



The Annals of Iowa

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In This Issue

PAMELA RINEY-KEHRBERG considers how moments in Iowa history contribute to our understanding of the complexity within broader national and international narratives. Through four key examples—woman suffrage, Buxton, Iowa, *Varnum v. Brien*, and the 1980s Farm Crisis—she demonstrates the rich insights that can be gleaned through state and local history.

REBECCA CONARD studies the individuals, institutions, and movements that have driven the publication of Iowa history. Beginning shortly after statehood, the essay traces the arc of Iowa history to the present, showing how major publications and the organizations that published them have adjusted to changes in public interest, financial support, and historiographical shifts.

Front Cover

I am an Iowa photographer who uses botanicals as metaphors for human experiences—toxic plants stand in for hurtful relationships, vanitas scenes represent the fleeting passage of time, and glorious blooms show moments of exquisite joy. In my work, I use natural window light and inspiration from Renaissance still life painting.

The image shown on this quarter's cover has several components that are specific to Iowa's history. The Prairie Rose (Iowa's state flower) and Burr Oak leaves (Iowa's state tree) anchor a bouquet that also contains native plants like Queen Anne's Lace, Milkweed, Phlox and Blackberries. This is contained in a transferware bowl similar to those that you would find in most people's homes in Iowa's early days. The arrangement sits on a stack of bound volumes of the *Annals of Iowa*. On the barnwood table are several acorns from a Burr Oak, more antique issues of the *Annals of Iowa*, leaves from a Burr Oak, and a Keokuk geode.

— Molly Wood, cover artist

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Contents

- 301 Iowa and the Importance of State and Local History
Pamela Riney-Kehrberg
- 321 The Arc of Iowa History
Rebecca Conard
- Art Inserts
- 365 Review Essays
-

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Review Essays

- 365 Iowa Without Borders:
Iowa History from European Contact to Statehood
Patrick J. Jung
- 371 Iowa Agricultural History:
Old Perspectives and New Directions
J.L. Anderson
- 377 Race and Iowa History
Ashley Howard
- 383 Iowa, The Bright Radical Star of the Civil War Era
Dwain Coleman
- 387 Immigration to Iowa:
A Brief History & Historiography
Jeff Bremer
- 394 Everywhere yet Nowhere:
Histories of Religion in Iowa
Andrew Klumpp
- 400 Iowa's History of Gender at 175:
A Brief Survey
Sara Egge
- 405 "No School Teaches It":
Revitalizing Iowa History Education in K–12 Classrooms
Megan Card
- 412 Iowa's Political Heritage:
A Quarter Century of Historical Publications and Research
Possibilities
Timothy Walch

Editor's Perspective

"WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO A SPECIAL ISSUE," I responded when asked about Iowa's upcoming 175th anniversary of statehood. With the naiveté and excitement of an eager new editor, I thought, "Why not?" Since then, smart and ambitious historians, creative and insightful artists, and supportive and encouraging colleagues have produced this exciting, substantive, and engaging special issue that honors the 175th anniversary of Iowa's statehood. Though I am far from impartial, I think it is a feast for those with an interest in the history of our state.

At the beginning of this project, I asked our contributors to reflect on the past, present, and future of Iowa history. Their work in answering this query has accomplished so much. This issue presents a dynamic case for the value of state and local history and the importance of supporting its development. Our authors have read so widely that even the most serious students of Iowa history—myself included—will find their reading lists augmented. For researchers, these essays outline exciting, challenging, and important new research opportunities.

Our feature articles are by leading scholars in Iowa history—Pamela Riney-Kehrberg and Rebecca Conard. They anchor the issue with distinct assessments of the value, place, and significance of Iowa history. Riney-Kehrberg considers how moments in Iowa history can make rich contributions to understanding the complexity of our national and international history. Conard presents an exhaustive study of the individuals, institutions, and movements that have driven the publication of Iowa history. Together, they demonstrate how historians have studied our state and shared its history and why that work matters for Iowans, the nation, and dare we say, the world.

A series of review essays on major topics in Iowa history round out the issue. They replace our regular Book Review section, which will, of course, return in full force next quarter. The nine authors represent both familiar faces and new voices in Iowa history. And, each one received a particularly challenging brief: in about six

pages, help us see the past, present, and future of Iowa history in one major subfield—pre-statehood, agriculture, race, the Civil War era, immigration, religion, gender, Iowa history education, and politics. A tall order, but one that they met with lucidity and verve. By design, the essays vary in style, tone, and approach, but each one offers a masterful assessment of the field, a comprehensive bibliography, and a research agenda that could (and hopefully will) fill many future issues of the *Annals*.

We are also delighted to feature artwork from Iowa artists, which provide yet another avenue into reflecting on Iowa's past. Artists from throughout the state working with a range of mediums offer their own interpretations of major themes in Iowa history. The art featured on the inserts is paired with a corresponding essay (as indicated on each insert's footer) and the cover was specially commissioned for the issue. These talented artists have offered a compelling interdisciplinary lens for us to reflect even more deeply on our work of studying, interpreting, and sharing Iowa history with diverse audiences.

Any project as ambitious as bringing together eleven authors and seventeen artists is a team effort. At the State Historical Society of Iowa, I am especially grateful for Susan Kloewer and Anthony Jahn's consistent support for this project. At the Iowa Arts Council, David Schmidt, Lindsay Keast, and Veronica O'Hern helped us to feature so many fabulous Iowa artists. Brady Winslow and Kyle Carpenter have offered a fresh set of eyes when they were most needed. As an editor, I work with bright, curious, and meticulous scholars every day. I am thankful to our authors for taking up this challenge and contributing to this remarkable product.

The contributors to this issue have been gloriously ambitious. This issue is a product of their collective efforts. Nevertheless, our work here isn't exhaustive. We know that. Many questions remain unanswered, topics remain unexplored, and our work continues. There's more to do. I am grateful to do this work alongside you and look forward to continuing our efforts together.

—Andrew Klumpp, editor

WHEN PRESIDENT JAMES POLK signed the bill that added Iowa to the Union on December 28, 1846, no one received a phone alert, social media notification, or saw it on the six o'clock news. If the telegraph operators and typesetters worked fast enough, Iowans may have found out in their evening newspaper.

No matter when or how those early Iowans eventually learned about their new role in the American experiment, I hope they paused for at least a moment to consider the significance of the event. A milestone like the granting of statehood offered an opportunity for early Iowans to consider how far they had come and to imagine where they might go next.

Now, as Iowa marks its 175th year of statehood, this special edition of *The Annals of Iowa* offers us a similar opportunity. The following pages remind us that Iowa's history started long before President Polk put his quill pen to paper and that our shared past continues to shape who we are today. History explains why our state map includes names as diverse as Elkader, Keokuk, Defiance, and Primghar, and why we find Vikings in Decorah, tulips in Pella, and the Sergeant Floyd Monument in Sioux City.

Each of those communities and all the others in between benefit from history as a part of our shared identity, a source of collective wisdom, and even a catalyst for growth. Understanding the obstacles that earlier generations overcame can inspire us to transcend our own.

That's why the *Annals* has never been more important. Ever since the first edition rolled off the press in 1863, this journal has traced important and often surprising connections between the past and the present. The State Historical Society of Iowa proudly supports the curious, careful research that contributes to each volume of this publication. We also look forward to continuing to partner with others who are interested in Iowa's past, like the talented Iowa artists showcased in this special issue.

As we look to the next 175 years, we renew our commitment to preserving Iowa's rich history, supporting rigorous and innovative research, and ensuring that future generations know and understand our history. Thank you for reading *The Annals of Iowa* and trusting us to share Iowa history with you.

—Susan Kloewer, Administrator, State Historical Society of Iowa

