



Legislative Services Agency

Ground Floor, State Capitol, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, 515.281.5129

Legislative Information Office

Pieces of Iowa's Past

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides monthly, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

America 250 and Iowa's Revolutionary Roots

July 2026



The United States commemorated its 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026, marking 250 years since the adoption of the United States Declaration of Independence. The Declaration formally announced that the 13 colonies were separating from Great Britain during the American Revolutionary War.

Even though Iowa was not yet a state during the Revolution, Iowa's story can be connected through how the founding of the United States eventually led to westward expansion, territorial organization, and Iowa's admission as a state. Iowa became a state in 1846, and a number of Revolutionary War veterans migrated west later in life and were ultimately buried in Iowa.

The Revolutionary War Memorial on the grounds of the Iowa State Capitol commemorates those who fought in the Revolutionary War but later settled and were buried in Iowa and demonstrates that Iowa's story is connected directly to the nation's founding generation.

When the Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (IASSAR) was founded in 1893, one of its founding goals was to create a monument honoring these veterans. That vision finally became reality over a century later, when the Iowa State Capitol Planning Commission approved the project on April 17, 2002.



Located south of the Iowa State Capitol, the Revolutionary War Memorial is on the Capitol grounds between East Walnut Street and East Court Avenue.

By early November, the site was complete — featuring a circular sidewalk, central monolith, and 13 granite pillars — just in time for its official dedication on Veterans Day, November 11, 2002. Surrounding the monument are maple trees grown from cuttings taken from George Washington's Mount Vernon estate, planted in 1993 to mark IASSAR's centennial.

The memorial's central obelisk is surrounded by 13 granite pillars with patriotic quotations dedicated to the original colonies. Each granite pillar is engraved with a U.S. state's name, its motto, and its date of ratification of the Constitution. The front of each bears a patriotic phrase from the Revolutionary War era. Wild roses, Iowa's state flower, grow between the pillars.



*Georgia
Wisdom, Justice and
Moderation
U.S. Constitution ratified
January 2, 1788
"One if by land. Two if by sea."
Paul Revere*

*Photographed by
Beverly Pfingsten*

The central obelisk was originally inscribed with the names of 39 Revolutionary War veterans buried across the state. Additional names have been verified and added in recent years through historical research. Today, there are 41 names. The inscriptions include the state from which the veteran migrated and the county in which the veterans were buried.

The veterans commemorated on the memorial served in various roles — as soldiers in the Continental Army and militias, scouts, spies, quartermasters, artillerymen, and musicians. They fought in iconic battles like Trenton, Saratoga, and Yorktown and endured brutal winters at Valley Forge.

