



Irving B. Weber Days: Spotlight on Local History

May 2008

The purpose of Weber Days is to honor the life of Iowa City's beloved late historian Irving B. Weber (1900-1997), and to bring history alive through programs and events. The following events, held throughout the entire month of May, are free and open to the public except as otherwise noted. For updated information, go to www.icpl.org/weber.

"Weber Days Presents: History of the Iowa City Airport" Thursday, May 1, 2008, 12:00 Noon, ICPL Meeting Room A. Jan Olive Nash, from Tallgrass Historians, L.C., will discuss her recent publication, "Iowa City Municipal Airport: Opening the West to Aviation, 1918-2007". Bring a lunch – ice cream and beverages will be provided.

"Hand Printing Press Demonstration" Saturday, May 3, 2008, 1:00-3:00 PM, Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Road, Coralville (across from Marriott). Associates from the UI Center for the Book will demonstrate historical printing on a hand-set printing press.

"Online History Resource Training" Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 10:30 AM, IC Public Library Training Room. Become your own historian and learn how to use the Iowa Heritage Digital Collection and other online history resources. Preregistration required – call the Reference Desk at 356-5200, Option 5.

"Trains Across Iowa" Saturday, May 10, 2008, 2:00 PM, Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Road, Coralville (across from Marriott). Dr. Rudolph Daniels will discuss the past, present and future of Iowa's railroads. This program is provided through the Humanities Iowa Speakers Bureau.

"Third Thursday – Music from Times Past with Dan Knight" Thursday, May 15, 2008, 12 Noon, IC Public Library Room A. Join pianist Dan Knight as we travel down memory lane with Music from Times Past, selected especially for the 55+ age group. Call ahead to reserve a complimentary lunch – 356-5200, Option 5. Also telecast live on Library Cable Channel 10.

"Johnson County Historical Museum Backstage Tour" Thursday, May 15, 2:00 PM., 860 Quarry Road, Coralville (across from Marriott). Curator Leigh Ann Randak will conduct a "behind the scenes" tour and share stories of items with a connection to Irving Weber and his Iowa City. Space is limited – call 351-5738 to reserve your spot.

"Weber History Lecture: Iowa Polio Stories" Friday, May 16, 2008, 12 Noon, IC Public Library, Room A. Kate Scott will discuss the Iowa Polio Stories project (www.iowapoliostories.org). Cablecast live on Library Cable Channel 10; ice cream served.

"Second Annual Parade of Northside, Goosetown and Summit Street Historic Homes" Sunday, May 18, 2008 from 1:00-5:00 PM. Sponsored by the Friends of Historic Preservation. Multiple locations, including the recently moved Isaac Wetherby Cottage. Small fee charged to support local historic preservation. See www.ic-fhp.org for detailed information.

"UI Archeology Field School at Plum Grove" May 19 – June 6, 2008 (except for Memorial Day), M-F, 8 AM-5PM, Plum Grove, 1030 Carroll St. Iowa City. Examine the work of UI Archeology students at their annual exploration of the grounds of Plum Grove, home of Robert Lucas, Iowa's first territorial governor. Call 351-5738 for more info.

"Weber Chautauqua – Family Storytime: Froggy Went a Courtin' Musical Storytime with Mike Haverkamp" Celebrate Weber Days with some toe-tapping tunes and ice cream! Saturday, May 24, 2008, 10:30 AM, IC Public Library Room A. Cablecast live on Library Channel 10.

"Old Fashioned Games at Plum Grove", May 24-25, 2008, 1-5 PM, 1030 Carroll St., Iowa City. The Johnson Co. Historical Society invites everyone to tour the grounds and gardens of this historic home, and visitors of all ages can try their hand at some 19th century games. For more information, call 351-5738.

"Ice Cream Social and Family Festival" Saturday, May 31, 2008. 1-4 PM, City Park, Iowa City. Weber Days 2008 marks the return of the beloved ice cream social! Along with free ice cream, come enjoy a performance by the Iowa City Community Band, horse-drawn wagon rides, old-fashioned games, and much more! Sponsored in part by KCJJ Radio, with special assistance from the Iowa City Host Noon Lions Club (Weber's own chapter). Ice cream courtesy of Roberts Dairy.

Displays all month at the IC Public Library: Iowa City Historic Preservation Awards; Local History Resources; Weber School House Models; Iowa City Collectibles; "Opening Doors – Contemporary African-American Academic Surgeons".

Look for displays of local photography in Iowa City downtown businesses the entire month of May. Various locations including University Camera, Iowa Artisans Gallery, Chait Gallery, and State Historical Society of Iowa. Organized by Marybeth Slonneger and sponsored by Roger Christian of University Camera.

For more information, call Kara Logsden at the Iowa City Public Library, 319.887.6007.

All events are free (unless otherwise stated) and open to the public.

Irving Weber Days are made possible by the City of Iowa City, the Iowa City Public Library, and the Johnson County Historical Society.

Who was Irving B. Weber?



Irving B. Weber lived his entire life, and almost the entire 20th Century, in his beloved Iowa City. His family's roots were deep into the beginnings of Iowa City, as his maternal great-grandparents settled in Iowa City in 1839. His paternal grandparents came to town in 1857. He was born in 1900, the momentous beginning of a new century. He was educated in Iowa City public schools, and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1922.

Irving first made his mark on the world while attending the University of Iowa. He was the University's first All-American swimmer. After graduation, his part-time job with the Sidwell Dairy in Iowa City became a lifelong occupation. In 1944 he helped organize Quality Check Dairies and was its president until he retired in 1966. He was also the local school board president in 1952-53.

At an age when most people retire, another career opened up for Irving when he started writing historical articles for the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* in 1973. During this second career, Weber wrote more than 800 articles, half of which were compiled into eight published volumes. His view of history was not one of a dull retelling of facts and names. He told of what it was like to grow up in Iowa City, the best places to buy penny candy, the joys of cooling off in Melrose Lake in the summer, and of sledding parties on closed-off streets. He recorded for future generations the story of Iowa City as no one else could.

Weber's research is used to this day, and will be used by untold future Iowa Citizens who study Iowa City's first full century. Sales of his published volumes of history benefited the Lions Club, of which Irving was an active member since 1931. Weber earned the Lion's International President's Award in 1990.

In 1989, in gratitude for his work in recording local history, Irving B. Weber was named as Iowa City's Official Historian.

One of Irving Weber's proudest moments came in 1994, when the Irving B. Weber Elementary School was opened. Weber's name was quickly nominated when the new school was planned, and a vote of the community assured his selection. Weber enriched the lives of students with frequent visits and birthday parties.

Irving B. Weber died in 1997, barely missing a century of life. Living true to character, his last days were spent writing history and listening to Iowa basketball games on the radio. His colleagues in the Lions Club honored his memory in 2003 with a statue of his likeness on Iowa Avenue at Linn Street.

More information about Irving Weber is available in a recently published book: [Iowa City's Irving Weber](#) by Lolly Parker Eggers.

What is Irving B. Weber Day?

A day to honor Irving B. Weber's memory was first established in Iowa City in 1998. It is befitting the memory of Irving that one day each year we focus on appreciating the rich history of Iowa City, not only events early in the century, but our more recent history as well. Just as Irving recorded history of the 20th Century, it is hoped that by remembering Irving we are helping to instill the desire to appreciate Iowa City's history in the years to come.