

Tell us your Grinnell story.

Please record your reflections on Grinnell in the journal located at the Grinnell-in-Grinnell exhibit cases in the basement of Burling Library.

Visit our sister exhibit.

Please visit a related display, "History of Education in Grinnell," at the Grinnell campus of Iowa Valley Community College (IVCC Grinnell). The exhibit will run from September 23 to November 7.



Union Depot, built 1871

Photo: Grinnell Historical Museum

Acknowledgements

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Grinnell - in- Grinnell: 150 Years of Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa

An Exhibit of the Grinnell College
Department of Special Collections and Archives

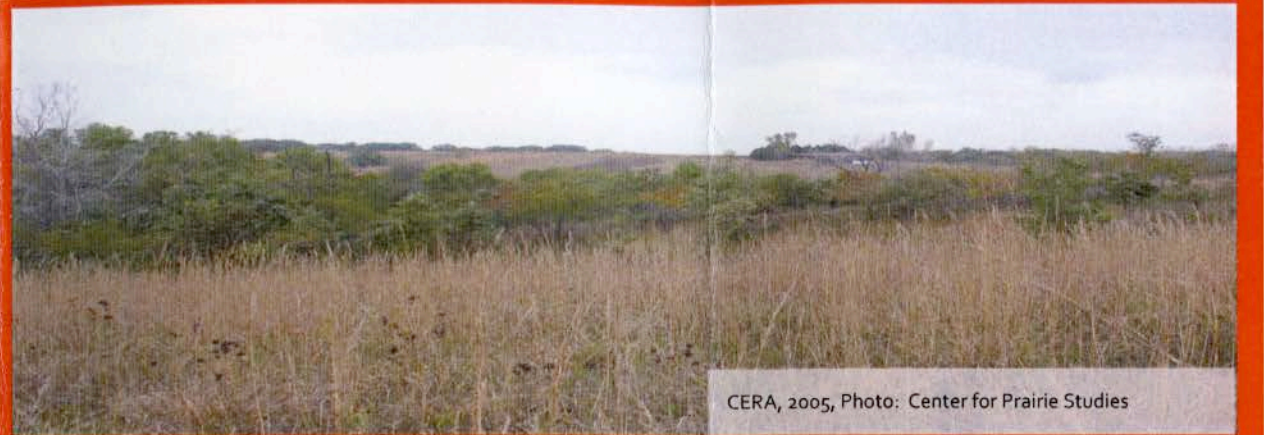


Fall 2009

A college. A town. *A journey.*

One hundred and fifty years ago, in 1859, the Trustees of Iowa College moved their school from the Mississippi River town of Davenport, Iowa, west across the prairie after repeated conflicts with city officials. Their destination was the recently established town of Grinnell, where Trustee George Magoun hoped that the rural community with strong abolitionist and temperance roots would "be more favorable to the objects of an Institution of Learning" (from *Pioneering* by Al Jones). Long after the move, in 1909, Iowa College was renamed Grinnell College in honor of Grinnell's founder, Congregational minister Josiah Bushnell Grinnell.

As we look back on a century and a half of Grinnell in Grinnell, we invite you to reflect on your own relationship with this place. What has brought you here? Which locales on campus and around town activate your curiosity? May you savor your own daily journeys and relish each new discovery.



CERA, 2005, Photo: Center for Prairie Studies

Personal Reflection by Curator Rachel Glass '09

My year working in the Iowa Room was riddled with discovery. I was a detective retrieving the back-stories of a place I lived in, a place that I had my own stories about. I learned of the buildings we see and interact with every day, of their history and past activity; of the values that have governed social action over time; and of the people that transformed prairie grassland into a community, one equipped with monuments of a prosperous past such as the Spaulding Factory, fueled by the Rock Island Railroad Line, and one forged upon Congregational values and emphasizing education. Each story I accumulated added another layer to the institutional memory, as I knew it, of Grinnell, Iowa, and personalized its history. I would walk around town, around campus, suddenly more empathetic to the entire community, past and present.

A memorable discovery was of the Iowa Band. My knowledge of the Iowa Band was that they were old men. They did indeed set out to found a college, practically a proselytizing mission, in order to educate the youth of the unsettled West, bringing quilts with them as they did so (see Case 3 of the exhibit). But they were also old, looking quite alike in their white beards and suit jackets. If you have seen any of their photographs, you may understand my impression of them (and if you have not, please see Case 1).

Therefore, you may share in my surprise that these gentlemen were not always old men, but quite young when they set out to settle a college in the West. They were, in fact, brand new graduates of college themselves. The catch is that photographic processes were not very popular in rural Iowa in the late 1840s, and so their community roles were not documented visually until the 1870s, when they were indeed quite old men.

The artifacts included in this exhibit are those stories and images that caught my attention, stories that challenged my perception of my environment here in Grinnell, Iowa, and my place within it. I hope that they will in turn, provoke you to reflect on your own.



Silk patchwork quilt, possibly made by Mrs. Ephraim Adams, wife of a member of the Iowa Band