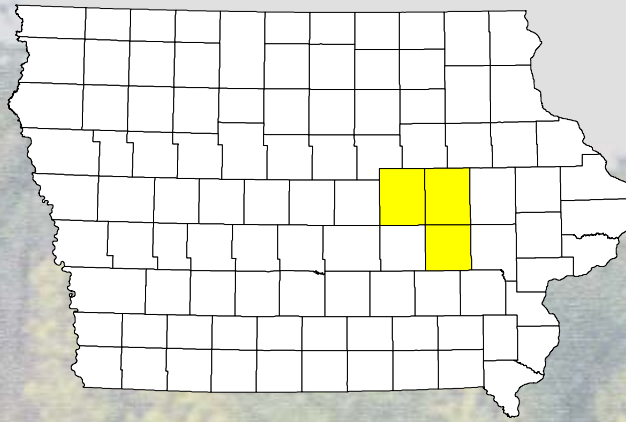


Iowa Valley Scenic Byway



Museums to visit:

Tama County Historical Museum:

200 North Broadway, Toledo (641) 484-6767

Pioneer Heritage Museum:

675 East South Street, Marengo (319) 642-7018

Museum of Amana History:

4310 220th Trail, Amana (319) 622-3567

For more information about attractions along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway contact:

The Amana Colonies Convention and Visitors Bureau and Welcome Center, 39 38th Avenue, Suite 100, Amana IA 52203, (800) 579-2294

or visit:

the Amana I-80 Welcome Center, I-80, Exit 225, Amana, IA (319) 668-9545.



Take a break from highway driving and witness the picturesque river valley which inspired Grant Wood's painting "Young Corn". The Iowa River Valley is not only scenic, but is replete with cultural heritage, from the Native American settlement of the Meskwaki's to the communal legacy of the Amana Colonies.

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway traverses a 77 mile stretch of the Iowa River Corridor, and is anchored by two very distinct cultures. The upstream end of the byway skirts the Meskwaki settlement, created when the Meskwaki tribe purchased an initial 80 acres in 1857, using profits from the sale of furs and ponies. The settlement now consists of 3,500 acres. The downstream end tours the seven villages of the Amanas. The Amana Colonies were settled in 1855, as a communal society, by Germans fleeing religious persecution. Interspersed along the byway are the railroad towns of Montour, Tama, Chelsea, and Belle Plaine and the Iowa County seat of Marengo. All are separated by intervals roughly dictated by the distance a pioneer farmer could travel to town and return home again in one day.

As one travels along the byway, a rich and rolling landscape presents itself, with wooded bluffs, scenic valleys, and newly restored prairies and wetlands. The landscape has changed considerably since the time of European settlement. The vast prairies and oak groves have yielded to pasture and grains, yet efforts to restore some of the corridor's natural heritage are ongoing. The combination of pastoral farms and the returning natural beauty, offer the traveler



“The town site (**Belle Plaine**), which was laid out by Presley Hutton, in 1860, just previous to the completions of the railway thus far, lies on a sloping northern bank of the Iowa River, which allows of excellent drainage facilities. Not only this, but the timber along the river and the hills beyond forming a beautiful prospect to the observer’s eye.” *History of Benton County 1878*

“The scenery in and around town (**Montour**) is truly beautiful. The bluffs here are its true mire of wealth; not only do they add charms to the place, but they are composed of a formation which at not distant day will cause the town to become a place of no small note” *History of Tama County, 1879*

“(Chelsea) is a bustling little town situated on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, about ten miles east of Tama city, and has a population of about 500. It is mostly surrounded by prairie which extends north and west for quite a distance and south one mile to the Iowa River.” *History of Tama County 1879*

Marengo’s namesake was a plain in northern Italy, where Napolean Bonaparte defeated the Austrian army on June 14, 1800. *History of Iowa County, 1881.*

Marengo will be the site for a gateway project which will increase public access and serve as the official gateway to the Iowa river.



Iowa DNR



State Historical Society of Iowa--Iowa City

“The principal stream in **Tama County** is the Iowa River, a broad, flowing, swift, bubbling, dancing stream... The face of the county along the river is abrupt, rough, broken, and timbered. In only a few places do the prairie vistas open down to the water’s edge, affording glimpses of the broad undulating plains, which open so wide beyond, that the blue of the sky and the green of the rolling sward, seem to mingle in a far off beauty.” *History of Tama County, 1879*

