Iowa Topics 2019-2020

Theme: “Breaking Barriers in History”

People

- **Alexander G. Clark and Susan Clark**
  On September 12, 1867, 12-year-old Susan Clark was denied admission to Muscatine's Second Ward Common School Number 2 because she was African American. Her father, Alexander Clark, a determined businessman and activist in Muscatine, acted to resist racism and the segregation of Iowa's schools. Clark initiated an Iowa Supreme Court case to allow his daughter to attend the white-only public school. The Iowa Supreme Court affirmed the district court's decision that children of color could not be refused admission to Iowa's district schools.
  - Primary Source Set: School Desegregation
  - PSS: Iowa: Leader in Civil Rights and Equality

- **Maria Pearson**
  Maria Darlene Pearson or Hai-Mecha Eunka (litr. "Running Moccasins") was a Yankton Dakota activist who successfully challenged the legal treatment of Native American human remains. She was one of the primary catalysts for the creation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Her actions led to her being called "the Founding Mother of the modern Indian repatriation movement" and "the Rosa Parks of NAGPRA."

- **Edna Griffin**
  Edna Griffin was an American civil rights pioneer and human rights activist. Griffin led a 1948 protest against Katz Drug Store in Des Moines when it refused to serve her ice cream at its lunch counter. When she sued based on Iowa law, she won.
  - PSS: Iowa: Leader in Civil Rights and Equality

- **Senator Tom Harkin and ADA**
  Tom Harkin is an American politician and served as a United States senator from Iowa from 1985 to 2015. One of his most notable achievements was authoring the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and he was its chief sponsor in the Senate. Harkin delivered part of his introduction speech in sign language, saying it was so his deaf brother could understand.

- **Carrie Chapman Catt**
  Carrie Chapman Catt was a suffragist and peace activist who helped secure for American women the right to vote. She directed the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and founded the League of Women Voters (1920) to bring women into the political mainstream.
  - PSS: Women's Suffrage
  - PSS: Right to Vote

- **J. L. Wilkinson of Algona/Des Moines**
  Born in Algona, Iowa, J.L. Wilkinson is regarded as one of the most innovative and creative Negro leagues owners. He was the principal owner of the Kansas City Monarchs from 1920-48, one of less than a handful of dominant Negro leagues teams.
  - PSS: Buxton Wonders

- **Edward Carter**
  Edward Carter was the first African-American doctor to earn a degree at the University of Iowa. He served as a company doctor in the mining town of Buxton, which was known for its integrated community of African Americans and white immigrant workers. Carter treated...
white and African-American patients, which was unusual for the early 1900s when treatment was many times segregated.

- **Arabella Mansfield**
  Arabella Mansfield, born in Burlington, Iowa, was the first woman admitted to the legal profession in the United States. Mansfield did not practice law, however, but continued to teach at Iowa Wesleyan, from which she also received an M.A. and an LL.B. During that time she helped organize the Iowa Woman Suffrage Society.

- **Althea Sherman**
  Althea Sherman was born in Farmersburg Township, Clayton County, Iowa. She was an illustrator, educator and ornithologist (bird expert). Her career in ornithology also lead to her publishing more than 70 articles in scientific and ornithological journals and led to her election as a member of the American Ornithologists' Union. She also inspired the Iowa Legislature to adopt the American goldfinch as the state bird.

- **Robert Noyce**
  Robert Noyce, from Burlington, Iowa, was nicknamed "the Mayor of Silicon Valley." He was an American physicist who co-founded Fairchild Semiconductor in 1957 and Intel Corporation in 1968. He also is credited with the creation of the first microchip, which fueled the personal computer revolution and gave Silicon Valley its name.

- **Jack Trice**
  Trice was the first African-American athlete to compete at Iowa State. In the letter, he described the significance of him playing in the game, and what he would face during the contest. During the football game against the University of Minnesota, Trice sustained severe injuries that later led to his death.

- **Clair Cameron Patterson**
  Claire Cameron Patterson was an American geochemist. He was born in Mitchellville, Iowa, and spent his entire professional career at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). In collaboration with George Tilton, Patterson developed the uranium–lead dating method into lead–lead dating. Using his technique, Patterson was able to calculate the age of the Earth at 4.55 billion years, which was a figure far more accurate than those that existed at the time.

- **John Robinson Pierce**
  John Robinson Pierce was an American engineer and author. Pierce was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and he worked extensively in the fields of radio communication, microwave technology, computer music, psychoacoustics and science fiction.

- **Peggy Whitson**
  Born and raised in Mt. Ayr, Iowa, Peggy Whitson is an astronaut and flew on Expedition 50/51 and participated in four spacewalks, bringing her career total to ten. With a total of 665 days in space, Whitson holds the U.S. record, placing eighth on the all-time space endurance list. She accumulated 377 days in space between two missions, the most for any U.S. woman at the time of her return to Earth.

- **Norman Borlaug**
  Norman Borlaug was born in Howard County along the Iowa-Minnesota border. He became a leading proponent for the use of hybrid grains in developing countries, exponentially boosting crop yields in what became known as the Green Revolution. His biographers credit Borlaug with saving the lives of one billion people from starvation. For his efforts, he received the Nobel Peace Prize and was a driving force behind the creation of the World Food Prize centered in Des Moines.

- **George Washington Carver**
George Washington Carver graduated from and taught botany at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University), the first African-American appointed to the ISC faculty, before taking a faculty and research position at the Tuskegee Institute. There he developed a successful career breeding crops, especially peanuts, that could raise the income of southern African-American farmers.

- John Froelich
  John Froelich was an American inventor who lived in Froelich, a small village in northeast Iowa. His most notable invention was the first stable gasoline/petrol-powered tractor with forward and reverse gears.

- Annie Wittenmyer
  After relocating from Ohio to Keokuk, Iowa, Wittenmyer became an American social reformer, relief worker and writer. She served as the first president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union from 1874 to 1879. She also drew together the efforts of women across the state during the Civil War to improve diets and care conditions in Union hospitals. The Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' Home was renamed the Annie Wittenmyer Home in 1949 in her honor.

**Places/Projects**

- **Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa**
  This college was founded for the purpose of providing more advanced educational opportunities for the children of the citizens of Mount Vernon, the College was renamed Cornell College in 1857 in honor of William Wesley Cornell. Progressive for its time, Cornell College was the first college west of the Mississippi River which freely granted women the same educational opportunities as men – the first degree Cornell College granted to a woman was awarded in 1858.

- **Mother Mosque of America**
  The Moslem Temple, now the Mother Mosque of America, was completed on February 15, 1934. It is a simple, one-story wood frame prairie schoolhouse style building. It is significant for being the first building designed and constructed as a house of worship for Muslims in America. It is also the oldest surviving place of worship for Muslims. The building illustrates two important historical trends. The first being the immigration history of the United States. The second being the beginning of the development of Islam as an established religion in the U.S.

- **Air Mail Service**
  The Iowa City Municipal Airport captured the attention of the U.S. Post Office while laying out their first air mail route. On January 8, 1920, Iowa City became the only stop during the very first air mail flight from Chicago to Omaha. The use of the air mail service played a prominent role in opening up communication across the country.

- **Special Schools in Iowa for Blind (Vinton) and Deaf (Council Bluffs) students**
  Iowa had these schools earlier than surrounding states, which was one of the reasons why Laura Ingalls Wilder’s sister Mary Ingalls left South Dakota to attend school in Vinton.

- **State v. Amana Society**
  The 1906 ruling from the Iowa Supreme Court on the State v. Amana Societies case upheld the rights of the Amana Societies to pursue economic gains for the purpose of supporting the members of the Society based on their religious principles and beliefs.

- **Alaska-Canada Highway**
  A wartime project, the highway was built during 1942 by the U.S. Army and civilian contractors. Thousands of people labored for nearly nine months to complete the pioneer
road from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Delta Junction, Alaska. Hundreds, if not, thousands of those who labored and braved that wilderness environment were Iowans. As a matter-of-fact, along with the soldiers of the Army engineer battalions were four groups of managing contractors assigned to the project by the US government. For all Alaska sections, consisting of 306 miles, the contract was held by a combination of C.F. Lytle Company of Sioux City and Green Construction Company of Des Moines.

- **Tinker v. Des Moines**
  In 1965, five Des Moines students, including John and Mary Beth Tinker and Chris Eckhardt, wore black armbands to school to protest America's involvement in the Vietnam War. School officials sent them home and did not allow them to return wearing the protest symbols. They claimed that the armbands were disruptive. A lawsuit challenging the decision went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court which ruled in favor of the students.

- **Farmers' Holiday Strike of 1932**
  The strike was called for after the National Farmers' Union, who had been lobbying for years to gain aid and tariff reform to help with the falling prices for goods during the depression. Initially, the idea for the strike was for farmers to stop selling their goods and buying goods from others for a period of time. The effectiveness of the strike was more in the media attention gained for their cause than a change to prices or legislation given many farmers did not participate in the strike. The roadblock was an example of members attempting to stop the sale of goods from farmers who were not participating.

- **Suffrage Movements**
  - **African Americans**: The first two constitutions adopted by the people of Iowa limited the suffrage (right to vote) to white males 21 years and older. The Civil War began to reshape white attitudes toward African Americans. At the behest of Alexander Clark, an African American and Iowan who fought in the Civil War, Iowa voters (entirely white males) went to the polls and approved a constitutional amendment striking the word "white" from voting requirements in 1868. A man, African American or white, could vote in Iowa if he was 21 years old and a resident.
  - **Women**: Carrie Chapman Catt, who was raised in Iowa, rose to the head of a national association promoting women's suffrage. In 1916, Iowa votes (still all male) narrowly defeated a women's suffrage amendment that would have struck the word "male" from the state's voting requirements. Nevertheless, when Congress submitted the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution to the states for ratification, the Iowa legislature approved it. In the 1920 elections, women across the United States went to the polls. Later in the decade, Iowa women won the right to serve on juries and be elected to public office.
  - **American Indians**: American Indians had a long and complex legal status within the United States. The tribes were considered sovereign nations and the federal government signed treaties with them just as if they were foreign powers. In most cases, American Indians could not vote unless they left their tribes and lived in white communities. The 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1971. It expanded the right to vote in federal elections to citizens 18 years and older, lowering the legal voting age from 21. Each state had to approve it for state and local elections. The number of legal voters has expanded widely since the U.S. Constitution was adopted. Voting is the most basic right of each citizen, and who gets the right to cast a ballot for elected leaders has been a contentious issue. Today, there is a debate over whether those who have committed a felony should have the vote, even after they have served their time. Other issues may still surface.

- **World War II: Homefront & Role of Women**
  Women stepped into farm production and management roles in place of husbands, fathers and sons during World War II. In Iowa, the Extension Service at Iowa State provided valuable information to farm families and relayed information from Washington on wartime regulations and best farming practices. Moving into full wartime production required a quick
expansion of the labor market in the face of the loss of males heading into service. To fill the gap, the American government and factories made a push to encourage women to take jobs they had never held before. "Rosie the Riveter" was a campaign that praised women who took manufacturing positions once reserved for men. Patriotic appeals to women to support the troops helped to overcome traditional views of women's place as in the home raising children.

PSS: WWII: Homefront

Notable U.S. and World Historical Anniversaries

May 2019
- 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869

June 2019
- 95th anniversary of the Indian Citizenship Act granting citizenship on all American Indians born in the United States on June 2, 1924
- 100th anniversary of Congress passing the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote on June 4, 1919

July 2019
- 55th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination in the work place, education, and outlawed racial segregation on July 2, 1964
- 50th anniversary of the first man (Neil Armstrong) walking on the moon on July 20, 1969

August 2019
- 105th anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal on August 15, 1914
- 75th anniversary of the liberation of Paris during World War II on August 25, 1944

October 2019
- 215th anniversary of the ratification of the Louisiana Purchase on Oct 20, 1803

November 2019
- 30th anniversary of the Berlin Wall coming down, ending the separation of East and West Berlin in Germany
- 155th anniversary of Sherman's March to the Sea during the Civil War on Nov 15, 1864
- 230th anniversary of when New Jersey ratified the Bill of Rights, becoming the first State to do so. On November 20, 1789, New Jersey became the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights - the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. Of the 12 articles proposed, New Jersey actually approved eleven.
- 75th anniversary of an air raid on Tokyo targeting the Nakajima aircraft engine works, 111 B-29 Superfortress bombers were involved, but little damage was done to their targets on Nov 24, 1944

December 2019
- 135th anniversary of the completion of the Washington Monument on Dec. 6, 1884
- 155th anniversary of Sherman arriving in Savannah, Georgia during the Civil War
- 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge during World War II on Dec 16, 1944

January 2020
- 100th anniversary of Prohibition coming into effect in the United States on January 16, 1920
- 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps
by the Soviet Red Army on January 27

February 2020
- 45th anniversary of Margaret Thatcher becoming the first female leader of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom on February 11
- 30th anniversary of Nelson Mandela being released from prison after 27 years on January 11
- 75th anniversary of the Royal Air Force bombers being dispatched to Dresden, Germany to attack the city with a massive aerial bombardment during World War II on January 13
- 75th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, Japanese Volcano Islands during World War II. The flag was raised on February 23

March 2020
- 30th anniversary of Mikhail Gorbachev becoming the first (and only) president of the Soviet Union on January 15
- 150th anniversary of the birth of Russian revolutionary and leader Vladimir Lenin on March 22

May 2020
- 75th anniversary of VE Day (Victory in Europe) during the Second World War
- 200th anniversary of the launch of Charles Darwin's ship the HMS Beagle
- 80th anniversary of the “Finest Hour” speech made by Winston Churchill during World War II

July 2020
- 75th anniversary of the United States detonating the world's first nuclear weapon, at the Trinity Site, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico
- 75th anniversary of the leaders of the three Allied nations, Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman and Joseph Stalin, meeting in the German city of Potsdam to decide the future of a defeated Germany after World War II
- 200th anniversary of the opening of the Union Chain Bridge across the River Tweed between England and Scotland
- 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II
- 75th anniversary of VJ Day when Japan announced its unconditional surrender, ending WWII in the Pacific. Officially ended on 2nd September
- 80th anniversary of the death of Sir J. J. Thomson, British physicist. Winner of the 1906 Nobel Prize for Physics for discovering the electron

September 2020
- 75th anniversary of the official ending of World War II with the formal signing of the surrender document by the Japanese on the USS Missouri

November 2020
- 85th anniversary of the first flight of the Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft which played such a big part in the Battle of Britain
- 400th anniversary of the Mayflower Pilgrims arriving at Cape Cod and signing the Mayflower Compact
- 100th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Dublin during the Irish War of Independence
- 75th anniversary of the start of the Nuremberg War Trials in Germany