

“Bridges of Madison County”? in Iowa

From an iconic baseball field to nostalgic covered bridges, Iowa is fortunate to lay claim to several sites made famous in feature films.

Field of Dreams – Dyersville

“Go the Distance” like Kevin Costner and visit this family century farm with a baseball diamond carved into its heart, the original site of movie filming. No organized activities – bring your own baseball equipment and play on this world-famous field. Or walk out of the corn like the ghosts in the movie.



State Fair – Des Moines

The original novel State Fair was based on Iowa’s annual event. Scenes for the first State Fair movie, released in 1933 and featuring Will Rogers and Janet Gaynor, were filmed on the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. Held annually since 1854, the Fair attracts more than one million people during its 11-day run in August.

Cold Turkey – Greenfield

The bulk of the film, about a tobacco company offering \$25 million to a town that could quit smoking for 30 days, was shot in Greenfield. Dick Van Dyke starred and many residents appeared as extras. Terrace Hill in Des Moines, home to Iowa’s governor, was also featured in the movie.

The Straight Story – Laurens

Alvin Straight (1921–1996) lived quietly until he went on an unusual journey that put him in the spotlight. The Laurens resident took a 240-mile road trip — on a lawn mower. At age 73, Straight wanted to see his brother Henry in Wisconsin, whom he hadn’t spoken to for almost a decade. Much of the movie was shot in Laurens. Visitors can see the Alvin Straight House and sit on the actual lawn mower he drove on his odyssey.

Bridges of Madison County – Winterset area

Romanticized in Iowan Robert Waller’s novel and brought to life on the silver screen by Clint Eastwood

and Meryl Streep in the movie of the same name, the historic covered bridges are scattered across the countryside. Maps to the bridges are available from the Winterset Chamber of Commerce office. Fans will also recognize other locations featured in the movie, such as the Northside Café on the town square and the stone bridge. Francesca's House, which had been abandoned for 35 years before being fully-restored for the movie, was damaged by arson in 2003.



Other locations of interest:

Iowa's ties to movies extend beyond actual film locations. Birthplaces and museums celebrate several famous entertainers who once called Iowa home.

Donna Reed Center for the Performing Arts – Denison

This 1914 German opera house is located in the hometown of Academy Award-winning actress Donna Reed. It houses the Donna Reed Heritage Museum, Donna Reed Theatre and Reiney's Soda Fountain. Exhibits include Reed's awards and honors, photos of The Donna Reed Show cast, personal and movie memorabilia from her life and scenes from her movies. View recently discovered letters from Donna to her pen pal of 48 years. Admire a miniature model of Bedford Falls, the town from It's a Wonderful Life. Schedule a guided tour of the theater and enjoy a treat at the restored turn-of-the-century soda fountain.

Birthplace of John Wayne – Winterset

This modest four-room house, built in the 1880s, has been restored to the way it appeared in 1907, the year of John Wayne's birth. Collection includes rare photographs of the Duke and memorabilia from his movie career. Plans have been developed for construction of an 8,500 square foot John Wayne Learning Center adjacent to the home. This new facility will provide an exciting, interactive experience for the whole family and will develop programs and opportunities to teach the values of citizenship, respect, trustworthiness, responsibility and caring.



Birthstone of Captain James T. Kirk, Riverside

View the birthstone of Starfleet Captain James T. Kirk, who, according to the popular TV show Star Trek, will be born in Riverside on March 22, 2233. See a scale model of the USS Riverside, which resembles the USS Enterprise, docked in the city park.

Meredith Willson Boyhood Home, Mason City

Meredith Willson, the famous band leader and composer of The Music Man, was born in Mason City in 1902. The Music Man Square development re-creates the flavor of River City with a streetscape based on the set designs from the original musical. Music Man Square complements the Meredith Willson Boyhood Home, which is filled with family memorabilia, musical treasures and period furnishings.

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