



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

July 28, 2017

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Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Chair  
Culture and Heritage Committee  
Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Madison, WI

Dear Dr. Hawkins:

Following a visit, it is my privilege to re-commend Heritage Center Museum (operated by the Des Moines County Historical Society) as the 17<sup>th</sup> National Interpretative Center for the State of Iowa. The museum is located in a building completed in 1898 as a free public library by Philip Crapo, an insurance agent. This 17,000 square foot building combines Italianate, Renaissance Revival and Georgian Revival architectural styles. Mississippi River Parkway Commission Culture and Heritage Committee themes featured in the building include numbers one, two, three, six, seven, nine, ten and eleven.

Exhibits include the impact of the lumber companies and furniture manufactures in Burlington, a prairie root display; prairie restoration area which pays tribute to Burlington native Aldo Leopold, author of A Sand County Almanac; the Middle Woodland tribes and later the Sauk and Fox tribes and Chief Blackhawk; influence of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad line; the Underground Railroad; an ice harvesting diorama; the Bart Howard Room features The Blue Angel Night Club in New York City where he composed and played "Fly Me To The Moon" and other songs later performed by Frank Sinatra, Johnny Mathis and other jazz and cabaret greats; and Catfish Corner for children including a mock steamship, log cabin and general store.

For all of the reasons cited above, I believe the Heritage Center Museum (operated by the Des Moines County Historical Society) should be the 17<sup>th</sup> National MRPC Interpretative Center in the State of Iowa.

  
Edith Reiss Pfeffer, Chair  
Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission