

Iowa Authors on Iowa: A Sesquicentennial Reading List

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In December 1996, Iowans will celebrate 150 years of statehood. These fifty books on Iowa, written by Iowans, include novels, memoirs, and historical studies portraying every part of the state. All of these volumes are on the shelves of the Iowa Authors Collection in the University of Iowa Libraries, a gathering of over 13,000 printed volumes by over 2,000 authors. An Iowa author (for the purpose of the collection) is defined as a writer who was either born in the state or who has lived here for at least twenty years.

Selecting fifty books out of over 13,000 is, of course, a very personal choice and another curator might have quite different preferences. More recent books and volumes still in print have been emphasized. There is a definite Iowa City slant, for a number of the books were published by the University of Iowa Press. Rather than full bibliographic description after each entry, the date of the first edition is indicated in parentheses. Works that are still available for purchase have "In print" at the end of the entry. All of the selections on this sesquicentennial list are readable and worthwhile and serve as interesting introductions to Iowa's heritage.

Richard, Lord Acton and Patricia Nassif Acton, *To Go Free: A Treasury of Iowa's Legal Heritage* (1995). Chronicles of the law in Iowa history. In print.

Bess Streeter Aldrich, *Song of Years* (1939). Novel of pioneer Iowa, 1854-1865, with a setting on the Cedar River in eastern Iowa. In print.

Clarence A. Andrews, *A Literary History of Iowa* (1972). Survey of Iowa's writers. In print.

Douglas Bauer, *Prairie City, Iowa, Three Seasons at Home* (1979). Narrative of small-town life in Iowa in the late 1970s. In print.

Mary Bennett, *An Iowa Album: A Photographic History, 1860-1920* (1990). An illustrated look at the past. In print.

Richard Bissell, *My Life on the Mississippi; or, Why I Am Not Mark Twain* (1973). Days and nights of a boy from Dubuque on the Upper Mississippi in the 1920s.

Black Hawk, *An Autobiography* (1833). Story of the Sauk warrior and the war that bears his name. The Donald Jackson edition, 1955, is recommended. In print.

- Vance Bourjaily, *Now Playing at Canterbury* (1976). Academic novel set in Iowa City in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- Harriet Connor Brown, *Grandmother Brown's Hundred Years, 1827-1927* (1929). Epic of an American woman in the nineteenth century. In print.
- E. Bradford Burns. *Kinship with the Land: Regionalist Thought in Iowa, 1894-1942* (1996). An intellectual and cultural history of Iowa in the early twentieth century with a special focus on Grant Wood and Ruth Suckow. In print.
- Ellis Parker Butler, *Dominie Dean, A Novel* (1917). A fictional account of a minister in Muscatine.
- Paul Corey, *Three Miles Square* (1939). The first volume of a trilogy on a farm family in southwest Iowa in the early twentieth century. *The Road Returns* (1940) and *County Seat* (1941) are the two following volumes.
- Richard Critchfield, *Those Days: An American Album* (1986). The true-to-life story of the Critchfield family in Iowa and North Dakota.
- Josephine Donovan, *Black Soil* (1930). Novel concerning an Irish family farming in northwest Iowa.
- Dayton Duncan, *Out West: An American Journey* (1987). A modern traveler follows Lewis and Clark. In print.
- Dykstra, Robert R., *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (1993). The story of how Iowa law dealt with the issue of African-American equality from 1833 to 1880. In print.
- Paul Engle, *A Lucky American Childhood* (1996). Reminiscences of his boyhood in Cedar Rapids by the late poet and director of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. In print.
- Hamlin Garland, *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917). A classic of life in the rural midwest in the nineteenth century. In print.
- John C. Gerber, *A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa* (1988). Historical views of the University. In print.
- Emily Hawley Gillespie, *"A Secret to be Buried": the Diary and Life of Emily Hawley Gillespie, 1858-1888* (1989). The life of a farm wife in nineteenth century Iowa. Edited by Judy N. Lensink. In print.
- H. Roger Grant, *Living in the Depot: The Two-Story Railroad Station* (1993). Train depots in American life. In print.
- Stephen Greenleaf, *Fatal Obsession* (1983). A mystery story set in Centerville. In print.
- Carl Hamilton, *In No Time at All* (1974). Memoir of farm life in Iowa in the early part of the century. In print.
- Curtis Harnack, *We Have All Gone Away* (1973). Reminiscences of growing up in northwest Iowa before World War II. In print.
- James Hearst, *Time Like a Furrow, Essays* (1981). Rural life in Iowa by one of Iowa's foremost poets.
- Drake Hokanson, *Reflecting a Prairie Town, A Year in Peterson* (1994). The landscape and rural life around the town of Peterson in Northwest Iowa. In print.
- Donald Dean Jackson, *Voyages of the Steamboat Yellow Stone* (1985). A steamboat on the Missouri River in the early nineteenth century. In print.
- MacKinlay Kantor, *But Look, the Morn; the Story of a Childhood* (1947). Recollection of his boyhood in Webster City by a Pulitzer Prize winning novelist.
- Nile C. Kinnick, *A Hero Perished: the Diary and Selected Letters of Nile Kinnick* (1991). In his own words, the life of Iowa's Heisman trophy winner and Phi Beta Kappa student. Edited by Paul Baender. In print.

- George William McDaniel, *Smith Wildman Brookhart: Iowa's Renegade Republican* (1995). Biography of a controversial U.S. Senator from Iowa in the years 1922-1933. In print.
- Frederick Manfred, *This Is the Year* (1947). Novel about Frisian immigrants farming in far northwest Iowa.
- Thomas J. Morain, *Prairie Grass Roots: An Iowa Small Town in the Early Twentieth Century* (1988). Jefferson, Iowa, by a native son. In print.
- Louise R. Noun, *Journey to Autonomy: a Memoir* (1990). The story of becoming a leader by a Des Moines art collector and civic activist. In print.
- Stow Persons, *The University of Iowa in the Twentieth Century: An Institutional History* (1990). The school's past as seen by a noted historian of ideas. In print.
- Elmer G. Powers, *Years of Struggle, The Farm Diary of Elmer G. Powers, 1931-1936* (1976). Diary from the depression era of an Iowa farmer in Boone County, Iowa. Coedited by H. Roger Grant and L. Edward Purcell. In print.
- Herbert Quick, *Vandemark's Folly* (1922). The first volume of a trilogy of novels set in Iowa in the nineteenth century. *The Hawkeye* (1923) and *The Invisible Woman* (1924) are the two succeeding volumes. In print.
- Cecil A. Reed, *Fly in the Buttermilk, The Life Story of Cecil Reed* (1993). Biography of an African-American from Cedar Rapids who became a government official. In print.
- Ross Santee, *Dog Days* (1955). The small town of Thornburg, Iowa, seen through the eyes of a perceptive boy.
- Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land* (1996). Social and economic history of the Hawkeye state by an Iowa State University faculty member. In print.
- Barbara J. Scot, *Prairie Reunion* (1995). Growing up in Scotch Grove, Iowa, in Jones County near Monticello. In print.
- Jane Smiley, *A Thousand Acres* (1991). Prize-winning novel on farming in Iowa in the 1980s. In print.
- Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (1964). Across Iowa in the nineteenth century, recounted by one of Iowa's paramount writers. In print.
- Phil Stong, *State Fair* (1932). Novel on Iowa's annual exposition. In print.
- Ruth Suckow, *The Folks* (1934). A novel exploring three generations of an Iowa family. In print.
- Mary Swander, *Out of this World, A Woman's Life Among the Amish* (1995). Memoir of a contemporary poet living in rural Iowa. In print.
- Susan Allen Toth, *Blooming: a Small-town Girlhood*. Memoir of growing up in Ames in the 1940s and 1950s. In print.
- Carl Van Vechten, *The Tattooed Countess* (1924). Novel set in Cedar Rapids at the end of the nineteenth century. In print.
- Joseph Frazier Wall, *Iowa: a Bicentennial History* (1978). Short survey of Iowa's past by an eminent historian.
- Margaret Wilson, *The Able McLaughlins* (1923). Novel on Scottish settlers in eastern Iowa. In print.
- Ray A. Young Bear, *Black Eagle Child, the Facepaint Narratives* (1992). A fictionalized autobiography of a Native American writer from the Mesquakie Settlement in the Iowa River valley. In print.