To Know Ourselves

The Report of The Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History

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State Historical Society of Iowa
A Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs

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CONTENTS

- Introduction 5
- Executive Summary 7
- Committee Reports 13
  - Comparable Studies 15
  - Curriculum 19
  - Instructional Resources 25
  - Teacher Training 29
  - Conclusion 33
- Appendixes 35

A. Organization
B. Members
C. Resources
D. Curriculum Survey

INTRODUCTION

To know history is to know ourselves. To understand the process of history is to understand how we have become who we are and how we can shape who we are yet to become. When we ignore our history or are ignorant of it, we live alone, isolated from both our unique identity and our shared humanity.

The history of Iowa is the collective experience of the people who have lived within particular geographic boundaries over time. To the degree that these boundaries simply superimposed political whim over previously undefined geography, the very concept of an "Iowa history" is artificial. State boundaries have little effect on settlement patterns, transportation networks, cultural institutions, and the ebb and flow of ideas. Iowa's history is common with its neighbors and with the nation as a whole.

At the same time, the history of Iowa is not identical to the history of Minnesota or Nebraska or Missouri. Iowa has its own peculiarities, its individual patterns, its unique rhythms. One state's history does not simply overlay another. There is a collective identity that allows one to say, "I am an Iowan," and that identity is as important for the health of a society as it is for an individual.

These are the two overriding reasons to study Iowa history: perspective and identity. By understanding the shared nature of our collective experience, what we share with each other, we learn tolerance and come to appreciate diversity. By identifying those unique characteristics that make us "us," we learn to relate to ourselves and to be confident of our ability to face the future, the history that we have yet to create.

Finally, the study of state history allows us to examine the forces of continuity and change at a level that can be understood. Continuity and change are the dual constants of history, and we are all individually and collectively agents of each. When studied on the grand scale of world or American history, they are often incomprehensible, and it is difficult to appreciate how individual human beings like ourselves can affect or be affected by either. When studied at the level of state and local history, the forces of continuity and change become very personal, and human beings enter the equation. Suddenly, our state, our city, our ancestors,

even we, ourselves, become an integral part of the process, and the grand, abstract reality of history enters our everyday lives.

For these reasons, we are obligated to teach our state's history to the young people of Iowa. We are called to understand who we are and how we got this way, to appreciate the forces of continuity and change. We must use our history in order to realize our potential as individuals and as a society. We cannot use our history if we do not know our history. That is why this Task Force was necessary. That is why this report has been prepared.

The State Historical Society of Iowa, the historical division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state agency responsible for assisting Iowans in understanding themselves, collectively and individually, in place and time. The Historical Society's Ten Year Plan, "Trustees for Tomorrow," published in 1986, placed highest priority on education. In August 1988 the administrator of the State Historical Society appointed a broadly-based task force of forty-five people from across the state to study the teaching of Iowa history at all levels of the educational system and to make recommendations in this report.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History formed committees to study in detail four specific areas of concern: (a) comparable studies of other states, (b) curriculum, (c) instructional resources, and (d) teacher training. After a full year of study and consultation, the Task Force presents its findings and recommendations in this report.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the Task Force and the staff facilitators for their time, energy, insight, and tolerance. I especially appreciate their understanding of the time pressures and other commitments that have occasionally delayed preparation and production of this final report far longer than anyone had expected. Finally, I am deeply grateful to the Iowa Centennial Memorial Foundation for its support through a ten-thousand-dollar grant that is unique in its history. We trust that you are happy with the results.

Now the challenge is before us. We must take these recommendations seriously and act responsibly and rigorously to bring Iowa history into the life of every student in Iowa. We must act now to preserve our past. We must act now to secure our future. We must act now to know ourselves.

— David Crosson
Administrator, State Historical Society of Iowa
Chair, Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History

Executive Summary

In August 1988 the administrator of the State Historical Society of Iowa, the historical division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, appointed forty-five Iowans to a Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History. Appointments included representatives of classroom teachers, the Department of Education, Area Education Agencies, professional teachers' organizations and unions, school boards, higher education, the General Assembly, the Iowa Humanities Board, the Iowa Council for the Social Studies, and the general public. State Historical Society staff served as facilitators. The Task Force was charged "to review and recommend to the Governor policies and procedures necessary to appropriately integrate the teaching of Iowa's historical and cultural heritage at all levels of the state's educational system."

The Task Force created committees to examine and make recommendations on four specific areas of concern. The Comparable Studies Committee was charged to review national, regional, and state studies on the teaching of history, particularly state history, and bring that information to bear on Iowa. The Curriculum Committee reviewed existing Iowa history curricula and recommended methods to incorporate Iowa heritage education at various educational levels. The Instructional Resources Committee recommended the necessary support materials and distribution system to classroom teachers. The Teacher Training Committee was assigned the task of recommending the necessary teacher training and support systems. This executive summary restates the mission, goals, and assumptions of the Task Force as a whole and then pulls together and summarizes the major findings and recommendations contained in the succeeding, more detailed reports from the individual committees.

Mission

The State Historical Society of Iowa has initiated and will coordinate the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History to review and recommend to the Governor policies and procedures necessary to appropriately integrate the teaching of Iowa's historical and cultural heritage at all levels of the state's educational system.

Goals

- Review national, regional, and state studies on the teaching of history, particularly state history, and bring that information to bear on Iowa.

- Recommend an appropriate integration of Iowa Heritage education at all curricular levels.

- Recommend the necessary instructional resource materials and distribution system to support the teaching of Iowa's cultural and historical heritage.

- Recommend necessary teacher training and support systems to implement an Iowa Heritage education program.

Assumptions

- Iowa's historical and cultural heritage should be taught in the state's schools.

- If we expect classroom teachers to teach Iowa's heritage, they must be provided with materials and training to do so.

- Any process that recommends actions affecting teaching must be broadly based and must provide opportunity for public and professional participation, review, and comment.

Major Findings

■ Across the country there is a direct correlation between the quality of the teaching of state history and the active leadership of the state historical society in curriculum development, teacher training, and the provision of support materials.

■ Although Iowa Code and Department of Education Administrative Rules require that the "history of the United States and Iowa" be taught in grades K-8, there are no specific requirements on curricula, content, course term, or teacher training. In the schools that specifically teach Iowa history, approximately 75 percent teach it in fifth or sixth grade. In most cases the course lasts six to eight weeks.

■ Although a large quantity of instructional materials on Iowa history exists, it is uneven in both quality and accessibility, often overlooking the experience of women and children, omitting most of Iowa's twentieth-century history, and lacking sensitivity in its treatment of people of diverse race, class, and ethnic background. Many schools are reluctant to purchase an Iowa history textbook or to subscribe to *The Goldfinch* for anything less than a semester course.

■ Teacher training in Iowa history is inadequate. The State of Iowa has no Iowa history licensing requirement at any level, and no history requirement at all for the licensing of elementary teachers. Eighty percent of elementary and secondary teachers of Iowa history have *not* taken an Iowa history course at the college level; only 37 percent have attended a staff development program on Iowa history. Of the twenty-nine college teacher training courses in Iowa approved by the Department of Education, only eight offer Iowa history courses.

Major Recommendations

■ The State Historical Society of Iowa, in cooperation with the State Department of Education, must play an active leadership role if the teaching of Iowa history is to become an important part of the elementary and secondary curricula in Iowa.

■ In order to exercise this role, the State Historical Society should:

1. Hold a conference in the summer of 1990 in which representatives of model programs in other states share their educational materials, concepts, and techniques with Iowa teachers and education officials;

2. In FY91 establish and staff an education bureau, supported by an advisory committee, to create and administer broad educational programs in support of the teaching of Iowa history at all levels;

3. Create the position of State Historian in FY91 primarily to assist and train teachers of Iowa history and also to create educational programs on Iowa history for people of all ages;

4. In FY91 create and staff a resource center with responsibility to collect, collate, distribute, and, when necessary, generate teacher reference and support materials on Iowa history and to serve as the primary reference point to service requests from both in and out of state;

5. In cooperation with the Department of Education establish in FY91 a committee to develop guidelines and propose materials for model Iowa history curricula at all levels;

6. By FY92 administer — in cooperation with the Department of Education, Area Education Agencies, community colleges, and colleges and universities — a coordinated statewide program of in-service training for teachers of Iowa history; and

7. Begin a series of Iowa history teacher institutes by the summer of 1992.

■ The State Department of Education should:

1. Adopt Administrative Rules that require one semester of teaching as the minimal accepted term for a course on Iowa history to meet the requirements for grades K-8;

2. Work with the State Historical Society, Area Education Agencies, community colleges, and colleges and universities to provide relicensing units for participation in approved teacher training programs in Iowa history, including an Iowa history teacher training institute;

3. Require that teachers who have been assigned to teach Iowa history complete an approved Iowa history teacher training program.

■ All colleges and universities with state-approved teacher training programs should make available to their education majors either a classroom or independent study course in Iowa history.

■ All interested parties should cooperate to ensure that recommended materials reflect the multicultural, nonsexist guidelines established by the state, and that they include the experiences of children and persons of varying socioeconomic strata and physical abilities.

Conclusion

The Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History respectfully presents these recommendations to the Governor of Iowa, the Iowa General Assembly, the Administrator and Board of Trustees of the State Historical Society of Iowa, and the Director of the State Department of Education with an urgent appeal for action. A generation is growing up with little understanding of our heritage as Iowans. We must act now. A heritage lost cannot be regained.

Committee Reports

Comparable Studies

Goal

Review national, regional, and state studies on the teaching of history, particularly state history, and bring that information to bear on Iowa.

Objectives

- Compile a bibliography of the relevant literature.
- Review the literature for information relevant to Iowa.
- Provide an analysis of current knowledge on the teaching of history relevant to the teaching of Iowa's heritage in Iowa schools.

Assumptions

- Studying state and local history at the elementary and secondary levels leads to the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable students to establish individual identity and an appreciation of their heritage reflecting an awareness of and an ability to think critically about the relationship of continuity and change.
- A state historical society, working with other state and local institutions and educational agencies, is an appropriate agent for initiating and coordinating the teaching of state history.
- Other states can provide models for the integration of state history in Iowa's schools, but these models must be adapted to meet Iowa's particular needs and resources.

Research

Individually and collectively, the committee identified and collected examples of elementary and secondary state history education projects and materials from other states, with special attention to the role of state historical societies. Examples of programs identified, contacts made, and materials collected, include the following.

■ David DeBoe, Director of Educational Services, Texas State Historical Association, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

■ Sheryl Vanderstel, Indiana Historical Bureau, Indianapolis, Indiana.
1. *Broadsides:* supplementary curricular materials for teachers.
2. "History on Wheels" (including arts).

■ Katharine Corbett, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.
1. Integrated programs with St. Louis city and county history curricula at junior and senior high school levels.
2. Planning grant for film for elementary level.

■ Karen Regina and Gregory Rhodes, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio.
1. Urban history source book series.
2. Commercial television urban history series.

■ *Insight*, educational publication to elementary students published by the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

■ *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in the Schools*, prepared by the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools. Washington, D.C.: Educational Excellence Network, 1988.

■ "A Catalog of Education, 1988/89" and other materials, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

■ "History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve," Calfornia State Board of Education, 1987.

■ *American Memory: A Report on the Humanities in the Nation's Schools*, by Lynne V. Cheney, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities.

Analysis

■ The Minnesota Historical Society provides a comprehensive model of involvement by a state historical society in the teaching of state history in the schools, from training to textbooks to supplementary materials.

■ The Texas Historical Association has direct input into state history curricula and standardized teaching materials.

■ The Indiana Historical Bureau, Missouri Historical Society, and Cincinnati Historical Society provide creative programs, products, and models for involvement with the schools.

■ In those states where the teaching of state history is the strongest, state historical societies are actively involved in leadership roles.

Recommendations

■ The State Historical Society of Iowa, in cooperation with the Department of Education, must play an active leadership role if the teaching of state history is to become an important part of the elementary and secondary curricula in Iowa.

■ The State Historical Society should:

1. Bring in appropriate representatives of the Indiana Historical Bureau, Minnesota Historical Society, Texas Historical Association, Missouri Historical Society, and other agencies that may be identified to share their educational models and materials with the full Task Force; a committee, or another forum that the Task Force may recommend.

2. Establish and staff an education bureau to integrate its educational services and programs within the Society itself and with other agencies and organizations.

3. Create the position of State Historian primarily to assist and train teachers of Iowa history and also to create educational programs on Iowa history for people of all ages.

4. Establish an advisory body, at least half of whose members will be classroom teachers from around the state, to assist the education bureau in planning and implementing its educational programs.

Comparable Studies Committee

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CURRICULUM

Goal

Recommend an appropriate integration of Iowa Heritage education at all curricular levels.

Objectives

- Review existing curricula and current classroom practice.
- Review examples and models from other states.
- Recommend what should be taught and how.
- Recommend actions and materials necessary to implement the recommendations.

Assumptions

- A single elementary school course of indeterminate length and quality is not adequate for the effective teaching of Iowa history.
- The integration of Iowa history into the total elementary and secondary school curricula should be encouraged.
- Teachers and administrators need external curricular guidance, support, and research to integrate Iowa history into the general curriculum.

Research

■ Iowa Code and Department of Education Administrative Rules were examined for Iowa history and general history teaching requirements, K-12.

■ A survey of all elementary schools in Iowa was conducted to learn the grade level at which Iowa history is taught, the amount of teaching time devoted to Iowa history, what text and teaching methods are used, the degree of teacher preparation, the desired form of in-service education, and whether and which curriculum guides are being used. Approximately two hundred schools responded (see Appendix D).

Analysis

■ Iowa Code and Department of Education rules require that the "history of the United States and Iowa . . . [and] American citizenship, including the study of national, state, and local government" be taught at the elementary level. No specific curricular, content, or term requirements are made.

■ Iowa Code now requires the teaching of American history at the secondary level.

■ Approximately 50 percent of the schools responding to the survey included a curriculum guide of some form, ranging from one-page outlines of the content covered to very elaborate documents describing content, method, and materials. They represent two major organizational forms. Most guides present a course on Iowa with almost equal emphasis given to geography, history, and economics and government. The history component is primarily related to settlement and the Civil War. Little time is devoted to twentieth-century history. Geography, economics, and government components tend to emphasize facts. A second set of guides presents a more thorough coverage of Iowa history with a more limited amount of other social studies material. In these cases the Iowa material is presented primarily as a case study within a broader context of American history.

■ About half of the schools teach Iowa history in the fifth grade; another 27 percent teach it in the sixth grade. Several school systems integrate Iowa history throughout the elementary school at all grades levels.

■ Most schools teach Iowa history for a period of six to eight weeks. There are many variations in scheduling. Several teachers reported scheduling Iowa history for one hour per week throughout the year. The likelihood of teaching Iowa history for a semester appears to be related to grade level. The semester pattern is more common in higher grade levels (sixth and above).

■ Teacher requests for a text are almost unanimous. In general, all existing texts are viewed as inadequate in some way. Three texts are most frequently used: the ones by Sjolund, Reida and Irwin, and Mathre and Rosenfelt. Iowa State University Press published a new text in 1989.

■ A wide variety of methods for teaching Iowa history is reported. The most commonly mentioned methods are notebooks or scrapbooks, mapping exercises, field trips, and films and tapes. The use of historical newspapers, oral history, games, and computers were mentioned occasionally.

■ Approximately 40 percent of the elementary teachers report that they try to integrate Iowa history into other curricular areas. It is most commonly integrated into the social studies and American history curricula. A few teachers reported integration with language arts courses and the fine arts.

■ The majority of teachers responding have had a college course in history, but fewer than 20 percent report taking a college-level course in Iowa history. Approximately 25 percent of the teachers report an elementary or secondary school course in Iowa history. A few individuals comment favorably on AEA courses on Iowa history, but the impact of these courses on the bulk of Iowa history teachers is small.

■ Approximately 85 percent of teachers requested in-service training. Most teachers would prefer the workshop format on one day during the school year in their local area (AEA). They want the workshops to cover teaching materials, curricula, and the content of Iowa history.

■ A survey of Iowa history teaching in the secondary schools was not conducted since few schools teach Iowa history at the secondary level. The need for additional information concerning secondary schools may require a survey as the recommendations of the Task Force are implemented.

Recommendations

■ The present Code requirement for the teaching of Iowa history in the elementary schools is adequate, but guidelines specifying the quality and term of Iowa history teaching are needed.

■ Model curricula for the teaching of Iowa history in the elementary schools should be developed by a group of historians and teachers under the leadership of the State Historical Society and the Department of Education.

1. The curricula should be distributed to all appropriate classroom teachers, directly as well as through normal channels.

2. The materials necessary to fulfill the curricular objectives should be made easily available to teachers in all areas of the state.

3. In-service education should be developed around model curricula to give teachers desiring to learn more every opportunity to do so.

4. The existence of model curricula should be widely publicized to inform the greatest number of teachers and parents of its availability.

5. Model curricula should be evaluated and revised periodically.

■ A series of units/learning activities and materials for integration into existing secondary school courses should be developed by appropriate scholars and teachers under the leadership of the State Historical Society and the Department of Education.

1. These materials should be distributed to all appropriate classroom teachers, directly as well as through normal channels.

2. The materials necessary to fulfill the objectives of the unit/learning activities should be made easily available to teachers in all areas of the state.

3. In-service education should be developed to give teachers desiring to learn more about these materials every opportunity to do so.

4. The existence of these materials should be widely publicized to inform the greatest number of teachers and parents of their availability.

5. These materials should be evaluated and revised periodically.

■ Goals, objectives, model curricula, learning activities, and units developed for Iowa students should be made available to college teachers of Iowa history and social studies methods courses to help them prepare their students to teach the Iowa studies curricula.

■ The State Historical Society of Iowa should assume leadership in promoting the teaching of Iowa history courses as an elective in secondary schools. To meet this objective the development of curricular guidelines and materials will be necessary.

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Instructional Resources

Goal

Recommend the necessary instructional resource materials and distribution system to support the teaching of Iowa's cultural and historical heritage.

Objectives

- Review what materials exist, how they are distributed, and how they are used.

- Recommend what materials need to be created, who should be responsible for creating them, and how they should be distributed.

- Recommend actions necessary to implement the above.

Assumptions

- Although a fifth grade course on Iowa history meets minimal requirements, Iowa's heritage should be integrated into the teaching of diverse subjects at the elementary and secondary levels.

- To adequately teach Iowa history at any and all levels, teachers must have access to high quality resources, including but not limited to books, teaching guides, audio-visuals, and software; and these resources should address the concerns of people across gender, class, race, and ethnic lines.

- Teachers should be encouraged to use other local and regional resources outside the classroom. Teachers' use of resource materials is directly determined by ease of access, which includes but is not limited to cost.

Research

The Committee reviewed a bibliography of the most highly recommended materials listed in Iowa and Some Iowans, edited by Betty Jo Buckingham (Des Moines: Iowa Department of Education, 1988). The committee also reviewed the preliminary results of a survey conducted by the Curriculum Committee of the Task Force.

Analysis

- Although a large quantity of instructional materials on Iowa history exists, it is uneven in both quality and accessibility.

- Available resources for teaching Iowa history are not clearly linked to curricula.

- Available resources for teaching Iowa history generally emphasize the nineteenth century to the almost total exclusion of the twentieth and generally focus on geography and political history to the almost total exclusion of Iowa's social and cultural heritage.

- Teacher's guides and curricular materials are needed to improve the educational value of field trips to museums and historical places.

- Prior to the publication of a textbook by Schwieder, Morain, and Nielsen in 1989, most available elementary textbooks were uneven in content and were woefully lacking in sensitivity to the diverse people who live in Iowa.

- Most school districts cannot afford to purchase a textbook for less than a full semester course, and even then limited resources may prohibit purchase of an Iowa history text.

Recommendations

■ The State Historical Society of Iowa should:

1. Actively assist in and coordinate the ongoing identification, production, and collection of Iowa heritage resource materials (including, but not limited to, activity books, teaching guides, and other instructional materials) and their distribution to teachers;

2. Create and staff a resource center with responsibility to collect, collate, distribute, and, when necessary, generate teacher reference and support materials on Iowa history and to serve as the primary reference point to service requests from both in and out of state;

3. Ensure the production of a minimal level of consistent, integrated material on Iowa history that reflects the multicultural, nonsexist guidelines established by the state and includes the experiences of children and persons of varying socioeconomic strata and physical abilities;

4. Arrange for the compilation, publication, maintenance, updating, and distribution to all libraries, Area Education Agencies, and classroom teachers teaching Iowa history of a comprehensive list of all Iowa heritage resource materials;

5. Provide interpretive materials for state-owned historical facilities and sites; and

6. Actively encourage teachers to use local historical resources (including, but not limited to public libraries, historical societies, newspapers, cemeteries, museums, AEA media centers, city and county records, genealogical societies, and oral histories) by (a) producing and distributing materials to teachers on how to use local historical resources, and (b) assisting local historical agencies and organizations in providing materials that integrate their exhibits, publications, and programs with local school curricula.

■ The State Historical Society and the Department of Education should:

1. Find a way to ensure the availability of *The Goldfinch* to all elementary and junior high school children studying Iowa history; and

2. Find a way to ensure the availability of a current Iowa history textbook to all elementary and junior high school children studying Iowa history.

Instructional Resources Committee

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Teacher Training

Goal

Recommend necessary teacher training and support systems to implement an Iowa Heritage educational program.

Objectives

- Review current status of teacher training on Iowa's heritage.
- Review examples and models from other states.
- Recommend level and methods of teacher training on Iowa's heritage to support other Task Force recommendations.

Assumptions

- While there are many teachers throughout the state who are doing an excellent job of teaching Iowa history, the overall quality of Iowa history instruction needs to be improved.
- The most immediate way to improve the quality of Iowa history instruction throughout the state is to work with teachers in the field.
- Most elementary teacher education programs provide only minimal preparation in the teaching of history.
- A collegiate-level Iowa history course will have to be added as a teacher training requirement in order to have a long-term effect on the quantity and quality of Iowa history teaching at the primary and secondary levels.

Research

■ The State of Iowa maintains no Iowa history certification requirement at any level.

■ It is possible to teach history in grades K-8 without ever taking a college-level history course. One cannot teach art, music, industrial arts, physical education, or special education without specialized training in those areas.

■ Iowa has recently adopted rigorous licensing requirements that require teachers to acquire licensing "units" on a regular basis through a combination of college courses and staff development courses.

■ According to a 1986 study by Dr. Lynn Nielsen, of the Price Laboratory School at the University of Northern Iowa, only 20 percent of the fifth-grade teachers of Iowa history have taken an Iowa history course at the college level, and only 37 percent have attended a staff development program on Iowa history.

■ Of the twenty-nine college teacher training programs approved by the Department of Education only eight offer Iowa history courses.

■ Area Education Agencies most often offer in-service Iowa history training, but these courses are on an ad hoc basis, last for only a day, and are directed more at method than content.

Analysis

■ It is very unlikely that teachers of Iowa history in grades K-12 have received any formal or informal training in Iowa history.

■ It is unrealistic to expect teachers to be trained in Iowa history if colleges do not offer Iowa history courses.

■ If a consistent, statewide method of delivery can be developed, relicensing requirements will make quality Iowa history teacher training courses attractive and popular.

Recommendations

■ The State Historical Society of Iowa should:

1. Prepare and coordinate teacher training in Iowa history in conjunction with local school districts, Area Education Agencies, and institutions of higher learning.

2. Prepare and present training institutes for teachers of Iowa history throughout the state who would in turn assume leadership roles for the teaching of Iowa history in their local areas.

3. Encourage Iowa's colleges and universities to make available to their education majors either a classroom or independent study course in Iowa history.

■ The Board of Educational Examiners should require teachers who teach a course on Iowa history to complete a state-approved course in Iowa history methods and materials.

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Conclusion

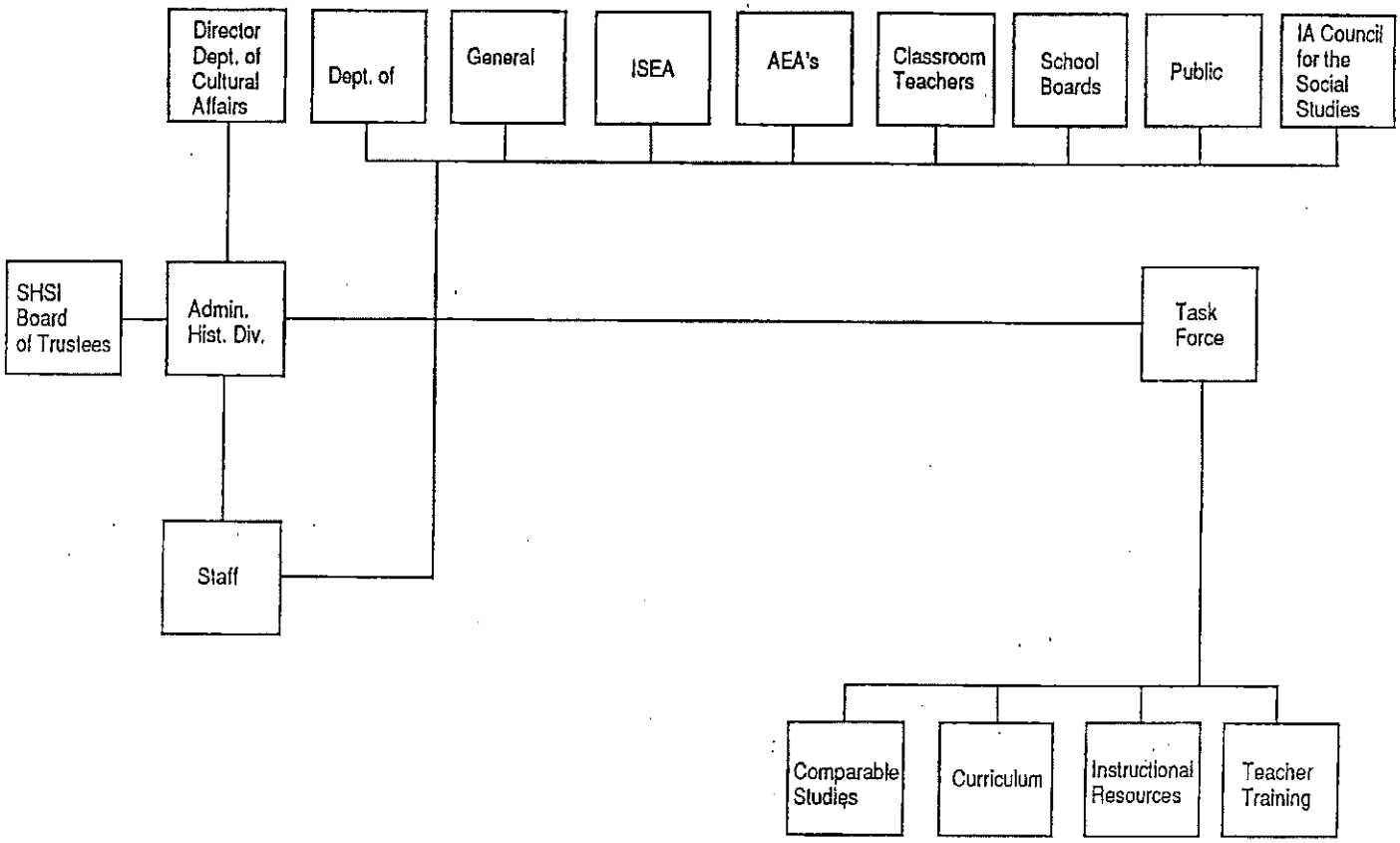
The teaching of state history in Iowa's elementary and secondary schools is representative of the teaching of state history across the country. With few exceptions, Iowa is neither better nor worse than most other states. Indeed, the quality and quantity of teaching Iowa history correspond with the general condition of history teaching in schools today. In the rush "back to basics" on one hand and "global education" on the other, the teaching of American, state, and local history has been too often lost. This decline in the quality, image, and perceived importance of history teaching is to be greatly regretted.

From a year of study, several things are clear. More people are teaching Iowa history or want to teach Iowa history than was suspected. Because of the lack of available training and resources, the quality of that teaching is very uneven. Teacher demand for training and resources is high, and the State of Iowa is obligated to find a way to make them both available on the broadest possible basis. Finally, the State Historical Society of Iowa must play an active leadership role if the teaching of Iowa history is to become an important part of the elementary and secondary curricula of Iowa.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History respectfully presents the above recommendations to the Governor of Iowa, the Iowa General Assembly, the Administrator and Board of Trustees of the State Historical Society of Iowa, and the Director of the State Department of Education with an urgent appeal for action. A generation is growing up with little understanding of our heritage as Iowans. We must act now. A heritage lost cannot be regained.

Appendix A

Organization



Appendix B

Members

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Ernest Horn Elementary School
Iowa City

Margaret Borgen
FINE
Des Moines

Mary Chapman
Hubbell Elementary School
Des Moines

William Cochran
State Library
Des Moines

William Dieleman
State Senator
Pella

Donald Drake
Iowa Humanities Board
Iowa City

Margo Dundon
Grout Museum
Waterloo

Ronald Enger
Loess Hills AEA 13
Council Bluffs

O. J. Fargo
Green Valley AEA 14
Creston

David Ferch
Mt. Mercy College
Cedar Rapids

Donald Fett
Iowa City Public Schools
Iowa City

Henry Gray
Kate Mitchell Elementary School
Ames

Jan Hein
Des Moines PTA
Des Moines

Bob Himes
Lakeland AEA 3
Cylinder

Dale Jensen
Northern Trails AEA 2
Clear Lake

Dorothy Kistler
Retired Teacher
Fairfield

Glen Lookingbill
Arrowhead AEA 5
Fort Dodge

Myron Marty
Drake University
Des Moines

Tom Morain
Living History Farms
Urbandale

Michael Morgan
West Ridge Elementary School
Harlan

Lynn Nielsen
Price Laboratory School
Cedar Falls

Arthur Ollie
State Representative
Clinton

Phil Parks
Des Moines Public Schools
Des Moines

Richard E. Peters
Mount Vernon High School
Mount Vernon

Robert Popliff
Edison Elementary School
Waterloo

Tom Prout
Western Hills AEA 12
Sioux City

Donald G. Roseberry
Southern Prairie AEA 15
Ottumwa

Dorothy Schwieder
Iowa State University
Washington Junior High School
Ames

Mary Louise Smith
Iowa Centennial Memorial
Foundation
Des Moines

Michael J. Smith
Putnam Museum
Davenport

Cordell Svengalis
State Department of Education
Des Moines

Paul Thompson
Anson Junior High School
Marshalltown

Curtis Van Gilder
Heartland AEA 11
Johnston

Evelyn Vondran
Keystone AEA 1
Dubuque

Larry Wellendorf
Parkview Junior High School
Ankeny

Michael Zahs
Washington Junior High School
Washington

Mary Zanotti
Jefferson School
Charles City

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The Goldfinch

Gordon Hendrickson
State Archivist

Loren Horton
Field Services Coordinator

Steven Ohrn
Historic Sites Coordinator

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Deputy Administrator

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES

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Organizations, Agencies, and People

Bennett, Pamela, Director, Indiana Historical Bureau

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Harstad, Peter T., Director, Indiana Historical Society

Hurt, R. Douglas, Associate Professor of History, Iowa State University

Iowa Council for the Social Studies

Luebke, Frederick C., Professor of History, University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Madison, James H., Professor of History, Indiana University

Metcalf, Fay, Executive Director, National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools

Minnesota Historical Society (a wide variety of curricular and educational resource materials)

National Center for History in the Schools, University of California, Los Angeles

National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, Washington, D.C.

Regina, Karen, and Gregory Rhodes, Cincinnati Historical Society

Vanderstel, Sheryl, Indiana Historical Bureau

Appendix D

Curriculum Survey

Introduction

Many observers believe that the quantity and quality of the teaching of Iowa history in the state's elementary and secondary schools are inadequate. Before the Curriculum Committee of the Blue Ribbon Task Force could recommend a course of action concerning the possible development of an Iowa history curriculum, it determined that it must assess the degree to which this allegation was true, so it set out to investigate the content, quantity, and form of Iowa history teaching in the state's elementary schools.

Relatively little current information concerning the status of Iowa history teaching in the state is available in the literature relating to the teaching of Iowa history. A survey conducted by O. J. Fargo several years ago revealed a pattern of strong interest in the teaching of Iowa history, but little curricular or resource help for the state's elementary teachers. Since Fargo's survey did not address several issues directly related to curriculum and since several years had elapsed since it was conducted, the Curriculum Committee believed that a new survey of the state's elementary schools would provide a sounder basis for recommending a course of action with respect to the curriculum for the teaching of Iowa history.

The staff of the State Historical Society designed and implemented a mailed survey in September 1988. A short questionnaire was mailed to all elementary principals on a list maintained by the Iowa Department of Education. The survey sought information about six aspects of the teaching of Iowa history in the state's elementary schools: (1) the existence and content of curriculum guides; (2) the grade level at which it is taught and the amount of time devoted to it; (3) teaching methods and materials, particularly texts; (4) the degree of integration into various curricular areas; (5) the amount of preparation teachers received; and (6) teachers' interest in and recommendations regarding in-service education.

This appendix summarizes the results of the survey. A copy of the questionnaire used in the survey follows this document.

Research Methodology

Both qualitative techniques and simple quantitative analysis were used to analyze the results of the survey. All quantitative evaluation was based on 197 complete and usable responses. Thirty-five additional responses were received, but were too incomplete to provide usable information. Internal reliability checks of the questionnaire revealed no major problems. External reliability and validity were not evaluated extensively because of the simple and obvious nature of the questions and the degree to which the results agreed with the Fargo survey and the expectations of the researchers and the committee.

The responses were distributed throughout the state in a pattern adequately representing the school population of the state as a whole. Several districts submitted multiple responses. All individual teacher/school responses were included in the quantitative analysis. Thus, larger school systems might be slightly overemphasized. Requests for a list of respondents or other questions concerning the methodology or results of the survey beyond those summarized here may be

directed to Deputy Administrator, State Historical Society of Iowa, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, Iowa 50319 (515)-281-3809.

Survey Results

Organization of Iowa History Teaching

The teaching of Iowa history in the state's elementary schools has been mandated for many years, but critics contend that the Department of Education and the majority of the school districts have done little to organize a curriculum and provide materials for the teaching of Iowa history. The problem has not been widely recognized in the broader educational community, however. In an effort to determine what really happens in the teaching of Iowa history, this survey asked several questions related to the articulation of the curriculum: grade placement of the course, amount of time devoted to the teaching of Iowa history, integration with other curricular areas, and use of a curriculum guide.

TABLE 1
GRADE LEVEL FOR TEACHING IOWA HISTORY

Grade	Number	Percent
First grade	4	2.0
Third grade	9	4.6
Fourth grade	20	10.2
Fifth grade	99	50.3
Sixth grade	54	27.4
Seventh grade	5	2.5
Eighth grade	2	1.0
Ninth grade	1	0.5
NA	3	1.5

The placement of Iowa history courses in the fifth and sixth grades in more than 75 percent of Iowa's schools reflects both the current rules of the Department of Education and an educational tradition of teaching state history in the middle grades (see table 1). Note that no responding school indicated that the primary placement of the Iowa history course is in the second grade. Three school districts indicated that Iowa history teaching occurs in the second grade to provide preparation for a more extensive course later in the student's career. This survey did not extend to high school courses. Respondents' comments and word-of-mouth information indicate that only two or three school districts in the state provide a separate high-school level course. Fewer than ten districts provide a significant unit on Iowa history as part of another high-school course. Among the elementary schools, fewer then one in four devote an entire semester or more to the teaching of Iowa history; an equal number allow less than six weeks (see table 2).

TABLE 2
DURATION OF IOWA HISTORY COURSE

Weeks	Number	Percent
One or less	4	2.0
Two or three	17	8.6
Four or five	23	11.7
Six to eight	46	23.4
Eight plus	59	29.9
Semester	18	9.1
Year	11	5.6
Other	14	7.1

Seventy percent of the respondents do not feel they have an adequate curriculum guide for the teaching of the required Iowa history course (see table 3). Fifty-five schools did include curriculum guides with the completed questionnaires. The complexity and sophistication of the guides vary greatly. In many cases the guides duplicate the content outline of one of the available textbooks in the field. A limited number of organizational patterns exists among the guides. An overview of the content of the guides appears in the following section.

TABLE 3
EXISTENCE OF A CURRICULUM GUIDE

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	55	27.9
No	137	69.5
NA	5	2.5

The format for teaching Iowa history also varies widely among the respondents (see table 4). Many respondents reported using several different teaching methods. Field trips were the most frequently used; mapping exercises, personal projects, films and tapes, and textbooks also show frequent use. Several respondents described unique methods designed for their own classroom. Others reported using games or historic newspapers or documents. Respondents generally indicated a preference for traditional methods. There also appears to be a slight preference for methods allowing for active student involvement: field trips, scrapbooks, and personal projects.

TABLE 4
TEACHING METHODS

Method/Technique	Number	Percent
Field trip	124	62.9
Project-personal	76	38.6
Text	67	34.0
Films and tapes	60	30.5
Mapping exercise	58	29.4
Printed handouts	50	25.4
Notebook/Scrapbook	33	16.8
IPT tapes	24	12.2
Local/oral history	20	10.2
Speaker	15	7.6
Lecture	14	7.1
Projects-class	13	6.6
TV-Iowa Heritage	7	3.6
Games	4	2.0

Note: The total number exceeds the number of respondents because teachers listed more than one method. The percentage figure given is the percentage of respondents listing any given method. Thus, the total exceeds 100 percent.

Questions relating to the availability and use of a textbook revealed a strong desire by Iowa teachers to use a textbook. Many respondents requested advice and leadership from the Society in the creation of new textual materials. Almost half of the respondents used one of three textbooks (see table 5). There were, however,

indications of dissatisfaction with existing texts. Eighteen respondents who indicated they used a text were not willing to or could not name it! Many others commented on the inadequacy of available texts. About one-third of the respondents used no text. Many teachers commented hopefully about the new text recently published by Iowa State University Press. The major concerns of grade level, cost, and organization of content were expressed frequently.

TABLE 5

AUTHOR/TITLE OF TEXTBOOKS USED

Author/Title	Number	Percent
A. Sjolund and R. Sjolund, *Iowa*	47	23.9
T. H. Mathre and W. E. Rosenfelt, *Iowa, Its People and Culture*	28	14.2
B. Reida and A. Irwin, *Hawkeye Adventure*	15	7.6
M. Posten, *This is the Place - Iowa*	9	4.6
O. J. Fargo, *History of Iowa*	4	2.0
C. Erbe, *History of Iowa*	2	1.0
Graphic Learning System, Map Series	2	1.0
Other	4	2.0
Not specified	18	9.1
None	68	34.5

Articulation and integration of Iowa history into the curriculum was explored only briefly in this questionnaire. About half of the respondents indicated that they integrated Iowa history with some other area of the curriculum (see table 6). Several respondents reported integration into several areas, but no significant difference in practice of integration was found. Content areas of integration and teaching methods used for such integration were not explored in this questionnaire.

TABLE 6

INTEGRATION OF IOWA HISTORY INTO OTHER CURRICULAR AREAS

Area	Number	Percent
American History	36	18.6
Social Studies	45	23.2
Language	4	2.1
Art, Music	2	1.0
Science	1	.5
None reported	106	54.6

Content of Iowa History Teaching

Eighty-five of the 197 respondents submitted a curriculum guide or syllabus used to teach Iowa history. The documents varied from one- or two-page topic outlines to elaborate curriculum guides of four hundred pages. Since most of the curriculum guides indicated that individual teachers have considerable flexibility in determining the length and depth of presentation on any given topic, no attempt was made to quantify the depth of content or length of the presentation. Also, more abbreviated curriculum guides may result in longer and deeper presentations than more lengthy guides depending on the teacher's interests and the time available. The tremendous variation in the curriculum guides makes categorization difficult. Nevertheless, the following more or less subjective observations can be made (see also table 7):

1. Iowa history courses are presented in a topical manner—emphasizing topics such as geography, settlement, economics, government, and famous people—rather than in a chronological manner. Many

courses begin with a chronological approach through the statehood period and then switch to a topical approach.
2. Integration with broader concepts of U.S. history is rare.
3. Political and/or governmental history is rarely presented. Early governors are discussed, but later governors are rarely mentioned.
4. Recent history (since the 1930s) is rarely presented, although material on famous Iowans frequently seems to be post-World War II.
5. The role of the fine arts and science or invention are rarely mentioned.
6. Although ethnic groups are frequently covered in detail, other coverage of social (home and community) life is rare.
7. Most courses emphasize the economic questions of how Iowans used resources to make a living. In a few instances the courses emphasized how Iowans lived.
8. The curriculum guides include many unique and worthwhile lesson components that could be incorporated into either recommended courses or proposed classroom activities.

TABLE 7
TOPICS PRESENTED IN CURRICULUM GUIDES

Most Frequently Covered	Less Frequently Covered
Geography - physical	Communication
Geology - glaciation	Education
Prehistoric eras	Energy problems
Indians	Climate
Pioneer life	Iowa's symbols
Migration	Recent history
Territorial period	Industrialization
Statehood period	Iowa's future
Civil War period	Arts
Iowa's economy	Science and invention
Transportation	
Famous Iowans	
Government	
Ethnic Groups	

Teacher Preparation

Many teachers responding to the survey expressed a desire for more training to teach Iowa history. Only 17.6 percent of the respondents had taken a college-level course in Iowa history (see table 8). Eighty-six percent of the respondents stated that they would like to participate in in-service workshops on Iowa history if the Society offered them. They expressed the most interest in the content of Iowa history, materials for teaching Iowa history, and the organization of an Iowa history curriculum. They preferred that the workshops be offered in areas scattered throughout the state, possibly at Area Education Agency sites.

TABLE 8
TEACHER PREPARATION

Preparation	Number	Percent
Iowa history - College	53	17.6
American history - College	114	38.0
Other state history - College	19	6.3
Iowa history - High school	8	2.7
Iowa history - Elementary	68	22.7
In-service	38	12.7

Note: The total number of responses is larger than the number of respondents because several respondents reported preparation in more than one category.

Conclusion

This survey presents both "good news" and "bad news" for the teaching of Iowa history. The "bad news" is that relatively few schools from the total population of Iowa elementary schools responded with well-organized curricular materials in Iowa history. The lack of teacher training in Iowa history was also disappointing. However, the "good news" is that the teachers responding are anxious to obtain both in-service training and curricular materials. The importance of Iowa history to the development of its young was not disputed by any respondent. Instead, there was a clear call for the development of curricular materials to make meaningful teaching easier.

State Historical Society of Iowa

The Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs

12 September 1988

Dear Educator:

As part of our commitment to the preservation and interpretation of Iowa's history, the State Historical Society of Iowa has called together educators and historians to form a Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History. The mission of the Task Force is to provide assistance to teachers through the development of curriculum materials and supporting supplementary education in Iowa history. Before the Task Force can begin to develop new materials and educational opportunities, we must determine what is taught now, and the materials and methods used. You can help the Task Force by completing the enclosed questionnaire and sending along a copy of your curriculum and/or unit plans.

The Task Force expects to provide curriculum guidance in Iowa history, identify resources in Iowa history for use in the classroom, and provide supplemental educational opportunities for teachers of Iowa history. The Task Force has been funded by the Iowa Centennial Memorial Foundation. All materials developed and educational opportunities will be announced to teachers of Iowa history by the State Historical Society of Iowa. The materials will interface with the Guide to Curriculum Development in the Social Studies recently adopted by the Iowa Department of Education. If you have specific requests or suggestions concerning the teaching of Iowa history please contact us.

Thank you for your time and effort in helping with this task.

Sincerely,

Carol L. Ulch, Ph.D.
Deputy Administrator
(515) 281-3809

Attachment

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Box 372
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(319) 423-7173

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON THE TEACHING OF IOWA HISTORY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction - The Curriculum Commitee of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Teaching of Iowa History is surveying the elementary schools of the state to determine what is taught about Iowa history and the general methods used. Our goal is to obtain a copy of all curriculum guides and/or unit plans used in the elementary schools of Iowa. This material will help us to prepare supplementary teaching materials for Iowa History.

If different guides or units are used by teachers in your building or district please duplicate this questionnaire. Please complete this questionnaire and return it to us by 28 SEPTEMBER 1988.

If you have questions please contact: Dr. Carol L. Ulch
Deputy Administrator
State Historical Society
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 281-3809

A. IOWA HISTORY CURRICULUM

1. CURRICULUM GUIDE - Please enclose with the completed questionnaire a copy of the curriculum guide and/or unit plan you use to teach Iowa history. Please write your name, the name of your school, phone number, address on the material.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. At what grade level do you teach Iowa history?

___ Third
___ Fourth
___ Fifth
___ Sixth
___ Seventh
___ Eighth
___ Ninth
___ Tenth
___ Eleventh
___ Twelveth

2. How many weeks do you devote to the teaching of material that is predominantly Iowa history?

___ One or less
___ Two or three
___ Four or five
___ Six to eight
___ More than eight, less than semester
___ Semester
___ Year
___ Other (please explain)_____

B. IOWA HISTORY TEACHING AND TEACHERS

3. Do you use a text for the teaching of Iowa history?

___ No
___ Yes, IF YES please give the authors and title.

_____

_____

4. Describe the general method you use in teaching Iowa history. Do you use special projects, field trips, etc?

5. Do you integrate the teaching of Iowa history into other social studies areas?

___ No
___ Yes, If Yes please describe how you do this.

6. What preparation have you had for teaching Iowa history?

___ College course in Iowa history
___ College course in American history with no Iowa history
___ College course in the history of another state
___ High school course in Iowa history
___ Elementary school course in Iowa history
___ In-service workshops (please describe)_____

_____

7. Would you be interested in in-service workshop in Iowa history?

___ No
___ Yes, If Yes please include any suggestions you have about content, organization, and time.

C. GENERAL COMMENTS - Please make any additional comments about the teaching of Iowa history that you would like to have the Task Force consider in this project.

Respondent's Name _____

School _____

Address _____

_____ IA _____
city zip

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO:
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
CAPITOL COMPLEX
DES MOINES IA 50319

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

DMR Oct 12, 2003

Sense of place

Young people need to know Iowa history

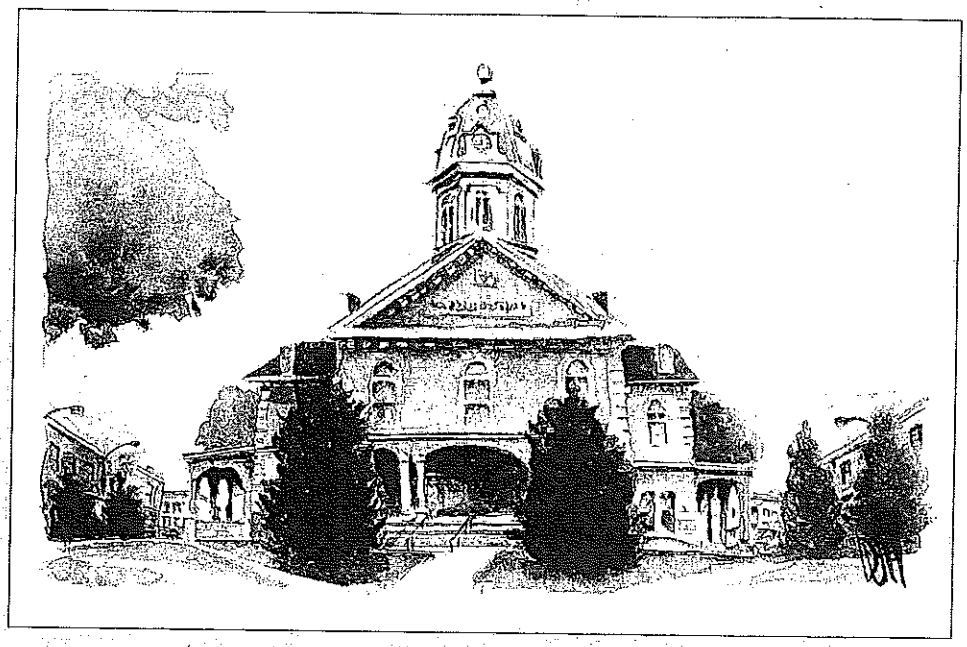
Having taught Iowa history to college students for more than 30 years, I applaud the Register's Sept. 28 editorial bemoaning the fact that we are doing a lousy job of instilling in young Iowans a "sense of place." ("Teach More Iowa History — and Pride.")

I thought it was an interesting juxtaposition — our governor in Chicago doing an admirable job of trying to lure native Iowans back with offers of good-paying jobs, while the Register is taking notice of something some of us have known for years — that our educational system (not just K-12 as your editorial suggests — but all the way through college) is offering less and less when it comes to learning about who we are as Iowans.

Isn't it ironic that we pride ourselves in how well we educate young Iowans, who then turn around and "flee" Iowa because they have no "roots" or a sense of their state's history or culture. The solution? Many states (Texas, Kansas, Wyoming, etc.) require one or two years of studying their state's history/culture. It wasn't that many years ago when Iowa's Department of Education required more.

Putting more Iowa studies back into our schools isn't the cure-all in retaining our young, talented college graduates, but combined with offers of good-paying jobs maybe, just maybe, we can begin to turn around this export of our more precious commodity — young Iowans.

—**John Liepa,**
Indianola.



The importance of teaching history, American or Iowa, is a critical part of the K-12 educational experience. We applaud the Register's stance on ensuring that history not be lost in the curriculum for Iowa's students.

Newly merged Area Education Agency 267, in partnership with the Belin-Blank Center, was recently awarded more than $700,000 by the U.S. Department of Education to support area school districts in this challenge.

—**Beth Strike,**
Area Education Agency 267,
Clear Lake.

As a member of the board of trustees for the State Historical Society of Iowa, a member of the Iowa and national Councils for the Social Studies, and a social studies teacher at Perry High School, I would like to applaud the Register for its editorial concerning the demise in teaching Iowa history and social studies.

While 48 other states do impose state curriculum standards for social studies, this does not mean that social studies is a priority in our nation's schools.

In fact, social studies has become the sacrificial lamb for schools as they try to meet other requirements, which has only been compounded by No Child Left Behind.

Social Studies — Don't Leave School Without Them!

—**Jason Follett,**
Ankeny.

I enjoyed your editorial urging better instruction on Iowa history.

In response to this need, Graceland University has developed an Iowa history course that is available to any Iowa high school student with access to e-mail through our Accelerated College Education (ACE) program.

We market the class to all public schools in Iowa and have students enroll in the course every semester.

The course is taught by Tom Morain, former director of the State Historical Society and now a Graceland vice provost. Morain co-authored an Iowa history textbook and was very involved in the development of the Historical Society's teaching standards on the subject.

While many schools do not have the resources to provide an Iowa history instructor, students can take an excellent Iowa history course through our distance-learning program.

—**Doug Greene,**
Graceland University,
Lamoni.