

A Historical Timeline of Cedar Falls

1700-1750	The Meskwaki (Fox), after having been forced out of their former homes further east, move into the area by 1750. They are allied with the Sauk through language and culture.
1750-1832	Pressure from European expansion increases competition for resources between the Meskwaki and Sauk, and the Dakota (Sioux). In 1825, a wide swath of land called the "Neutral Ground" was created just north of Black Hawk County angling up into Northeast Iowa to provide a buffer between the warring tribes.
1832-1846	The Black Hawk War leads to further land cessations and the forced removal of the remaining Native Americans from Iowa.
1837	Paul Somaneaux, a French fur trapper and hunter, scouts the area. He returns about ten years later to settle on the Cedar River where he builds a cabin and lives until his death sometime between 1850-1860.
1838	The Territory of Iowa is officially organized on 4 July by an act of Congress. Robert Lucas, of Ohio, is the first territorial Governor.
1843	Black Hawk County is created by the Territorial Legislature of Iowa and attached to Delaware County for judicial, election, and revenue purposes. The county is named for the Sauk Chief Black Hawk (Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-keah).
1845	Black Hawk County is attached to Benton County. William Sturgis and his family become the first permanent non-Native American settlers in the region. Erasmus D. Adams and his family settle near the Sturgis family. The local settlement is named Sturgis Falls and has a population of 14.
1846	Roxie (Mrs. Jackson) Taylor opens the first school in the area in her home at Waterloo Rd. and East 13 th St. On October 1, Jeannette Sturgis is the first non-Native American to be born in the area. On December 28 Iowa is admitted to the Union as the 29 th state.
1847	<p>Feb - John Milton Overman, Dempsey Overman and John T. Barrick arrive in Sturgis Falls to build a dam and mill on the Red Cedar River.</p> <p>Fall - William Sturgis accepts John Overman's offer to buy his property, and moves from the area.</p>

1848	The Overmans and Barrick dig a mill race and build a dam across the Red Cedar River, providing water power to their saw mill (the first in the county).
1849	<p>Sturgis Falls is re-christened Cedar Falls.</p> <p>Dempsey Overman becomes the first Postmaster of Cedar Falls. So little mail arrived that Dempsey carried the letters under his hat and delivered them to the addressees when he saw them in town.</p>
1850	<p>Andrew Mullarky arrives in Cedar Falls and opens the first retail store in the county.</p> <p>Samuel H. Rownd arrives from Ohio with land warrants from Mexican War soldiers. He purchases several thousand acres from 18th Street southward.</p> <p>The Cedar Falls Post Office opens.</p> <p>A grist mill is added to the mill race, attracting customers from 100 miles away.</p> <p>Cedar Fall Flour Mills is organized by Overman Co.</p>
1851	Black Hawk County is attached to Buchanan County.
1853	<p>Cedar Falls is incorporated.</p> <p>Aug 17 - Black Hawk County forms county government, with Cedar Falls as the county seat.</p> <p>The first community school opens on the corner of 5th and Main Streets.</p> <p>The Overmans donate a plot of land downtown (now Overman Park) to be used for the construction of the county courthouse.</p> <p>The Masonic Lodge (Black Hawk Lodge No. 65) is organized in Cedar Falls.</p> <p>Population: 40</p>
1854	<p>A group of men from Waterloo attempt to steal the county records for transplant to Waterloo, but are successfully thwarted by Cedar Falls residents lobbing rotten eggs.</p> <p>Feb 6 - The Cedar Falls township is organized.</p> <p>Jun 1 - First Black Hawk County office opens in room of Andrew Mullarky's house. Rented for \$8 per month.</p> <p>Jul 11 - The area's first newspaper, the <i>Cedar Falls Banner</i> (now <i>The Courier</i>) begins publication.</p>

1855	<p>Apr 2 - Waterloo pushes a vote through the Iowa General Assembly to move the county seat to Waterloo. The local vote passes 388 to 260, making Waterloo the new county seat. First election of Cedar Falls township officers. Hon. J. M. Overman is elected the first Mayor of Cedar Falls.</p> <p>Population: 450</p>
1856	Peter Melendy settles in Cedar Falls and becomes a major influence in area politics, education, industry and commerce.
1857	A passing Winnebago tribe holds a pow-wow (war dance) near downtown Cedar Falls, on 3rd Street. Decked in full war paint and regalia, the tribe is preparing for a battle with the Sioux tribe near Newell's Ford.
1858	<p>Feb 18 - The Cedar Valley Horticulture and Literary Association (forerunner of the Cedar Falls Public Library) is organized.</p> <p>Population: 1500</p>
1859	<p>Samuel Rownd returns to Cedar Falls with his family.</p> <p>Population: 1500</p>
1860	Population: 1600
1861	<p>Mar 30 - The Illinois Central Railroad is completed, linking Cedar Falls to Chicago. Continued efforts westward to Sioux City are stalled by the Civil War, making Cedar Falls the westward terminus from 1861-1865.</p> <p>Cedar Falls sends Black Hawk County's first company of soldiers, "The Pioneer Grays," for the Union cause.</p>
1863	<p>The Cedar Falls and Minnesota Railroad is completed.</p> <p>Dec 9 - Telegraph services arrive in Cedar Falls, thanks to the Western Union company. The first message, from Platt Smith of Dubuque, reads, "DID I NOT TELL YOU SO."</p> <p>Central School (later re-named Lincoln School) is constructed on the site of the current Lincoln School grounds.</p>
1867	The Cedar Falls Fire Department is established, with 85 citizens enrolled. It has a single Silsby Steam Fire Engine and two hose carts.

	Population: 3388
1868	A home for orphans of Civil War soldiers opens one mile south of Cedar Falls. Waterloo surpasses Cedar Falls in population.
1876	The Iowa State Normal School opens on the site of the Civil War Soldiers' Orphans' Home, which is renamed North Hall.
1884	Cedar Falls now enjoys direct rail connections to Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, Chicago, New Orleans, Kansas City, Sioux City, Des Moines and Burlington.
1888	The Cedar Falls City Council votes to construct a water works utility at Dry Run and establish city-wide piping. This major project allows residents to obtain water in their homes without cisterns, wells, or manual "toting" of water in buckets from the spring.
1893	Population: 6178
1909	Iowa State Normal School is renamed the Iowa State Teacher's College.
1910	Frank Cotton opens the Cotton Theatre in downtown Cedar Falls.
1915	Sartori Memorial Hospital is constructed with funds bequeathed by Joseph Sartori, Sr.
1918	The Cotton Theatre is renamed the Regent Theatre. Merle Blair, the new owner and manager, promotes his theatre through imaginative marketing schemes, such as bicycle, nylon and other prize giveaways.
1921	The Cedar Falls Ice Company's Ice House is constructed on the bank of the Cedar River.
1924	The second Lincoln School is constructed to replace the 1863 building.
1961	The Iowa State Teacher's College is renamed the State College of Iowa
1965	Jul 22 - The Old Central section of the State College of Iowa burns to the ground.

1967	The State College of Iowa is renamed the University of Northern Iowa.
1970	The mill race is filled in to become the current First Street.
1978	The Cedar Falls Community Theatre is organized with the assistance of the Cedar Falls Recreation Center.
1987	Cedar Falls Community Main Street is founded to help preserve the historic downtown district and to support economic revitalization.
1991	The Regent Theatre is gifted to the Cedar Falls Community Theatre (CFCT) organization by the Blair Family and Beck Trust. The Cedar Falls community raises \$1.2 million to renovate and restore the building.
1994	June - The Regent Theatre is renamed the Oster-Regent Theatre.
2006	The third Lincoln Elementary School is constructed to replace the 1924 building.
<p>Information gleaned and cross-referenced from various sources, including: <i>When Cedar Falls Was Young</i>, Roger Leavitt, ed., Record Press, Cedar Falls, 1928.</p>	