



Continue on Road to Abbe Creek School

Old Lincoln Highway

Shoe Tree
Old Interurban Route
Brick Street and Railroad Overpass

Davis Park
Ash Park
Historic District
Cornell College
Historical District
Pres Hill
Old Interurban Route
"Uptown on the Hill" Historical Business District

Old Middle School
Brick Factory Site
Cemetery

Old Limestone Quarry (Nature Park)
"The Rock" Hillcrest Country Club (One of oldest public courses in Iowa)

Red Brick Farmsteads (Historic Landmarks)

Dillon's Furrow
Old Military Road

"I like the countryside atmosphere around Mount Vernon."

"Davis Park is constantly used and has three 120 year old cottonwoods!"

"I love the iconic, traditional and old fashioned feeling of the downtown."

"The houses up the hill from Cornell College— Oh how I love them!"

"[There is a] beautiful, historic, and social culture with front porches on older homes."

"We like to hang out at Ink Pond and stand around talking and catching frogs."

"Students comb their hair with a hand mirror in the moonlight beneath the ginkgo tree [on Cornell campus] and wait to see their true love in the reflection."

"The old train bridge is so unique. It is always a destination during our family bike rides."

"Every 20 minutes a train goes through and the noise used to annoy us. Now it is a comforting sound— like a community rhythm."

Historically Speaking

Mount Vernon residents love their history, which is so closely intertwined and related to their beloved architecture that it is often hard to distinguish the two. In fact, Mount Vernon's architecture is a large part of its history.

According to special places mapping workshop attendees, there are three official historic districts in Mount Vernon: Uptown Historic District on 1st Street, which is the business district; Cornell College Campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places; and the Ash Park Historic Neighborhood, a neighborhood with outstanding visual qualities created by

well maintained Victorian homes on streets lined with large, mature trees.

No discussion of Mount Vernon history would be complete without mentioning, as many residents did, the historic Lincoln Highway, which ran through the heart of town. Segments still remain. It was the first transcontinental highway in the United States and one with a much celebrated past.

Of more local significance is the old interurban rail service that connected Lisbon to Cedar Rapids through Mount Vernon. The alignment is still visible at either end of town and is often thought of by trail advocates as a perfect

regional trail opportunity.

A railroad is still active on the northern edge of town and trains pass through town approximately every 20 minutes. One fairly new resident has overcome her early dislike for the disruption and now looks forward to the sound of the passing trains. She feels as if it brings a comforting rhythm to the community.

Workshop participants described their own favorite historical sites. One woman said the residential neighborhood south of 1st Street and east of the college makes her feel as if she were living in a post-Victorian age. One young girl loves the three huge and more than 120-year-old cottonwood trees in Davis Park. The loud rustle of the cottonwood leaves marks the

coming of autumn to some in the park's neighborhood. Another popular site is Pres Hill, starting at the Presbyterian Church heading downhill on 3rd Avenue NW. The city blocks off the street at certain times in the winter for sledding.

Several young residents cited Ink Pond on campus as a favorite location, noted for its opportunities for rock throwing and socializing. The old bridge over the railroad tracks on the old Lincoln Highway alignment has been converted to pedestrian use and is a favorite spot to experience the trains as they pass beneath.

Northwest of town on Mount Vernon Road, outside the city limits, is an old, one-room schoolhouse known as Abbe Creek School.

Historically Speaking

Mount Vernon, Iowa

Landscape Architect: Craig Ritland, FASLA, Craig Ritland Landscape Architects

Iowa Department of Transportation Trees Forever ISU Landscape Architecture Extension ISU Extension Community and Economic Development

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