

Fun IOWA Facts

The hamburger was first introduced in Clarinda when a restaurant owner discovered a new way for making a sandwich by using ground beef. The Clarinda restaurant's chef who was from Hamburg, Germany, named the sandwich.

Since 1910 Iowa has led the nation in the percentage of people who can read and write. Iowa's literacy rate is 99%.

The Iowa Capitol Building has 27 fireplaces.

The Maytag washer was invented in 1907 in Newton by Howard Snyder and marketed by Fred L. Maytag.

William Morrison of Des Moines in 1890 built the first successful car in the United States. His electric car sat 12 people and traveled at 20 miles per hour.

In the United States, Iowa has the most per-capita participation of girls in high school competing in sports.

In 1835 when Stephen Kearney explored Iowa, the prairie grass was so high that the soldiers could tie knots of grass over the backs of their horses.

All of the Cornell College campus in Mount Vernon is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is the only campus in the U.S. to have that designation.

The oldest building in Iowa is a one-room school house on the Mathias Ham House Historic Site in Dubuque.

If all the shelves in the law library of the Iowa Capitol Building were laid end to end they would stretch more than 4 miles long.

The entire town of St. Donatus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Most Iowa counties have a low population density: less than 50 people per square mile.

The Republican Party was first organized in Crawfordsville, Iowa.

The Cherry Sisters were vaudeville performers at the turn of the century. They were so bad that a net was used on stage to protect them against food and debris that the audience threw at them.

The first McDonald's restaurant in Iowa was opened in Davenport in 1958.

Fairfield was the second town west of the Mississippi to have electric lighting and the first in the nation to have a public power system.

The first sponsored kite tournament was held in 1926 in Sac City. There were 183 kites entered in the competition.

The first public highway in Iowa was built in 1849 in Lucas County.

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The first Iowa State Fair was held in 1854 in Fairfield with 16 counties participating.

Iowa has lost half of its top soil since pioneers first plowed the prairie.

The *Des Moines Register* has won more Pulitzer Prizes than any other newspaper in the country, except the *New York Times*.

Iowa's first train robbery took place in 1873 when Frank and Jesse James robbed a Rock Island train close to Adair and stole \$3,000.

Iowa's first fire department was organized in Carroll in 1875 and had 20 members. The only firefighting equipment the department had were buckets.

The University of Iowa was the first public university in the United States to admit women and men on an equal basis.

In the late 1800s LeMars had a famous polo team.

It would cost over \$1,000,000 to clean and preserve the Civil War flags showcased in the Capitol.

In 1940, Iowa's first city swimming pool was constructed in Cedar Rapids.

The dome of the Iowa Capitol building in Des Moines is covered with sheets of 23-carat gold. The sheets are so thin that 250,000 of them piled together would measure one inch high. The combined weight of all the sheets of gold on the dome is 100 ounces.

Hospice and Employee Assistance Program (EAP), two national programs contributing to the physical and mental well-being of Americans, were first developed in Iowa.

Iowa's Capitol building has a prairie boulder as its cornerstone. The stone was laid in 1871 and was 7 foot long, 3 foot wide, and 3 foot thick. Forty items were placed in the cornerstone which included \$40 in gold and silver and a membership list of the Monroe Cornet Band.

Fifteen Iowans have served in the Cabinets of 13 presidents of the United States.

One of three places settled by the Icarians was Adams County. The group was the longest existing, non-religious, communal experiment in U.S. history.

The Duesenberg brothers operated a bicycle shop in Garner and later created the Dusenbergs automobile.

The original Red Delicious apple was discovered as a chance seedling in Madison County in 1850 and it became the leading U.S. variety.

The Fenelon Place Elevator in Dubuque is the world's steepest and shortest railway.

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In the 1920s, Earl May started the radio station KMA in Shenandoah to promote his seed business and the station was heard worldwide.

An important event at the 1941 Iowa State Fair was the National Tall Corn Contest; the winning cornstalk was over 23 feet tall.

The art calendar industry originated in Red Oak. The Thos. D. Murphy Co. has been in business for over 100 years and is the leader in the advertising specialty field.

Cap'n Crunch Cereal was developed in the early 1960s in Cedar Rapids.

In 1881, Barnum & Bailey's Circus stopped in Cedar Rapids and displayed the first electric lights seen in Iowa.

The Hart-Parr Company in Charles City coined a new word in 1871 when they used "tractor" to describe their new machine in their advertisements. Hart-Parr was the founder of the tractor industry.

Iowans read more books per capita than in any other state.

Iowa is the first state to offer legal riverboat gambling.

Christian Nelson from Onawa invented the Eskimo Pie and teamed with confectioner Russell Stover to produce the Eskimo in 1920. Nelson also developed an insulated jug for selling Eskimo Pies at newsstands and by street vendors.

The *Quad-City Times* newsroom was the first all-electronic newsroom in the world.

There is only one town named Maquoketa in the world.

Snake Alley in Burlington has been called the crookedest street in the world by *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.

Iowa is the only state bordered by two navigable rivers.

Wright County has the highest percentage of grade-A topsoil in the U.S.