Iowa- An American Portrait Essay, Research Paper

Iowa- An American Portrait

The film Iowa- An American Portrait was narrated by Tom Brokaw. It described the land, people, education, work, religion, and family life of Iowa. One of the main topics of the film was the general view of Iowa- the Farm State. Iowa has more than two- hundred- thousand farms; ninety- eight percent of Iowa s total land is used for production; with ninety percent of total land being used for the production of food.

Reverence for the great land and rich soil of Iowa began with the Native Americans. Many years later, European immigrants settled the land of Iowa. They first settled near the Mississippi River and spread through out Iowa in the short time span of forty years. They soon began farming the land and found that one family could make a good living on eighty acres. Work was a necessity to Iowans. It gave meaning and pride to life, and farming was a business that could be passed on from generation to generation.

Corn soon became the crop of choice to Iowa farmers. They found that it was more resistant to disease than the other crops they were growing, such as barley, oats, wheat, and apples. With this newfound wonder crop , Iowans found that farming had become the ideal way of life. Working on the farm involved all of the members of the family, which brought them together and made them stronger through hardships and great opportunities.

Draft horses used for plowing later became a luxury and farming soon lost its fun and joyful qualities. It was a time of greater hardship than ever before, but the freedom Iowa farmers had to work, worship, live, and play in their own way made it worth the despairing times.

Towns of all sizes began growing throughout Iowa. With them came churches, schools, businesses, and co-ops. The various institutions and businesses of the towns were flourishing. The children of Iowa were attending school regularly and doing well. The literacy rate of Iowa soon became the highest in the nation.

Farms weren t the only means of earning a living in Iowa. Saw and lumber mills were abundant along the upper Mississippi River, but the lumber supply being harvested was exhausted quickly, putting the mills out of business. Quaker Oats, a factory in Cedar Rapids, was a prosperous business. It employed hundreds of Iowans, as it still does today.

The land of Iowa is great in size and full of life, with green pastures, wetlands, forests, and prairies. Some of the first settlers to Iowa claimed that the land was green as far as the eye could see. Despite the many cities, towns and farms that have grown, that statement still holds true today, more than a century later.