Thats Where The Tall Corn Grows Essay, Research Paper

THAT’S WHERE THE TALL CORN GROWS On December 28, 1846, President James Knox Polk signed a bill of statehood that admitted Iowa to the Union. Our first permanent State Capitol was built in the 1840s in Iowa City. The state government later moved to Des Moines in 1857 and the Old Capitol building was given to the University of Iowa. Iowa means “beautiful land” and it says a lot in its famous rich soil. Robert Frost put it well when he said “It’s a shame to grow crops and run them through animals for food, because that black Iowa soil looks good enough to eat as it is.” There are more than 30,000 farms in the state of Iowa and 92% of its land is farmland. Iowa’s most significant crop is corn. The state covers 55,965 square miles and its highest elevation is 1,670 feet above sea level in Osceole County. According to the most recent census, the state of Iowa has about 2.8 million people and ranks 30th in the United States in population. Predominately white, the total population has 5% minorities and 95% Caucasians. Females are the minority that takes up 47.2% of the population. If you think that Iowa is full of nothing but “hicks” and “farmers” you might be interested to know that many Iowans became famous and impacted this country. Former President of the United States Herbert Hoover was born in West Branch, Iowa. He received his B.A. in Geology at Stanford University and married his wife Lou Henry who was also born in Iowa. There are twelve presidential libraries in the United States and one of these is dedicated to the 31st President of the United States, Herbert Hoover. Another Iowan began as a magician and later became a well-known stand-up comedian and talk show host, Johnny Carson. He hosted The Tonight Show for thirty years and first vocalized in the place he was born Corning, Iowa. Two sisters Esther and Pauline grew up in Sioux City and attended nearby Morningside College. They were married in a dual wedding ceremony. In the late 1950s Esther moved to Chicago and snatched a job writing a column titled “Ann Landers that syndicated in forty papers.” During this time Abigail moved to San Fransisco and began an advice column in the San Fransisco Chronicle. These women have been called “the most influential women in the United States” and the American Medical Association chose Ann Landers to receive the Citation for Distinguished Service. These are just a few impacting Iowans. Iowa is famous for agriculture and it is the nation’s 13th most productive manufacturer. Suprisingly, the fastest growing area in Iowa is its professional sector. The growth in this area is primarily because of Iowa’s insurance and financial services. Behind Hartford, Connecticut Iowa is the second largest insurance capital. In July of 1997 unemployment in Iowa reached in all time record low 2.6%. Based on the Iowa Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for 1997, the top ten employers by average employment in the state of Iowa include: Hy-Vee Food Stores, Deere & Company, Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Principal Financial Group, Rockwell International Corporation, IBP, Inc., Iowa Health Systems, APAC Teleservices, Inc., Mercy Hospital Medical Center, and K Mart Corporation. The fastest growing part of Iowa’s economy is its service and professional section. The average weekly wages in all industries in 1995 is $440. The most recent information on its average annual family income is $37,227. A quarter of the nation’s pork is produced in Iowa. In most years Iowa has also been the nation’s number one producer of corn, soybeans, and red meat. Although agriculture is a large part of Iowa, Iowans have also led the world in developing some of the most important technologies of the 20th century. Examples of this state’s inventiveness are the developments of the tractor and hybrid corn. John Froelich, an Iowan, built the world’s first tractor in 1892. Another Iowan Henry Wallace performed several experiments with corn breeding which eventually led him to produce high yielding corn or hybrid corn. The economy this year has been strong in Iowa. Income adjusted for inflation was expected to grow about 2.8% in 1997 and another 1.2% in 1998. According to a Presidential report from Bill Clinton, Iowa business failures have dropped by 33% in the last few years. The State of Iowa’s governmental revenues totaled $7,614.6 million for fiscal year 1997. There are five categories that make up governmental revenue from the state including: taxes make up 61% of Iowa’s revenue, receipts from other entities make 28% of the revenue, 5% is accumulated through fees, licenses, and permits, and 6% is other financing sources. Iowa’s expenditures in the year 1997 include: 29% in education, 29% in health & human services, 11% transportation, 11% general government, and 20% is other financing uses. With regard to debt, the State of Iowa’s Constitution prohibits the State from exceeding a maximum of $250 thousand general obligation debt without approval by voters. The state did not exceed that debt in fiscal year 1997. The history of education in Iowa shows the first schools were in 1857, the same year the Constitution created a State Board of Education (this was abolished in 1864). School terms at that time were a minimum of twenty-four weeks. The first high school in the State is credited to Tipton. Education is an important part of Iowa and a part we are proud of. We have one of the lowest adult illiteracy and high school drop out rates in the nation. The most recent U.S. census from 1990 shows the percent of population in Iowa that are not high school graduates is 19.9%. Our students consistently rank at or near the top in college entrance exams. Iowa’s average ACT college entrance exam result was 22.1 in 1997, which is Iowa’s all-time high. This state has more than 400 public school districts, 200 parochial and private schools, three state universities, 50 private colleges, and fifteen community colleges. Public school enrollment has steadily increased. Enrollment in education, kindergarten through twelfth grade was 505,587 in the school year 1996-97. Iowa has also seen growth in public higher education enrollment especially in community colleges over the last decade. In the are of technology, Iowa is up with the times the latest statistics show that during the year 1996-97 Iowa had 5.9 pupils per computer whereas the national average is ten. The percentage of Iowa school districts with Internet access in this school year is 91.6%. School districts have increased their outstanding obligation from one year ago by 18.6%. A large percentage of the increase is attributed to the construction of new school buildings. If you have watched the movie Field of Dreams you know why several people visit the field in Dyersville that represents “the space that is made for living and working amidst the dreaming.” Or if the movie Bridges of Madison County touched you, you may be one of the many tourists who visit these famous landmark covered bridges daily. Many bicyclists travel from all over the world to be in Iowa for our annual Registers Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI). Which is a ride from the Missouri River at the western border to the Mississippi River at the eastern border, around 500 miles. Every August, Des Moines hosts the annual Iowa State Fair, which consists of food, farm animals, music, contests, displays, entertainment, and other activities. Our fair is so famous Iowa native Phil Stong wrote about it. Will Rogers starred in the first screen production in 1932 and later was turned into a broadway musical which is still being done today. We have several National Parks in this state including Loess Hills and Ledges State Park. Among the many festivals held across Iowa to honor the heritage of her people is the Pella Tulip Festival. This annual event includes a parade with several people walking in wooden shoes. Pella is a touch of Holland and is known for their Dutch letters and several other pastries. Indianola is famous for their festival as well. Each year they have a carnival followed by several competitions involving hot air balloons. Companies from all over sponsor many of these balloons. Imagine what the sky looks like with hundreds of hot air balloons being launched at the same time to race. The sky is filled with colors and this exciting event brings thousands of people to this small town in Iowa.

Iowa is commonly called the rural state, however, this statement is misleading. Most Iowans do not live in the rural countryside or the city. As a matter of fact the majority of Iowans live in small towns. Classified as all farmland, Iowans are commonly referred to as “hicks.” However, national attention has been given to Iowa since the nation’s first political caucuses were held here. This has changed some of the stereotypes and confirmed others. Iowa Caucuses have existed in Iowa since about the time it became a state. When Iowa became a state in 1846, conventions was adopted to nominate candidates. The General Assembly reformed their nomination process in 1910 and created a statewide primary. This process was amended again in 1913 to include the selection of delegates to national conventions and a presidential poll. This became the only primary in Iowa because it was expensive and was criticized heavily for it. The process was left unchanged until about 1968 when the Iowa Democratic Party started a series of reforms to the delegate selection, which later effected the date for the precinct caucuses and grabbed national attention. In 1972 media interest in the Iowa Democratic caucuses started to pick up and George McGovern made a major success in Iowa and it caused media spotlight on Iowa. The Republicans decided to get in on the attention and beginning in 1976 they held their event the same day. This was the birth of Iowa caucuses, which are the nation’s first caucuses, and every four years many states do all they can to have the first caucus in their state. Similar to the national government Iowa’s government has three branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. The legislative branch makes the laws, the executive branch carries out the policies and programs, and the judicial branch settles any conflicts arising from interpretation or application of the law. Each branch has separate responsibilities but each cannot function without the others. The legislature is broken up into two sections, the House and the Senate. The presiding officer of the House is the “Speaker of the House.” The Speaker of the House has several duties which include: appointing members to committees, naming committee chairpersons, referring bills to committees, overseeing debates, and making procedural rulings. The Speaker is chosen by the members of the majority party and serves a two-year term. “President of the Senate” is the presiding officer of the Senate. This position is similar to the Speaker of the House except that the President cannot appoint committee chairpersons or members. Another branch of our government is the executive branch. This branch contains agencies that create state departments. The governor chooses a department head for each; this appointment is subject to approval by the Senate. There are two exceptions to this rule: Department of Justice is led by Attorney General and Department of Agriculture which is directed by Secretary of Agriculture. These positions are obtained by election by Iowa voters. The highest authority in the state of Iowa is the governor who is currently Terry Brandstad. The governor is elected for a four-year term and oversees all forms of state government. One important duty that that the governor has is the power to pass or veto a bill, the veto can be reversed if 2/3 of both houses vote to repass the bill. There are several other leaders in this branch which include: Lieutenant Governor (who succeeds the governor in case of death, impeachment, resignation, or disability), Secretary of State, Auditor of State, and Treasurer of State each who serve four year terms. Our Judicial System is similar to that of a hierarchy. There are two main levels of courts, trial courts and appellate courts. At the trial court level there are three further breakdowns with regard to Judges. These breakdowns are Magistrates, District Associate Judges, and District Judges. Magistrates are at the bottom of this pyramid having the authority to hear simple misdemeanors or civil suits for $2,000 or less within their county of residence. They are appointed by the Magistrate Appointing Commission and serve a four-year term. The next step up from the Magistrates is the District Associate Judges who hear serious and aggravated misdemeanor cases and civil suits up to $5,000. The District Judges from a list of three nominees appoints district Associate Judges. This list is submitted from the Magistrate Appointing Commission. The top of the trial courts is the District Judges who serve six-year terms and hear a variety of civil and criminal cases. The higher level of the court system is the appellate court, which consists of Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. Court of Appeals were created in 1976 to relieve some of the workload for the Supreme Court. There are six judges on the bench for the Court of Appeals and each serve six-year terms. Similar to the Supreme Court they review cases appealed at trial courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the state and has nine Justices. Each Justice is appointed by the Governor and serves an eight-year term. Those of us from Iowa have sung the words to the Iowa Corn Song several times in our lives. I was born and raised in Iowa and am proud to live in this honorable state. As you can see, Iowa has always been a progressive state and its people have embraced beneficial changes. Known for its farmland, by midyear 1997 it was worth 10 percent more than the year preceding. This says something about Iowa’s hardworking farmers and indicates strong farm income growth in the past several years and shows what it is ahead for us. The state of Iowa stresses the importance of education and hard work and rewards Iowans for it. In 1997 Iowa tied North Dakota for the second lowest average annual unemployment rate and has increased its personal income 5% from last year. Not only are more citizens working but also they are improving the quality of life by increasing their income. Students consistently rank first or second in the nation in ACT and SAT scores. These qualities show Iowa’s value of hard work. In return for this hard work the state has reduced personal income taxes by 10% across the board. This means that it will help every Iowa citizen. These reductions make Iowa more competitive and prove fair to all Iowans. This tells Iowans that the economy will only get stronger and stronger. REFERENCE LIST Robert Bresler, Robert Friedrich, Joseph Karlesy, and D. Grier Stephenson, Jr., American Government (HarperCollins Publishers, 1992). 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