EXHIBIT GUIDE

STATE
MUSEUM
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STATE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM OF IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF **CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

WELCOME

Welcome to the State Historical Museum of Iowa. You're at the best place to learn about Iowa history! Like any museum, it can be overwhelming, especially for first-time visitors. This handy guide is designed to help you and your group make the most of your visit.

- **Fast Facts** – Find additional information to enrich the stories told within the exhibit itself.
- **Exhibit Maps** – Use the maps to navigate the exhibits. The numbers match the exhibit highlights. Exhibit entrances/exits are marked on the map with ◀▶.
- **Artifact Spotlights** – These artifacts represent the exhibit's overall theme. Ask your group to examine the objects closely and use the provided questions to start discussions.
- **Exhibit Questions** – Use these questions to start conversations about the exhibits.
- **Exhibit Scavenger Hunts** – See if you can spot each item!

INSIDER TIPS

- **Take your time.** Iowa wasn't built in a day, so don't rush through the exhibits. Allow time to read the posted information and imagine what it was like to live "way back when."
- **Use the Artifact Spotlights.** If you're short on time, focus on the Artifact Spotlights to make the most of your visit.

MUSEUM RULES

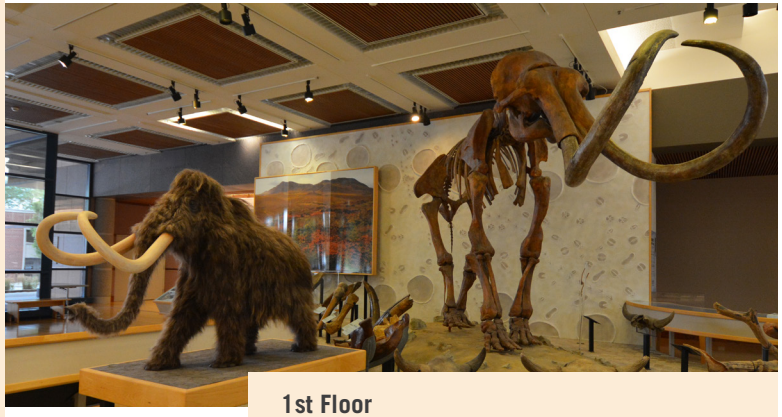
Museums are unique places, so please follow – and politely enforce – the following rules. As caretakers of a priceless collection, we appreciate your help in creating a safe space for artifacts and your fellow visitors.

- Please walk.
- Please speak softly.
- Please don't touch any objects, including display cases, unless otherwise noted.
- Please limit food and drinks to the designated areas, and please don't chew gum in the building.
- Please silence phones in the exhibits.
- Flash photography is allowed, unless otherwise noted.

IF YOU'RE HERE WITH A SCHOOL GROUP

- Split into small groups. If you're here with a big group, split up and choose different routes to avoid crowding. Remember, at least one adult should accompany each group.
- Please stay with your groups at all times. This applies to students and chaperones.
- Please don't go into the "Hands-On History" gallery. It's designed for families with young children, not school groups.
- Please don't let students wear backpacks or take large bags into the exhibits. However, backpacks and bags are appropriate for teachers and chaperones.

If students' behavior disrupts other visitors or museum exhibits in any way, our staff may ask your group to leave the exhibits and stay in the atrium during the rest of your group's visit.

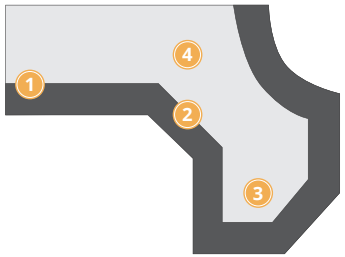


1st Floor

MAMMOTH: WITNESS TO CHANGE

FAST FACTS

- Mammoths were herbivores and ate almost 500 pounds of plants every day.
- Male woolly mammoths weighed up to six tons, which is equivalent to about three cars!
- Like their elephant relatives, mammoth families followed a matriarch (a female who is the head of a family or tribe). A matriarch's death could be a disaster for the rest of herd.
- Mammoth bones were discovered near Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 2010. It was the first time multiple mammoth skeletons were found at one site in the Midwest.
- Mammoths disappeared from Iowa about 10,000 years ago, around the same time as many other animals, such as ground sloths and giant beavers.



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 The Des Moines Fossils

The Hebior Mammoth on display was found with its skull crushed and its bones in piles. Some of the bones have marks, and stone tools were found near the piles. What do you think happened to the mammoth?

2 Mammoth Tusks

Mammoth tusks were very long, sometimes measuring 15 feet. Why do you think tusks were important for the animal's survival?

3 Mammoth Tooth

Mammoths went through up to six sets of teeth in their lifetimes, some sets lasting only two or three years. Notice the size of this mammoth's tooth. Why do you think mammoths went through so many sets of teeth. Why were their teeth so large?

4 Mammoth Cast

The large skeleton is a reproduction cast from a mammoth found in Wisconsin. What can you learn from a full-scale model like this?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- What do you think was the greatest threat to mammoths: disease, predators, climate change or something else? Why?
- Based on what you see here, where do you think mammoths would live if they were still around today? Why?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

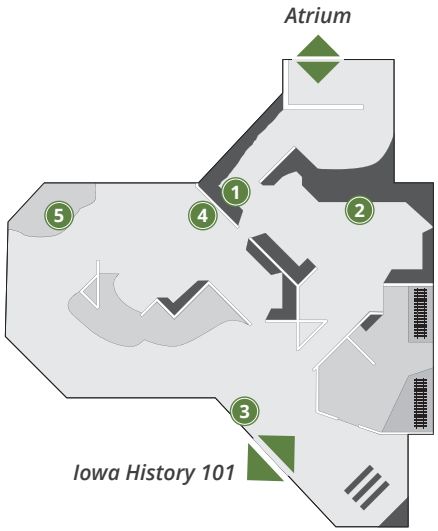
- ☐ Mammoth hair
- ☐ Arrowheads
- ☐ Hafted knife
- ☐ Cyclops image
- ☐ Mammoth shoulder blade

1st Floor

DELICATE BALANCE

FAST FACTS

- Iowa has produced many influential conservationists, including Ding Darling, Louis Pammel, Aldo Leopold and Ada Hayden.
- Deer were reintroduced to Iowa in the early 1900s due to overhunting and habitat destruction that greatly reduced their population in the late 19th century.



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 Crinoids

Crinoids are marine animals that live underwater and are close relatives to the starfish. What do you think Iowa looked like when these Crinoids were alive almost 5 million years ago? How has the state geography changed?

2 Millstone

Water was very important to early Iowans, just like it is today. Why did early Iowans settle near water? How did they use water differently than Iowans do today?

3 Black Bear

Many different animals have called Iowa home over the years, including this black bear. Currently, very few black bears live in Iowa. Why would animals need to find different places to live over time?

4 Ding Darling Cartoons

Art can influence people's opinions. How effective do you think Ding Darling's cartoons were in changing society's opinions about conservation? Why?

5 Bison

Historically, when Native Americans in Iowa hunted bison they often used the entire animal. In what different ways could a bison be used? Think creatively.

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Think about the objects you use every day. Are any of them made with natural resources found in Iowa? Which ones?
- What do you think was the most important natural resource during Iowa's early statehood? What do you think is the most important now? Why?
- How do you think Ding Darling and Aldo Leopold's work influenced future conservationists?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

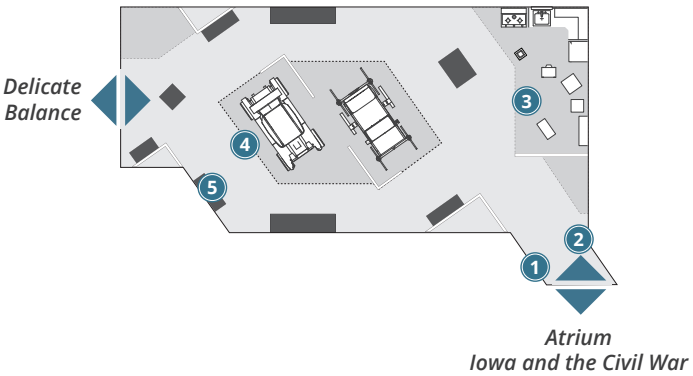
- ☐ Buffalo headdress
- ☐ Woman's swimsuit
- ☐ Andrew Clemens' sand art
- ☐ Wagon wheel
- ☐ Jack Musgrove wood duck decoy

1st Floor

IOWA HISTORY 101

FAST FACTS

- Two first ladies were born in Iowa: Lou Henry Hoover and Mamie Doud Eisenhower.
- The Red Delicious apple was developed in an orchard in Peru, Iowa. The apple you can buy in a grocery store today is very different from the original version.
- In 1869, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that women should be allowed to practice law. Iowan Arabella Mansfield became the first female lawyer in the country.
- The country's first successful electric car was built by William Morrison of Des Moines in 1890.



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 Alexander Clark Portrait

Alexander Clark of Muscatine founded Iowa's first African-American military regiment and succeeded in removing the word "white" from the state constitution's requirements for voting. Why was that important?

2 Population Graph

Examine the graph showing the cultural background of Iowans in 1920. How have immigrants and their cultures shaped Iowa? Why do you think these groups moved to Iowa?

3 1939 Radio

Before the television and the Internet, radio was one of the main sources of entertainment in Iowa. What do you think life would be like without Internet and television? How do you think electricity changed life for Iowa farmers?

4 1917 Electric Car

By the early 1900s, some wealthy Iowans drove cars powered by steam, gasoline or electricity. How is this 1917 car different from the carriage on display? How is it different from and similar to modern cars?

5 Peggy Whitson's Spacesuit

In 2017, Iowan Peggy Whitson broke the record for the most days spent is space by an American: 665. Looking at her space suit, why do you think it has so many pockets? What other things would impact its design?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Because of Alexander Clark's work, Iowa courts integrated schools 86 years before the U.S. Supreme Court reached the same conclusion in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954. How do you think Iowa's decision influenced the rest of the country?
- Iowa has both urban and rural areas. In the past, how was life different for children in cities and farms? Do the same differences exist today?
- In your own words, what does it mean to be an Iowan?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

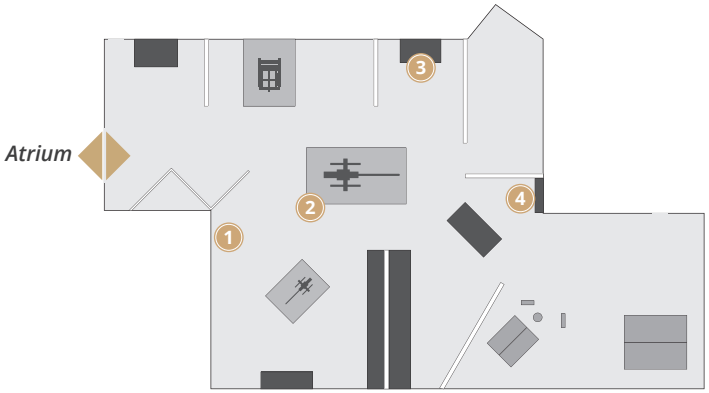
- ☐ 1998 iMac computer
- ☐ "The Secret of the Old Clock" novel
- ☐ 1900 ice skates
- ☐ 1940s mining pick
- ☐ Charlie Wittmack's snow boots

1st Floor

IOWA AND THE CIVIL WAR

FAST FACTS

- An estimated 76,534 soldiers from Iowa fought in the Civil War. Of those, 13,169 lost their lives in the war.
- Iowan Annie Wittenmyer helped create "diet kitchens" to prepare food safely for soldiers. She also established homes for orphans after the war and became the official State Sanitary Agent of Iowa (an early version of the Red Cross).
- General Grenville Dodge of Council Bluffs built one of the largest spy networks in the Civil War. He also helped develop the first transcontinental railroad.



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 Decision "In the Case of Ralph," by Chief Justice Charles Mason

Ralph, an enslaved man from Missouri, had promised to pay his master $550 for his freedom but did not pay. Ralph's case was the first ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court, and Ralph won, gaining his freedom. Why was the ruling important to Iowa's history? How did it shape Iowa's role in civil rights?

2 Section of Tree

The battle at Chickamauga, Georgia, claimed the second-highest number of casualties (wounded and deaths). Look at the ammunition in the cases next to the cannon and trunk. Can you match any objects with pieces lodged in the tree? Based on the tree trunk and ammunition, describe how a Civil War battlefield would have looked.

3 Battle of Fort Donelson Diorama

Voltaire Twombly was the last color guard (assigned to carry the flag) to survive at Fort Donelson and the first Iowan to win the Iowa Medal of Honor. Why were battle flags important to Civil War soldiers on the field?

4 Section of Prison Wall

Samuel Byers, a member of the 14th Iowa Infantry, escaped from a Confederate prison and wrote the lyrics for Iowa's official state song. How do you think being a prisoner of war affected his opinions about the conflict?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Compare your life at home to a soldier's life at camp. How is it the same or different? Would you have enjoyed living in a camp? Why or why not?
- How did the war change life for Iowans?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- ☐ General Belknap uniform
- ☐ Wooden crutches
- ☐ Model 1847 Grimsley saddle
- ☐ Dominoes
- ☐ "Battle Cry of Freedom" sheet music

2nd Floor

YOU GOTTA KNOW THE TERRITORY

FAST FACTS

- Iowa became a state on December 28, 1846.
- After being removed from Iowa territory, the Meskwaki tribal members pooled their government annuity payments and sold property. With the consent of the state government, they purchased land in Tama County in the 1850s.
- Iowa has had three capital cities since becoming a territory: Burlington, Iowa City and Des Moines.
- Robert Lucas was appointed the first territorial governor. Ansel Briggs was elected Iowa's first state governor in 1846.

ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 Meskwaki Feast Bowl and Spoon

Meskwaki Indians often served food at religious gatherings. In your family, what special occasions or holidays involve food? Why?

2 American Indian Ribbon Blankets

Before European immigration, the Meskwaki used natural resources for materials. Why was trading important to American Indians and early settlers? How did these items arrive in the new territory?

3 Conestoga Wagon

Conestoga wagons carried up to six tons and were pulled by teams of horses or oxen. If you were an early settler and could take only five things on your trip, what would you choose?

4 Urban Frontier Section

New towns offered opportunities for business. This section shows the different jobs of early Iowa settlers. What occupations do you think were most important in early Iowa towns? Why? What job would you like to do?

5 Robert Lucas' Desk

Robert Lucas was Iowa's first territorial governor, before it became a state. If you had his job, what laws would you help create? Why?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- What incentives did the Iowa Territory offer settlers? What were the drawbacks of moving to the new territory?
- Why was the land surveyed before people could buy it?
- Why were the first cities in Iowa built on rivers?
- By the 1830s, parts of Iowa were no longer considered the frontier. What things do you think make an area "settled?" How might your answer differ from an Iowa territory settler?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

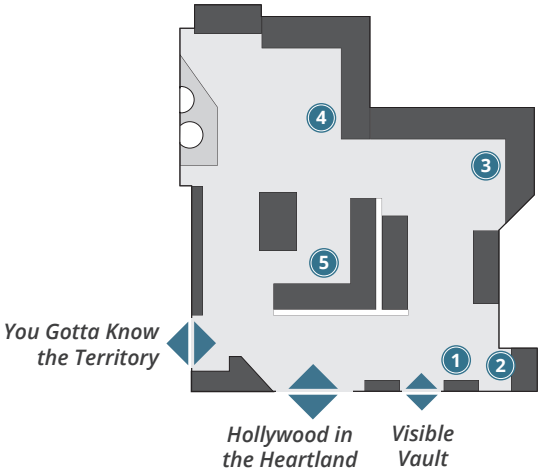
- ☐ Surveyor's compass
- ☐ Davenport silver collection
- ☐ Woman's saddle frame
- ☐ Model of the first capitol
- ☐ Iowa Territorial Gazette newspaper

2nd Floor

RIDING THROUGH HISTORY

FAST FACTS

- Historians think Pella merchant D.S. Huber bought Iowa's first bicycle in 1865.
- At least 120 cyclists finished the first RAGBRAI® in 1973. Clarence Pickard was the oldest participant at 83 years old.
- In 2013, an estimated 36,000 RAGBRAI® riders were counted on the road from Perry to Des Moines.
- By 1997, RAGBRAI® had passed through all of Iowa's 99 counties.



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 Bicycle Lamp

Bike safety has always been important. Besides this lamp, what other safety precautions can you spot in this exhibit?

2 John Deere Bicycle

John Deere is a company famous for building tractors. Why would a tractor company want to produce bicycles? Who would have wanted to ride John Deere bicycles? Why?

3 Plaques and Keys to the City

Being a host city for the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa brings a lot of people to town. For communities, what are the advantages of hosting RAGBRAI®? What are the drawbacks? Would you want your town to host? Why or why not?

4 2009 Banjo

RAGBRAI® is a mix of recreation and relaxation. What role does music or entertainment play in RAGBRAI®?

5 Iowa Map Sign from Vinton

Every town in Iowa is unique. If RAGBRAI® visited your town, what would you suggest visitors should see? Why?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Have you ever participated in RAGBRAI®? Or would you? Why or why not? Do you know anyone who has completed the ride?
- How do you think bicycles changed life for Iowans?
- How does RAGBRAI® create community spirit and pride?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

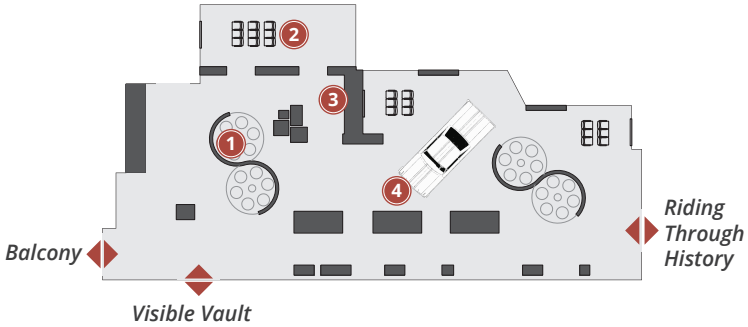
- ☐ Bicycle jerseys from Iowa colleges and universities
- ☐ Mr. Pork Chop's apron
- ☐ "Great Six Day Bicycle Ride" certificate
- ☐ RAGBRAI® XXXIX route map
- ☐ RAGBRAI® XLI jersey

2nd Floor

HOLLYWOOD IN THE HEARTLAND

FAST FACTS

- The Cherry Sisters were known for their famously bad vaudeville act. They lost a court case that helped protect the media's right to publish controversial opinions.
- Iowa has produced three Academy Award-winning actors: Donna Reed ("From Here to Eternity," 1953), John Wayne ("True Grit," 1969) and Cloris Leachman ("The Last Picture Show," 1971).



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 "The Music Man"

The musical by Meredith Willson reflects his childhood in Mason City. Do you see any resemblance between the citizens of Willson's fictional River City and the people in your own community? Is this an accurate description of Iowa life today?

2 "State Fair"

The novel "State Fair" by Iowa writer Phil Stong captures some of the tensions between urban Des Moines and rural Iowa. What differences can you see between urban and rural Iowa in this film?

3 Motiograph Hand-Crank Projector

Before 1920, many projectors were powered by hand and were used to show silent films. How is that different than watching a movie today? Compare and contrast these movie-going experiences.

4 Galaxie 500

Cars like the Galaxie 500 were popular during the era of drive-in movies. Why do you think drive-ins were so popular during the 1950s to 1970s? Why do you think most closed?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- Which movie or story in this exhibit best represents Iowa? Why?
- Why do you think movie theaters are important to small towns? How are small towns affected when a theater opens or closes?
- Iowa has been portrayed in many different movies. What are some differences between the "Hollywood Iowa" and where you live?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

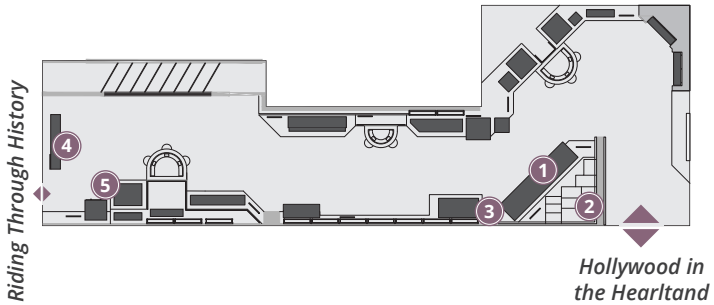
- ☐ Coca-Cola beverage dispenser
- ☐ 1920s slide projector
- ☐ "Is this Heaven?" bumper sticker
- ☐ Automaticket ticket dispenser
- ☐ Drive-in movie speakers

2nd Floor

VISIBLE VAULT

FAST FACTS

- In 1900, the State Historical Museum moved from the lower level of the Iowa capitol across the street into what is now called the Ola Babcock Miller Building. In 1987, the museum moved to the current location.
- The museum's collection has more than 80,000 artifacts that document Iowa's history. Due to object care and conservation, only an estimated 3-5% of objects are on display at any given time.
- When artifacts are not on display, they are stored in the climate-controlled vault. This storage area is roughly the size of half a city block.



ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHTS

1 Currency

Both the 1844 and 1846 Iowa Constitution drafts prohibited "banks of note." These banks printed their own paper currency that held varying worth. Why do you think early Iowa leaders outlawed these banks?

2 Trunks

There have been many different ways of carrying things throughout history. Examine the different trunks and discuss which one is your favorite and why. Why would trunks be important tools for people in the past?

3 Soda Fountain

Iowans have found unique ways to have fun through the years, such as grabbing a drink from a soda fountain. What activities do you do for fun? How are your fun time activities the same as those from the 1950s? How are they different?

4 Patten Collection

Robert E. Patten was an influential African-American leader and businessman in central Iowa. Why do you think his print shop played an important role in the local African-American community?

5 Native American Collection

Former museum curator Edgar Harlan worked with a Meskwaki man named George Young Bear to build the museum's Meskwaki collection. Why was this partnership so important?

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS

- The State Historical Museum of Iowa was founded to help teach Iowans about the world but now focuses on Iowa history. Why do you think the museum's mission has changed over the years?
- Why are the State Historical Museum of Iowa and its collections important to Iowans? Why are they important to visitors from other states and countries?

EXHIBIT SCAVENGER HUNT

- ☐ Neon flame
- ☐ Lydia Pinkham medicine box
- ☐ Small brown ceramic boot
- ☐ Arrowheads
- ☐ 1957 Pow Wow poster

STATE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF **CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

For more information on the State Historical Museum of Iowa, visit **iowaculture.gov.**