

2008

Children's Web Site: History of Elkader, Iowa... for kids

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Children's Web Site:
History of Elkader, Iowa... for kids

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Spring 2008

This Research Project by: Nancy Healy

Titled: Children's Web Site: History of Elkader, Iowa...for kids

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

5/1/08

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Abstract

Elkader, located in the hills of Northeast Iowa, along the banks of the Turkey River, is a community rich with history. There are no resources designed for children about the history of Elkader. The purpose of this project was to create an engaging informational web site for children that shares information about the history of Elkader, from its beginning years to present day. Research provided throughout this project makes it evident that not only is history education important and that young people are capable of understanding and appreciating the past; it also demonstrates how to best present the information online—with a clear purpose and easy to use path—in order to draw the young audience into the history of Elkader.

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Chapter One

Introduction

“The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from which alone men see the town in which they live and the age in which they are living.”

G. K. Chesterton (Smock, 2004, p. ¶ 19).

In order to bring history to life, schools need to provide enriching historical resources for their students. Historical literature that enlightens its readers will motivate students to learn more. When resources of high quality are incorporated into school library collections and the social studies curriculum, learning opportunities for students expand. Students are exposed to extended information beyond their textbooks and are more willing to seek information because of the broader choice of sources (Fredericks, 2000). When identifying resources to be used in history curriculum, the National Council for History Education states in one of its standards: “Textbooks should be only one part of a variety of sources for historical study” (National Council for History Education, 1996, ¶ 15). An extended, diverse history collection should also be available in the school library.

Resources related to local history are especially important in schools, and many educators and historians, both past and present, have emphasized this thinking in their experiences and writings (Schwartz, 2002). They recognize that students’ connection to their community’s past enhances their understanding of history as a whole and gives

them a sense of unity. Educators of the past, such as John Dewey and Lucy Sprague Mitchell, stressed that students must learn about their community first in order for them to make a connection to larger world events (Schwartz, 2002). Current educators, such as Gail Hickey and James Percoco, have found through their own research and experiences that integrating family and local history into the social studies curriculum not only enhances student learning, but also promotes a sense of community in the classroom and beyond (Schwartz, 2002).

Elkader is a small town located in the northeast part of the state of Iowa. Its history dates back to the early 1800s and involves unique and interesting experiences and events that can be linked to larger historical events of the world (Elkader Historical Society, 1976). Unfortunately, there are no sources of information created specifically for young children regarding this community's local history.

Recognizing the importance of providing enriching historical resources in schools and the lack of elementary-level resources related to the history of Elkader, Iowa, the purpose of this research and project was to develop an informational web site for elementary students about the history of Elkader.

Importance of History in the Classroom

During the 1980s, there was growing concern that history education in elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States was declining both in the quality of curriculum and instruction and the amount of time spent on this subject during the school day (Whelan, 1997). Because of this increasing concern, the Bradley Commission on History in Schools was formed in 1987 to examine the state of history education in the United States. Made up of scholars and teachers, this commission determined that

changes needed to be made to improve history education throughout the country (Bradley Commission, 1988). One particular study in the mid-1980s emphasized this necessity for change. It found that fifteen percent of high school students did not take an American history class and sixty percent never studied world history or western civilization (Bradley Commission, 1988). The Commission concluded:

History belongs in the school program of all students, regardless of their academic standing and preparation, of their curricular track, or of their plans for the future.

It is vital for all citizens in a democracy because it provides the only avenue we have to reach an understanding of ourselves and of our society, in relation to the human condition over time, and of how some things change and others continue

(Bradley Commission, 1988, p. 5).

Since the 1988 publication of the *Bradley Commission on History in Schools* report, other organizations, recognizing the benefits of learning about the past, have revised or updated their stance on and standards related to history education in schools. In 1992, the National Council for the Social Studies, in its position statement, emphasized that history education enhances a student's understanding of society and his or her ability to recognize factors and conditions that benefit all citizens (National Council for the Social Studies, 1992). The National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS), when introducing its standards in 1996, stated that history education develops a student's sense of citizenship (Hoge, 2003). The NCHS went further by warning policymakers and educators that students will be ill-prepared for the 21st century if they are ignorant of the past and the cultures of the world (National Council for History Education, 1996).

In 2002, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) began its *We the People* initiative with its primary objective to strengthen the teaching and understanding of history in schools across the nation. The NEH believes that understanding the past is now more important than ever: “Defending the ideas and ideals of America requires more than a strong national defense. Americans must know our nation’s past so we can uphold its guiding principles and labor toward a free and just society” (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2008, ¶ 2). The NEH’s *We the People* initiative continues today and is expected to be funded through at least 2008 (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2008).

The National Assessment Governing Board, a part of the U.S. Department of Education, released its *U.S. Framework for the 2006 National Assessment of Educational Progress* report. This framework encourages history education curriculum that introduces the process of historical inquiry and fosters a sense of citizenship based on the core beliefs that the United States was founded on—“liberty, equality of opportunity, freedom of religion, self-government under law, and respect for individual worth” (National Assessment Governing Board, 2006, p. vii). According to the National Assessment Governing Board, this framework is vital in developing students into informed citizens who will take an active part in their democratic society (National Assessment Governing Board, 2006).

Importance of Local History in the Classroom

As part of the recommendations established by the Bradley Commission on History in Schools for teaching history in elementary grades, there is strong emphasis on “expanding environments” (Bradley Commission, 1988, pg. 16). This approach

encourages early elementary grades during their study of history to focus first on immediate surroundings--family, neighborhood, and community--and then connect their study to broader aspects of state history and beyond as they move to upper elementary and middle school grades. “This modified model compares family, community, and state today with family life long ago, and with people and events of earlier times in the historical development of their community and state” (National Center for History in the Schools, 2005, ¶ 3).

• The inclusion of local history in a social studies curriculum can lead to several beneficial outcomes for elementary students. First, meaningful connections can be made between events that happened in their community, state, and as a nation during important periods in United States history.

As the nation was evolving through its colonial, revolutionary, expansionist reform, and ensuing stages, so too were individual communities... Learning that one’s street was once an Indian trail, that a neighbor’s ancestor died in a Civil War battle, or that a local mill was the site of a violent labor dispute is a powerful experience that arguably will help cement in a learner’s memory the significance of the event on both a local and national scale (Danker, 2003, p. 112).

The National Council for History Education, as part of its recommendations for designing history curriculum, suggests that “connections to world, state, and local history be made in U.S history” (National Council for History Education, 1996, ¶ 5), and in addition, that “local history be given attention from kindergarten through twelfth grade” (National Council for History Education, 1996, ¶ 5).

Secondly, the inclusion of local history can open up avenues for integrating multi-cultural themes (i.e., Native Americans, religious groups) into curricular units.

Because local history is so grounded in social and cultural developments and largely embodies the stories of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups responsible for setting and building the communities of the nation, the integration of local content would naturally present multicultural perspectives” (Danker, 2003, p. 112).

Gary Nash of the National Center for History in the Schools takes this one step further when stating that multi-culturalism provides an “opportunity to teach kids an inclusive history that will promote mutual support among people of different religions and cultural backgrounds” (Crabtree, Nash, Gagnon & Waugh, 1992, p. ix).

Local history can also promote citizenship and a sense of community. “Historical knowledge is no more and no less than carefully and critically constructed collective memory. As such, it can make us both wiser in our public choices and more richly human in our private lives” (Bicouvaris, 1994, p. 52). A student who has learned about her community—including its past struggles and triumphs—has made a personal connection, encouraging her to “create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good” (Banks, 1991, p. 1). By understanding local history, students “gain deeper understandings and an appreciation of their own communities and cultures and promote the habits of good citizenship as well” (Danker, 2003, p. 113).

Because of the benefits local history can add to a social studies curriculum, educational standards and benchmarks at the national, state and local levels include local history as part of their requirements. For example, at the national level, the National

Center for History in the Schools *Topic One – K-4 Content Standard 2A* states: “The student understands the history of his or her local community” (National Center for History in the Schools, 2005, ¶ 1). Another national organization, the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel), lists in its kindergarten through fourth grade standards and benchmarks that a young student should “understand the history of a local community and how communities in North America varied long ago” (McRel, 2006, ¶ 1). At the local level, the history standards for Central Community School in Elkader, Iowa, note that a student in third or fourth grade “knows important events and significant individuals in local, Iowa and United States history” (Central Community School, 2004, p. 3).

Importance of Elkader’s History in the Classroom

Elkader, Iowa, a small town located in the northeast corner of Iowa, is a community rich with history. Its stories can be unique, interesting, informational, and easily connected to historical events of our world (Elkader Historical Society, 1976). For example, Elkader lies along the banks of the Turkey River—a river that was once vital to Native Americans, early settlers, and later residents of the town. The Turkey River provided water, food, transportation, and even for a period of time, electricity to the town of Elkader.

Elkader currently has 10 structures registered on the National Register of Historic Places, each with a special story connected to it. One of these structures is the Keystone Bridge, built in 1889. It is the longest limestone bridge of its type west of the Mississippi River. Its completion was vital because it connected the east side of the town to the west side (Elkader Chamber of Commerce, 2007). Another significant structure is the Elkader

Opera House, built in 1903, which has served as the entertainment center of the community. In its early years, the Opera House hosted performances from Chicago and Minneapolis, vaudeville shows, dances, and other entertainment. Throughout the years, it has also hosted barbershop programs, musical performances, plays, and community meetings (Elkader Historical Society, 1976).

As did many other communities throughout the United States, Elkader struggled through the Great Depression, and also sent some of its young people off to wars going back as far as the Civil War. Several did not return. Cars replaced horses on the streets of Elkader and pavement replaced dirt roads. The first school was built in 1847 and Elkader was once home to a junior college. From 1875 to the late 1960s, trains passed through Elkader along the east side of the river carrying both cargo and passengers (Elkader Historical Society, 1976).

Elkader also has its share of folklore, which can provide unique insights into the characteristics of a geographic area (Perez-Sable, 2005). Elkader's most famous folktale is the story of *Lover's Leap*. As the story goes, a young man named Lou Millville and a Native American chief's daughter, White Cloud, had fallen in love around 1831. On one particular day, Millville, who was interested in lead mines, secretly followed two braves into the wilderness to find these mines. When the braves discovered they were being followed, they ordered Millville to jump off a cliff overlooking the Turkey River. As he stood at the edge of the cliff, Millville suddenly jumped back and attacked the braves. Before he lost consciousness from the fight, Millville was able to push both the braves off the cliff. When White Cloud found Millville lying on the cliff, she thought he was dead. Overwhelmed with grief, she laid her moccasins next to Millville and jumped off the cliff

to her death. When Millville awoke, he saw White Cloud's moccasins and discovered her body on the rocks below near the river. Millville buried her body on the cliff from which she had jumped. Legend has it that each year after White Cloud's death, Millville would climb to the top of the cliff to visit her grave—a place now known as *Lover's Leap* (Elkader Historical Society, 1976).

Even the origination of Elkader's name is connected to world history. Elkader is named after Abd el Kader, an Algerian leader from the early 1830s. Because of Abd el Kader's efforts in leading his country's fight to keep the French from overtaking his country, the early citizens of Elkader admired his bravery and named their community after him (Elkader Historical Society, 1976). Elkader continues a relationship today with the descendents of Abd el Kader and citizens of Algeria (Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area, 2002).

Unfortunately, even with this rich history, there are only a handful of sources that take a look into Elkader's past, and these materials are not intended for elementary-level students. Younger students would have difficulty with the reading levels, context, and/or accessibility of the current materials. For example, the book *Old Elkader Facts & Foods* includes a great deal of text with only a few photographs and illustrations. It provides no sequence of events and has pages of recipes placed sporadically throughout the book that could be confusing to young readers. Most importantly, though, this is the only published book specific to the history of Elkader, Iowa. There are several books that share Elkader's history with the histories of other surrounding communities. Unfortunately, the information in these books regarding Elkader's past is limited. Other books cover only genealogical information about families from this area.

Problem Statement

Elkader, located in the hills of Northeast Iowa, along the banks of the Turkey River, is a community rich with history, including its unique name, folklore, and accounts of the early settlers to this area (Elkader Historical Society, 1976). There are no resources designed for young children about the history of Elkader, Iowa.

Research Questions

This research explored what information and elements were needed to create an informational web site for children about the history of Elkader by answering the following questions:

1. What is the history of Elkader, Iowa?
2. What significant events, people, and stories relating to the history of Elkader should be included in the informational web site designed for children?
3. What basic web design elements need to be considered when developing an informational web site specifically for children?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project was to create an informational web site designed for elementary students in third through sixth grades that would share general information about the history of Elkader, Iowa, including significant events, persons, and folklore.

Definitions

Citizenship – the character of an individual viewed as a member of society; behavior in terms of the duties, obligations, and functions of a citizen (*Random House*, 1997, p. 377).

Elementary – a school for the first four to eight years of a child’s formal education, often including kindergarten (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 2000, p. 445).

Historical literature – a product primarily of a literate stratum of society, as that kind of narrative prose which is governed by the aim to record people, objects, and events as they really were. Its structure and logic are controlled not so much by aesthetic and imaginative considerations—although these factors may enter in to some degree—as by chronology, direct description, and concern to show cause-effect relationships between events (Long, 1984, p. 4).

Multiculturalism – the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society, as a state or nation (*Random House*, 1993, p. 1263).

Assumptions

The research assumed that both children and adults would be interested in an informational web site about the history of Elkader, Iowa. Because this informational web site would focus specifically on Elkader, it was also assumed that a large portion of the audience would be from the town of Elkader, Clayton County, and Northeast Iowa. In addition, the research assumed that enough accurate resources would be available to develop an informational web site on the history of Elkader. It was also assumed that when completed the web site would serve as a resource for students, teachers, parents, community members, and others who are interested in the history of Elkader.

Limitations

The informational web site was developed for elementary students in third through sixth grades. This limitation affected the design and layout of the web site.

Illustrations and photographs were limited to those provided with proper copyright permission. Due to the extensive number of years in Elkader's history—from its first inhabitants in the early 1800s to present time—only those events, people and folktales deemed most significant by the researcher were included in the web site.

Significance

Historical resources have an important place in schools. More specifically, historical resources related to local history are vital to an elementary history education program. It allows students to discover relationships between their own personal environment and the larger world. "Such connections not only make history more relevant and meaningful but also allow students to understand their particular place in society" (Schwartz, 2002, p. 61).

It is essential that schools across Iowa and the United States include local historical resources in their collections and curriculum. "Learning about a community and its people brings a reality to history often missing in the general textbook" (Bonney, 1995, p. 14). Local historical resources intended for school-age children have the benefit of scaling down national and world events to the local level, making these events more easily understood, relevant, and interesting to students (Iowa Department of Public Instruction & Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15, 1985).

An informational web site on the history of Elkader provides an educational source for local history curriculum—one that is unique in that it is specific to elementary students. Moreover, by experiencing this informational web site, students should be able to make a meaningful connection to Elkader, both its past and present, and the larger world.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

The purpose of this project was to create an informational web site for children in third through sixth grade that would share information about the history of Elkader, Iowa, a town nestled in the hills of Northeast Iowa. The following review of research and literature focuses on three important areas: the importance of history education in schools; students' ability to understand history; and presenting the information to children on a web site.

The Importance of History Education

The importance of history education is vital for both the student and society as a whole. History education enhances higher-level thinking and analysis (Kohlmeier, 2005). History education encourages citizenship (Hoge, 2003). History education promotes inclusion and tolerance for different cultures and ethnicities (Bicouvaris, 1994). Several researchers have conducted studies to demonstrate the importance of history education in schools.

In 1986, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered a nationwide multiple-choice test to 8,000 eleventh graders throughout the United States to assess their understanding of core concepts related to American history and well-known stories and authors in western literature. The test consisted of 141 questions related to history and 121 questions related to literature. The researchers, Finn and Ravitch (1987), had assumed before this assessment was administered that the majority of students would be able to correctly answer most of the questions on this test. The results, however, were alarming with students on average answering only fifty-five percent of the questions

correctly on the history section and only fifty-two percent correctly on the literature section of the test. Finn and Ravitch attributed these dismal results to a lack of focus on content learning in the areas of history and literature, which in turn has led to a declining national literacy level. Finn and Ravitch stress that students need to be *culturally literate*—that is, have an understanding of core historical facts and events and an appreciation of where they come from—in order to participate meaningfully in society and understand “what they read, see, and hear” (Finn & Ravitch, 1987, p. 32).

In light of the criticism that Americans today are ignorant of historical events and that this ignorance negatively effects society, Rosenzweig and Thelan (2000) developed a study to determine to what degree Americans understand history and how their understanding of history benefits themselves and society. With the assistance of the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University, Rosenzweig and Thelan interviewed by telephone 808 Americans from all walks of life and all regions of the United States about their understanding and use of history in their lives. The researchers chose participants based on their age, gender, income, and education in order to establish a representative sample of the United States population. The ages of those interviewed ranged from 18 to 91 years. In addition, to ensure they had representation from minority groups, Rosenzweig and Thelan also studied a subgroup of African Americans, Mexican Americans and Sioux Indians.

The telephone interviews involved an average of ten minutes of quantitative questions and thirty-five minutes of qualitative questions. Responses were recorded onto transcripts. The questions asked were somewhat broad in nature, ranging from

identifying how many times a person visited a historical site over one year to asking for an opinion about what events throughout history were most important.

One of the more significant findings from Rosensweig and Thelan's (2000) study showed that in the span of twelve months almost all of the persons interviewed had engaged in at least one of the ten history-related activities listed by the researchers. These ten activities included: discussing photographs from the past with family or friends; taking photographs or videos to preserve memories; watching movies or television programs about the past; attending a family reunion; visiting a history museum or historical site; reading a history-related book; working on collections related to the past; looking into family history or working on a family tree; writing in a journal or diary; and taking part in a group dedicated to studying, preserving, or presenting the past. When asked how connected to the past individuals felt, the largest number of responses, almost two-thirds of the participants, felt most connected to their own family history.

Rosenzweig and Thelan (2000) found that throughout the interviews, comments and connections to personal histories were continually brought up by the participants. For example, when asked to name someone from the past who had the most influence on the participant, fifty-two percent of the participants noted a family member while only thirty-six percent mentioned a public or historical person. Participants also often times linked national events to something in their own personal past.

As a result of their research, Rosenzweig and Thelan (2000) conclude that Americans regularly think about and connect to the past, especially their own personal pasts; and they use this connection when evaluating an aspect of history or current event,

and when coming to terms with who they are and how they should behave as family members and citizens of their communities.

Jada Kohlmeier (2005), a ninth grade world history teacher, was questioned once by several of her own students why learning history was important. After reflecting on this question, Kohlmeier felt that she needed to demonstrate how learning about the past has a positive impact on students and society as a whole. Kohlmeier believes that studying history in school enhances analytical, interpretive and critical assessment skills that in the long run are vital to her students becoming engaged citizens who are aware of what factors have shaped and continue to shape the world today.

With the support of Auburn University, Kohlmeier (2005) began a study by creating an instructional unit for her ninth grade history class that focused on learning about the lives of three ordinary women who lived during three different eras--the Renaissance, the Bolshevik Revolution, and Mao's Cultural Revolution in China. By using accounts of ordinary people, Kohlmeier hoped that her students would be able to "see events through the eyes and experiences of those that were there" (Kohlmeier, 2005, p. 500). Observations, discussions and classroom assignments of all fifty-two ninth graders in her world history classes were used for this study; but for closer observation and small group sharing opportunities, Kohlmeier focused on a subgroup of ten specific students who she felt best represented the broad range of abilities and interests of her ninth grade students.

As part of the study, Kohlmeier (2005) set up a three-step process that students were required to follow as they read history-related documents. According to Kohlmeier, this three-step process is similar to procedures historians take when studying an aspect of

history. The steps involved students completing graphic organizers as they read each document; discussing as a class to find deeper understanding of the authors' perspectives; and then finally, writing essays comparing what was known about the historical period before the readings to what was learned after reading the documents. In both the written assignments and during classroom discussions, the students were asked to support their responses using their prior knowledge and evidence from the readings. In addition to the three-step process, the students were also required to keep journals about what they were thinking as they worked through the three steps.

To gather data, Kohlmeier (2005) kept a log throughout the study that included notes from discussions as well as homework and performance assessments of all her students. She used this log to look for patterns of thinking and main ideas that were surfacing from students' responses in their written work and class discussions. Kohlmeier also conducted near the end of this study a group discussion with her ten identified students to gain insight into their attitudes and opinions regarding their recent experiences with her process of learning history.

From the information collected in her log, Kohlmeier (2005) was able to identify three key elements that seemed to emerge and improve as the study moved forward: her students' increasing ability to point out the main ideas after analyzing documents; her students' increasing ability to evaluate sources and use evidence to support their opinions; and her students' increasing ability to recognize and respect the perspectives of those who experienced the past. As the study moved forward through the semester, Kohlmeier collected more and more evidence that showed her students comparing, contrasting, using background knowledge, questioning, and investigating in order to

make connections and draw conclusions from what they were reading. For example, with the first few readings, students simply described the events that occurred and pointed out the main ideas. By the time the students moved to the final readings, they were able to compare events in the stories to broader historical events and more naturally consider the viewpoint of the historical person or author.

Kohlmeier (2005) concludes from her findings that the study of history helps students understand that history is not one story, but many stories with different interpretations, perspectives and outcomes. Therefore, students, as they work through history lessons, improve their analytical, interpretive and critical assessment skills that in the end will help them become engaged citizens who are aware of the events that have shaped and continue to shape their surroundings.

The results of all three studies demonstrate the importance of history education in schools. By studying history, students are opened up to multiple perspectives, and given opportunities to look at and formulate their own ideas. By studying history, students gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the past, and connect this understanding to their own personal lives. By studying history, students come to appreciate the important events of the past and realize the difference they can make in the future.

Students' Ability to Understand History

Research has shown that history education is important in schools. Nevertheless, do young students have the ability to understand and appreciate history? According to Piaget's principles of developmental psychology, children are "concrete thinkers, unable to think in abstract ways and incapable of investigating and researching until at least adolescence" (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958, p. 348). National standards in the United States

for both elementary and secondary history education, however, stress that the study of history should involve an investigative, inquiry-based approach to learning (VanSledright, 2002). These conflicting assumptions between Piaget's principles and national standards regarding the abilities of young people raise questions regarding if or at what age students are capable of understanding and appreciating the past. "Learning history is no simple task. It demands some fairly sophisticated thinking processes" (VanSledright, 2002, pg. 5). The study of history requires skills such as interpreting, evaluating, analyzing, recounting, and investigating. Do students, especially younger students, have the capacity to *think historically* (VanSledright, 2002)?

In April of 1994, Levstik and Barton conducted research meant to demonstrate that young students (kindergarten through sixth grade) are capable of comprehending, arranging (chronologically), and making meaningful connections to events in history. They studied fifty-eight kindergarten through sixth grade students from inner city, suburban, and rural areas of central and northern Kentucky.

Levstik and Barton (1994) used historical pictures as the focal point of their research because they believed that visual images better convey the essence and significance of historical events. The researchers began with several sets of historical pictures related to American history from the 1740s to the 1960s that they felt adults could easily put in chronological order. To test this idea, the researchers observed 90 college-level students putting different sets of pictures in chronological order and from their observations narrowed the pictures to one set based on how easy it was for the students to recognize and organize the historical events.

Levstik and Barton (1994) then turned to the kindergarten through sixth grade students. Each student was given one picture at a time to place in chronological order. While each student worked, the researchers asked the student to explain why he put each picture in a certain spot, if he knew when a specific picture took place, what changes took place from one photograph to the next, and other similar questions.

After all interviews were completed, Levstik and Barton (1994) analyzed transcripts from their observations to try to identify patterns of thought related to how students arranged photographs and what connections, if any, were made to one's personal life and community. One of the observations made was that as students compared pictures, they used their background knowledge and made inferences to come to conclusions. Even the youngest students would try to explain clues they found in the pictures to determine where they thought a picture should go. Another observation made was that older students were more specific in their responses and interpretations of events. They were able to critically examine a photograph and make decisions based on their examination. One additional observation worth noting was that there were at least several students from each grade level who connected something in the historical photographs to something in their own community or everyday life.

Based on their findings, Levstik and Barton (1994) conclude that young students are capable of recognizing historical events, drawing conclusions, and making important connections. The researchers also note that when students are able to make personal connections between historical events and their own lives and surroundings, this connection enhances their understanding and makes learning meaningful. Levstik and

Barton, therefore, emphasize that local history can play an important part in a student's understanding of the past.

VanSledright (2002) used a classroom of twenty-three 10-year-old children (fifth graders) as the center of his research to determine if young students are capable of learning history through inquiry-based learning activities and instruction. Observations, discussions, and assignments from all the students in the class were used for this study. For more in-depth observation, though, of what was happening in the classroom and how students were affected by classroom activities, VanSledright focused on a subgroup of eight students--four girls & four boys, two reading above grade-level, four at grade-level, and two below grade-level--that he felt represented the diversity of the classroom based on their academic scores and ethnicity.

The study involved VanSledright (2002) teaching American history to the fifth grade class from January through May of 1999, working through several units including the study of Jamestown and the Revolutionary War. VanSledright developed lessons that he felt encouraged inquiry learning and required investigative and evaluation skills. For example, one activity involved assigning five small research groups where each group researched daily over two weeks and then taught what they learned to the rest of the class. Several other activities that the students participated in over the four months included guided readings, timelines, and essay writing. Students also created booklets, took pretests and quizzes, evaluated primary and secondary sources, and kept logs and journals. To gather data during the four months of instruction, VanSledright collected notes from interviews and observations, results from performance assessments, and copies of student assignments.

By the end of the study, VanSledright (2002) was witnessing the students identifying primary and secondary sources and comparing and contrasting between them; making a case for information they had collected; using expanded vocabulary as they spoke about events; categorizing people, places and events; and recognizing inconclusive evidence. Not surprisingly, the rate at which each student developed these skills differed depending on such factors as their reading level, patience, and access to sources of information outside of school. Of the ten children he more closely studied, all demonstrated at least some improvement in their abilities to understand history.

VanSledright (2002) concludes that students, with some instruction and ample time to research, are able to use investigative and inquiry skills to understand events in history. VanSledright notes that in order to have meaningful understanding of history, a student's experience in the classroom requires more than memorization of events and people. Students need to understand where to look for information and how to interpret what information they find. VanSledright believes students have this capability.

One striking study conducted by Christine Cooper (2003) demonstrates that even very young children (ages three to seven) are capable of arranging events in chronological order, recognizing changes over a period of time, and connecting meaning to historical events. Cooper observed students in the St. Mark's Day Care Unit Preschool Playgroup in England. The students were placed in three different classes depending on their age—the Reception class (four and five year old children), the Year 1 class (five and six year old children), and the Year 2 class (six and seven year old children). During this study, Cooper observed the Reception class students working on simple activities that focused on studying their families and sequencing a school day. She observed Year 1

students working on activities that extended their learning of sequencing by creating timelines of their own personal lives. These students were also introduced to artifacts from when their parents were young, simple historical nonfiction, and photographs from the past and present. The purpose of these activities was to gradually make students aware of what makes up one's past. Lastly, Cooper observed the Year 2 students working on activities that extended their focus from what life was like when their parents were young to what life was like when their grandparents were young. These students looked at primary sources, newspapers and photographs; read historical fiction; studied the results of questionnaires that were completed by their grandparents; and watched a historical play.

At the end of the study, Cooper (2003) found that Year 1 students were able to distinguish between the past and present; recognize that things change over time; and understand that you can find out about the past by asking people or looking at books, pictures and artifacts. Cooper found that Year 2 students were not only able to recognize past events and artifacts, but they were also able to speak independently about them. These same students also demonstrated an increase in vocabulary related to history. Cooper concludes that students, even at a very young age, are capable of putting events in order, understanding that changes occur over time, and summarizing what they learned about the past.

The findings from all three studies show that students have the ability to *think historically* (VanSledright, 2002). Even the youngest students are capable of understanding their past. The research shows that as students grow older, they are increasingly capable of recognizing historical events, analyzing their importance,

drawing conclusions, and formulating their own ideas and perspectives. Students are also able to make personal connections to larger historical events, which in turn makes their learning more meaningful.

Presenting Information to Children on a Web Site

The research provided so far indicates that not only is history education important to young students; it also demonstrates that children are capable of understanding and making meaningful connections to the past. Now the question that remains is how to best present historical information to young students on a web site that peaks their interest and enhances their understanding and connections.

Children are increasingly using the Internet for educational and entertainment purposes. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, approximately 90 percent of children between the ages of five and seventeen use computers, and 59 percent of these children use the Internet. Almost 75 percent of five year-old children use computers, with 25 percent of this age group using the Internet. By the age of nine, 50 percent of children use the Internet, and this number climbs to 75 percent for those children between the ages of fifteen and seventeen (DeBell, 2003).

Children are increasingly being asked to locate information on the Internet. In order to make available to children the most reliable and usable web sites, the American Library Association has created guidelines for creating and evaluating web sites for children under the age of fifteen. According to the ALA, the most effective children-specific web sites have a clear purpose and are easy to use for its intended audience. For example, one of the ALA guidelines recommends that the content of children's web sites be simple and easy to comprehend in order to ensure understanding for the young

readers. Another guideline stresses that images and graphics on web pages should relate to the site's content, and that the web pages load quickly and correctly in order to maintain the interest of the young students. Navigation should be easy for the user, and for informational web sites, the "quality of content should be most important" (American Library Association, 2008, ¶ 9).

Findings from several studies that looked at how a web site's design affects children's understanding of its content confirm the importance of the ALA guidelines. In 2003, Shiva Naidu studied 30 children between the ages of 7 and 11 years of age who had at least one year of experience using the Internet. The purpose of this study was to examine how the children responded to the usability and content of three different web sites. The web sites were EnchantedLearning.com, FactMonster.com, and InfoPlease.com. The children's efficiency in finding information and time on task were measured. In addition, the children were asked to rate different features of the web sites using a smiley face scale.

Naidu (2005) found that features such as overly long web pages, difficult vocabulary, too many links, and animated advertisements contributed to all three web sites failing to score well in the areas of usability and content. In regards to web page length, the study found that the participants, especially the younger children, tended not to scroll down a web page even when reminded of the scroll bar. Therefore, information near the bottom of the longer web pages was never seen by several students. Participants also had difficulty with web pages that used vocabulary that was unfamiliar to them. Furthermore, the study found that the fewer number of links on a web page, the less confusing it was for the participants to navigate through the web site. Advertisements,

too, were confusing to several of the participants. Some children were unable to separate the advertisements from the true content of the web pages. These children would mistakenly click within the ad taking them to a completely different site. Animated advertisements distracted several of the participants, directing their attention away from the important content on the page. Naidu concluded that the design and content of web sites must match the child's developmental and cognitive abilities in order to ensure sufficient understanding and a positive experience working through the web site.

Research conducted by Terry Sullivan, Cathleen Norris, Martha Peet, and Elliot Soloway in 2005 studied 16 children—eight females and eight males in two age groups, 12 years and 16 years of age—working through an online scavenger hunt. The children were instructed to use two very different web sites. The first web site, www.disney.com, is designed specifically for children. The second site, www.edmunds.com, is intended for older individuals looking for information on vehicle pricing and specifications. The goal of this study was to identify those factors in web design that most influence the children's success in finding factual information on a web site.

Sullivan, Norris, Peet, and Soloway (2005), from the evidence they collected during their research, found three primary factors that most influence a child's success in finding information on a web site. The first factor focuses on navigation. The researchers determined that children may know in general *how* to look for information online, but may face difficulty in knowing *where* to look depending on the navigation design of the web site. Students performed better with simpler navigational design and when a site map was included. The second factor relates to the images on the web site. The researchers observed that the children tended to be distracted by the animated images on

the Disney web site; so much so that those animated images that could be scrolled off the screen were scrolled off by several children within five seconds of their appearance on the screen. The third factor focuses on the ‘bells and whistles’ seen on a web site—that is, the number of graphics and animations displayed on the pages. The study found that even though the Disney site was designed specifically for children and that the children were observed enjoying this site more than the Edmund’s site, there was no evidence to show that the children were more successful in finding information on the Disney site than on the Edmund’s web site. Sullivan, Norris, Peet, and Soloway conclude that web design elements that improve the user’s success in finding information should take precedence over graphic content.

In 2002, Jakob Nielsen (2002) studied 55 children, ranging in ages from 6 to 12 years of age, using 24 web sites designed for children and 3 general web sites designed for adults (Amazon.com, Yahoo.com, and Weather.com). The purpose of this study was to examine how children use and respond to Internet sites. One significant finding from this study showed that even the younger participants “often had the greatest success using web sites intended for adults” (Nielsen, 2002, ¶ 6). Nielsen believed this was because the adult sites were simpler in content and design than most of the children’s web sites. Similar to the results found in the Naidu study, the children during Nielsen’s research had difficulty with the advanced vocabulary, confusing links, and bright advertisements, along with slow loading web pages that were more prominent in the children’s web sites. Nielsen concluded that children are drawn more to colorful web pages with graphics and multimedia effects, but perform better locating information in web sites that are simpler in design and contain content that is easier to read and understand.

The American Library Association guidelines and the findings from these research studies show that there are important design elements to consider when presenting historical information to children on a web site. The most effective informational web sites contain clear, understandable content. The design and layout are attractive and easy to follow. The right amount of illustrations and photographs peaks the user's curiosity and adds deeper insight into a topic. By incorporating a simpler design with clear navigation and age appropriate content, the creator encourages further investigation and interest in the facts and features of the web site.

Summary

The research provided in this chapter offers evidence that history education plays an important part in the curriculum of school districts across the United States. Through history education, students learn to critically examine what has happened in the past in order to improve their futures. Through history education, students develop personal connections with their communities, states, and the nation as a whole. Through history education, students learn to appreciate the diversity and multiple perspectives of those in the past and those around them today.

The research also demonstrates that students are capable of understanding history, even with its broad perspectives and complexities. The results of the studies in this chapter show that students are capable of analyzing, interpreting and critically examining events in history, and drawing their own conclusions and appreciation for the past.

The importance of history education, therefore, makes it vital that historical information is presented to students in a way that draws them into the subject, whatever it may be; enhances their understanding of the person, place, or event; and allows for the

students to make personal connections between their own lives and the past. Even though there are multiple ways to present information to students on the Internet, the results from the research mentioned in this chapter encourage web sites that have a clear purpose and are easy to use for its intended audience.

The purpose of this project was to create an informative, engaging web site for students in third through sixth grade that would share information about the history of Elkader, Iowa. Currently, there are no sources specifically available for younger children in the elementary grade levels regarding this community's local history. The research provided in this chapter makes it evident that not only is history education important and that students are capable of understanding and appreciating the past; it also shows that providing ways for students to make personal connections to history enhances their understanding and interest of the past. A web site regarding the local history of Elkader that is designed for younger students allows these students to make a meaningful connection to their community's local history, and then tie it to larger historical events. An informational web site on the history of Elkader will provide an educational source for local history curriculum—one that is unique in opening the pathway for elementary students into the history of Elkader.

Chapter Three

Procedures

Elkader, located in the hills of Northeast Iowa, along the banks of the Turkey River, is a community rich with history, including its unique name, folklore, and accounts of the early settlers to this area (Elkader Historical Society, 1976). There are no resources designed for young children about the history of Elkader, Iowa.

Description of Project

For this project, the researcher created an informational web site that outlines the history of Elkader, Iowa. An informational web site on the history of Elkader provides an educational source for local history curriculum—one that is unique in that it is specific to elementary students. And more importantly, by experiencing this informational web site, students should be able to make a meaningful connection to Elkader, both its past and present, and the larger world.

The primary audience of this web site is children in third through sixth grades. It is the hope of the researcher, though, that all users regardless of their ages and abilities will find this web site both informational and interesting.

Procedure

To begin the process of creating an informational web site, the researcher investigated and collected information related to the research questions listed below:

1. What is the history of Elkader, Iowa?
2. What significant events, people, and stories relating to the history of Elkader should be included in an informational web site designed for children?

3. What basic web design elements need to be considered when developing an informational web site specifically for children?

To gain an understanding of the history of Elkader, the researcher first looked for and studied information in written resources from several different places, including the Elkader Public Library, Carter House Museum, Elkader Historical Society, Clayton County Historical Society, and Iowa State Historical Society. The local newspaper, *The Clayton County Register*, and several websites were also explored. Information such as local and state government records and maps were attained from the Clayton County Courthouse.

According to Lindsay Mannell, one of the most important characteristics in determining the quality of information is the accuracy it contains (Mannell, 2006). The authenticity of facts and folklore put into this web site was of primary concern. As each piece of information was collected, its source was evaluated to ensure its validity. A bibliography of sources was updated as information was found and verified for its accuracy.

As the search for information progressed, additional written sources, experts, and local residents who experienced Elkader's past were discovered. The researcher also visited several historical sites to gain further understanding and appreciation of their significance. Permission to use photographs was sought as well.

Once the proposal for this project was accepted, the researcher filed a University of Northern Iowa Human Participants Review Committee Application with the Office of Sponsored Programs in the University of Northern Iowa Graduate College Office. This form allowed the researcher to gather information regarding the history of Elkader by

means of interviews. Once the Human Participants Review Committee Application was approved, the researcher used an interview permission letter (see Appendix A) to give to potential persons who may have had knowledge of Elkader's past. During the interviews, the researcher used an interview sheet (see Appendix B) that included a list of questions meant to collect information and guide the interview discussion.

After a sufficient amount of historical information about Elkader was collected and the researcher felt she had developed a good understanding of this community's history, the researcher then began the process of sorting and selecting which historical information—the events, people, and places--to include on the web site. The researcher based her selections on the significance of the information to Elkader's history, and when possible, connections that could be made to national and world history. Those events, places, and people that the researcher deemed most significant took priority over less significant information. The researcher also sought the input of local historians regarding their thoughts and ideas on the most significant events and features in Elkader's history.

In addition, when selecting information for the web site, the researcher gave special consideration to details that would most effectively work with at least one of several different navigation scenarios for the web site. For example, one possible navigation option would have followed Elkader's history in chronological order from its earliest date to present time. Another possible navigation option would have separated information into subtopics or separate chapters, such as Native Americans, transportation, military, and commerce. One more navigation option would have followed what life was like for a child at different periods throughout Elkader's history. The navigation method for the web site was decided after all historical information was selected and sorted, and

it was better known what information and how much information was available to sufficiently cover the events, places and people in Elkader's history.

After the information was selected for the web site, the researcher turned her attention to studying the basic elements necessary in designing an effective informational web site for children. The researcher first looked at examples of recommended and award-winning children's web sites, especially those that related to history. The researcher referred to the American Library Association, PBS.org, and the U.S. Department of Education Federal Resources for Educational Excellence for their listings of recommended web sites.

To further increase her knowledge of designing a web site for children, the researcher referred to the findings in the studies covered in chapter two and recommendations by additional authors and experts regarding the essential components of quality web site design. For instance, the researcher studied the American Library Association guidelines for children-specific web sites. These guidelines emphasize web sites that offer accurate information and are easy to use for their intended audiences (American Library Association, 2008). Web design books used as sources of reference by the researcher included *Building Treehouses for Learning* by Annette Lamb (2006); *Exploring Web Design* by Jeremy Vest, William Crowson, and Shannon Pochran (2005); *Developing Web Pages for Educators* by Kathy Schrock (2003); and *Spinnin' the Web: Designing & Developing Web Projects* by Annette Lamb (1998). These books emphasize a simple, consistent web site design that is in line with the research findings discussed in Chapter 2.

The researcher intended to develop a site that was similar in size, organization, and scope of other quality informational web sites for children. The researcher understood the importance of how text and images need to blend together to convey the message. The images should begin to tell the story and the text should add to what the images cannot tell (Hall, 1990). If photographs were not found for an essential piece of historical information, the researcher contacted a local artist regarding possible illustrations for the website.

When the researcher felt confident in her understanding of the basic elements needed to design a web site for children, the researcher began the design and layout of the web site. While creating the first rough draft of the web site, the researcher periodically returned to the guidelines and recommendations for quality children web sites to ensure her site was meeting their standards and maintaining overall appeal and effectiveness.

The researcher invited several third through sixth grade teachers, third through sixth grade students, and community members to participate in small group and individual evaluations of this web site. Community members included those with expertise in Elkader's local history and those with expertise in language and writing mechanics. After obtaining permission from the participants (see Appendices C, D and E), the researcher asked the participants to work through the web pages, and then offer their input regarding what they liked and disliked about the web site based on both its usability and content (see Appendix F). Feedback collected from their evaluations was used to make changes and additions to the web site.

After the evaluations by the students, teachers, and community members were completed, a final draft of the website was created.

Chapter Four

The Web Site: *History of Elkader, Iowa... for kids*

A paper copy of the *History of Elkader, Iowa... for kids* web site is Appendix G.

A CD of the web site is attached.

As of May 10, 2008, the updated web site can be viewed at

<http://www.central.k12.ia.us/ElkaderHistory/index.html>

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Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Elkader, located in the hills of Northeast Iowa, along the banks of the Turkey River, is a community rich with history, including its unique name, folklore, and accounts of the early settlers to this area (Elkader Historical Society, 1976). There are no resources designed for young children about the history of Elkader, Iowa. The purpose of this project was to create an informational web site for children in third through sixth grades that would share information about the history of Elkader, Iowa, from its beginning years to present day.

Reflection of Project

After completing this project, the researcher believes she has created a web site for children that provides an informative introduction to the history of Elkader. By working through this project, the researcher has learned a great deal not only about the importance of local history for our youth, but also how to design a web site that presents the historical information in a meaningful and educational manner. Following the American Library Association's guidelines and recommendations of several researchers and authors, the researcher hopes she has created a web site that "clearly presents accurate information and is easy to use for its intended audience" (American Library Association, 2008, ¶ 9).

The researcher is pleased with the evaluations of the web site provided by the children, teachers, and community members regarding its usability and content. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and several good suggestions from their

evaluations were implemented to enhance this web site. The researcher is also appreciative of the teachers and community members who willingly proofread the web site for grammatical errors and historical accuracy. Their willingness to help with this project was crucial to the quality of the final outcome.

Possible Additions to Enhance Content

The researcher has come to appreciate that there is so much more to the history of Elkader than is provided on this web site. Through her research and input from others, the researcher realizes that many additions could be made to this web site to further inform its users of the richness of this community's past.

For example, the researcher could add a section in the future that discusses historical homes. Currently, there are several homes in Elkader listed on the National Historical Register. As the researcher was looking for information on the history of Elkader and speaking with community members, she came upon several interesting stories that related to some of these historical homes. The researcher believes that children may find some of these stories interesting. Beyond looking for information in the local historical books, the researcher could interview the owners or previous owners of these homes to gain additional insight and personal stories.

In 2007, Elkader received the honor of being selected as the smallest town in the United States designated as a Cultural and Entertainment District (Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, 2007). The researcher could add a section to the web site that relates to Elkader's strong support of the arts throughout its history. This could include adding more information regarding the history of the Opera House and adding biographies of authors and artists who at one time or another lived in this community.

The researcher may also consider placing more emphasis on the Turkey River that flows through the town of Elkader and has been and continues to be an integral part of this community. At least one child who evaluated the web site remarked that he wished there was more information and pictures related to life in and around the Turkey River in the early years. This could include more specific information on how people have used the river and a description of how the ecology of the river has changed over the years. The Turkey River and the geography that surrounds it was an important part of the early growth of this community and continues to attract people today. The researcher believes that with deeper investigation she could find more facts and stories about this river that children would enjoy studying.

The researcher may consider adding more games and activities to enhance the child's understanding of the historical information presented on the web site. During the evaluations of the web site, the researcher observed the children enjoying the activities currently available on the web site. Both the children and the adults gave positive remarks regarding the activities. The researcher may consider ways to make these activities more interactive and engaging for the young users.

Research provided in this project emphasizes the importance of connecting local history to our nation's history. The researcher hopes to one day add a teacher's link that consists of lesson ideas and expanded research activities that connect events in Elkader's past to historical events in our broader national and world history. As the web site expands, the researcher may consider adding a search box to make navigation throughout the web site easier.

Design of Web Site

One primary concern the researcher had as she designed the web site was whether or not the web site's design was too formal for the younger children, specifically those children below the fourth grade. The researcher struggled with designing a web site that would be informative and engaging to both a young third grader and an older sixth grader. In addition, the researcher wanted the web site to be interesting to other age groups. To ease this concern, the researcher found in most of the research and guidelines she studied that the quality of the information on the web site should take precedence over the visual representations. Most research and guidelines support the idea that a simple, consistent design is more effective in enhancing a child's experience with a web site than a design with many bells and whistles.

During the evaluation stage, as the researcher observed and compared the younger students to the older students navigating through and understanding the content of the web site, the researcher saw very little difference between the age groups in their ability to navigate through this site. Because the older students were more experienced in using the Internet, they were obviously able to navigate more quickly and efficiently through the web site than the younger students. However, the younger students, too, were successful in moving around this site and finding useful information. Few problems were observed in either group. Both age groups also seemed equally engaged and interested as they worked through the web site. Of course, both age groups were excited to use this web site because it was new to them and it related to something familiar to them—their hometown. These findings eased the concern of the researcher regarding the formality of the web site design.

Another concern the researcher struggled with related to the amount of text provided on each web page and on the web site as a whole. The researcher did not want the children to become frustrated with too much information presented to them. The researcher tried to keep each web page limited to two or three paragraphs in length. However, several web pages contain more than three paragraphs. During the evaluation stage, the researcher observed on occasion a few of the younger children (third graders) clicking to the next page without reading the complete web page. The same was also true of several older students. The researcher was encouraged, though, by how infrequently this occurred. When observing the third graders, who ranged from below grade reading levels to advanced reading levels, only three of these children were observed navigating to another page without first reading the entire content of the current page; and this seemed to happen only sporadically and not always on the web pages that contained a larger amount of text. The researcher noted that in some cases (after asking the children why they prematurely advanced to the next page) children clicked to the next page because of their lack of interest in the topic of that web page, not necessarily because of their struggle with the amount of information on the web page.

Accuracy of Information

It is the hope of the researcher that children will use this web site as both a resource for research activities and for the enjoyment of learning about local history. It is of utmost importance to the researcher that the information provided on the web site is accurate. Determining the information's accuracy, though, was not always easy throughout the research process. During her search for historical information, the researcher occasionally came across facts in one source that didn't match related facts

given in another source (especially dates). The researcher also came across information that was very interesting but questionable in its accuracy. In addition, the researcher found that information regarding certain features and events in Elkader's history could only be found in one source and could not be validated using another source. Another obstacle the researcher encountered was that several individuals who were interviewed about Elkader's history were not always certain of the specifics of an event. The researcher had to often times check the validity of their comments. Throughout this project, the researcher struggled with determining the accuracy of some information and whether to include it in the web site. The researcher decided that if the historical information was questionable, it would not be added to the web site. Unfortunately, some information that children may have found interesting had to be omitted from the web site because its accuracy could not be fully determined. Even though the researcher knew this was the right thing to do, it was not always easy to do and many hours were spent trying to determine accuracy to no avail.

Conclusion

The researcher has created an informational web site outlining the history of Elkader, Iowa. It is the hope of the researcher that this web site will eventually serve as a local history resource for the children of Elkader. And more importantly, the researcher hopes that by experiencing this informational web site, the children of Elkader will be able to make a more meaningful connection to their community, both it's past and present, and the larger world.

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Appendix A
Adult Interview Permission Letter

Project Title: History of Elkader, Iowa

Name of Investigator: Nancy Healy

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed permission to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this interview is:

- To collect information about the history of Elkader, Iowa, from primary sources—that is, persons who have first hand recollections and/or personal experiences in Elkader's past.
- To collect this information through the use of personal interviews
- To use the information collected to further research the history of Elkader
- To use the information collected as part of a children's web site about the history of Elkader
- To complete a necessary part of the School Library & Media Studies degree program at the University of Northern Iowa.

The interview will be conducted at your convenience. The interview will last no more than one hour. If additional information is needed, an additional interview time may be requested upon completion of the first interview.

If something should arise that makes it impossible for you to complete the interview, another interview time will be arranged. The interview will only be conducted in a place in which you feel comfortable and can be conducted in the presence of a friend or relative. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all.

Because participation in this interview is strictly voluntary, there will be no financial or material compensation for your participation in this project.

Risks during this research project will be minimal. Your participation is strictly confidential and will be conducted at your convenience. No personally-identifying information will be collected and disseminated. All information collected from the interview will be destroyed at the end of the research project. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all.

If you have questions about the study or if you desire information in the future regarding your participation or the project in general, you can contact Nancy Healy at 563-245-1989. You can also contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for questions regarding the rights of research participants and the participant review process.

I have included two copies of this letter. Please sign one copy and send it to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Keep the second letter for your records.

Agreement:

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix C

Parental Permission Form Student Participation

Dear Parent(s),

My name is Nancy Healy. I am a graduate student at the University of Northern Iowa in the School Library & Media Studies Division. As part of my graduate work at the University of Northern Iowa, I have developed a children's web site about the history of Elkader. The purpose of this web site is to provide students in third through sixth grade with information about Elkader's past.

Your child is invited to participate in this research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to allow your child to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.

As part of my project, I have asked teachers for students in third through sixth grade to select students to participate in my research. The students selected will be asked to work through the web site and then provide feedback regarding its content, organization and design. By having the students work through and provide feedback about the web site, I hope to determine whether I have met my goal of providing an interesting and educational look at Elkader's history.

I plan to ask the students to generate a list of things they already know about Elkader's past before accessing the web site. After working through the web site, I will ask the students to list new things they learned about the history of Elkader. I will also ask the students to tell me what they liked and disliked about the web site, and what changes they could suggest. I will be taking notes of their responses during and after their web site evaluations. Information gathered from these evaluations may be used in the final revisions of the web site.

The teacher will determine the time during which the web site is shared. I have asked that the time period chosen to be the least disruptive to the student's day with assurances that the student will be able to make up any activity missed during this time period.

A student may be asked to end his/her participation in this project if circumstances such as apprehension or misbehavior should occur. At the completion of this project, all information collected from the evaluations will be destroyed.

Your child's participation is completely voluntary. Your child is free to withdraw from participation at any time or choose not to participate at all. Because participation in this project is strictly voluntary, there will be no financial or material compensation for your child's participation in this project.

If you desire additional information regarding your child's participation or the project in general, you can contact me at 563-245-1989. You can also contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148 for questions about the rights of research participants and the participant review process.

I have included two copies of this letter. If you would like your child to participate in my project, please sign one copy and send it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I have included. Keep the second letter for your records.

If I do not hear from you within one week, I will assume that you do not want your child to participate in my project, and I will ask the teacher to select another student.

Agreement:

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my child's participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this project. I have received a copy of this form.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Printed Name of Child Participant

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix D**Child/Minor Informed Assent Form – Group Participation**

Project Title: History of Elkader, Iowa

Principal Investigator: Nancy Healy

I, _____,
have been told that my mom, dad, or the person who takes care of me has said that it is okay for me to take part in an activity where I look at a web site about the history of Elkader. I will look through the web site, and then I will be asked to share what I learned from the web site, what I liked about the web site, what I disliked about the web site, and what changes I think should be made to the web site.

I am taking part in this activity because I want to. I have been told that I can stop taking part in this activity at any time. If I ask to stop or decide that I don't want to do this activity at all, I will not be in trouble.

Student Signature

Date

Appendix E Teacher Consent Form

To Whom It May Concern:

 Nancy Healy has requested permission to collect research data from students in my class at Central Community School in Elkader, Iowa . I have been informed of the purpose of the study and the nature of the research procedures. I have also been given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

I grant permission for Nancy Healy to work with and collect research data from students in my class. I understand that it is my decision to identify which students will participate in this study. I also understand that students without parental permission will not participate in this study.

I understand that I, too, have the option of participating in this study. If I choose to participate, I understand that I can end my participation at any time before or during the study.

If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Teacher – Printed Name

Teacher Signature

Date

Appendix F

Interview Questions – Small Group Discussion

1. Can anyone tell me something historical about Elkader – an event, place, or person?
2. We are going to look at a web site about the history of Elkader. I want you to work through the web site on your own. If you have a question, raise your hand and I will help you.
3. If you don't like something about the web site, let me know by raising your hand. If you really like something about the web site, let me know that, too. I want to know your opinions.

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- ◆ [Before Elkader Became a Town](#)
- ◆ [Elkader in the Early Years](#)
- ◆ [How Elkader Got It's Name](#)
- ◆ [Elkader Folklore](#)
- ◆ [Historic Places in Elkader](#)
- ◆ [Elkader Today](#)

[More Information](#)

Site created by [Nancy Healy](#), UNI School Library Media Program
Site last updated: Thursday, April 10, 2008

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Elkader is nestled in the hills and valleys of Northeast Iowa, along the banks of the Turkey River. It's located about 20 miles west of the Mississippi River and 60 miles south of the Minnesota border.



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Elkader is nestled in the hills and valleys of Northeast Iowa, along the banks of the Turkey River. It's located about 20 miles west of the Mississippi River and 60 miles south of the Minnesota border.



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BEFORE ELKADER BECAME A TOWN



Before the early 1800's, the land that would eventually become the town of Elkader was mostly made up of woodland trees and plants. A variety of wildlife also made this area their home, including deer, wild turkeys, rabbits, raccoon, fox, opossum, coyote, beaver, muskrats, eagles, owls, geese, ducks, and different types of fish.

Before the white settlers came to this area in the 1800's, several Native American tribes made Northeast Iowa their home. They included the the Fox (also called Meskwaki), Sac (also called Sauk), and Sioux tribes. They hunted, fished, grew crops, and raised their families.

In 1829, the United States Government forced tribes from western Illinois to move across the Mississippi River into Eastern Iowa so that white settlers could purchase land in Illinois. In 1832, unhappy with their life in Iowa, several members of the Sac and Fox tribes went to Illinois to try to reclaim land where they once lived. They were led by Chief Black Hawk. The U.S. Government did not like this and fighting between the Native Americans and the U.S. military began. This battle became known as the Black Hawk War.

The U.S. military was too much for the Native Americans. As a result, the Sac and Fox tribes were forced to move at least 50 miles west of the Mississippi River in what is now the state of Iowa. The 50-mile strip of land next to the Mississippi River was set aside for white settlers. The future town of Elkader would fall within this strip of land.



Artwork by Kate Deutmeyer

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ELKADER'S FIRST SETTLERS

The first white settlers to the Elkader area were Elisha Boardman and his friend, Horace Bronson. They crossed the Mississippi River in 1836 eager to find a place to live. Floating on the Turkey River on a raft, Boardman chose a spot along its banks. With the help of Bronson who arrived shortly after, they both bought large pieces of land along the Turkey River from the United States Government and moved their families to this area.

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HOW ELKADER GOT IT'S NAME

After Elisha Boardman and Horace Bronson arrived, more settlers began moving to this area and gradually a small town began to form. In 1846, three important members of the community -- John Thompson, Timothy Davis and Chester Sage -- drew up a plan of what they thought their new town should look like. But their new town was without a name.

Timothy Davis suggested that their town be named after Abdel-Kader, the leader of Algeria during the mid-1800s. Abdel-Kader had become well-known throughout the world for his bravery in leading Algeria's fight against France who had invaded their country. In honor of this brave Algerian leader, Mr. Davis and the others decided that their town without a name become known as *Elkader*.



Abdel-Kader



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ELKADER IN 1852



By 1852, Elkader had a general store, flour mill, sawmill, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, several homes, and a wooden bridge that crossed the Turkey River. Early settlers were Irish and German.

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THE MILL

One of the first buildings in Elkader was a [flour mill](#) built by John Thompson in 1847 along the banks of the Turkey River. It became the largest mill in the area. Flour produced at this mill was shipped as far as Dubuque. At first, the flour was delivered on [keelboats](#). However, at times, the Turkey River was too shallow or too high for boats to travel. Another way to deliver the flour was needed.



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THE BRIDGES ACROSS THE TURKEY RIVER

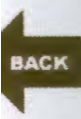


In 1850, a wooden bridge was built near the mill so that flour could be delivered by horse and wagon across the Turkey River. But this bridge needed to be repaired quite often because it wasn't strong enough for the heavy wagon loads that went across it.

In 1870, an iron bridge was built to replace the wooden bridge. But the iron bridge needed many repairs, too, because of its poor design.



In 1888, a limestone bridge was built to replace the iron bridge. This bridge, completed in 1889 in the same spot as the iron bridge, became known as the Keystone Bridge and is still traveled on today.



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BUILDING THE CLAYTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Clayton County Courthouse being built in 1868

From 1849 to 1880, the county seat for Clayton County changed several times between Elkader and the nearby towns of Garnavillo and Guttenberg. In 1880, Elkader finally became the official county seat for Clayton County.

During this time, the Clayton County Courthouse was built in two sections. The first section was completed in 1868. The second section of the courthouse was finished in 1878.

The clock tower which sits on top of the courthouse was added in 1896. The clock still keeps time today.



Second section added to Clayton County Courthouse



Clock tower added to Clayton County Courthouse



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THE RAILROAD COMES TO ELKADER



September 1886



At the train depot

In 1875 the first train from the Iowa Eastern Railroad Company rolled through Elkader next to the east side of the Turkey River. A train depot was built near the railroad tracks. In 1886, the Milwaukee Railroad Line started service in Elkader. Trains transported goods and passengers in and out of Elkader for many years. The last train to leave Elkader was in 1973.



Train wreck near Elkader in 1915



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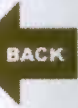
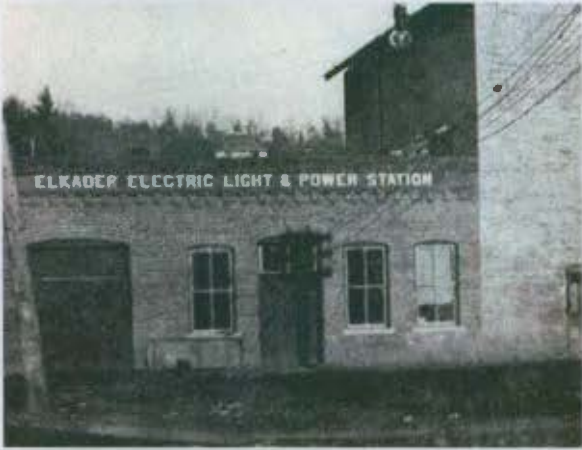
ELECTRICITY AND WATER COME TO ELKADER



In the early 1900's, Schmidt Bros. Electric Company began the installation of electricity for the businesses and homes in Elkader. Schmidt Bros. decided to use the energy from the water rushing over the mill dam to power the electricity. But because the mill dam was getting older and needed to be repaired, and as more persons wanted electricity, Schmidt Bros. decided a more sturdy dam needed to be built. In 1914, a new concrete dam along with new electrical equipment was built to increase electricity throughout Elkader.



The installation of a waterworks system in Elkader began in 1896 so that homes and businesses throughout Elkader could have running water.



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SCHOOLS IN ELKADER

The first school in Elkader was built in 1847 on the west side of the Turkey River. There may have also been a [grade school](#) on the east side of the river in what is now the First Congregational Church [parsonage](#).

In 1866, the Independent School District of Elkader was officially formed with a grade school on each side of the river. At that time, students went to school for six months out of the year.



School in 1884

In 1868, a new high school building was built on the site where today's high school building is located in Elkader. In 1875, the first class graduated from Elkader High School.

A bell was put in a tower above the high school building. It could be heard throughout Elkader and rang twice each day--30 minutes before the school day was to begin and at the start of the school day. The bell also rang whenever the Elkader students won a school event (for example, winning a basketball game). This bell is no longer in use but is on display in the lobby of Central Community School in Elkader.



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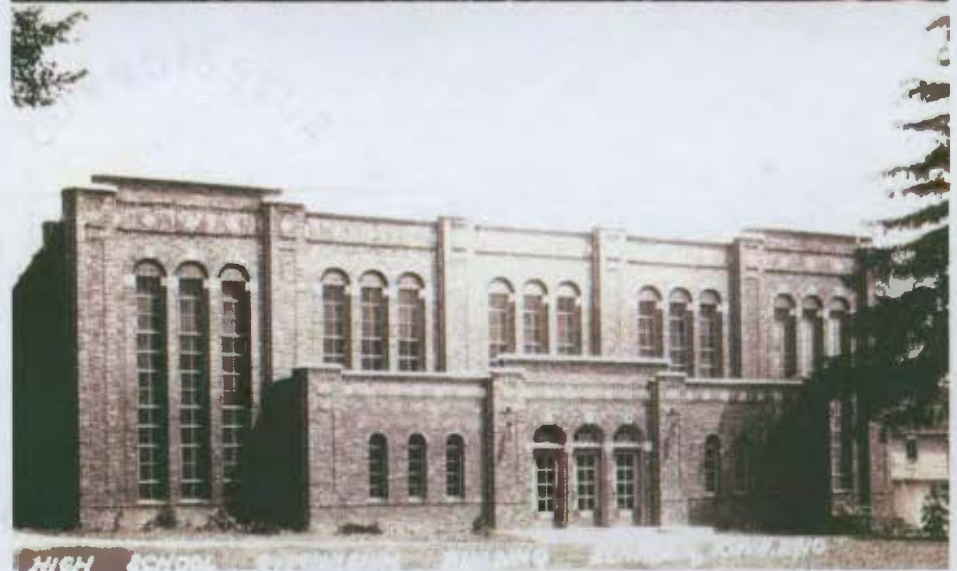
SCHOOLS IN ELKADER

A new grade school building was built next to the high school in 1912. The grade school building would later become the Elkader Junior College from 1929 to 1947.



Because the school buildings had no gym, basketball games were played in the basement of the Elkader Opera House. There wasn't a lot of room in the basement, however, for both players and those who came to watch the games.

In 1927, a new gym was added to the high school. This gym is still used today for physical education classes and junior high sporting events.



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SCHOOLS IN ELKADER



In 1936, the high school building burned down but the grade school and gym were saved. A new high school was built in its place in 1937 and attracted a lot of attention because it was considered one of the most modern schools in the United States. The high school building was even featured in the *National Geographic* magazine. It was considered modern because:

- It had more than 16,000 glass blocks in its outer walls.
- It was one of the first schools in the United States to have mechanical air conditioning.
- It was the first school in the United States to have all of its walls on the inside of the building made of concrete cinder blocks.
- It was considered the first fire-proof school in the United States because it was made of almost all concrete except for the wood doors and wood stage floor in the auditorium.
- It was the first school in the United States to have a school-wide public address system.
- It had a theater stage in a separate room from the gym. Most schools in those days had a gym and stage in the same room.

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SCHOOLS IN ELKADER



The Elkader School continued to change throughout the years.

In 1947, the Elkader Junior College closed and the building became part of the grade school.

In 1952, students in the surrounding towns of Littleport, Elkport and Garber began attending school in Elkader for the first time. In 1954, students from St. Olaf started school at Elkader and Volga students came to Elkader in 1962. The name of the school district changed from the Elkader School District to Central Community School District.

A new elementary section, lunchroom, and agriculture/industrial shop were added to the school in 1959.

The older section of the elementary school (the old junior college building) burned down in 1969. A new elementary school wing was built in its place. In 1974, a second gym was added, and in 1984, offices and the high school library were increased in size.



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CONNOISSEUR

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TRANSPORTATION IN THE EARLY YEARS

People in Elkader during the 1800's and early 1900's traveled by horse and buggy. Eventually, though, cars replaced horses on the streets of Elkader and pavement replaced the dirt roads.



T. M. Davidson became the first person to own a car in Elkader.

In 1911, a group of people started the Elkader Auto Club "to encourage the building of better roads, putting up sign boards, and also the fixing of the Smith Hill about two miles out of Elkader."

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THOSE WHO SERVED OUR COUNTRY

As did many other cities and towns throughout the United States, Elkader sent some of its young people off to wars going as far back as the Civil War. Several of those young people did not return. Men from the Elkader area who were killed during combat included: 17 from the Civil War; 5 from World War I; 19 from World War II; 6 from the Korean War; and 4 from the Vietnam War.



Decoration Day in 1911

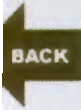
A Civil War Memorial monument and a Vietnam War Memorial monument are located next to the Clayton County Courthouse. An Elkader Area Veterans Memorial monument is located in the Elkader City Park.



Civil War and Vietnam War Memorials



Elkader Area Veterans Memorial



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ELKADER IN THE EARLY 1900's



This picture is a view of Elkader in the early 1900's. Do you see the Keystone Bridge? Clayton County Courthouse? Central State Bank? St. Joseph Church?



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HOW ELKADER GOT IT'S NAME

Settlers began moving to this area in the 1830's and gradually a small town began to form. In 1846, three important members of this new community -- John Thompson, Timothy Davis and Chester Sage -- drew up a plan of what they thought their new town should look like. But their new town was without a name.

Timothy Davis suggested that their town be named after Abdel-Kader, the leader of Algeria during the mid-1800's. Abdel-Kader had become well-known throughout the world for his bravery in leading Algeria's fight against France who had invaded their country. In honor of this brave Algerian leader, it was decided that the town without a name become known as *Elkader*.



Abdel-Kader

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ELKADER FOLKLORE

[Story of Lover's Leap](#)

[Jesse James and His Gang](#)



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STORY OF LOVER'S LEAP



Elkader's most famous folktale is the story of Lover's Leap. As the story goes, a young man named Lou Millville and a Native American chief's daughter, White Cloud, had fallen in love around 1831. On one particular day, Millville, who was interested in lead mines, secretly followed two braves into the wilderness to find these mines. When the braves discovered they were being followed, they ordered Millville to jump off a cliff overlooking the Turkey River. As he stood at the edge of the cliff, Millville suddenly jumped back and attacked the braves. Before he lost consciousness from the fight, Millville was able to push both the braves off the cliff. When White Cloud found Millville lying on the cliff, she thought he was dead. Overwhelmed with grief, she laid her moccasins next to Millville and jumped off the cliff to her death. When Millville awoke, he saw White Cloud's moccasins and discovered her body on the rocks below near the river. Millville buried her body on the cliff from which she had jumped. Legend has it that each year after White Cloud's death, Millville would climb to the top of the cliff to visit her grave—a place now known as Lover's Leap



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JESSE JAMES AND HIS GANG



Jesse James, along with his brother Frank and several other members of his gang, became famous and feared throughout the United States in the 1860's and 1870's for the many bank, train, and stagecoach robberies they committed in several states (including Iowa).

In 1875, it has been said that Jesse James, his brother Frank, and several other members of his gang visited Conrad Cline and Calvin Crawford who lived several miles outside of Elkader. Cline and Crawford became friends with Jesse James during the Civil War.

The men in the photo above are believed to be Jesse James and his gang along with Cline and Crawford.

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BAYLESS HOTEL



Frank D. Bayless came to Elkader in 1866 and started his own business. He was a Civil War Veteran and also an Iowa Senator from 1884 to 1892. In 1896, after the Clark House (a hotel located in downtown Elkader) burned

down, Mr. Bayless decided to build a new hotel. He hired Thomas Byrnes, the man who built the Keystone Bridge, to build his new hotel. The new Bayless Hotel had three floors. On the first floor there was a large dining room, kitchen, office, reading room, and barber shop. The second and third floors had parlors, bedrooms, and bathrooms with hot and cold running water. Over time the Bayless Hotel also had a restaurant, pub, gift shop, and floral shop.

The Bayless Hotel is no longer a hotel. It is now the Turkey River Mall, a store filled with antiques and specialty items.



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CARTER HOUSE



The Carter House is one of the oldest homes in Elkader. In 1847, two brothers--Ernest and Henry Carter--and their families moved to Elkader from Ohio. In 1855, the Carter brothers built a "mirror" house. A mirror house is two identical homes attached to each other by double doors in the middle of the house that lead to a central hallway. Henry, his wife, and eight children lived on one side. Ernest and his wife, Mary, lived on the other side.

The Carters lived in this house for thirty years. Ernest was away for some of this time, serving as a Major in the Union Army during the Civil War. He returned from the war in November 1865 in poor health and died in April 1866. Henry worked in a bank during his years in Elkader. In 1885, the Carters (except for Ernest's widow) moved to Oregon. They sold their home to Joe and Ella Lamm. The Lamms owned the house until 1938. William and Lina Reimer then bought the home and owned it until 1983. The Elkader Historical Society bought the Carter House in 1983 and have restored it and opened it to the public as a museum. There are many historical items in the museum today that date back to the time when the Carters lived in Elkader.



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CLAYTON COUNTY ASYLUM



The first county asylum was built in 1880. However, in order to meet the needs of the increasing number of patients living in the asylum, a new asylum building was built about a half mile from the Clayton County Courthouse in 1897. The asylum was built on a farm and next to a 'poor house'. Money earned from the farm went to supporting the asylum and poor house.

The name of the asylum later changed to the Clayton County Mental Health Institute. In 1975, the patients were moved to a new County Home in the country. The mental health building has since been renovated to hold county offices.



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CLAYTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

From 1849 to 1880, the county seat for Clayton County changed several times between Elkader and the nearby towns of Garnavillo and Guttenberg. During this time, the first part of the Clayton County Courthouse was built in 1868. When it was finally determined that Elkader would be the county seat, the second part of the courthouse building was completed in 1878.



There are records stored in the Clayton County Courthouse that go as far back as 1838. This was eight years before Iowa officially became a state.



The clock tower was placed on top of the courthouse in 1896 and still tells time today.



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JOHN OLSEN
SOUTH WORTH
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OLD CLAYTON COUNTY JAIL



The first jail in Clayton County was a log cabin. In 1870, a new stone jail was built in Elkader. The jail building included not only jail cells and an office, but a separate part where the sheriff and his family lived.

In 2006, a new Clayton County Jail was built. The old jail building has since been remodeled as a bed & breakfast, the [Elkader Jailhouse Inn](#).





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CENTRAL STATE BANK



First National Bank

The first bank in Elkader was called the First National Bank. It opened in 1871 and was located on Main Street.

In 1892, the Elkader State Bank opened just one block away from the First National Bank.



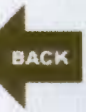
Before the new Elkader State Bank was built

In 1900, after a saloon located near the Keystone Bridge burned down, the Elkader State Bank built a new building on this spot.

In 1931, the First National Bank and the Elkader State Bank combined to become Central State Bank and moved into the Elkader State Bank building. Central State Bank is still located on this spot today.



Elkader State Bank (later called Central State Bank)



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ELKADER OPERA HOUSE



Before the Elkader Opera House was built, people went to a place called Turner Hall for entertainment and meetings. But in February 1903, Turner Hall burned down. Because so many people had enjoyed the events at Turner Hall, \$10,000 was raised within four days after the fire to build a new entertainment place.

The new Elkader Opera House was completed in November 1903. In its early years, it hosted plays from Chicago and Minneapolis, vaudeville shows, dances, and other events. Throughout the years, the Elkader Opera House has also hosted barbershop programs, musical shows, plays, and community meetings. It has also been used as a dance hall, roller rink, fire station, and city hall.

From 2004 to 2006, work was done on the Elkader Opera House to restore it to the way it looked in 1903. The Opera House continues to host many performances and events today.





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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

In the mid-1800's, E. V. Carter's wife, Mary (*see Carter House*), donated land so that a church could be built. The foundation was laid, but a church was not built on the foundation at that time. It wasn't until Reverend B. Y. Childs, a missionary, came to Elkader in 1894, organizing a group of people, including Mary Carter, to make plans for a new church. The First Congregational Church was completed in 1897. A pipe organ was added in 1898 and a church bell was added in 1909.



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GLESNE BUILDING



The Glesne building was built in 1891. At that time, John and Riley Glesne opened a general store named "Glesne Bros." In 1934, the store changed to a hardware store. Since its beginning in 1891, this building and business have been owned and operated by the Glesne family. Today it is a True Value store.



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KEYSTONE BRIDGE



The Keystone Bridge crosses the Turkey River in downtown Elkader connecting the east and west sides of the town. It was built in 1889 using limestone from a quarry near Elkader. The Keystone Bridge is one of the largest keystone arch bridges west of the Mississippi River.



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COLLECTION

COLLECTION

OLD METHODIST CHURCH



The Old Methodist Church was built in 1869 as a white frame church. Besides being a church, this building also served as a schoolhouse. It was located close to the current Central Community School. In 1898, the Methodist Church was moved two blocks closer to downtown Elkader using horses and a "jack". It took three weeks, though, to move the church. There were no paved roads back then and the church got stuck in the muddy road for several days only a half block away from where it was supposed to be set.

The number of people belonging to the Methodist Church kept decreasing until the church eventually had to close. In 1906, the building became Frieden's Evangelical Church (later called Peace United Church). During this time, brick walls were added to the outside of the building. In 1923, members of Frieden's Church moved to a new church building leaving the Old Methodist Church building empty. Since then the Old Methodist Church has had several owners and businesses, including doctors, government offices, and apartments. Kristi's Hair & Tanning Salon and Cedar St. Suites are now located in this building.



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PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

In 1905, Frieden's Evangelical Church was formed. Friedens means 'peace' in German, so the name of the church was later changed to Peace Church.



Members of Peace United Church of Christ first met in the Old Methodist Church building. In 1923, a new church was built which is still being used today.



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SCHMIDT BUILDING



The three-story stone building was built in 1855 on a corner of Main Street across from the flour mill. Henry Carter opened a [mercantile store](#) in this new building.

The two-story stone building next to Carter's store was built in 1859. Bartley Whitney opened a [hardware store](#) in this building. In 1894, a [pharmacy](#) run by the Becker brothers took the place of the hardware store. This building has had several owners but has remained a pharmacy throughout the years. Today it is Moser's Pharmacy.

The three-story building held several different businesses until 1960 when George W. Schmidt, who owned the nearby pharmacy, bought the building to make his pharmacy larger.

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ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

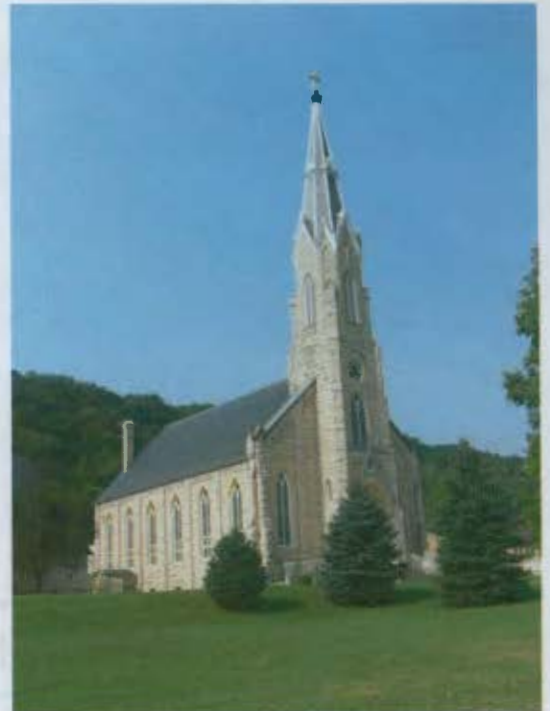


Missionary priests began coming to the Elkader area in the 1840's even before Elkader became an official town. Church services took place in a log cabin that was located where the Elkader Post Office sits today. In 1856, the first priest named Reverend Peter McGinnis moved to Elkader and started plans to build a limestone church just down the road from the log cabin. The limestone would be dug out of the hill behind the church. The limestone church was finished in 1858. But the church members had to stand or kneel on the dirt floor because the inside of the church was not done at that time. Three large bells were added to the church in 1876.

By 1897, the number of church members had increased so much that their church had become too small. It was decided that a larger church needed to be built. Thomas



Byrnes, who built the Keystone Bridge and the Bayless Hotel, was hired to build a new St. Joseph Church. Again, limestone was used for the walls of the new church. The larger church was completed in 1898. The older smaller church became the parish hall.



SOUTH WORTH

COOPERATION

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HISTORY OF ELKADER, IOWA... For Kids

ELKADER TODAY



Elkader River Walk



Shopping in Elkader



Elkader City Park



Elkader Cinema

Population: 1,465

Number of Homes: 693

Number of Businesses: 170+

Medical Care: [Central Community Hospital](#)
[Elkader Medical Associates](#)

Education: [Central Community School](#)
[Keystone Area Education Agency](#)

Library: [Elkader Public Library](#)

Museums: [Carter House Museum](#)
[George Maier Rural Heritage Center](#)

Parks and Campgrounds: Elkader City Park and Campgrounds
Mascara Park
Triangle Park
Turkey River Park
[Deer Run Resort](#)

Things to do:

- Take a stroll on the river walk
- Canoe down the Turkey River
- Shop in antique and specialty shops



Elkader Campgrounds



Pony Hollow Trail



Turkey River

- Swim at the local swimming pool
- Play in the city parks
- Camp in the campgrounds
- Go for a walk, bike ride, or horse ride on the Pony Hollow Trail
- Check out books at the [Elkader Public Library](#)
- Go to the movies at the [Elkader Cinema](#)
- See a show at the [Elkader Opera House](#)
- Get a bite to eat at one of the several eating places
- Fish the Turkey River
- Tour the [Carter House Museum](#), the [George Maier Rural Heritage Center](#), and other historical places
- Go to [Central School](#) music and sporting events
- Golf at the Elkader Golf Course
- Work out at the [Turkey River Athletic Club](#)

Additional Information

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Algeria

A country in northwest Africa on the Mediterranean Sea - [more information](#)

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Asylum

A place for the care of those who are unable to care for themselves and especially for the mentally handicapped

Barbershop

The singing of four-part harmony

Black Hawk War

A conflict in 1832 between the Sauk and Fox tribes (led by Chief Black Hawk) and the white settlers who wanted to settle in Illinois. The Native Americans lost and were forced to surrender the Indian-held lands in the Illinois region - [more information](#)

*Clicking on *more information* will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.

Chief Black Hawk

A Sauk Indian chief who lived from 1767 to 1838 . He fought against the westward movement of the white settlers in Illinois - [more information](#)

*Clicking on *more information* will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.

Cinder Block

A building block made of cement and coal

Civil War

The war in the United States between the Union (northern states) and the Confederacy (southern states) from 1861 to 1865 - [more information](#)

*Clicking on *more information* will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.

Combat

A war, battle, fight

Consciousness

Awake, alert

County Seat

A town that is the seat (location) for county government offices

Courthouse	A building in which courts of law are held or county offices are located
Dam	A barrier wall to slow or shift the flow of water built across a stream or river
Decoration Day	A holiday that falls on the last Monday in May; honors those who died in war
Depot	A building for railroad passengers and goods next to railroad tracks
Fire-Proof	Not easy to burn, made safe against fire
Flour Mill	A building with machinery that grinds grain into flour (another example of a flour mill is the historic <u>Motor Mill</u> near Elkader)
Folktale	A story told by word of mouth and passed down through the generations
Foundation	A base on which a building sits
Fox Tribe	A Native American people who used to live in parts from Michigan through Iowa. Now live mainly in Iowa - <u>more information</u> <small>*Clicking on <i>more information</i> will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.</small>
General Store	A store that sells a wide variety of merchandise, such as clothing, food, or hardware
Grade School	An elementary school; a school that includes the first six or the first eight grades
Hardware Store	A store that sells metalware, such as tools, locks, hinges, and nails
Installation	To put in place; set up for use or service

Jesse James	Fought as a Confederate soldier in the Civil War and later led a band of outlaws that robbed trains and banks until he was murdered in 1882 by a member of his own gang - more information *Clicking on <i>more information</i> will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.
Junior College	A school that offers two years of studies after high school
Keelboat	A river boat with a shallow bottom and no sails. Used to carry freight. Moved by rowing or towing - see picture
Keystone	A wedge-shaped stone at the top of the arch that locks its parts together - more information *Clicking on <i>more information</i> will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.
Lead Mines	Mines containing lead ore - more information *Clicking on <i>more information</i> will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.
Limestone	A rock that is formed chiefly from animal remains (as shells or coral) and consists mainly of calcium carbonate
Mercantile	A store that sells a wide variety of merchandise, such as clothing, food, or hardware
Missionary	A person sent to spread a religious faith or to engage in charitable work with religious support
Parlor	A room in a home, hotel, or club used for visiting with guests
Parsonage	A house provided by a church for its pastor
Pharmacy	A store where medicines are sold
Poor House	A place maintained at public expense to house needy or dependent persons
Pub	A bar or tavern

Public Address System	An electronic speaker system used to communicate from room to room
Quarry	An open pit used for digging out building stone, slate, or limestone
Reclaim	To claim or demand the return of something
Renovated	To make like new again
Saloon	A bar or tavern
Sac Tribe	<p>A Native American people who used to live in parts of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa. Now live mainly in Oklahoma - more information</p> <p><small>*Clicking on <i>more information</i> will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.</small></p>
Senator	A member of a senate (a government group)
Sioux Tribe	<p>A Native American people, also known as the Dakota who used to live in the northern Great Plains from Minnesota to Montana. Now live mainly in North Dakota and South Dakota - more information</p> <p><small>*Clicking on <i>more information</i> will take you to a different web site. To return to this web site, click on your browser's Back button.</small></p>
Union Army	The northern army during the American Civil War in the 1800's
Vaudeville Show	A show made up of a variety of songs, dances, and comic acts
Waterworks	A system of reservoirs, pumps, and pipes for supplying water to a city or town

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CONNOISSEUR

ULB BOSTON

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Can you guess what these buildings are today?

1.



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What am I today?



COLLECTION

2.



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What am I today?

3.



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What am I today?

4.



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What am I today?

5.



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What am I today?

COLLECTED
100% cotton fiber

6.



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What am I today?

7.



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What am I today?



8.



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What am I today?

9.



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What am I today?

10.



What am I today?

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11.



What am I today?

12.

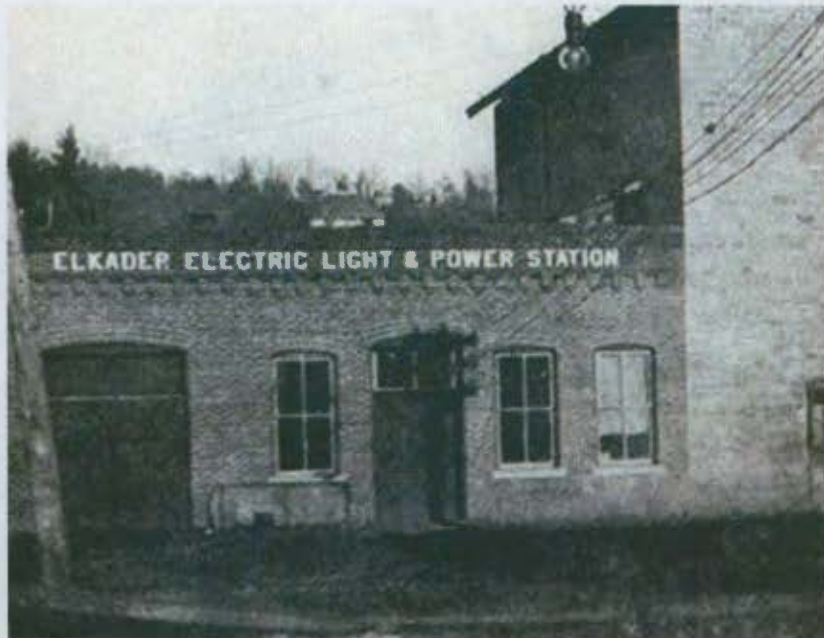


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13.



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What am I today?



14.



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What am I today?



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SOUTH WORTH
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LET'S GO DOWNTOWN

Can you guess what order the following pictures of Elkader's downtown should be in from the earliest to the most recent years? Can you guess what years the pictures were taken?

A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.



Answers!

←
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CULTURE

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