special occasions or holidays involve food? Why?

### 2 American Indian Ribbon Blankets

Before European immigration, the Meskwaki used natural resources for materials. Why was trading important to American Indians and fur trappers? How did these items arrive in the new territory?

### 3 Conestoga Wagon

Conestoga wagons carried up to six tons and were pulled by teams of horses or oxen. If you were an early settler and could take only five things on your trip, what would you choose?

### 4 Urban Frontier Section

New towns offered opportunities for business. This section shows the different jobs of early Iowa settlers. What occupations do you think were most important in early Iowa towns? Why? What job would you like to do?

### 5 Robert Lucas' Desk

Robert Lucas was Iowa's first territorial governor, before it became a state. If you had his job, what laws would you help create? Why?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- What incentives did the Iowa Territory offer settlers? What were the drawbacks of moving to the new territory?
- Why was the land surveyed before people could buy it?
- Why were the first cities in Iowa built on rivers?
- By the 1840s, parts of Iowa were no longer considered the frontier. What things do you think make an area "settled?" How might your answer differ from an Iowa territory settler?



## EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Surveyor's compass
- Davenport silver collection
- Woman's saddle frame
- Black top hat
- Model of the first capitol

## 2nd Floor Exhibits



You Gotta Know the Territory



Riding Through History



Hollywood in the Heartland



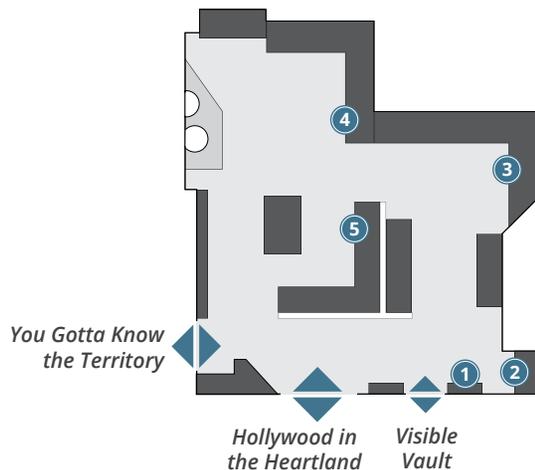
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## RIDING THROUGH HISTORY

### FAST FACTS

- Historians think Pella merchant D.S. Huber bought Iowa's first bicycle in 1865.
- At least 120 cyclists finished the first RAGBRAI® in 1973. Clarence Pickard was the oldest participant at 83 years old.
- In 2013, an estimated 36,000 RAGBRAI® riders were counted on the road from Perry to Des Moines.
- By 1997, RAGBRAI® had passed through all of Iowa's 99 counties.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 Bicycle Lamp

Bike safety has always been important. Besides this lamp, what other safety precautions can you spot in this exhibit?

### 2 John Deere Bicycle

John Deere is a company famous for building tractors. Why would a tractor company want to produce bicycles? Who would have wanted to ride John Deere bicycles? Why?

### 3 Plaques and Keys to the City

Being a host city for the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa brings a lot of people to town. For communities, what are the advantages of hosting RAGBRAI®? What are the drawbacks? Would you want your town to host? Why or why not?

### 4 2009 Banjo

RAGBRAI® is a mix of recreation and relaxation. What role does music or entertainment play in RAGBRAI®?

### 5 Iowa Map Sign from Vinton

Every town in Iowa is unique. If RAGBRAI® visited your town, what would you suggest visitors should see? Why?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Have you ever participated in RAGBRAI®? Or would you? Why or why not? Do you know anyone who has completed the ride?
- How do you think bicycles changed life for Iowans?
- How does RAGBRAI® create community spirit and pride?



### EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Bicycle jerseys from Iowa colleges and universities
- Mr. Pork Chop's apron
- "Great Six Day Bicycle Ride" certificate
- RAGBRAI® XXXIX route map
- RAGBRAI® XLI jersey

## 2nd Floor Exhibits



You Gotta Know the Territory



Riding Through History



Hollywood in the Heartland



Visible Vault

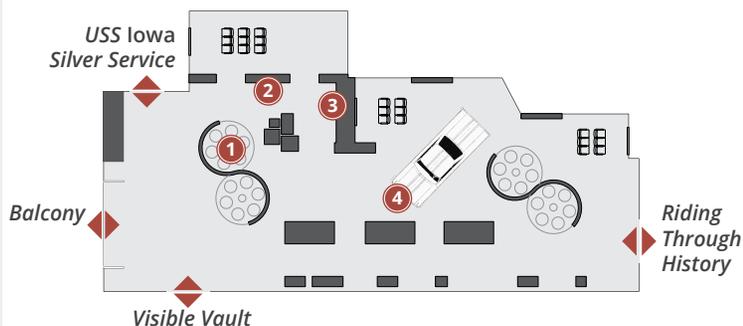


2nd Floor

## HOLLYWOOD IN THE HEARTLAND

### FAST FACTS

- The Cherry Sisters were known for their famously bad vaudeville act. They lost a court case that helped protect the media's right to publish controversial opinions.
- Iowa has produced three Academy Award-winning actors: Donna Reed (*From Here to Eternity*, 1953), John Wayne (*True Grit*, 1969) and Cloris Leachman (*The Last Picture Show*, 1971).



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### 1 The Music Man

The musical by Meredith Willson reflects his childhood in Mason City. Do you see any resemblance between the citizens of Willson's fictional River City and the people in your own community? Is this an accurate description of Iowa life today?

### 2 State Fair

The novel "State Fair" by Iowa writer Phil Stong captures some of the tensions between urban Des Moines and rural Iowa. What differences can you see between urban and rural Iowa in this film?

### 3 Motiograph Hand-Crank Projector

Before 1920, many projectors were powered by hand and were used to show silent films. How is that different than watching a movie today? Compare and contrast these movie-going experiences.

### 4 Galaxie 500

Cars like the Galaxie 500 were popular during the era of drive-in movies. Why do you think drive-ins were so popular from the 1950s to 1970s? Why do you think most closed?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Which movie or story in this exhibit best represents Iowa? Why?
- Why do you think movie theaters are important to small towns? How are small towns affected when a theater opens or closes?
- Iowa has been portrayed in many different movies. What are some differences between the "Hollywood Iowa" and where you live?



## EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Coca-Cola beverage dispenser
- 1920s slide projector
- "Is this Heaven?" bumper sticker
- Automatic ticket dispenser
- Drive-in movie speakers

## 2nd Floor Exhibits



You Gotta Know the Territory



Riding Through History



Hollywood in the Heartland



Visible Vault

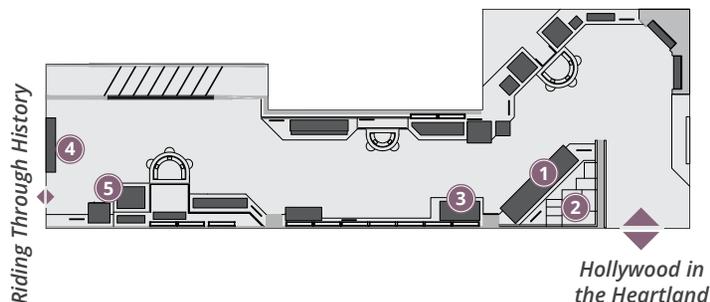


2nd Floor

## VISIBLE VAULT

### FAST FACTS

- In 1900, the State Historical Museum moved from the lower level of the Iowa Capitol into what is now called the Ola Babcock Miller Building across the street. In 1987, the museum moved to the current location.
- The museum's collection has more than 80,000 artifacts that document Iowa's history. Due to object care and conservation, only an estimated 3-5% of objects are on display at any given time.
- When artifacts are not on display, they are stored in the climate-controlled vault. This storage area is roughly the size of half a city block.



## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

### ① Currency

Both the 1844 and 1846 Iowa Constitution drafts prohibited "banks of note." These banks printed their own paper currency that held varying worth. Why do you think early Iowa leaders outlawed these banks?

### ② Trunks

There have been many different ways of carrying things throughout history. Examine the different trunks and discuss which one is your favorite and why. Why would trunks be important tools for people in the past?

### ③ Soda Fountain

Iowans have found unique ways to have fun through the years, such as grabbing a drink from a soda fountain. What activities do you do for fun? How are your fun time activities the same as those from the 1950s? How are they different?

### ④ Patten Collection

Robert E. Patten was an influential African American leader and businessman in central Iowa. Why do you think his print shop played an important role in the local African American community?

### ⑤ Native American Collection

Former museum curator Edgar Harlan worked with a Meskwaki man named George Young Bear to build the museum's Meskwaki collection. Why was this partnership so important?

## EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- The State Historical Museum of Iowa was founded to help teach Iowans about the world but now focuses on Iowa history. Why do you think the museum's mission has changed over the years?
- Why are the State Historical Museum of Iowa and its collections important to Iowans? Why are they important to visitors from other states and countries?



## EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- Neon flame
- Lydia Pinkham medicine box
- Small brown ceramic boot
- Arrowheads
- 1957 Pow Wow poster

# STATE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF IOWA

For more information on the  
State Historical Museum of Iowa, visit [history.iowa.gov](http://history.iowa.gov)

