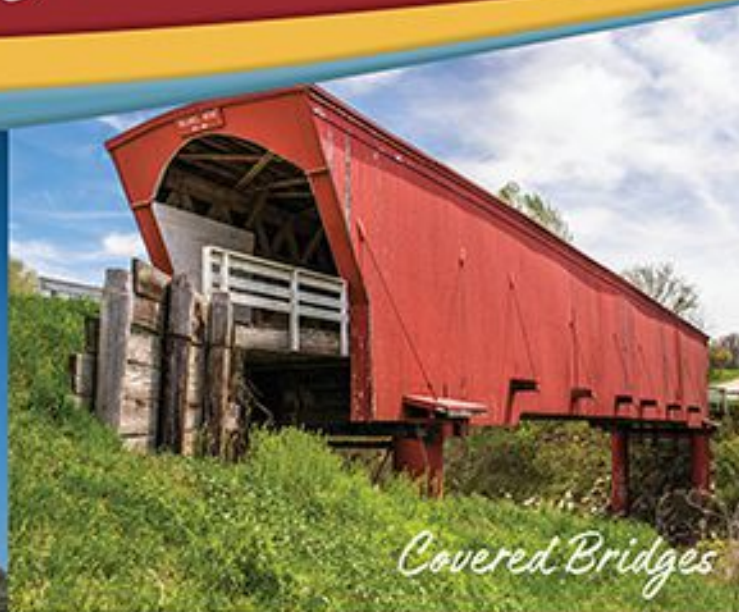


Discovery Guide



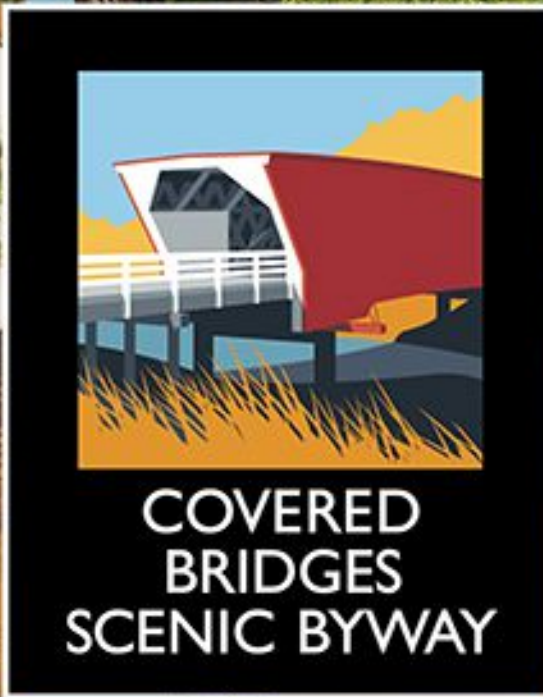
*Hollywood in
the Heartland*



Covered Bridges



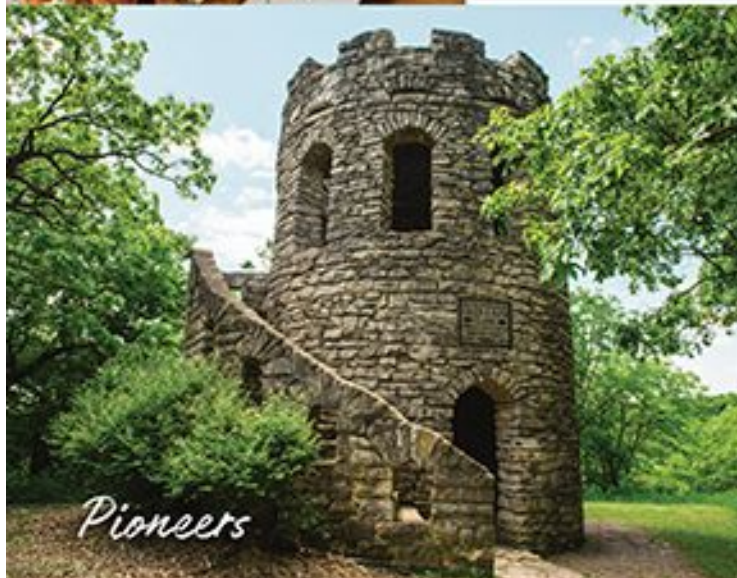
Field to Fork



**COVERED
BRIDGES
SCENIC BYWAY**



Quilting



Pioneers



*Recreational
Adventures*

Discover Iconic America



Step into the stories of authentic American heroes and cultural icons. The Covered Bridges Scenic Byway is an 82-mile route into the heart of America. Dotting the classic Iowa landscape are the famed covered bridges of Madison County. At the center is an authentic and thriving courthouse square. Tour the birthplace of John Wayne and discover other local heroes who have made an impact in the world. Enjoy the many attributes that make this community a desirable place to live, work, and play.

Madison County is part of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain, and its abundant natural resources made it highly desirable for early settlers, farmers, innovators, and builders. The landscape is characterized by rolling hills and valleys formed by hundreds of thousands of years of erosion and stream development, as well as timber, limestone bluffs, rivers, and streams. Of course, the highlights of the county are the six remaining covered bridges which tell of our history, industry, and culture, inspiring artists, writers, photographers, and even movie makers.

We invite you to explore the byway and delve further into the stories that interest you, whether cultural, historical, recreational, or scenic. Adventure awaits!

Choose Your Adventure

Covered Bridges



Pages 3-4

Explore the Covered Bridge Capital of Iowa, where six of the original nineteen covered bridges remain.

Field to Fork (A Culinary Tour)



Pages 5-6

Tour farms and sample local food products, and see why Iowa ranks second in the nation for agricultural production and exports.

Hollywood in the Heartland



Pages 7-8

Iowa may not be top of mind when thinking of Hollywood, but Madison County has produced its fair share of movies, stars, and subjects.

Pioneer Life



Pages 9-10

Abundant natural resources, beautiful landscapes and proximity to Des Moines made Madison County highly desirable to settlers.

Quilting & Fiber Arts



Pages 11-12

Madison County is home to the Iowa Quilt Museum and is the birthplace of Fons & Porter's Love of Quilting.

Recreational Adventures



Pages 13-14

Camp, hike, bike, canoe, kayak, hunt, fish, or simply explore all of the natural beauty here.

Covered Bridges

Madison County is the Covered Bridge Capital of Iowa, home to the largest group of covered bridges that exists in a single area west of the Mississippi Valley. With an abundance of rivers, creeks, and streams, crossings were critical for farmers. Originally, nineteen covered bridges dotted the county, built during a sixteen-year span from 1868 to 1884. Covering bridges helped to preserve the interior wooden trusses and floor boards, which deteriorated quickly in the severe weather of the plains.

County supervisors ordered modern steel bridges after 1884 as farming equipment and other transportation grew larger and heavier. Over the years, most of the covered bridges were lost to floods, ice jams, fires, progress, or wilful destruction. In 1933, the Madison County Historical Society began a campaign to save the surviving bridges. In 1950, the Board of Supervisors finally agreed to maintain the seven remaining covered bridges as tourist attractions. One by one, the bridges were moved or bypassed over the next several decades, but the county upheld its commitment to preserve them. The McBride Bridge was lost to arson and never rebuilt. The Cedar Bridge has been destroyed twice by arson, but a replica has replaced it each time, as recently as 2019.



Construction of the new Rose-Dunmire Bridge in 1910. (The old 1871 covered bridge can be seen in the background.) The new iron pony truss bridge bypassed the covered bridge, as it could support larger and heavier farm equipment.

The Bridges of Madison County

The 1992 novel by Robert James Waller really set Madison County on the map. The story of the love affair between photographer Robert Kincaid and Italian-American housewife Francesca Johnson was made into a motion picture in 1995. Filmed in Madison County and starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood (who also directed), the movie still draws tens of thousands of fans from around the world to our bridges.



Roseman Bridge. Photo by Teddi Yaeger

Sights



Cedar Bridge

Built in 1883, Cedar Bridge was featured on the book cover of *The Bridges of Madison County*.



Cutler-Donahoe Bridge

Situated in City Park since 1970, this 1870 bridge was built over North River in Bevington.



Hogback Bridge

Built in 1884, Hogback Bridge spans 98 feet over North River, and is still in its original location.



Holliwell Bridge

Located across Middle River, Holliwell is the longest, spanning 110 feet. Completed in 1880, it was featured in the movie.



Imes Bridge

The oldest of the remaining bridges, Imes (1871) was relocated from Middle River in Patterson to St. Charles.



Roseman Bridge

Featured prominently in the movie, Roseman Bridge was built in 1883 over Middle River in Winterset.

Field to Fork

Iowa ranks second in the nation for agricultural production and exports, with over 90 percent of the land in the state used for agriculture. Madison County is a rural community comprised of many growers and makers of foodstuffs including beef, pork, poultry, and bison, as well as wine, cider, beer, locally-roasted coffee, produce, baked goods, and more.

The iconic Red Delicious apple, which reigned as America's favorite for more than 50 years, was discovered in Madison County on a farm in East Peru. Farmer Jesse Hiatt discovered it in the 1870s, and entered it in a contest in 1893. Hiatt called his variety Hawkeye, but after being purchased by the Stark Brothers Nursery of Missouri, the name was changed to the Stark Delicious and eventually the Red Delicious. A marker commemorating the famous apple resides in Winterset's City Park. Even the bakery in Winterset uses Red Delicious apples in their popular apple fritters.

Madison County visitors and residents can tour farms, experiencing everything from alpacas to flowers to pumpkins, and sample their wares at local eateries, retail stores, or the Madison County Farmers Market.



The first Red Delicious apple tree, shown here in 1925. The unique apple tree was discovered in the 1870s by farmer Jesse Hiatt (not pictured) at his farm in East Peru. The original tree died in 1940 when the Armistice Day frost killed it. Since then, several sprouts from the original tree have been successfully transplanted.

Wine Country?

Believe it or not, the same fertile soil that makes Iowa a leading agricultural state has winemakers producing delicious and award-winning wines here in America's heartland. Three such wineries craft quality wines from grapes grown in Madison County – Covered Bridges Winery, Madison County Winery, and Two Saints Winery. Each offers tasting hours; most offer live music on weekends and a chance to join in the harvest in autumn.



Harvesting grapes at Two Saints Winery

Sights



Bare Bison Ranch

The 350-acre ranch has 300 head of bison, an event facility, tours, and sell Bison meat.



Pammel Park Coffee Co.

Pammel Park Coffee Company makes freshly roasted, small batch specialty coffees.



Howell's

This family farm offers florals and fresh produce, including U-pick berries and pumpkins.



Winterset Cidery

The Cidery crafts hard apple cider through fermentation using locally-grown apples and nothing else. Open seasonally.



Farmers Market

Madison County Farmers Market on the Winterset courthouse square has offered locally-grown food for over 25 years.



Big Rack Brew Haus

Enjoy hand-crafted IPA, lager, wheat, blonde, brown or porter beer. A tap room is open at their facility.

Hollywood in the Heartland

John Wayne

Marion Robert Morrison was born at home in Winterset, Iowa, on May 26, 1907. The first child of Clyde Morrison, a pharmacist, and mother Mary ("Molly") Brown, he spent his early childhood years in Madison County. Not long after his brother Robert's birth in 1912, Clyde decided to move west to California (the family joined him in 1914). Marion acquired the nickname "Duke" (the name of his beloved dog) when he was nine years old.

In his teen years, Duke was active in sports (especially football), student government, and theatre. While employed as a prop man in the late 1920s, he met John Ford, who cast him as an extra from 1928-29. He landed his first starring role in *The Big Trail* in 1930, where he acquired the screen name John Wayne.

John Wayne starred in 142 films throughout his career. He settled in Los Angeles with his family (Wayne was married three times and had seven children). He made many trips to the front during WWII with the USO. Wayne also produced a number of award-winning movies from the 1950s to 1970s. His only Academy Award was for *True Grit* (1969). Wayne succumbed to stomach cancer on June 11, 1979, at age 72. His family accepted the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to him in March 1980, inscribed simply, "John Wayne - American."



Visitors to the John Wayne Birthplace & Museum in Winterset enjoy a special short documentary about the actor and his prolific career. The theater seats are from Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood, where Wayne placed his footprints on January 25, 1950.



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The Bridges of Madison County

Based on the 1992 novel by Robert James Waller, *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995) portrays the brief love affair between an Iowa housewife and a traveling photographer.

Filmed in Madison County and starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood (who also directed), the movie still draws tens of thousands of fans from around the world to the county. The entire movie was filmed locally, with many sites still accessible to visitors, including Roseman and Holliwell Covered Bridges, the Northside Café, the Pheasant Run Tavern (used as the Blue Note Lounge), the stone bridge in City Park, the town square, and the intersection at Green Street used in their final scene together. More information is available at the Madison County Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center.



Sights



John Wayne Museum

The only museum dedicated exclusively to Hollywood legend John Wayne features the largest private collection of memorabilia in existence.



John Wayne Birthplace

This tiny four-room home was the birthplace of the legendary actor, and is included with admission to the museum.



The Iowa Theater

The turn-of-the-19th-century theater was completely renovated and reopened in 2017. Catch a new movie, a classic film, or a live performance.



George Stout Storybook

Portrayed by George Clooney in the film *The Monuments Men*, George Stout helped rescue precious works of art during WWII. An Iowa Byways public art piece honors him.



Stone Bridge at City Park

One of many filming locations in the area for *The Bridges of Madison County*, this was the site of Robert and Francesca's picnic scene.



Roseman Bridge

The most popular of the bridges thanks to its feature in the movie *The Bridges of Madison County*, Roseman was built in 1883 over Middle River in Winterset.

Pioneer Life

Early Settlers

The abundant natural resources of Madison County (part of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain), including water, timber, limestone, native wild plants, soil, and food sources, drew early settlers in the mid-1800s. The area's proximity to Des Moines, its moderate climate, beautiful landscapes, and these plentiful resources made it highly desirable for farmers, builders and innovators.

"In Madison County, settlers found numerous rivers and streams, timber for building houses, stables and barns, native wild grasses to cover barn roofs, fuel for fireplaces to aid both cooking and heating, corn (one of the most useful of crops), a grist mill and a woolen mill. Land was more affordable than other counties in Iowa, the climate was more moderate, the soil was fertile and there were thousands of deer, wild turkeys and prairie chickens for food. As Des Moines was about to become the state capital around this time, and as the lands within several miles of Des Moines were nearly all owned and held by eastern speculators, people wishing to purchase farms were compelled to move out from the city."



James W. Sawhill stands in his pasture eight and a half miles west of Winterset, Iowa, on Highway 92, circa 1903.

St. Patrick's Irish Settlement

St. Patrick's Parish (40 acres of land where Irish immigrants settled) was established in 1852, with a log church built in 1856. The parish was listed as "New Ireland" in the 1857 *Madison County Almanac*. The current church was completed in 1868, and served much territory (including Des Moines) as there was no other Catholic priest closer than Ottumwa (over 90 miles away). St. Patrick's was visited by Pope John Paul II in 1979. The church is still active today.



St. Patrick's Catholic Church. Photo by Teddi Yaeger

Sights



Clark Tower

Built in 1926, this monument honors a family of stone masons who were among our early settlers.



Historical Complex

Many authentic buildings and thousands of local artifacts are displayed on this 18-acre site.



N. River Stone Schoolhouse

Built in 1874 and closed in 1945, this one room schoolhouse serves as an early time



Courthouse District

The Winterset Courthouse Square Commercial Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.



St. Patrick's Cemetery

Tombstones in the cemetery date back to the 1850s and offer the names of many of our earliest Irish residents.



Harmon Tunnel

Located in Pammel Park, the 1858 highway tunnel (the only one in Iowa) was enlarged for vehicle traffic in the 1920s.

Quilting & Fiber Arts

Iowa Quilt Museum

Madison County has been home to a wealth of storytellers and makers, each with a unique narrative to share. Many have exemplified an appreciation of arts, culture and education. Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the art of quilting.

The Iowa Quilt Museum (opened in 2016) is dedicated to telling the story of, and fostering appreciation for, the American quilt. The non-collecting (display-only) museum showcases vintage to modern quilts through changing exhibits based on a specific theme. The museum is proud to serve as the national headquarters for the Quilts of Valor Foundation, a national non-profit organization whose mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. Airing of the Quilts is an annual community-wide event featuring the display of hundreds of quilts around the town of Winterset.



The Iowa Quilt Museum, which opened in May 2016, is housed in the former J.C. Penney building on Winterset's courthouse square.

Fons & Porter

Marianne Fons and Liz Porter met in a quilting class in Winterset in 1976. Soon they were teaching locally themselves. Over the years, they wrote many best-selling quilting books, including the landmark *Quilter's Complete Guide* (1992). Writing led to a how-to program on public television nationwide, and the launch of *Fons & Porter's Love of Quilting* magazine, which became the largest circulated quilting magazine in the world. They sold the business in 2006, but both love making quilts as much as they did in the beginning.



Marianne Fons & Liz Porter in 1989

Sights



Iowa Quilt Museum

Open throughout the year, the museum features changing exhibits of American quilts.



Piece Works Quilt Shop

One of *Quilt Sampler* magazine's Top Shops, Piece Works offers fabric, patterns, and more.



Ben Franklin

This family-owned store offers fabric and quilting supplies, plus a huge array of other items.



Barn Quilts

Madison County is home to many of these wooden panels painted to look like quilt blocks. They adorn barns, garages, and homes.



Freedom Rock

Painted by Bubba Sorensen, one side of Madison County's Freedom Rock depicts a female veteran cloaked in a Quilt of Valor.



Heartland Fiber

The store offers gifts, yarn, knitting tools and materials, as well as an array of classes and events, including Fiberpalooza.

Recreational Adventures

Pammel State Park

Pammel State Park was originally called "Devil's Backbone" and was one of the first state parks in Iowa. The park consists of 351 acres of picturesque woodlands (including Iowa's oldest oak trees), meadows, and limestone bluffs, all carved by Middle River. Historic features are Pammel Lodge and Harmon Tunnel (Iowa's only highway tunnel). Stone gateways that greet visitors and Backbone Shelter were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. A grist mill once operated adjacent to the Middle River water ford.

Located just four miles southwest of Winterset, the park consists of trails (including geocache sites and the Middle River Water Trail), a nature center, picnic shelters, modern campsites, yurts, and more. Inside the park, the Middle River water ford allows drivers to pilot their vehicles through the low waters, and provides some of the greatest numbers of channel and flathead catfish in the county. The park has also been designated one of the state's best places to view wildlife, and is now part of the Central Iowa Makoke Birding Trail.



Devil's Backbone State Park was renamed Pammel State Park and dedicated on June 30, 1930, in honor of Louis H. Pammel, a professor of botany and the State Board of Conservation's first chairman (1918-1927). Under his tenure, Iowa acquired thirty-eight state parks.



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"We think of a park as a place where there are trees like the maple and the basswood or the stately elm and the sycamore or white pine and cedar, the oak and the ash and they are all beautiful, but let [us] not forget that in Iowa at least we should have pride in the Prairie Park where the lily and gentian, the golden rod and aster, the blue stem and the switch grass, the pasque flower and Johnny-jump-up vie with each other in brilliant array, for it is to the prairie that we owe all of our greatness as a corn state." - Louis Pammel



Hanson Prairie Park in Winterset

Sights



Badger Creek

This state park offers over 700 acres of public land for hunting, boating, and bird watching.



Cedar Lake

Fishing and non-motorized boating, and picnic areas are available at this water reservoir.



City Park

Tour a covered bridge, explore a live English hedge maze, camp and hike up to Clark Tower.



Jensen Marsh

This 190-acre wildlife area is managed as a natural resource/public hunting area, and used for wildlife, bird viewing, and hiking.



Middle River Water Trail

Spanning over 45 miles, this popular water trail is perfect for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, and sightseeing!



Pammel Park Water Ford

Built in the 1920s, the ford allows for vehicle traffic when water levels are low enough, as well as swimming and fishing.

COVERED BRIDGES SCENIC BYWAY



Covered Bridges Scenic Byway is located in south central Iowa, thirty minutes from Des Moines, two hours from Omaha, less than three hours from Kansas City, four hours from Minneapolis, and less than six hours from Chicago. There are entrances to the byway from I-80 in DeSoto, and I-35 at Cumming, Bevington, and St. Charles.

The Covered Bridges Scenic Byway is one of fourteen designated Iowa Byways. It is 82 miles in length and incorporates the remaining historic covered bridges of Madison County, the John Wayne birthplace, the Madison County Historical Complex, the Iowa Quilt Museum, Pammel State Park, and many other sites.

WELCOME CENTERS

Madison County Chamber of Commerce
73 Jefferson Street, Winterset, Iowa 50273
Phone: 515-462-1185

St. Charles Welcome Center
202 E. Main Street, St. Charles, Iowa 50240
Phone: 641-396-2506



BYWAY CONTACT INFORMATION

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