

2010

## Hull Iowa: Yesterday and Today

Lisa Jansma  
*University of Northern Iowa*

*Let us know how access to this document benefits you*

Copyright ©2010 Lisa Jansma

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>

---

### Recommended Citation

Jansma, Lisa, "Hull Iowa: Yesterday and Today" (2010). *Graduate Research Papers*. 3163.  
<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/3163>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uni.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uni.edu).

**Offensive Materials Statement:** Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

---

## Hull Iowa: Yesterday and Today

### Find Additional Related Research in UNI ScholarWorks

To find related research in UNI ScholarWorks, go to the collection of [School Library Studies Graduate Research Papers](#) written by students in the [Division of School Library Studies](#), Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, at the University of Northern Iowa.

Hull, Iowa: Yesterday and Today

This Graduate Research Project

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Division of School Library Media Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Northern Iowa

by

Lisa Jansma

December, 2010

This Project by: Lisa Jansma

Titled: Hull, Iowa; Yesterday and Today

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts.

Karla Krueger

12/16/2010  
Date Approved

[Signature]  
Graduate Faculty Reader

Jean Donham

12/16/2010  
Date Approved

[Signature]  
Graduate Faculty Reader

Jill Uhlenberg

12-17-10  
Date Approved

[Signature]  
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....                   | 1  |
| Local History in the Classroom .....            | 1  |
| Hull, Iowa Brief History .....                  | 6  |
| Problem Statement .....                         | 8  |
| Purpose Statement.....                          | 8  |
| Research Questions.....                         | 8  |
| Assumptions.....                                | 8  |
| Limitations .....                               | 8  |
| CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....           | 10 |
| History in Elementary Classroom .....           | 10 |
| Literature-based History .....                  | 15 |
| Text Structures .....                           | 18 |
| Summary .....                                   | 19 |
| CHAPTER 3. PROCEDURES .....                     | 21 |
| Description of Project .....                    | 21 |
| Storyboard.....                                 | 21 |
| Procedures.....                                 | 22 |
| CHAPTER 4. THE PROJECT.....                     | 25 |
| CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 26 |
| Research Question 1.....                        | 26 |
| Research Question 2.....                        | 28 |
| Research Question 3.....                        | 28 |

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| Conclusions.....                        | 29 |
| Recommendations for Further Study ..... | 29 |
| REFERENCES.....                         | 31 |
| APPENDIX A: SAMPLE BOOK PAGE .....      | 32 |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

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)

#### *Local History in the Classroom*

Experts agree that local history is the building block for the understanding of national and world history. Students who make this connection are better able to understand and appreciate the history of the world around them (Bicouvaris, 1994; Danker, 2003; Fredericks, 2000; Schwartz, 2002).

Local history is integral to the elementary history curriculum. It allows students to make connections between their local history and the world. "Teachers who use family and local history projects enhance the development of classroom community and urge students to explore the world around them" (Schwartz, 2002, pp. 57-58). These connections make history more applicable for students. It allows students to understand their place in the world.

Bicouvaris (1994) played an important role in the writing of the national history standards. In her article, she discusses the process used to make the standards we have today. She began with the 1892 appointment of a Committee of Ten by the National Education Association to examine the entire high school experience. This committee recommended that every student take two to four years of history in high school whether they are going to college or not. In 1991, Lynne V. Cheney pressed for national goals

and standards to be put in place. A committee was established and several meetings took place to develop K-12 History standards. Charlotte Crabtree, Diane Ravitch, Mary V. Bicuvaris, and Gary Nash were a few of the members of this committee.

According to Danker (2003), the study of local history can help students master topics like U.S. history: “Students may be aided in their understanding and retention of the major themes in American history by attaching them to local individuals or events that contributed to or were affected by their unfolding (Danker, 2003, p. 113). “History happens at home, as well as in distant and unfamiliar places” (Danker, 2003, p. 115). The local community is a valuable resource to history education. Local history relies on primary sources. It helps prepare students for standardized tests, but we need to do this in ways that are effective. Students are able to make sense of “democracy, nationalism, equality, and diversity when they can be related to locales or events with which we are already familiar” (Danker, 2003, p. 112). Teachers may take students on local field trips and find sources through school records, gravestones, historical markers, buildings, photographs, oral histories, and maps.

Schwartz (2002) states that social studies instruction should start by introducing more current concepts of self and community in early grades and expand to distant concepts of the nation and world in upper grades. She found that early educators agreed with this theory. “Early twentieth century educators like John Dewey and Lucy Sprague argued that it was necessary to connect students to their world by having them look at their familiar surroundings” (Schwartz, 2002, p. 57). The National Endowment for the Humanities’ We the People funds many projects to increase the availability of resources



through preservation. They preserve local books, newspapers, manuscripts, and audio and visual material (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2006).

National social studies standards require students to learn about local history. The K-4 standards are the foundation for what will be learned in the grades to come. Local history studies can help students make connections to the history of their state, country and world. The National Standards for history state that students need to study their local history to make that connection. One way to study local history is through primary sources. This gives students a real life connection to the history they are studying. The following is an excerpt of standards from Kendall, Rode, and Snyder's (2004) *Exemplary history benchmarks among the seven states in the Central Region*:

#### Historical Understanding

##### Grades K-12

Standard 1. Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns

- Knows how to construct and interpret time lines of key events, people, and periods in one's life and in history

Standard 2. Understands the historical perspective

- Knows research strategies, methods, and sources used to obtain and interpret historical data (e.g., artifacts; archeological studies; literature research; primary sources; personal interviews; reference documents such as atlases, electronic sources, dictionaries, newspapers, and databases)
- Interprets different types of primary and secondary sources (e.g., maps, photos, oral histories, newspapers, letters, speeches, photographs, artifacts, diaries, eyewitness accounts)
- Knows how to evaluate historical sources and interpretations (e.g., in terms of credibility, purpose, perspective, bias, and authenticity; relevant v. irrelevant information; verifiable from unverifiable information; fact v. interpretation)

##### Grades K-4

Standard 1. Understands the history of local community and how communities in North America varied long ago

- Understands changes in land use and economic activities in the local community since its founding (e.g., differences in rural, urban, and suburban communities; the impact of past economic systems on the present; the connection between the locality and the larger world geographically and economically; land use changes, including industry, agriculture, housing, mining, and public use)

Standard 2. Understands the people, events, problems, and ideas that were significant in creating the history of the state

- Understands geographic, economic, religious, and political reasons early explorers, settlers, and immigrants came to the state or region, what their lives were like, and their experiences

Standard 3. Understands family life now and in the past, and family life in various places long ago

- Understands family life today and how it compares with family life in the recent past and family life long ago (e.g., daily life, transportation, occupations, generational differences) (pp. 7-10)

In some communities, resources are easily found at the local public library or city hall.

But most of these sources are not at the students' level.

The National Center for History in Schools (NCHS, n.d.) “founded in 1988 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a nationally known organization that has engaged the talents of scores of classroom teachers and provided history educators across the nation with historical resources and teaching strategies” (p. 1). This program was first envisioned by former President George H. Bush and several state governors to create a standard in history education. Many educators wondered if a national standard was possible in such a changing country, and questioned whether there would be a good representation of the history of Americans that also incorporated their racial, religious, ethnic, and national backgrounds. The national standards also suggest that “a literature-centered approach makes history appealing” (p. 1). Literature is “used to take children into adventurous and deeply engaging excursions through a variety of

historical eras and cultures” (p. 1). These standards are a revision of the original 1996 standards and more than 30 states have developed state standards based on those developed by the NCHS.

In addition to using local history, Fredericks (2000) believes that incorporating books other than textbooks into the elementary social studies curriculum gives students more of an opportunity for learning far beyond just the facts and figures of the general social studies class. “New worlds of discovery and exploration open up for students through the magic of literature; these worlds expand the curriculum and enlarge students’ appreciation of their environment and their place in it” (p. 6). Fredericks also argues that using literature in history education allows students to use any of the eight human intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Musical-Rhythmic, Visual-Spatial, Body-Kinesthetic, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Naturalist Intelligences. By using literature-based teaching techniques, students are given a balanced approach to social studies learning. Literature-based learning encourages students to learn history in a more beneficial way. Students have the choice of what and how they learn. “Literature-based instruction not only offers students unique opportunities to process and practice hands-on, minds-on social studies, but also provides teachers with integrative strategies and activities that enhance and promote social studies concepts in all curricular areas.” (Fredericks, 2000, p. 25)

The Iowa History Unit at Boyden-Hull Community School begins with the study of prehistoric times and progresses chronologically to the 1980’s. The teachers at Boyden-Hull Elementary base some of the curriculum on the book “Hawkeye Adventure” by Bernice Reida, and Ann Irwin published by Graphic Publishing Company

in Lake Mills, Iowa in 1982. This narrative nonfiction book has been used by the school since 1986. The curriculum covers explorers like Lewis and Clark, Dubuque, and Pike, as well as events like the Spirit Lake Massacre and other Indian events throughout the state. As a part of the unit, each student researches a famous Iowan. The final project is a report with a tri-fold board display and power point presentation. The classes end their study of Iowa with the annual fieldtrip. This is a trip from northwest Iowa to Des Moines. Some of the sites they see are the West Bend Grotto, Living History Farms, the Capital Building, and Iowa's Hall of Pride. The unit varies a little every year depending on time available.

### ***Hull, Iowa Brief History***

Hull was founded in 1873 with the name Pattersonville. Pattersonville was named after John G. Patterson, a right-of-way agent for the Milwaukee Railroad. He was killed in 1878 when a boxcar left the tracks and the railroad ties inside fell on him (Nieuwenhuis, 1983). "On April 15, 1886, the County Board of Supervisors legally changed the name of Pattersonville to Hull" (*Hull Iowa centennial*, 1973, p. 7). The reason for the change was because there was already a Pattersonville, Iowa in Madison County. "Hull was chosen in honor of J.A.T. Hull, congressman from the Seventh District" (p. 7).

This community has grown steadily. The census in 1880 stated that Pattersonville had a population of 173 people. City-Data.com (2008) stated that Hull had a population of 1960 people in 2000 and estimated that the town would exceed 2041 people by 2006. Hull's history is currently preserved in several different formats: photo albums, microfilm, bound books and digitally online at

[www.siouxcounty.newspaper.archives.com](http://www.siouxcounty.newspaper.archives.com). The “Hull Iowa Centennial” book of 1973 contains many useful facts. The pages of the Hull Centennial book are mostly text and would not appeal to children. There is no table of contents or index to help locate the information in the book. The book is divided into sections: beginning history, family album, business highlights from the past, churches, schools, city government, business and industry, and organizations. The pictures are interesting, but there are a lot of words and the reading level is too high for elementary. The newspaper archives website has digital copies of the *Sioux County Index Reporter* dating from 1913-1999. There are about 440 entries that have 6 to 78 pages each. The copies are difficult to read and take a long time to load. There is a search box, but the searcher would need to know what specific subject they would like to search for and ideally approximate dates. Overall, the search process can be very time consuming and difficult. The researcher has searched for a newer medium for the history of Hull and has not found one. There is not a newer book or website that would fulfill the need for a Hull, Iowa history book for the upper elementary. The current “Hull, Iowa Centennial” book has too much concentrated information for elementary students to try and get through. The forward of the book credits the contents to records, interviews and recollections of many individuals in the community (*Hull, Iowa centennial, 1973*).

Hull has a very rich history that starts with the coming of the railroad. In 1873 Hull was established as Pattersonville and flourished because of the resources brought into town by the railroad. Many local businesses are no longer operating, but students should know what these businesses were and how they made the town thrive and grow to its current status.

***Problem Statement***

There is a need to preserve stories and photographs of Hull, Iowa in a format accessible and interesting to upper elementary students.

***Purpose Statement***

The purpose of this research project was to teach the history of Hull, Iowa through an informational book for the elementary students. The researcher created a history book of Hull, Iowa that will be used to supplement the upper elementary Iowa History Unit at the Boyden-Hull Elementary School and others in the surrounding area.

***Research Questions***

1. What important places in Hull should be included in an informational book for upper elementary?
2. What is the best way to organize the information and illustrations?
3. In what ways will this book be incorporated into the existing curriculum?

***Assumptions***

This project assumes that the researcher will be able to find historical stories and photographs. Many of these resources will be acquired from the Hull Public Library, the City of Hull, the *Sioux County Index Reporter*, and members of the community. The researcher assumes that the teachers at Boyden-Hull would want to use this book in conjunction with their current Iowa History curriculum and that in doing so, students would be motivated to do more research into local history.

***Limitations***

The project is limited to the small town of Hull, Iowa and its resources. Hull has newspapers dating back to the start of the community in 1873 to the present day. The project will be designed for elementary students interested in the history of Hull.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this project is to create an illustrated information book to supplement the Boyden-Hull upper elementary Iowa History Unit. This book describes the local history of Hull at the elementary level. The following is a review of research and literature that focuses on three major areas: the importance of history in the classroom, the advantages of teaching literature-based history, and a brief look at the history of Hull, Iowa.

#### *History in the Elementary Classroom*

The Iowa Core Curriculum for Social Studies states that students in the middle elementary grades need to have an understanding of local history. Essential Concept/Skill #4 states:

**Understand the role of individuals and groups within a society as promoters of change or the status quo.**

- Understand roles of important individuals and groups in technological and scientific fields.
- Understand that specific individuals had a great impact on history.
- Understand the people, events, problems, and ideas that were significant in creating the history of their state.
- Understand how democratic values have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols.

Kinderknecht (2010) created a traveling truck filled with primary and secondary resources organized into eight units with lesson plans. Her purpose was to develop this trunk to be used in the third grade social studies unit about the community of Sheldon in



Sheldon Iowa. She found that there were no resources available at the appropriate level. Her first question was what to include in the trunk. She had to determine what limitations needed to be used. She decided to focus on specific time periods and events. She used resources from the local Prairie Queen Museum and connected the items in the trunk to the museum for future visits. She also had to adjust the reading levels to make them more appropriate for third graders. Her second question dealt with what primary sources to use.

Kinderknecht (2010) chose sources which best correlated with the units that were to be taught. She asked the local Sheldon Historical Society for advice on what objects should be included. Her last question was if the hands-on activities of the trunk met the learning need of the students and the instructional needs of the teachers. She created eight units to meet the different learning styles of the students. Some of these activities included the following: “the large Sheldon floor map; the agriculture and industry objects; the family life antique objects; the fact cards for government and city services, and the videotaped school oral history interview” (p. 45). She created the eight units independently. Teachers can use them all or pick and choose which ones they would like to use. They were also able to adapt each unit their own time frame. She also provided teachers with three different options for final projects. She had the third grade teachers fill out a survey to see if the teachers felt that the materials provided met their needs. She found that the teachers were excited to use the trunk and that they thought it would fit the needs of the local history unit. She concluded that “social studies comes alive and becomes more than just words in a books when hands-on experiences are a part of the

learning” (p. 46). She believes that her traveling trunk will meet the needs of a grade appropriate resource for the local Sheldon community unit.

Healy (2008) created a web site of her local town of Elkader. This site was very easy to navigate and would be very student friendly. She started with where the town is on a map and then went into the history. She started in the 1830s when the town began and continued up through today, which would be 2008. She also included interesting facts and folklore that students may find interesting. There were also two activities that students could do. The first was “What is it now” where the students could guess what historical place in the picture is in Elkader today. The second game, “Let’s go downtown” is a chronological depiction of downtown, where they needed to guess the correct order. The site was very user friendly with simple language and great pictures for students. After Healy created her site, she had it reviewed by teachers, students, and local history authorities for accuracy and content. Students were especially excited to learn more about their community history. Healy established that there was not any other historical information like this for elementary students at their level. By introducing students to their local history, teachers give them the ability to link their own history to that of the world around them. Healy also determined that students are able to understand history and “think historically” (p. 19). She also found that using pictures better conveys the importance of historical events. By making her web site, Healy 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” (p. 41).

Kohlmeier (2005) researched how students use historical knowledge. This qualitative study started with a student asking the typical question “Why do we have to know this stuff?” (p. 499). Kohlmeier asked his students to respond and was disappointed with their responses. He analyzed how to get students “to see history as relevant to their futures in the same way they saw science and math” as relevant (p. 500). He devised a new lesson format to see if students could think historically through three characteristics: historical knowledge, historical significance, and historical empathy (p. 501). He selected ten students as his test group. They were a cross-sectional representation of the class of fifty-two 9<sup>th</sup> graders in his world history class in the spring of 2001.

Kohlmeier devised a three step system to test his theory. Students were given an assignment of reading three portrayals of women in different eras. For each they had to create a reading web, give a Socratic seminar, and write a historical narrative demonstrating the attempts to understand historical thinking. Each of these activities was completed with the teacher’s instruction and support for all three readings. He used the Grounded Theory approach to analyze the students’ writing samples. The students improved with each consecutive work. Kohlmeier concluded that using this teaching method helped students understand the challenges in writing history and gained a new appreciation for the interpretive nature of history. Students saw that events in history impacted people differently. Lastly, the research changed the students’ view of what a historian does as more real.

Fertig (2005) researched how elementary students are taught history. He found that the way students are being taught lead them to believe that history is a predetermined sequence of events instead of requiring interpretation of cause and effect. Fertig (2005)

states “Elementary students can learn how to take an interpretive approach to learning history so that they can construct knowledge in ways that provide a meaningful context for understanding present experience” (p. 2). Students decipher the meaning of the past through their present realities. He found that students find history instruction as memorization of famous people and events, but this perception doesn’t exist before fourth grade because students have not been exposed to very much formal history instruction. When fourth graders were asked how they think people learn about the past, they responded that they probably: use books, get it from other people, by looking at old things, and going to museums. This shows that they have not formed the memorization conception of learning history. Students learn better when they ask the following questions and find their answers to learn about the events of history: Why did the event occur and how do events relate to each other? Fertig concluded that students should view history as “a disciplined way of thinking about the past that requires interpretation” (p. 6).

Schwartz (2002) discussed the impact of early educators on current teaching practices. Those early educators saw the importance of teaching local history. Connections can be made to the rest of the social studies curriculum. Schwartz examined the Expanding Environments curriculum that is attributed to the mid-twentieth century work of Paul Hanna. Schwartz aligns her work with other advocates of curriculum theory such as John Dewey and Lucy Sprague Mitchell and current theorist Gail Hickey. “Hickey found that elementary teachers who use family and local history projects enhance the development of classroom community” (p. 57). Schwartz stated that “instead of beginning in the remote past or a faraway place, students immersed themselves in their own surroundings” (p. 58). This kind of teaching is “considered more

relevant, useful, and practical for an American audience” (p. 58). Schwartz established that “histories, geography texts, and readers often blurred time periods by connecting past events to present-day occasions” (p. 60). Schwartz also found that exposing students to their personal and local history helped them connect to their past as well as their present. Schwartz concluded that this made history more relevant and meaningful to students and helped them find their place in society.

Ravitch and Finn (1987) conducted a survey of eleventh-graders for three reasons. First, they were trying to acquire some “reliable national information about the present condition of basic knowledge” (p. 23), the second was to provide a baseline for future tests, and third to fill in some gaps in current knowledge about the teaching of history and literature in the high schools. They surveyed almost 7900 eleventh grade students. The results were very grim. Nearly all of the questions on the history assessment were taken from American history. On average, less than 55% of the attempted questions were answered correctly, and only about 11% of the questions were answered correctly by 80% of the students. A startling “78.4% of ‘the students’ were enrolled in U.S. history at the time they took the assessment” (p. 46). Almost all of the remaining students had taken U.S. history in the past two years. Because of these findings, Ravitch and Finn suggest that history should be studied in the early elementary grades. They also recommend that these early grades do so by studying family history and local histories (p. 206)

### ***Literature-based History***

Gensicke (1993), author of *I is for Iowa*, based her research on the need for history in the elementary school curriculum as stated in the code of Iowa education. She also maintained that Iowa had an insufficient amount of children’s books on the state of

Iowa. Gensicke also stated that there was “little available in print form to assist the early childhood or primary teacher with historical instruction about the state of Iowa” (p. 4).

Gensicke articulated that “The Iowa alphabet book places primary focus on introducing historical concepts. The writer hopes it will serve as an important tool to assist the needs and interests of the children. The book will help any child who reads or hears it, or looks at its pictures, to understand that Iowa’s past was different from today, yet people still had hopes and dreams, and fear and problems.” (p. 3) She found that by studying history, student can see that they are not “alone in making the human journey” (p. 10).

Hackett (2004) reviewed the need for a picture book to accompany the Des Moines Schools’ third grade local history unit. She determined that there were no age-appropriate books to supplement this unit. Hackett looked at the sites covered in the Des Moines unit and incorporated them into her list of places to cover in her field trip picture book. Her son, Kel, drew himself as a third grade student to guide the reader through the places covered in the book. Through the use of digital pictures and text, Hackett produced the book “Adventures with Kel in Des Moines.” She determined that this book would enhance the local third grade unit for students and staff. She envisioned her book being used in two ways. The first option was to publish the book so that each classroom and the library would have a copy. This would allow the staff and students to refer to it before, after, or in lieu of the actual field trip. The second option was to have the book published in a consumable format that could be given to every third grade student in the district. Des Moines is the state capital, so she also envisioned that students outside the community could benefit from this book.

Afflerbach and VanSledright (2001) conducted a comparison of history textbooks. One was a traditional textbook and the other was a textbook with embedded primary sources. They were trying to see if students understood the embedded primary sources. There were two foci for the study. “First, we focus on the challenges that an innovative history chapter with embedded texts presents to middle-grade students and the strategies and stances that student readers use in relation to these challenges. A second focus of this study was the examination of the nature of students’ historical thinking and its relationship to how students read history” (p. 697). Students were chosen from teacher recommendations of average readers. They also reflected the ethnic diversity of the school. The participants chosen were two African American females, two Caucasian females, one Asian American female, one Caucasian male, and one African American male. Students were asked about their reading habits, interest and experiences. Students were not given any formal instruction about imbedded texts and primary sources in any of their formal schooling. Several different responses were given. Few were able to understand the embedded text because of contextual difficulties. The use of older vocabulary (like “hath”) made it difficult to understand. One of the embedded texts was a poem that most found too confusing. Although students were challenged with the embedded text, many were unable to understand the meaning, and in effect they were not found to be helpful in better understanding the lesson. They found that appropriate primary sources need to be used to supplement any history lesson.

Levstik and Barton (1994) stated that by using pictures of the past, students were better able to understand the significance of the history they are reading about. They began research with pictures from the 1740s to the 1960s that they felt were easily

recognizable by adults. They had 90 college age students put them in chronological order to see if they were correct. From their observations, they restricted the list to one grouping on how easy it was for them to be put into order by historical events. Then they moved on to kindergarten through sixth grade students. The students were given pictures one at a time and asked to place them where they thought they would fit in chronological order. As they placed the picture, the students were asked why they placed the pictures where they did, if they know what event it was depicting, what changes they could see from picture to picture, as well as other similar questions.

Levstik and Barton (1994) concluded that students used their own background knowledge to guess where they should place each picture. There were also several students that connected their everyday life to something in the pictures. This proved to them that students made connections based on their own lives and surroundings which made learning more meaningful. Barton also stressed that local history can play a large role in how students understand the past.

### ***Text Structures***

Moss (2004) focused her research on “how teachers can use information trade book retellings to improve student comprehension of expository text structures” (p. 710). She believed that information trade book retellings not only gave students great exposure to expository texts but also the ability to better understand them. She defined retellings as “oral or written postreading recalls during which children relate what they remember from reading or listening to a particular text” (p. 711). Students are encouraged to recall as much of the information as they can. Moss suggested a two-phase method of teaching the retelling process. First, teachers need to model how it is done. Second, students need



to be given the opportunity to practice in small groups or pairs. Moss concluded that “by engaging students in retelling information trade books, teachers can capitalize on students’ enthusiasm for nonfiction literature while providing rich experiences for engagement with nonnarrative texts” (p. 717). Through the use of retelling, students increased their understanding of expository texts.

Saul and Dieckman (2005) addressed two key questions: “Why is there a call for more informational text and what is meant by informational text” (p. 502). They found that teachers preferred to use fiction texts because they assumed that informational texts were too difficult and boring for students. Saul and Dieckman found that this assumption was incorrect and that some students preferred nonfiction reading. Standardized tests are made up of largely informational texts. Saul and Dieckman suggest that educators think these tests would improve if students were exposed to more informational texts. When considering which informational texts to use, Saul and Dieckman suggested looking at content, writing or artistry and design when choosing a book for inspiration or motivation but looking at fluency, comprehension and structure when using them as educational tools. They concluded that we need to “acquaint students with more high-quality informational text” (p. 510). Even young students are able to learn from and enjoy informational texts. They stated that informational texts could be described as narrative, expository, or just nonfiction.

### ***Summary***

The research in this chapter suggests that history education is an important part of every school curriculum throughout the United States. Healy (2008), Bicouvaris (1994), Kohlmeier (2005), and Ravitch and Finn (1987) all agree that teaching local history is the

foundation of all other history. Fertig (2005) suggests that teaching students to use methods other than memorization will help students better understand history and how it relates to themselves. Students develop a personal connection to their world through history education. They learn to appreciate the world around them in the past and present.

The research of Afflerbach and VanSledright (2001), and Levstik and Barton (1996) supported that using literature in history units helps student make the connection to local, U.S. and world history. Literature allows students to discover more than what is learned in text books and connects this knowledge to their world.

Kinderknecht (2010), Gensicke (1993), and Hackett (2004) demonstrated that their local history project could be used to enhance the current curriculum at their schools.

The research of Moss (2004) and Saul (2005) support the need for informational texts. Students are able to better understand informational texts when presented to them in a format that is easier for them to understand and using techniques that aid them with texts that are more difficult.

The researcher proposes to create an informative picture book of Hull, Iowa. This book will be used to supplement the local upper elementary Iowa history unit. There are currently no resources at the elementary level about this community's local history. The research provided shows that the creation of this book would be beneficial to the students studying Iowa history. This book will allow students to explore their local community history at their own level.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PROCEDURES**

There were no age appropriate resources to teach the local history unit to the upper elementary history classes. The purpose of this research project was to write an informational book about Hull, Iowa through pictures and stories that would be accessible to elementary students. The researcher created a history book about Hull, Iowa that will be used to supplement the upper elementary Iowa History Unit at the Boyden-Hull Elementary School and others in the surrounding area. There are other schools in the community such as Hull Christian Elementary and Hull Protestant Reformed School that could also benefit from this book. Hull is a small town of about 2100 people. The town shares a school with the town of Boyden.

#### ***Description of Project***

The purpose of this research project was to teach the history of Hull, Iowa through an informational book for the elementary students. The researcher used a combination of historic newspapers, pictures and the Hull Centennial book from 1973 to find information for this project. It is the hope of the researcher that this book will be used by the students at Boyden-Hull and other interested readers of all ages.

#### ***Storyboard***

Information in this book was organized topically and chronologically into the following four sections: Hull's beginning, churches, schools, and businesses. The *Hull Iowa Centennial* book had many great entries that are not at the appropriate grade level. The researcher used the centennial book as a source for the information to be re-written for the interest and motivation level of most upper elementary students. The text was

written for an upper elementary reading level. A page layout is Appendix A. An illustrated information book was an informative, age appropriate, way to introduce students to the history of Hull.

### ***Procedures***

Lukens (2007) explained how informational books should be written in contrast to fiction. She recommended concentrating on the discovery of facts and concepts and not on storyline and character building as one would in fiction. The curiosity that informational books create can open the door to the wonder of discovery. The organization of an informational book is very important. Information is best organized in sections that are easily understood and in topical order. The facts given should trigger the reader to want more information.

Bluestein (2010) stated that the use of a table of contents, index, and glossary would aid students in better understanding the important topics covered in the book. She stated that it is difficult for students to discern between important facts and unnecessary information without these aids.

Saul and Dieckman (2005) recommended looking at content, writing or artistry and design when choosing a book for inspiration or motivation but looking at fluency, comprehension and structure when using them as educational tools. These thoughts were considered in the preparation of the final project. The researcher made sure the content was age appropriate for the upper elementary level and written in a way that was easy for them to understand. The layout of each page was carefully considered to be appealing to students. The researcher compared the text used to other informational books at the appropriate level. The researcher looked at the Coretta Scott King award winner, *We are*

*the ship: the story of the Negro League Baseball* by Kadir Nelson (2008) as well as several of the American girl Collection books like *Welcome to Felicity's World 1774: Life in colonial America* and *Welcome to Molly's World 1944: Growing up in World War Two America* by Catherine Gourley (1999). The researcher also looked at *One-room School* by Raymond Bial (1999) and *Ultimate Field Trip 4: A week in the 1800s* by Susan E. Goodman (2000). These books were referenced for story line, text structure and reading levels. Saul and Dieckman recommended using text features to engage students in learning. The researcher used the question/answer format at the beginning of each section to get the students thinking and encourage further study.

The title of this collection is *Hull, Iowa: Yesterday and Today*. Each entry was described with who, what, where, and what year. They were placed in chronological order within each section, in an informational format. Black and white photographs were used for pictures from long ago and new color pictures were taken with a digital camera by the researcher's brother and sister-in-law to portray current sites.

The researcher looked at several different websites to create the final book. After testing these sites, Shutterfly.com was chosen. This site allowed the researcher to build the pages with many different layouts. There were several backgrounds and cover designs to choose from. The cost was also considered, the researcher determined this site was affordable. Pictures were easily downloaded and inserted into the pages, and text boxes are provided in acceptable places. There are many different page layouts from which to choose. Each page may have as many pictures on a page as the researcher desired.

After sufficient information had been collected, the researcher sorted it to select what should be included in the book. The researcher based her selection on the information available and the significance of the information in Hull's history. The researcher asked the advice of local teachers and community members for their ideas and thoughts of significant events.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE PROJECT**

See separate book titled,

*Hull, Iowa: Yesterday and Today*

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important for children to feel a sense of belonging and understanding they can get from knowing their local history. Through the use of a local history book, students will be able to learn about their local history and begin their adventure into history.

The purpose of this research project was to create an informational book on the history of Hull, Iowa for the elementary students. The researcher created this book with the intent that it be used to supplement the upper elementary Iowa History Unit at the Boyden-Hull Elementary School and others in the surrounding area.

The researcher looked at the different resources available for the history of Hull, Iowa and found that there was not anything available at the elementary level. The 100 year centennial book from 1973 was the last history written in book form. This book is targeted for adults and does not capture the interest and attention of young students. When approached, the teacher of the local history unit was interested in having a book that would be intended for their students. Healy (2008), Bicouvaris (1994), Kohlmeier (2005), and Ravitch and Finn (1987) all agree that teaching local history is the foundation of all other history.

#### **Research Question 1**

The first question was what important places in Hull should be included in an informational book for upper elementary. Through the use of the 1973 centennial book and the local archives in the public library, specific places were chosen to be represented



in the book. The researcher wanted to keep the book under 35 pages, it was decided that it would only include a brief local history and a history of the local churches, schools, and still-existing businesses. These places are the foundation of the community. By using the places still existing in the community, students can make a stronger connection to the past. They will feel like they can touch a part of history. It would be very difficult to include everything in the 137 years of Hull history. This book will also be an update of the existing book from 1973 with ties to the current local community. Making sure that the reading level was appropriate for the intended readers was also difficult. The researcher looked at other informational texts at the appropriate grade level and compared the texts. According to Moss (2004), “teachers must choose books that don’t overwhelm children with difficult technical vocabulary and numerous complex concepts” (p. 712).

The author also looked into what other aspects an informational book should include. Bluestein (2010) recommends that they include a table of contents and index. She says that it can focus students on “what concepts the text will cover” (p. 599). The researcher read though the 1973 Hull history book and decided what students might like to know and subjects that would peek their interest and make them want to find out more. The text is intended to make the students question why things happened and make them want to do more research into the subject. The text chronicled changing from speaking Dutch to English. The community of Hull is predominantly Dutch descendants. The settlers moved here and created a community together and this was big controversy over giving up the Dutch language and speaking only English. The settlers here didn’t see Dutch as a problem because they all spoke it.

## **Research Question 2**

The second research question was about the best way to organize the information and illustrations. The researcher looked to Bluestein (2010) for suggestions on making the book more student-friendly. The researcher included questions at the beginning of each section to pique interest and encourage more questions as they read. Saul and Dieckman (2005) recommended using question/answer structure to engage students to want to learn more. The researcher also chose to start with a brief history of the town itself. The subsequent sections of the churches, schools, and businesses were organized chronologically within each section. These sections were chosen because students see them in the community and have a connection with them. This will help the reader better understand the order each began in the community. Bluestein (2010) states that “Setting the context with a focus on time and place frames an instructional focus on determining the important events of a person’s life. Often, a timeline can focus this discussion, or these events can be gleaned as students read the text” (p. 598).

## **Research Question 3**

The last research question asked in what ways will this book be incorporated into the existing curriculum. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Boyden-Hull Elementary School will use this book to supplement the current Iowa history unit by inserting our local history into the timeline of events in the unit. As the class covers the late 1800s they will be able to use this book to learn how their local community was started and how it has changed to what we have today. Due to time constraints, the teacher will not be able to devote much time to a whole local unit, but with this book will be able to introduce the local history without having to devote too much time into research and classroom time. By

starting with a brief local history, students will be able to make connections between the local history and Iowa history. It is the researcher hope that by making local history more accessible, the classroom teacher may spend a little more time with this before starting the Iowa history unit. The research has included a list of web pages after the index for the places that have them. The author considered the facts that were included concluded that they would be of interest to students and lead them to want to learn more about the community's history.

### **Conclusions**

The book, "Hull, Iowa: Yesterday and Today" provides a brief overview of Hull history. The researcher believes that the book will enable the students better understand the history of the community where they live. Through local history, students will be able to make connections from local to the world. Local history is the stepping stone to the world. "Elementary students can learn how to take an interpretive approach to learning history so that they can construct knowledge in ways that provide a meaningful context for understanding present experience" (Fertig,2005. p. 2). The researcher believes that the book's purpose has been met in providing an informational book of the history of Hull, Iowa to be used with the Boyden-Hull Community School's Iowa History Unit.

### **Recommendations for further study**

Many community schools have a local history unit in their curriculum. However, many of the local resources for a community's history are written for adults. By developing a local history book, teachers will be better equipped to teach their

community's history. Students have a better understanding of history if they have a local connection to start from.

Another suggestion for research is to learn what other methods could be used to supplement a local history unit. Research was found that suggests the use of primary sources could be another possibility.

It is the recommendation of the researcher that other communities could use a local history book designed for elementary students. The creation of these books would provide teachers and students with a local resource at the right level. It is also recommended by this researcher that further studies could be completed on different presentation methods for local history information.

## Reference

- Afflerbach, P., & VanSledright, B. (2001). Hath! Doth! What? Middle graders reading innovative history text. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 44(8), 696-707.
- Bicouvaris, M. (1994). Setting national standards for history: A teacher's view. *Journal of Education*, 176(3), 51-61.
- Bluestein, N. (2010). Unlocking text features for determining importance in expository text: A strategy for struggling readers. *Reading Teacher*, 63(7), 597-600. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- City-Data.com (2008). Retrieved February 23, 2008, from <http://www.city-data.com>
- Danker, A. (2003). Multicultural social studies: The local history connection. *Social Studies*, 94(3), 111-117.
- Fertig, G. (2005). Teaching elementary students how to interpret the past. *Social Studies*, 96(1), 2-8. Retrieved from Professional Development Collection database.
- Fredericks, A. (2000). *More social studies through children's literature: An integrated approach*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Gensicke, M. (1993). *I is for Iowa: An alphabet book about Iowa*. Graduate Research Project, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Division of School Library Media Studies, University of Northern Iowa.
- Hackett, G.E. (2004). *Adventures with Kel in Des Moines*. Graduate Research Project, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Division of School Library Media Studies, University of Northern Iowa.
- Healy, N. (2008). *Children's web site: History of Elkader, Iowa*. Graduate Research Project, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Division of School Library Media Studies, University of Northern Iowa.
- Hull Iowa Centennial (1973).
- Iowa Department of Education. (n.d.). History Grades 3-5. In *Iowa Core Curriculum*. Retrieved October 8, 2010, from <http://www.corecurriculum.iowa.gov/Discipline.aspx?C=Social+Studies&D=History>
- Kendall, J., & Marzano, R.J. (Eds.). (1996). *Content knowledge: A compendium of standards and benchmarks for K-12 education*. Aurora, CO: Midcontinent Regional Education Laboratory

- Kendall, J.S., Rode, L., & Snyder, C. (2004). *Exemplary history benchmarks among the seven states in the Central Region*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Kinderknecht, J. (2010). *Sheldon community history traveling trunk*. Graduate Research Project, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Division of School Library Media Studies, University of Northern Iowa.
- Kohlmeier, J. (2005). The impact of having 9<sup>th</sup> graders “do history”. *The History Teacher*, 38(4), 499-524.
- Levstik, L.S., & Barton, K.C. (1996). "They still use some of their past": Historical salience in elementary children's chronological thinking. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 28(5), 531-576.
- Lukens, R. J. (2007). *A critical handbook of children's literature*. Boston: Pearson.
- Moss, B. (2004, May). Teaching expository text structures through information trade book retellings. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(8), 710-718.
- National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS). (n.d.). Retrieved July 21, 2009, from <http://nchs.ucla.edu/about-catalog.html>
- National Center for History in Schools. (2005). *Developing standards for students in grades K-4: Topical organization*. Retrieved April 28, 2008, from <http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/dev-k-4e.html>
- National Endowment for the Humanities. (2006). *Budget supports NEH core programs and We the People*. Retrieved April 27, 2008, from <http://www.neh.gov/news/archive/2060206.html>
- Nieuwenhuis, G.N. (1983) *Siouxland: A history of Sioux County, Iowa*. Orange City, Iowa: Plum Publishing Incorporated, 143-147.
- Ravitch, D., & Finn, C. E., Jr (1987). *What do 17-year-olds know? A report on the first national assessment of history and literature*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Saul, E. W. & Dieckman D. (2005). Choosing and using information trade books. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(4), 502-513
- Schwartz, S. (2002). Finding the expanding environments: Curriculum in America's first primary schools. *Social Studies*, 93(2), 57-61.

APPENDIX A

Page 8

Page 9

### 1st Christian Reformed Church

The 1st Christian Reformed Church was organized on October 9, 1893 with 23 charter members. In 1894, their first church building was built.



The congregation sang Dutch psalms to the accompaniment of a Veerzinger (someone that sang first so everyone knew how to sing it) until 1912 when a pipe organ was purchased.

### American Reformed Church

The American Reformed Church began on April 19, 1921 with 70 charter members.



These members requested to leave the 1st Reformed Church to create their own because they wanted to have their sermons only in English.



Sample of 2 pages done on Shutterfly.com. Pages will be 8 X 11.