

*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.

**SUPPORTING THE TEACHING OF IOWA HISTORY**

Thank you for an invitation via your “Publisher’s Perspective” column to comment on the importance of learning Iowa history in our schools (Volume 8, Issue 1, “Council to study, recommend changes to Iowa history education”). I greatly appreciate and enjoy *Iowa History Journal*, suggested to me by the governor.

Context for my commitment to personal understanding Iowa history includes a social studies degree with secondary education certification; past president, P.E.O. International; trustee, Iowa Wesleyan University; chairman, Friends of the Harlan-Lincoln House; honorary chairman and committee member, Main Street Mount Pleasant’s rehabilitation of the Union Block; and family “historian.”

Obviously, I can’t state the case better or express strategic reasoning more strongly for elementary-secondary Iowa history curricula than you can. It is my intent to simply add my support for formalized educational programming that reaffirms the obvious benefits of understanding the backstory for Iowa’s future.

Teaching initiatives that utilize the popular “hands on” approach are very beneficial for retention. Case in point, after last Christmas, we enjoyed a few extended days with two grandsons visiting our farm. During a snow-ice storm one evening, the power went out. It was an interesting learning experience (among other things) to bring down the kerosene lamp, depend on the wood stove for heat and look out over the flat farm ground seeing only darkness – no lights anywhere. When I explained that farm life was only two generations (in our case) from this being the norm, the 13 and 11 year olds were impressed. It opened up many levels of discussions. Of course, I’m not suggesting that routine classrooms can have this level of hands-on application, but you get my drift.

Again, thank you for an excellent history publication. As a longtime trustee of an old college that is constantly reinventing itself with the scholastic mixture of timeless and timely, I also remain grateful for your consecutive ad that reinforces Iowa private higher education. It remains motivational to me that two of the four achievers referenced are Iowa Wesleyan alumni! – Elizabeth E. Garrels, Mount Pleasant

*(Thank you, Elizabeth! Clearly, you “get it” and your grandchildren are fortunate to have such a thoughtful grandmother. Thanks, too, for acknowledging one of our longtime advertisers – Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Like you, they care about the education and future of Iowa children, and Iowa history. I’m grateful to them and to readers like you for supporting IHJ. – Michael)*

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