

Archival Resources on the Web

Assistant Editor: Lauren White, University of Michigan. Contact Lauren at laurenashleywhite@gmail.com if you would like to guest author a column or have a good idea to share.

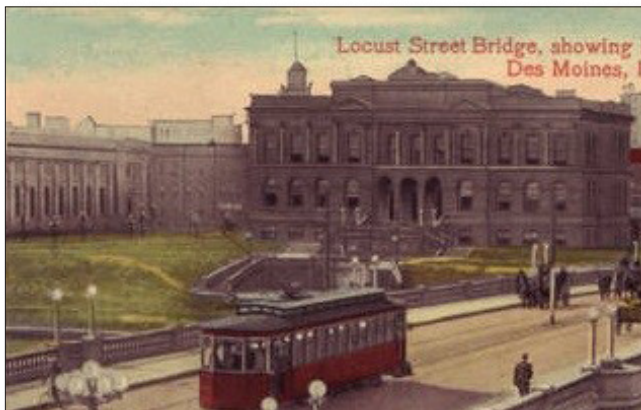
So Much More than Cornfields: All about Des Moines

By Hope Grebner Bibens, Drake University

When you arrive in Des Moines in May, you might be expecting cornfields, but Iowa's capital city is so much more than limitless farmland. Des Moines is a city with a rich history. Here's a look at some archival resources from Des Moines and the Hawkeye State!

Iowa Heritage Digital Collections

Created in 2003 by the State Library of Iowa and the libraries of the University of Iowa and Iowa State University, the Iowa Heritage Collections site (<https://www.iowaheritage.org>) serves as a central access point for collections of Iowa's history and culture. It now contains digital collections from 35 different repositories including academic libraries, public libraries, local historical societies, and museums from all corners of the Hawkeye State. Collection topics include events, industry and commerce, maps and atlases, music, notable Iowans, places, publications and journalists, organizations and clubs, and conflicts. Some Des Moines-related collections include the Des Moines Public Library Postcard Collection, the Des Moines University Historic Photograph Collection, and the Des Moines Women's Club Archives.



Locust Street Bridge, Des Moines Public Library Postcard Collection

Political Cartoons

No conversation about Des Moines would be complete without mentioning politics. The *Des Moines Register* has a storied history of political cartoonists. The University of Iowa has digitized collections of original cartoons by Jay N. “Ding” Darling (<https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Ading>), who drew editorial cartoons for

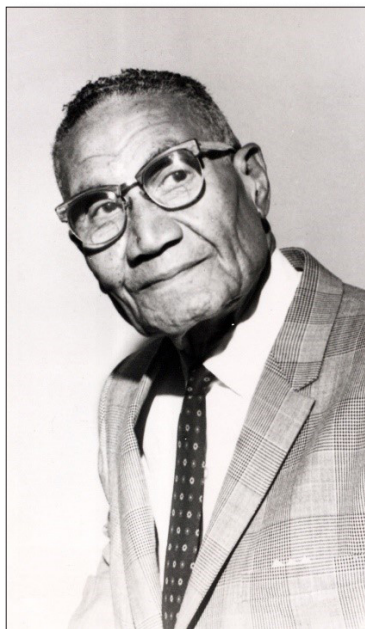
the *Des Moines Register* from 1940 to 1949. In 1934–1935, he founded what is now the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Federal Duck Stamp program. When Darling retired in 1949, his assistant Harold “Tom” Carlisle served as primary cartoonist until his retirement in 1953 (<https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Aatestcarlisle>). The University of Iowa also has digitized a collection of over 500 editorial cartoons by Frank Miller (<https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Aatestingmiller2>). Miller served as the *Des Moines Register* cartoonist from 1956 until his death in 1983. Brian Duffy became the *Register* cartoonist after Miller's death and drew the daily cartoon until 2008. Over 500 of his political cartoons have been digitized as well (<https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Aduffy>).

Daily Planet

Des Moines is known for its publishing industry. It is home to Meredith Corporation—the publisher of many well-known magazines including *Better Homes and Gardens*. The *Des Moines Register* is well known for its coverage of presidential politics. But Des Moines is also home to alternative newspapers. The *Daily Planet* was an alternative newspaper published in Des Moines in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It covered local and national news as well as arts and entertainment and truly had a Des Moines voice. It was created by three alumni of Drake University, and a digital collection is available from Drake Digital Collections (<http://content.library.drake.edu/digital/collection/p16331coll6/search>).

National Bar Association Digital Collection

Housed at the Drake University Law Library, the National Bar Association (NBA) Archives (<http://content.library.drake.edu/digital/collection/p16331coll9>) documents the creation of the NBA in 1925 after African Americans were excluded from membership in the American Bar Association. The NBA was cofounded in Des Moines by 12 lawyers, including Drake University Law School alumnus Charles Preston Howard. It is the oldest and largest national organization of African American lawyers and judges. The digital collection includes newspaper clippings, photographs, correspondence, publications, and annual meeting materials. It also contains records from the National Association of Bench and Bar Spouses.

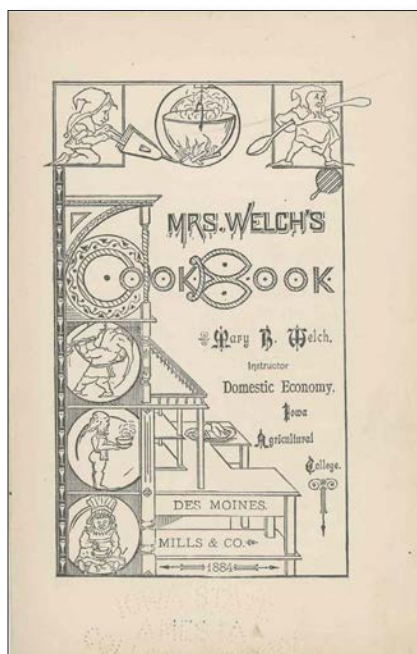


In 2018, a sculpture by Kerry James Marshall was installed along the Principal Riverwalk at Hansen Triangle Park in Des Moines to honor the founders of the National Bar Association.

*Charles Preston Howard,
Drake University Archives
& Special Collections*

Iowa Cookbook Collection

Des Moines is also home to the famous Iowa State Fair every August. In addition to fair food, amusement rides, and livestock shows, the fair is also known for its contests. In everything from horticulture to quilting to recipes, Iowans compete to take home the prized blue ribbon. Iowa State University has digitized an Iowa Cookbook Collection (<https://digitalcollections.lib.iastate.edu/cookbook-collection>). Who knows, some of these recipes may have taken home a prize! Of special interest are the *Suffrage Cookbook* gifted to Carrie Chapman Catt and *Mrs. Welch's Cook Book*, published in Des Moines in 1884. Check out some of these historical Iowa recipes!



Mrs. Welch's Cook Book, Iowa Cookbook Collection, Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives

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Project Des Moines

Downtown Des Moines, from the Western Gateway to the East Village, has gone through a resurgence of redevelopment in recent years. Many warehouses have been converted into apartments, breweries, and other new businesses. You can discover the storied pasts of these buildings at Project Des Moines (<https://projectdesmoines.dmpl.org/>). Developed by the Des Moines Public Library, Project Des Moines is a website and app that allows you to explore the history of Des Moines and discover

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Lauren White, Assistant Editor

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information on different historic sites on a GPS-enabled map. Locations include the home of the *Iowa Bystander*, a weekly newspaper founded in 1894 to serve as the voice of Iowa's African American population. Other locations include Younker's Department Store, Tone Bros. Spices, and the Jewett Typewriter Company.



Tone Bros. Building, Des Moines Illustrated Souvenir

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