



## Appendix

## A Desire to Dance<sup>1</sup>

My God, yes I need to dance more.  
Not merely tulips, green grass  
and slick ballroom floors.  
But into life, living,  
loving, creating, dancing.

Child, sweet child,  
full of health and vigor,  
where have I lost you?

The John Deere, model MT tractor  
you used to drive to cultivate the corn  
and now the oats.  
Oh dreamer, contemplative one,  
who even at that young age  
appreciated the solitude and patterns  
of the fields and nearby Lizard Creek.

Oh child of summer who knows  
the pungency of farm life,  
the animals, the manure,  
the smell of straw baled and  
stacked in the barn.  
The wild flowers  
beside the gravel road.  
The volunteer tiger lilies  
along the lane to the house.  
The time your mother taught you  
to bounce a ball.  
Yes, the ball, red, white, and blue  
with stars and stripes.  
Bouncing it on the round concrete slab  
that covered the underground coal bin  
next to the house.

Yes, the dance, Dear One,  
the roundness of the ball,  
the roundness of the concrete sphere,  
the circle that encompassed  
you and your mother.

You must dance more.  
It is your life and desire to move  
with the rhythm of that ball,  
the rhythm of the farm,  
the land and the universe.

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1. Helen wrote this poem in 1991 at a writing class at the Angela Center in Santa Rosa, California.

## On Being at Home in the Garden<sup>2</sup>

I enter the garden, searching and yearning,  
homing in on that visceral something that lures me.

The garden is home, sanctuary, embrace and acceptance.  
It connects me to a voice not heard in religions whose steeples  
pierce upward, away from earth, away from home.

The garden is home with no division between sacred and secular.  
It nurtures and sustains, uniting people and nature,  
the past with the present and future.

The garden calls me to that renewing center where I am loved  
and where the spirits of those I love are with me.

The garden reminds me that eternal life has as much to do with  
the quality of life in each grace-given moment  
as it does with unending chronological time.

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2. Poem written by Helen D. Gunderson. Circa 1991.



## Residents and Former Residents of the Road<sup>1</sup>

### I. **Abandoned Farms** (listed by 1995 owner and going east to west down road)

#### A. **The first farm**

South side Section 7, Garfield Township

Owned by Velma Ives who lives on the farm on the highway on the east side of section. Farmed by her daughter's family, the Kathy and Gary Dahls. The Ives family bought the farm in 1983 from the Gunderson family.

1. DAN and Mary Allen
  - a. lived there 1973–1976
  - b. now live in Rolfe but Dan farms for my folks
2. John and Katherine Schurr
  - a. John was a hired hand for the Gundersons 1963–1971.
  - b. 4 children, 3 older ones did not live on road
    - (1) ELAINE IRLBECK, Coon Rapids, farm woman
3. Henry Hank and MARIE BAADE
  - a. Hank was a hired hand for the Gundersons 1960-62
  - b. children
    - (1) Karen Pedersen, Scotts Valley, CA, homemaker
    - (2) David, Fort Dodge, Cenex Land O Lakes
    - (3) Joyce Coburn, Liverpoole, NY, Dictaphone for doctor's office
    - (4) Susan Hundertmark, Rutland, Humboldt Sausage Company in lab
4. Lyman and Arlene George
  - a. tenants 1941–1958 for the Bruce heirs, then for John Gunderson who bought the farm in 1955
  - b. children
    - (1) Willard Bill, Des Moines, deceased 1963 at age of 42
    - (2) LORENE GUSTAFSON, Spirit Lake
    - (3) Ada Marie Colee, Blooming Prairie, MN, deceased
    - (4) BERTHA ELLEN WISEMAN, Mt. Pleasant
    - (5) Norma Jean Groenwold, Rushmore, MN
    - (6) MARJORIE SIMONSON, Des Moines
5. Jim and Carrie DeWolf
  - a. tenants for the Bruce heirs 1920–41
    - (1) ROGER DEWOLF, Eagle Grove, owner livestock equipment business
    - (2) Beverly Wiegert, rural Bradgate, farm woman
    - (3) Phyllis Thompson, Hayfield, MN, farm woman
6. Mary and Robert Hunter, Sr.
  - a. owners 1896–1910
  - b. 6 children: Ronda, William, Albert, Jennie, Clara, and Robert G. (Bobby 1898–1975 produce person and Maytag salesman in Rolfe)

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1. This outline was prepared in 1995. It includes all names that were available through my research; however, it is not an exhaustive listing of the people who have lived along the road. Children are listed from oldest to youngest. Italicized name is nickname person goes by. CAPITALIZED NAME indicates a key contact person for the project. Dates and occupations are roughly accurate.

B.     **The Brinkman farm**  
North side Section 8, Garfield Township  
Owned by California relatives. Farmed by ROBERT BRINKMAN

1.     Floyd and Naomi Page
  - a.     Floyd was a Brinkman hired hand 1947–1955.
  - b.     10 children, youngest did not live on road
    - (1)     LAVONNE HOWLAND, Rolfe, cake and dressmaker
    - (2)     MARLENE LINDEMAN, Dakota City, works in dress shop
    - (3)     Dean, Farnhamville, deceased
    - (4)     Sharon Sutton, St. Louis, American Airlines
    - (5)     Max, Dakota City, Chantland manufacturing
    - (6)     Steve, Fort Dodge, Iowa Illinois Gas and Electricity
    - (7)     Barbara Barb Osterberg, Fort Dodge Becker’s florist shop
    - (8)     Cheryl Geis, Duncomb, deceased
    - (9)     Douglas Doug, Madison, WI
2.     Albert and Hattie Ercelle Peers
  - a.     Albert was a Brinkman hired hand 1928–1932.
  - b.     WANDA HODGELL, rural Gilmore, farm woman
  - c.     Helen Johnson, Webb, deceased
  - d.     Audrey Johnson, Manson
  - e.     Violet Vi Schoon, Arkansas (born in house on farm in 1930)

C.     **The Cornwell farm**  
Northeast corner Section 14, Roosevelt Township  
Owned by Joy Cornwell. Farmed by Paul Howard. Bought by Cornwell family in 1895.

1.     Irving and Velma Cornwell
  - a.     owners 1946–1983
  - b.     Daughter, Joy Cornwell Palmer, Forest City, medical journal librarian

D.     **The farm where the Jordans lived**  
South side, Section 10, Roosevelt Township. Owned by Martha Gunderson Carlson, who lives in Florida. Farmed by Dan and Roger Allen. Bought by Gunderson family in the 1960s.

1.     Russel and Mary Jane Jordan
  - a.     tenants 1951–1958 then they moved to the building site on north side of section until 1975
  - b.     children
    - (1)     Pam Wolfe, Elkhorn, The Woodshop retail store
    - (2)     Judy Marnin, Atlantic, community college administrator
    - (3)     Janet, Red Oak, elementary school teacher
    - (4)     Jeanne Jordan, Boston, MA, video editor
    - (5)     Jim, Atlantic area, quit farming and is going back to school
    - (6)     Jon, Atlantic area, owns a trophy shop
2.     Nels Pederson ?–1950
3.     Walter Gahm

E. **The Shimon farm**

Northeast quarter, Section 15, Roosevelt Township

Owned by Marjorie Shimon of Pocahontas. Farmed by Chuck Wheatley. Bought by Shimon family in 1892.

1. Marshall and Marjorie Otto
  - a. tenants 1948–1963
  - b. 10 children, two youngest did not live on the road
    - (1) Shirley Najjar, Milpitas, CA
    - (2) JUDY LARSON, Anderson, CA
    - (3) Susan Otto, Omaha, NE
    - (4) Kathleen Wassam, Michigan
    - (5) Nona McLeran, Cherokee Village, AK
    - (6) Mark, Omaha, NE
    - (7) Weston, Santa Clara, CA
    - (8) Daniel, Minneapolis Lakeville, MN
2. SAM and Alberta Simpson
  - a. tenants March 1946–March 1949
  - b. 9 children, youngest five did not live on the road
    - (1) Allen, Boston, full-time sergeant in army reserves medical division
    - (2) Paul, dead, killed 25 years ago in motorcycle accident in CA
    - (3) Mavis Forby, Greenville, SC, clerk in a mission thrift store
    - (4) Linda Cordeiro, Des Moines, accountant for Brenton Bank
3. Adolph and Agnes Sefcik
  - a. tenants 1933–1940
  - b. children
    - (1) Albert, rural Pocahontas, farmer
    - (2) DENNIS, Laurens, Roman Catholic priest

F. **The Grant farm**

East half of northwest quarter, Section 15, Roosevelt Township

Owned by Lois Grant of Pocahontas. Farmed by Bob Joens.

Bought by Grant family in 1920.

1. BOB and Marlene Joens 1960
2. Henry and Esther Joens 1952–57 (Bob's uncle and Marjorie Otto's parents)
3. Cap and Addie Grant 1920–52
  - a. Duncan, Pocahontas, former county treasurer, deceased
  - b. DON, Colo, retired ISU engineering professor

G. **The last farm**

Southwest quarter, Section 9, Roosevelt Township

Owned by Mildred Ives of southern California. Farmed by Paul Harrold.

Bought by Ives family in 1954.

1. The Agnes and Harrold Young, Sr.
  - a. Harrold was a hired hand 1957.
  - b. children
    - (1) CHERALELLEN MORGAN, Clear Lake, teacher
    - (2) Joyce Means, Creston, disabled
    - (3) Harrold, Gunnison, CO, service manager in hardware store
2. Les and Opal Allen
  - a. Les was a hired hand 1955-56.
  - b. 7 children, youngest five probably did not live here
    - (1) DAN, Rolfe, farms for my folks
    - (2) ROGER, Pocahontas, farms for my folks
3. Henry Hank and MARIE BAADE, newly married hired hand March 1947–March 1948

II. **Occupied Farms** (listed by 1995 residents from east to west along road)

A. **The Reigelsberger farm**

South side, Section 12, Roosevelt Township

Farmed by Mick Reigelsberger. Bought by Eva and Lee Reigelsberger in 1929 who then moved there.

1. MICK AND SUE Reigelsberger, 1992–current
  - a. Mick's parents, Joe and Norine Reigelsberger, moved to Rolfe from farm in 1992
  - b. Mick's brother, Greg, lives in Ft. Dodge and is part owner of Stile's Golf, Bowling, and Trophy Shop
2. JOE AND NORINE Reigelsberger, November 1953–November 1992 (married August 13, 1953)
3. Eva and Lee Reigelsberger 1929–November 1953
  - a. children
    - (1) Joe, Rolfe, Pioneer Seed Dealer and retired farmer
    - (2) Helen Woelfel, Edina, MN, nursing instructor and related work
    - (3) Mary Therese Wolford, Louisville, KY, retired medical records librarian
4. James Dady 1918–1928

B. **The Gunderson farm**

North side, Section 13, Roosevelt Township

Farmed by Dan and Roger Allen. Bought by John Gunderson in 1939.

1. Deane and Marion Gunderson 1945–present
  - a. Children
    - (1) Clara Hoover, Omaha, school librarian, computer administrator
    - (2) Charles, Rolfe, attorney and farm manager
    - (3) Helen, Gilbert, photographer and videographer
    - (4) Martha Carlson, Largo, FL, communications
    - (5) Margaret Peggy Moore, Detroit, MI, homemaker and student
    - (6) Louise Shimon, Perry, public school media specialist



2. Fred Baade (not related to Henry Baade) was tenant for Rosa Dady and her estate @1920s–30s
3. David and Rosa Dady, 1883–1916, Rosa until 1929

C. **The Harrold farm**

South side, Section 11, Roosevelt Township

Farmed by Paul Harrold. Bought by Marion and Gladys Davis in 1942 who then moved there.

1. MARJORIE Harrold 1942–present and son PAUL 1976–present
2. Marjorie (Davis) and Faber Harrold married 1947, Faber died in 1989
  - a. children
    - (1) Paul Harrold lives with Marjorie and farms
    - (2) Paulelda Gilbert, Fort Dodge, food and nutrition specialist with ISU Extension Service
3. Marion and Gladys Davis lived there 1942–1952
  - a. Three sons and one daughter, Marjorie. The oldest boy was already farming on his own when the Davis family moved to the road. The next two boys, Melvin and Milton, were only there from spring through the fall of 1942.
4. The Biederman family lived there in the early 30s.
5. Cap and Addie Grant and two infant sons lived there 1918–1920.

D. **The Howard farm**

Northwest quarter, Section 14, Roosevelt Township

Farmed by Paul Harrold. Bought by Harry and Marian Howard in 1939 who moved there in 1940.

1. VELMA AND VERLE Howard lived there December 1961–present (married May 19, 1947)
  - a. Randy, Elkhorn, WI, in sales for Rexall
  - b. Joy Hayes, Aeia, HI, CEO for Perry's restaurant chain
  - c. Monte, deceased, fell off grain elevator while on construction job in July 1970
  - d. Hope Schneider, Battle Creek, NE, physical therapist in hospital
  - e. Kelly Hartman, Kanawha, account executive, telephone sales, with All-Star Pro Golf in Clarion
  - f. Karen Leyba, Thermopolis, WY, speech pathologist/therapist in hospital and schools
2. Harry and Marian Howard lived there 1940–December 1961
 

Had four children but the older two did not live on the road. Their two twins moved to the road with Harry and Marian, then graduated from high school in 1941.

  - a. Verle, lives on farm now, is retired
  - b. Doris, lives in California
3. Walter Gahm, tenant 1933–March 1939



## The Swamplands<sup>1</sup>

an 1884 perspective by J. J. Bruce

On the 28th of September, 1850, an act of Congress was approved by which the United States granted to the State of Iowa all of the swamp and overflowed lands within the limits of the state then undisposed of. Two years later the State of Iowa, by an act of the General Assembly, approved Feb. 2, 1853, granted these “swamp and overflowed lands” to the counties in which they were situated, and made provision for their selection. This was the status of these lands when Pocahontas County was organized. David Slosson, on behalf of the county and in pursuance of these acts, as soon as he was elected County Judge in March, 1859, entered into a contract with Ringland & Brady, of Fort Dodge, for their special survey and selection. As this contract does not appear on the records it is impossible to give its exact terms, but it has been stated the surveyors were to receive for their services a certain compensation for each acre thus selected. Two selections were made during the year 1859. The first one, by Messrs. Ringland & Brady, was rejected as a whole by the commissioner of the general land office; and one is not surprised at this result when it is known that the whole of township 91, range 32 (Lincoln), was included as swamp. The second one was made by G. S. Ringland and Guernsey Smith, who made their report Aug. 3, 1859. In this report they state that they were appointed commissioners by the County Judge to make selections of the swamp and overflowed lands, and it is presumed that such was the case, although no entry of their contract or appointment is found on the records. They swear that “they have examined the lines of each and every tract selected, and that the greater part of each is swamp and overflowed land.” The number of acres according to their footing is 72,075.75, an amount equal to 114 sections or six sections more than three townships — about one-fifth of the entire county.

At this day it seems quite incredible that an amount of land so large should have been reported under oath as “swamp and overflowed.” There are, however, three good reasons which may in a measure explain why an amount so large was selected. In the first place the compensation for the selection and survey was based on the number of acres selected; second, at that time the value of these treeless prairie lands was neither realized nor appreciated on the part of the pioneer residents of the county, many of whom were indifferent to a certain extent as to what became of them; and third, the cupidity of the parties who conspired to become possessors of so vast a domain. This second selection, however, had to be submitted to the commissioner of the general land office for his approval or rejection.

The contract with William E. Clark, of Baltimore, Md., of date Oct. 18, 1859, and declared Nov. 21st, following, as having been approved by the people on Nov. 14, 1860, “for good and valuable considerations in hand paid” was assigned by W. E. Clark to John M. Stockdale, of Webster County. The latter, under President Buchanan, had been register of the U.S. land office at Fort Dodge, and the former proved to be a mere figurehead working under his direction. When Lincoln was elected, the latter soon retired from the land office and assumed open control of his scheme.

The public building and bridge when completed by John M. Stockdale were accepted, and on Dec. 9, 1860, there was deeded to him, according to the government survey, 76,250 acres

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1. This report of the Pocahontas County swamplands controversy is from pages 189–191 of R.E. Flickenger’s book *The Early History of Iowa and Pioneer History of Pocahontas County* published by *The Fonda Times* in 1904. The account was originally written by J. J. Bruce for the *Pocahontas Record*, May 1, 1884, and later published in the *Plat Book of Pocahontas County*, 1887, page 5.

of land in Pocahontas County, the deed containing a clause that expressly released the county from all liability arising from the reclaiming of these lands. This deed was attested by John A. James, County Judge, and the estimated value of the lands conveyed was \$91,000.

It will be noticed that until this date the title to these lands rested upon an act of Congress and a subsequent one by the General Assembly of Iowa, both of which were of a general nature referring to a certain class of lands, namely, "swamp and overflowed lands" and not to particular tracts. This left the title of particular tracts without foundation until the selections should be approved by the government and their respective patents be issued. Until the land in particular tracts should be patented to the county, its title thereto would be imperfect and its deed to another would of course convey no title to the land. This was the kind of deed given to John M. Stockdale, who understood its imperfect nature, but expecting to secure the approval of his entire list, he was willing to let the entire matter rest in that condition. He began at once to sell particular tracts, putting his lists in the hands of agents in all parts of the country. He gave warranty deeds, selling generally large quantities to each purchaser and representing to parties purchasing that patents could be procured at any time upon application, but as the land was not taxable until patented, it was better to let them lie as they were and thus avoid taxation.

Of the 76,250 acres deeded by the county to John M. Stockdale, the commissioner of the general land office approved and issued patents to him for 29,000 acres, and formally rejected the remaining 47,000 acres as not swamp land within the meaning of the act. The last were disposed of by patent as follows: about 27,000 acres in a body to the Dubuque and Pacific Ry. Co., some to the Des Moines Valley Ry. Co., some to the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Ry. Co., some to the Agricultural College, some to cash purchasers and others were claimed by homesteaders. Nearly all of these lands are now occupied as farms. The tracts patented to the county on which the taxes have been paid annually, thereby avoiding entanglement by tax sales, have good and perfect title.

Another remarkable incident in the story of the swamplands is the fact that John M. Stockdale under his imperfect deed from the county, continued to sell all the lands included therein, he seeming to be entirely indifferent about the matter of patent. The fact that most of these lands had been patented to other parties made no difference to him so long as he could find buyers willing to purchase from him. The last lot sold by him was in the year 1882; it contained 9,000 acres and the price paid was \$200. Of the 29,000 acres patented to him and upon which the taxes have been paid the county probably suffered no great loss, since the amount originally received together with the taxes and interest paid would amount to about the present value of the land. The misfortune of the transaction came in a subsequent period of litigation over titles and consequent uncertainty in the minds of owners as to the stability of their tenures.

It will be seen, from this brief resume, that patented swamplands have good titles and the rejected selections had no valid title through John M. Stockdale.\* The traffic in these respective swamplands was a great scandal upon land titles and many innocent parties were bled severely.

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\*Mr. Stockdale died in Washington, Pa., Sept. 17, 1897. He was well known to the early settlers of this county, and the titles to many farms bear his name as their first owner.

## Corn Statistics

### Iowa's Top Corn Growing Counties in 2000

County	Bushels (000)
Kossuth	47,940
Sioux	34,439
Pottawattamie	30,880
Webster	30,131
Pocahontas	27,163
Wright	26,860
Benton	26,239
Hancock	25,940
Clinton	25,681
Plymouth	25,668

### The History of Iowa Corn Yields and Prices through 2003

Crop Year	Average Bushels per Acre	Average Price per Bushel*	Total Bushels Produced for Grain (in thousands)
1866	32		57,920
1867	41		74,210
1868	41		76,545
1869	34		69,680
1870	40		102,000
1871	44		133,110
1872	41		137,760
1873	33		117,000
1874	34		141,100
1875	35		161,000
1876	34		176,800
1877	34		194,300
1878	41		247,050
1879	42		275,226

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\*Average price received by farmers

\*\*Preliminary calculation

\*\*\*Prior to 1919, the harvested and production figures are for all corn, including that used for silage.

\*\*\*\*The data for 2003 is based on forecasted numbers dated November 1, 2003.

From Iowa Agricultural Statistics. State Statistician: Jim Sands

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1880	40		274,525
1881	30		195,900
1882	31		205,570
1883	29		203,000
1884	40		290,720
1885	37		276,670
1886	29		230,840
1887	30		243,600
1888	40		333,380
1889	41		355,593
1890	28		246,120
1891	41		366,120
1892	31		239,730
1893	38		306,750
1894	15		131,250
1895	39		353,730
1896	43		393,880
1897	34		302,170
1898	36		311,760
1899	39		345,644
1900	45		409,500
1901	29		269,610
1902	38		363,280
1903	33		273,325
1904	39		372,450
1905	42		398,400
1906	46		439,075
1907	35		339,500
1908	38		355,300
1909	37	***\$0.52	348,777
1910	42	\$0.42	395,495
1911	36	\$0.60	349,675
1912	46	\$0.44	456,320
1913	38	\$0.61	364,500
1914	41	\$0.64	398,925
1915	33	\$0.63	321,750
1916	38	\$1.15	372,400
1917	39	\$1.30	404,250
1918	37	\$1.40	362,600
1919	42	\$1.34	368,950

1920	46	\$0.47	424,534
1921	43	\$0.41	396,718
1922	45	\$0.64	395,415
1923	41	\$0.75	364,743
1924	28	\$1.01	245,476
1925	44	\$0.60	424,294
1926	39	\$0.69	371,085
1927	35	\$0.83	316,225
1928	42	\$0.76	404,708
1929	40	\$0.73	389,297
1930	34	\$0.52	334,254
1931	33	\$0.28	330,217
1932	43	\$0.30	462,121
1933	40	\$0.50	417,400
1934	28	\$0.79	160,768
1935	38	\$0.62	340,556
1936	20	\$1.07	148,900
1937	45	\$0.44	460,800
1938	46	\$0.46	452,824
1939	52	\$0.53	467,712
1940	53	\$0.57	452,760
1941	51	\$0.72	439,416
1942	60	\$0.86	547,980
1943	55	\$0.99	556,985
1944	53	\$0.98	545,842
1945	45	\$1.23	441,618
1946	57	\$1.53	604,200
1947	31	\$2.15	297,228
1948	61	\$1.31	649,286
1949	47	\$1.27	521,747
1950	49	\$1.52	455,706
1951	44	\$1.61	421,080
1952	63	\$1.50	653,062
1953	53	\$1.50	572,983
1954	55	\$1.45	545,763
1955	49	\$1.44	499,210
1956	54	\$1.31	503,596
1957	62	\$1.50	611,320
1958	66	\$1.08	645,612
1959	65	\$1.01	789,035
1960	64	\$0.97	772,541
1961	76	\$1.09	753,188
1962	77	\$1.09	745,129
1963	80	\$1.05	851,600
1964	78	\$1.12	754,695
1965	82	\$1.13	814,506

1966	89	\$1.17	901,748
1967	89	\$1.01	986,332
1968	93	\$1.07	909,075
1969	99	\$1.11	945,351
1970	86	\$1.25	866,622
1971	102	\$1.04	1,178,100
1972	116	\$1.65	1,229,600
1973	107	\$2.58	1,206,960
1974	80	\$2.97	968,000
1975	90	\$2.50	1,117,800
1976	91	\$2.05	1,173,900
1977	86	\$1.99	1,092,200
1978	115	NA	1,477,750
1979	127	\$2.45	1,663,700
1980	110	\$3.00	1,463,000
1981	125	\$2.34	1,731,250
1982	120	\$2.69	1,578,000
1983	87	\$3.12	743,850
1984	112	\$2.51	1,444,800
1985	126	\$2.02	1,707,300
1986	135	\$1.41	1,626,750
1987	130	\$1.89	1,319,500
1988	84	\$2.45	898,800
1989	118	\$2.29	1,445,500
1990	126	\$2.21	1,562,400
1991	117	\$2.30	1,427,400
1992	147	\$2.00	1,903,650
1993	80	\$2.44	880,000
1994	152	\$2.22	1,915,200
1995	123	\$3.20	1,426,800
1996	138	\$2.60	1,711,200
1997	138	\$2.33	1,642,200
1998	145	\$1.86	1,769,000
1999	149	\$1.94	1,758,200
2000	144	\$1.77	1,728,000
2001	146	\$1.90	1,664,400
2002	165	**\$2.25	1,963,500
2003	****159		****1,908,000



## Pocahontas County Population and Farm Data through 2003

Year	County Population	Number of Farms	Average Farm Size	Land Value A	Land Value B
1860	103			\$3	
1870	1,446			\$9	
1880	3,713			\$10	
1890	9,553		173	\$21	
1900	15,339		182	\$43	
1910	14,808		182	\$89	
1920	15,602		175	\$282	
1925			171	\$193	
1930	15,687		174	\$153	
1935			173	\$99	
1940	16,266	2,039	177	\$111	
1945		1,990	182	\$148	
1950	15,496	2,032	179	\$233	\$311
1954		1,907	188	\$273	\$340
1959		1,767	203	\$332	\$395
1960	14,234				
1964		1,511	242	\$352	\$413
1969		1,369	265	\$513	\$563
1970	12,793				
1972					\$647
1973					\$909
1974		1,239	289	\$992	\$1,224
1975					\$1,723
1976					\$2,086
1977					\$2,131
1978		1,177	308	\$2,264	\$2,394
1979					\$2,810
1980	11,369				\$2,891
1981					\$2,905
1982		1,105	323	\$2,164	\$2,364
1983					\$2,272
1984					\$1,738
1985					\$1,173
1986					\$995
1987		987	354		\$1,159
1990	9,525				\$1,644
1992		919	391		\$1,641
1995					\$1,893
1996					\$2,224
1997		778	459		\$2,437
2000	8,662				\$2,329
2001					\$2,381
2002					\$2,546
2003					\$2,762

Census data from the Iowa State University Department of Sociology Census Service, Willis Goudy, coordinator. Source A for land values is the federal government's agricultural census data. Source B for land value is the ISU Extension Program's Ag Land Value Survey super-vised by Michael Duffy at <http://ia.profiles.iastate.edu/data/landvalues>.

## 2020 Data Update

In 2010, the U.S. census reported a population of 7,310 residents in Pocahontas County. In 2018, the number dropped to 6,740 – a loss of about 8 percent of the population for an average of 1 percent per year. In 2012, there were 742 farms in the county for an average of 448 acres per farm. And in 2019, the average value of an acre of land in the county was \$8,666.

In 2019, Iowa's average yield of corn was 198 bushels per acre for a total of over 2.5 billion bushels, making it the top corn-producing state in the nation. The previous year, Pocahontas County had produced an average of 179 bushels per acre for a total of 31,475,000 bushels. In 2019, the average price per bushel of corn was \$3.85. As of June 1, 2020, it was \$3.53.

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\*This is the best survey of Iowa history available.

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# THE ROAD I GREW UP ON

## Requiem for a Vanishing Era

VOLUME 2

Helen DeElda Gunderson

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### *From the Foreword*

I love reading books about rural life, books such as Mildred Armstrong Kalish's *Little Heathens* and Ronald Jager's *Eighty Acres*, but most of those accounts are not honest about the disadvantages of rural life. Helen's willingness to admit the "nostalgic and disenchantment, the love and disdain" is the reason *The Road I Grew Up On* is so fascinating.

Helen's examination of the limited agricultural opportunities for women farmers is especially fascinating. As she now manages her Pocahontas County farmland and has transformed her Ames properties to a delightfully diverse urban farm, she certainly is a triumphant example of what women can accomplish.

Helen's book is not only a gift for today but for future generations, for those who may come to it to learn about an ancestor, old farming techniques, land ownership patterns, changing gender identities and much more.

From the foreword by **Teresa Opheim**

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Project Director, Climate Land Leaders

Main Street Project

[www.mainstreetproject.org](http://www.mainstreetproject.org)

Editor, *The Future of Family Farms: Practical Farmers'*

*Legacy Letter Project*

[www.uiopress.uiowa.edu](http://www.uiopress.uiowa.edu)



Helen at prairie restoration project she gave to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in 2011. Photo by Erin VanWaus, INHF. 2015.

**Helen DeElda Gunderson** is a fourth-generation, septuagenarian Iowan who grew up on a farm in Pocahontas County, Iowa, where she currently owns inherited farmland. After earning an undergraduate degree in physical education from Iowa State University, a master's degree in instructional technology and a Master of Divinity, and following a diverse career that took her to other states, Helen returned to Iowa in 1993. She now lives in Ames on what she calls her urban farm. Her book, *The Road I Grew Up On*, is a two-volume anthology written from a liberal perspective and consists of regional and neighborhood history, personal memoir, spiritual insights, other opinions, and photographs. The seeds for the project were sown in fall 1989 followed by years of Helen's taking photographs, shooting video footage, recording interviews, conducting other research, and writing about the neighborhood and culture where she grew up. The first volume consists primarily of material completed in 2004, while the second volume consists of chapters written in 2019 and one completed on July 31, 2020, about living in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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