

Theme Towns:

The Pitfalls and Alternatives of Image Making

by Mira Engler

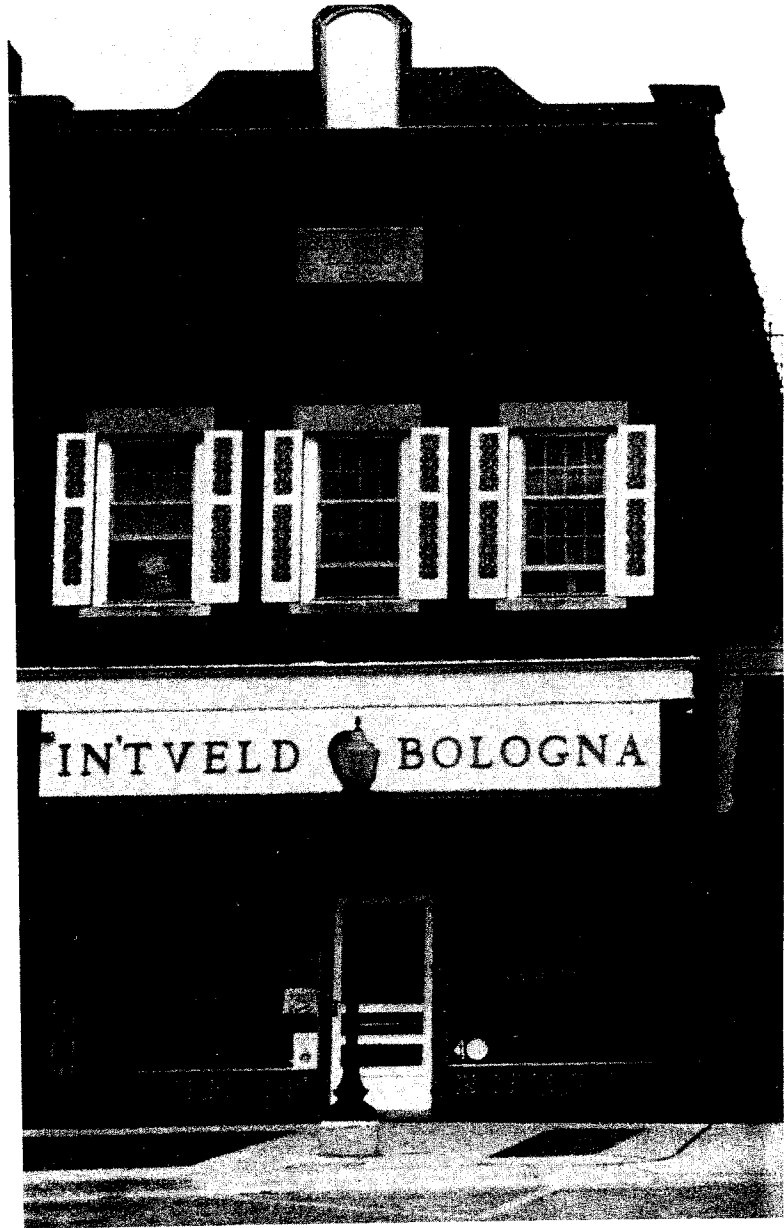
In a *Small Town* article published a few years ago, Marti Willetts of Albia, Iowa, described her experience of living on the town square in a restored second-floor apartment: "It's just like living in Disney world. I look through my front windows at the wonderful Albia Square and feel as if I'm in Disney's Main Street U.S.A. with the little shops and people walking around and things going on."¹ But Marti did not realize that Disney's Main Street image is based on those real images existing in small towns like Albia. Mrs. Willetts' description expresses the dependence people have on images shaped by commercial settings and the mass media and also exemplifies a desire of people who live in small towns to revive community identity and the lost vitality of their downtowns.

Today, town image or theme is a popular small town topic of discussion. The quest for a town theme is openly and loudly pursued at many town meetings. Without a theme for your town, claim the proponents, you have nothing that pulls the community together, no identity and certainly no guide for future development. Besides, a lack of a theme may mean that you simply cannot market yourself.

A recent community-based economic development endeavor in small towns is tourism. Tourism has become an alternative in many agriculturally-based communities that have suffered economic downturns.

Tourism development, some claim, is also a type of psychological advocacy—a way to show pride in cultural heritage; a way to elevate the pain resulting from the desertion of industry, businesses and youngsters; and a way to revitalize and recapture the vitality that once dominated Main Street. In tourism, an image based on consumer society marketing concept seems to be an essential ingredient.

Many extension publications, journal articles and state-published guides are helping communities plan for and develop an image. As a result, small communities manufacture new images and transform their townscapes and lifestyles to make the image real. Rarely are the impacts of thematic development on small town landscape and community values questioned or the idea of theme town phenomenon explored.²



Creating a town image or theme is not a solution to a problem. Appealing to tourists could prove viable to a small town's economy, but it doesn't have to be done by imposing a theme on the community. Thematic development as a strategy to develop tourist trade holds many pitfalls that impinge on community values and landscapes. However, when the options of tourism development are carefully

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Many Iowa towns have tried to turn themselves into theme towns. Often, the first clue to this transition is the appearance of ethnic signs on the community's downtown buildings. Communities dress up their downtown areas by adding touches that reflect the real or imagined heritage that they want to emulate. The gate leading to this downtown alley in Pella, Iowa, consciously imitates the Medieval gates leading into European towns and cities. All photographs in this article courtesy of Mira Engler.

ethnic neighborhoods served as social centers for the acculturation of immigrants and were not intentionally used to market an image. Only in the 1960s did mayors and chambers of commerce realize that local identity could be converted into a moneymaker in the new age of universal mobility. This conversion instigated the fabrication and enforcement of images foreign to the community and the townscape.

Thematic development was first realized in older neighborhoods of large cities and in neighboring towns. An example would be New Orleans' French Quarter in the 1960s. It continued to rule in new commercial parks, such as Marine World in

evaluated and carried through, tourism growth could protect landscape resources and cultural traditions and enrich quality of life. To explore these disadvantages and advantages, let's review the history of thematic development.

Historical Overview

The concept of landscape theming can be traced to the early theme parks (such as the Chicago Colombian Exposition in 1893, New York World Fair in 1939) and their successors, the Disney parks (Disneyland, opened in 1955), and to ethnic urban districts (Chinatowns, Little Italies). While theme parks set out to promote material progress and consumer culture,

Sonom. County, California, and spread to new residential suburbs, such as Seaside, Florida.

Although a few small Iowa towns began thematic developments as early as the 1970s, only in the 1980s was theming adopted as a commercial marketing strategy by dozens of communities and even a few farmsteads. Unable to target national or regional tourism, rural small towns with limited attraction power and resources capitalized on interstate travelers (I-80, in particular) and on local tourism. Enticing travelers to enter and spend a few dollars in town has proven to be successful. For example, in 1980 the small town of Elk Horn attracted 80,000 visitors, mostly interstate travelers.

The success of some Iowa towns in "commoditizing"

tourism led other communities to follow suit. For some towns, developing a theme requires amplifying an existing rudimentary theme. But, for most others, it requires reincarnating a past image or developing an image of a foreign reality.

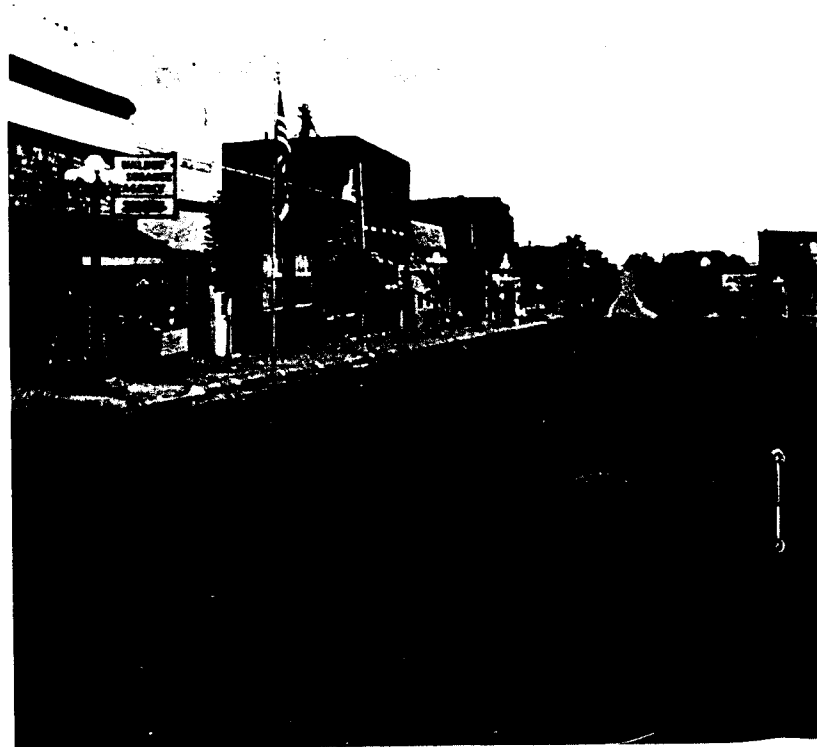
Theme Towns' Tourist Package

When Iowa's tourist-oriented theme towns are scrutinized, four major themes emerge: ethnic heritage, frontier/pioneer, good-old-town and country charm. The key to understanding these themes lies in their relationships to the past. The ethnic heritage theme revives the memory of the Old World, that is, the European roots of many Iowan communities. The frontier/pioneer theme encapsulates Iowa's early settlements, forts and battlefields. The good-old-town theme captures the 1920s prosperous Main Street and its vital public life, and, finally, the image of agrarian America's preindustrial farms and countryside is realized and framed in the country charm theme. As one drives along Interstate 80, one encounters a Czech village, Danish villages, a Dutch village, an antique city, living history farms, several pioneer or train museums, several log cabins, a fort museum, a dozen historical villages or museums and even a memorial farmstead.

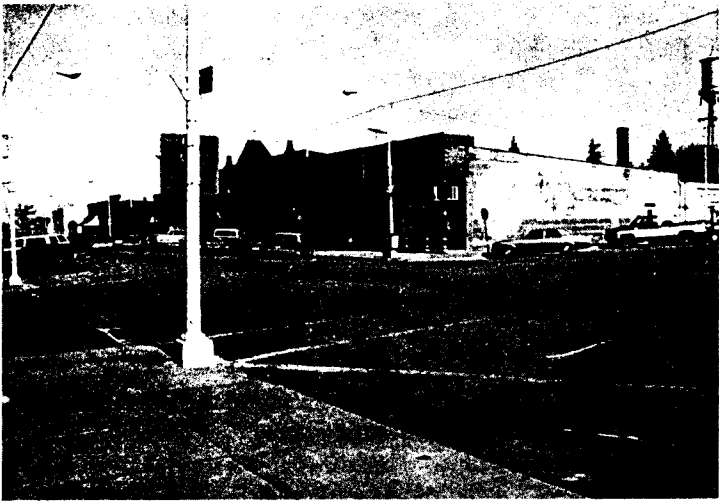
Whatever the theme type, it is well-packaged for nostalgia-seeking tourists. The package includes several essential ingredients: logos and slogans, welcoming signs, festivals and special events, inns and bed and breakfasts, restored or remodeled buildings, replicated or transplanted buildings, historical or ethnic museums, historical or ethnic villages, central attractions, tourist stores, old transportation modes, giant specimens and miniature artifacts, and miniature toy collections.

While each ingredient alone has a limited impact on the town, when combined, they instill new looks, project messages alien to the place and community, and change peoples' daily patterns and lifestyles. All of the themes offer experiences of the rural, small, pedestrian-friendly town atmosphere of the early or preautomobile era. Following are brief descriptions of the major elements used by communities as they develop their theme and the associated attractions.

Logos and slogans. Logos and slogans are used in promotional adds and brochures, on signs and street banners, and on storefront windows to promote and advertise the town's tourist "goods." They are carefully designed to whet tourists' appetites and meet their nostalgic quests. For example, Pella, Iowa, is a "touch of Holland," Elk Horn is "a little piece of Denmark," Fort Dodge is the "frontier of the future," Walnut is "Iowa's antique city," and Lamoni is "Iowa's Quilt City." Kalona's slogan reads "Visit that Kalona Country charm," Fort Atkinson invites people to "Take a journey into the past," Walnut offers to "Take a walk back in time," and "Come and feel the magic" sets the tone for Stanhope's "Country relics little village and homestead." Sometimes the town's central attraction—a windmill in Pella and a fort in Fort Dodge, a "smiling" water tower in Adair or a steamboat in Clinton—are used as town logos.



Counterclockwise from top right: Tourist shops enliven the historic district of a small Iowa town and fill storefronts that would probably remain empty without tourist support. A German motif adds charm to a mall (middle right) in Manning, Iowa. The shops only sell tourist-oriented gifts, however. Local residents must shop elsewhere for their goods. Main street in Manning, Iowa (bottom right). The main street in Walnut, Iowa (below), a town of less than 1,000 people, is typical of the small farming communities that line the roads of the state. Tourist dollars, however, have enabled the downtown to revitalize itself. The attractive brick paving is a new addition to the community. The Stable (left), a new shopping complex in Okoboji, Iowa is made up of old barns that have been moved to the area



Welcoming signs. Welcoming signs beckon and welcome travelers to town. In addition to featuring a town's slogan and logo, they often advertise festivals or dates for special events. *Velkommen*, *Willkommen* and *Bitte Kommen Wieder* (please come again) greet visitors coming and departing ethnic towns. Some towns embellish their entrances with memorable 3-D artifacts—a rotating cornstalk in Coon Rapids and a miniature windmill in Pella make a visit memorable.

Festivals and special events. Festivals and special events are a promised boost to local businesses and to community pride. The number of festivals have recently doubled. Even in small towns of less than one thousand people, two or three major festivals are often held per year. "Good Ole Days" in Kalona, "Frontier Days" in Fort Dodge, "Pioneer Days" in Clarksville and Morrison, "Scandinavian Days" in Story City, "Weihnachtsfest" in Manning and "Julefest" in Elk Horn invite people to repopulate Main Street and mix with folk dancers, local bands, old threshers and new tractors, antique cars and Disney's figures Mickey and Mini. A parade, carnival rides and crafts displays are complemented with a flea market and a petting zoo. Ethnic food booths stand alongside a fast-food court, where Pizza Hut and the Lions Club hotdogs are sold. Without street banners and T-shirts displaying the festival's name and logo, it is easy to mistake one festival with another.

Inns and bed and breakfast establishments. These offer necessary accommodations that are usually missing in small towns. They extend tourists' visits and increase their spending. Recently, the number of bed and breakfasts has increased rapidly in small rural Iowa towns. Often a restored mansion, an old Victorian house or a farmstead furnished with antiques and nostalgic collectibles offers the tourist an informal, intimate atmosphere along with a flavor of the area. The Stables, a bed and breakfast located in a contemporary farmhouse near Kalona, imparts "the beauty of the Iowa countryside...in the secluded hills near historic Kalona." The Mason Inn in Bentonsport, in addition to guest rooms, houses a gift shop and offers tours with detailed descriptions of every piece of antique furniture in the inn. Other inns or bed and breakfasts have the capability to expand into a conference center for small groups or feature a full-service restaurant where a hired crew replaces the homeowners' personal service.

Remodeled or restored buildings. Remodeling or restoring buildings on Main Street is often necessary. But, while some towns, like Albia, restored their town square and downtown buildings to their former look, other towns, like Manning, fabricated and fastened new-styled facades over the original Victorian brick exterior in order to create their new ethnic heritage theme, a German town. The German-Bavarian style—exposed wooden beams, white mortar fillings and balconies with geraniums—is enforced throughout the Main Street. Historic buildings, such as depots in Creston and

Ottumwa, are also often restored and recycled into museums or restaurants.

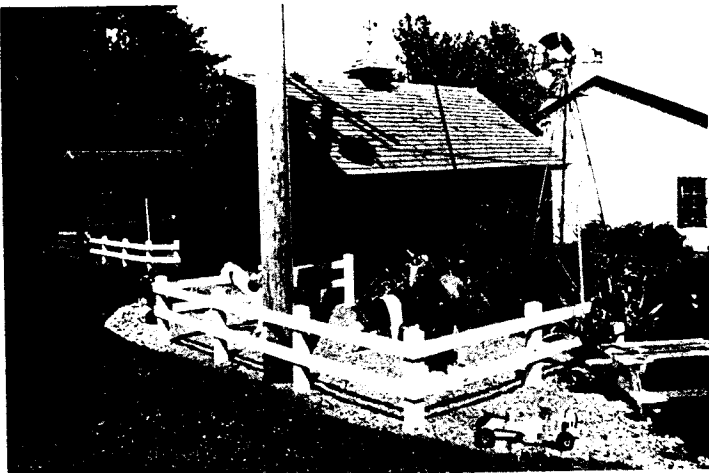
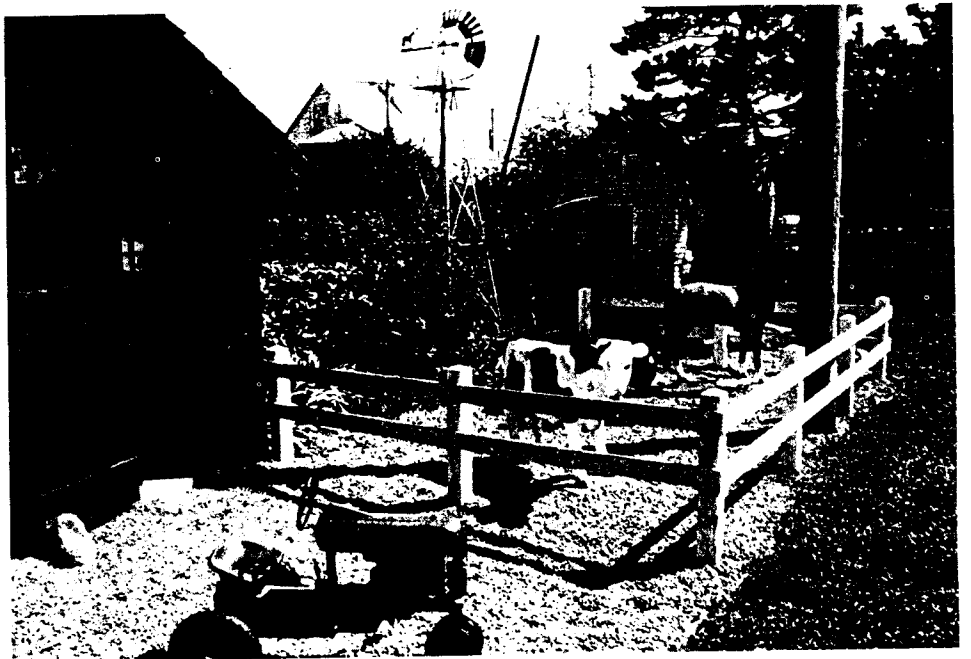
Transplanting or replicating of historic structures. These structures are common in towns that have lost their old buildings. In one example, replicas of bandstands in city parks usually spur enthusiasm among elder residents. Old barns, one-room country schools and log cabins are hot items in the market but their original locations are no longer viable. Many of them are uprooted and relocated in city parks in order to serve as central attractions or museums. They may also be relocated along highways where convenient access and visibility attract travelers' attention. In the lake district of Okoboji, for example, a developer transplanted four dairy barns next to the highway and transformed them into a tourist shopping complex.

Historical or ethnic heritage museums. These have become an essential town institution. In almost every county seat and other respected towns, nostalgic memorabilia piles up in historical museums in order to keep the memories of the heydays alive. Restored depots, Victorian houses, log cabins, country schools or empty stores on Main Street can serve as the setting for a museum. In Oakland, Iowa, the Nishna Heritage Museum has consumed six storefronts on Main Street. While the hopeful slogan, "100 years of history coming to life" is inscribed on the storefronts' windows, most of the other buildings on Main Street are vacant. Ethnic heritage museums are often housed in buildings that have traditional ethnic architecture flavor. If it proves successful and resources permit, such a museum is usually expanded into a historical or ethnic heritage village.

Historical and/or ethnic heritage villages. These reconstruct a whole setting and give the tourist an experience of a foreign reality. Typically, replicas or imported buildings from European countries and/or old towns align along a street with wooden sidewalks and contain various displays or gift stores. In the historical villages found in Kalona, Fort Dodge, Bentonsport and Des Moines' Living History farms, a post office, a doctor's clinic, a general store and a church are among the common features. Bygone workaday tasks are performed by period-dressed people. The potter and the blacksmith are among those demonstrating their skills to visitors who are longing to renew their contact with their heritage and with the real workplace and its sounds and smells.

Central attractions. The pinnacle of a tourists' theme-packaged experience is a town's central attraction. These are typically imported or replicated cultural icons that have prominent size and imageability. Replicated Dutch windmills in Orange City and Pella and an imported Danish Windmill in Elk Horn are among the most celebrated tourist attractions in Iowa. Elk Horn's windmill, imported from Denmark, and

The Little Country Village near Stanhope, Iowa, features small, quaint buildings that mimic the idea of the ideal country town at the turn of the century. Tourists enjoy the recreation since most of the urban dwellers have long-ago lost their true connection to the countryside and to rural life. They spend weekends trying to recreate a rural experience (heavily influenced by television and movies) and give their children some sense of connection to the countryside.



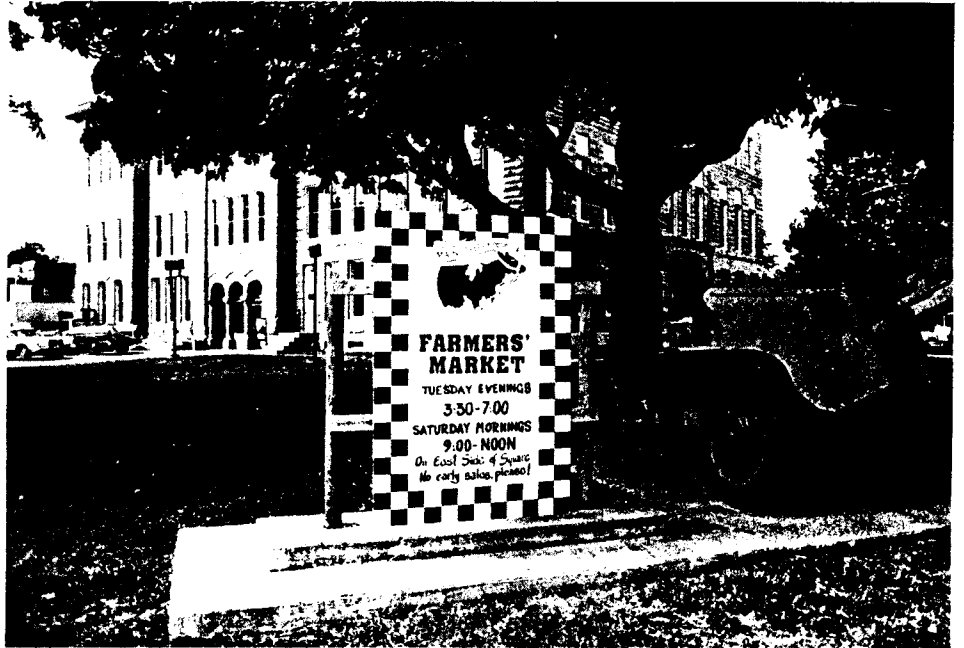
rebuilt by the community, is one of Iowa's top tourist attractions. Inside the windmill people can see displays of artifacts from Denmark.

Manning, the German town north of Elk Horn, is contemplating importing a Hausbarn (a barn connected to a house) from Germany as a central attraction for its tourist industry. Replicas of old forts to revive the spirit of the frontier days have also proven successful as central attractions in older fort towns. The replica that is called the Fort Museum in Fort Dodge invites tourists to "a journey into the past" with folk musicians and representative army troops performing the daily duties of the frontier era. Other town emblems—an antique carousel in Story City or the gigantic bull in Audubon—also constitute central attractions.

Antiques and collectibles. The consumer goods of the tourist's package are found in many tourist stores. Country stores and antique stores dominate the market with old furniture and houseware, quilts and laces, wood carved pigs and cows, kitchen candles and potpourri. Downtown Walnut, West-Des Moines, Kalona and West Branch are almost entirely dedicated to these two kinds of shops. In fact, they make up the towns' central attractions. Beginning its tourist trade in 1983 with one new antique store, Walnut, "Iowa's Antique City," today boasts 92 antique stores including the booths in three antique malls.

Old transportation modes. Old trains, paddleboats and steamboats offer kinesthetic experiences of the past. Iowa's Scenic Valley Railroad, Vinton's steam locomotive (housing a fancy restaurant), a paddleboat in Greene, gambling steamboats on the Mississippi and a stagecoach and buggies in

Knoxville, Iowa (right), features a weekly farmers market that is popular with tourists. They come from the cities to find the fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables that are missing from the urban supermarkets. Story City, Iowa (below), features cartoon characters who walk through the downtown to enliven the tourist interest. The historical museum in Oakland, Iowa (bottom), has been a boon to local tourism. The museum, however, takes up storefronts once dedicated to meeting the everyday needs of residents. Residents, though, usually shop elsewhere and other downtown storefronts remain empty.



Cedar Rapids and Burlington attract many people and dollars to the local economy. However, some trains or boats are going nowhere—they are bound in place. Purple Martin Train, for example, a three-year-old steam locomotive museum (or to be accurate, a shopping complex in the form of trains) located near Interstate 80, has no relationship to a railroad or a depot. Most of its train cars contain gift shops, one is a restaurant and a couple display railroading memorabilia.

Giant specimen and miniature artifacts. Giant specimens and miniature artifacts further convey a memorable image. Albert, the world's largest bull, is a thirty-foot tall, forty-five ton statue erected in Audubon's city park as a tribute to the area's cattlemen. Water towers contribute to a community's image as they are transformed into "the world's largest coffee pot" in the Swedish town of Stanton or a hot air balloon in Indianola. In contrast, some artifacts are miniaturized, perhaps because of budget constraints, time limitations, or, maybe, popular fashion. Including six miniaturized farm and old town buildings filled with children's toys and memorabilia, "Country Relics Little Village and Homestead" is located at the Carlsons' farmstead near Stanhope. On-site plastic horses provide rides for small children!



Miniature toy collections. Another miniaturization of toy-size artifacts is also popular. The Mini Americana Barn Museum in south Amana is the "Largest Known Collection of Miniatures in America Created by one man," or its competitor, "The Largest Collection of Farm Miniatures," in Dyersfield, invites tourist admiration. Old transportation modes, especially trains and steamboats, comprise the museum toy collections in Davenport, Boone and Council Bluffs. And the small

town of Colfax claims the title "Trainland U.S.A." with its toy-size Lionel railroading collection.

The Pitfalls of Thematic Development

These descriptions of theme town tourist packages (painted at times with unavoidable irony) stir both sympathy and concern. As community designer Randolph Hester asserts in his article, "Community Design: Making the Grassroots Whole,"³ the problem with this kind of economic development is the incongruity between the marketable image and the internal reality of the community. Clearly, economic hardship and identity crises force small communities to hastily embark on glamorous tourism thrusts. But, in spite of the good money that flows into the pockets of some small towns, there are ten arguments that should make small towns cautious before imposing a theme on their community.

First, thematic development perpetuates conformity with a mass commercial identity and neglects local identity and place-rooted experiences. As Marti Willetts' description pointed out earlier, Albia's downtown, which otherwise seems mundane and unworthy of appreciation, appears admirable when changed to the Disney's fantasyland image. Small town residents flock to Disneyland to get a glimpse of Main Street U.S.A. while its origin, though sometimes vacant, lies just under their noses.

Local identity has also submitted to mass national image in Fort Dodge. When Fort Dodge sought a tangible symbol for the town and its museum, it did not choose its original fort overlooking the Des Moines River. Rather, it chose distant Fort Williams, located 100 miles north of town. The original fort did not have the imageability people perceive of when they think about an old fort. It did not have tall wooden walls and towers. Instead, it was comprised of 16 individual buildings arrayed along a street and a marching grounds.

Second, although some tourist-oriented development, such as building restoration, is exactly what a town needs, thematic development usually favors tourists over residents. Walnut, filled with antique stores from one edge of Main Street to the other, forces residents to drive 15 miles to buy groceries. The farmer who cannot afford buying the costly items in the stores anyway, is estranged from what used to be a farm service town. The tendency to isolate attractions and to place them in a visible and accessible site from the interstate, focuses on the tourist rather than supporting and enriching the lives of the local residents. Located right off Interstate 80 at Exit 60, Purple Martin Train is inaccessible to town residents, but is planted three miles away from Atlantic, Iowa, as an isolated entity in the landscape.

Third, thematic development precipitates standardization and homogeneities and inhibits diversity. In a fashion that is similar to MacDonald's and Wal-Mart stores, several of these theme towns look alike. It becomes hard to distinguish the downtowns of Walnut, West Des Moines and West Branch from each other. Lamoni, labeled recently as "Iowa's Quilt

City" must still compete with Kalona which holds on to its title "The Quilt Capital of the World." The loss of stable relationships with physical and cultural landscape idiosyncrasies contributes to standardization.

Fourth, the dependence on tourism's fashions cannot be trusted over time, therefore the environment that is reduced by the imposed-upon theme to a singular homogeneous place could be at risk. When the Dutch Elm disease hit the country in the 1930s, it left entire towns naked—stripped of their trees. When the antique stores go, the antiques Walnut will not survive. It will have to seek out a new slogan, identity and outfits.

Fifth, theme towns, highly dependent on visuals and less on substance and meanings, are driven to create replicas and faked facades. Foreign icons, emptied of content and function and detached from their locality, are used as mere pictures. The Danish windmill that used to be a working grain mill is today a money generator business in the form of a museum and a gift store.

Sixth, in the rush to implement their tourist industry, small towns tend to compromise on design quality and materials. Mass produced "historic looking" fiberglass benches and trash cans and red-painted concrete pavers are attempts to replicate wooden-crafted benches and brick pavers. "Little Mermaid," a fiberglass replica of the sculpture erected to honor Hans Christian Andersen in Copenhagen, is sitting every summer on a rock in the middle of a fountain in the city park of Kimballton. In the winter the naked fiberglass statue must be taken down to keep it warm while baffled visitors then wander futility through the park looking for the lost mermaid.

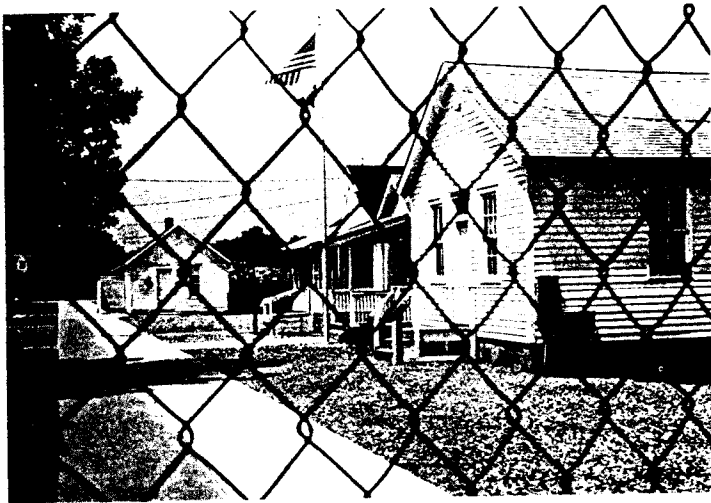
Seventh, thematic development usually produces segregation and exclusion in the landscape—exclusive tourist function areas and exclusive local function areas. When the town of Pella began restoring Dutch immigrant residences on Franklin Street to preserve the community heritage in 1966, they were an accessible and integral part of the downtown district. In 1980, when the concept of commercialized tourism materialized and new fabricated buildings were added to create the Dutch Heritage Village, a tall wire fence was erected and fees charged to contain, maintain and control this tourist attraction.

Eighth, when successful, theme towns, like shopping malls, invite people to participate primarily in the circle of consumption, life becomes costly and lifestyles incompatible. Some tourism entrepreneurs bring problems that degrade a small town's atmosphere. In Davenport and Burlington long-time residents are fighting the invasion of gambling-based tourism. The revival of the steamboats on the Mississippi as casinos not only brought money and jobs, but also a lifestyle and social problems foreign to Iowa communities.

Ninth, thematic development often creates an atmosphere that isolates certain population groups from the rest of the community. The fast development which creates a swift change makes it hard for older residents to adjust. As a result they often become estranged to the place or are forced out.



This historic photograph (above) is on display at the Living History Farms in Des Moines, Iowa. An historic village (below) has been assembled by moving numerous buildings to a spot in Kalona, Iowa. The attractions has become so popular that it is now fenced off from the rest of the community.



Further, imposing an ethnic theme of a majority group often excludes minority groups who then become antagonistic and feel peripheral in the newly-styled town. In the newly-promoted German town of Manning, residents of decent other than German express their frustrations by opposing the idea of importing a Hausbarn from Germany as the town attraction.

Tenth, as with highly attractive historical or ethnic museums that have become theme villages, highly attractive festivals are being commercialized into theme parks similar to those found in big cities. The successful Renaissance Festival, presenting everything from jousting knights to madrigal singers, celebrated annually in Mason City and Council Bluffs, is now moving to a semipermanent location in the state capital, Des Moines. Due to its success, the festival producers were invited by the Iowa State Fairgrounds to develop the new site, this time with professional performers and exhibits—additions that may erase the small town qualities that attracted people to the festival in the first place.

Alternatives and Recommendations

It is easy to severely judge new landscapes and the people who are bringing them into being. Moreover, it is fair to argue that grassroots tourism development is meant to save towns

from decline and to facilitate the preservation of communities and cultural traditions. As Erik Cohen argues in his article, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," in viable cultures there is always a process of change, a continuous invention of traditions.⁴

Tourism could be a positive venture in small towns when it is realized in the following ways:

Allow diversity. Adopting more than one theme might aid in creating diversity and a less regulated place.

Focus on insiders and not solely on outsiders. When a new institution, such as a museum, is planned, it needs to be located in the center of town, rather than out on the interstate, so that residents and tourists, alike, can enjoy it.

Preserve the very same qualities that make small rural towns attractive and different from big cities—the small-scale, pedestrian environment, the feel of a community and the social public places. Resembling and competing with urban theme parks needs to be avoided.

Ensure that inclusive and nonisolated functions are retained. Incorporating attractions and tourist services into downtown with other local services could mix the activities of both tourist and residents.

Forge a dynamic environment rather than a frozen-in-time setting. Themes that focus on both past and present, on memories and future visions can be chosen. Old farm windmills and new wind farm technology could be celebrated together in a new town park. Painted old threshers can compose a contemporary public art at the city entrance as a welcoming gate instead of an artifact in a historical museum or a city park.

Develop place-rooted community themes and celebrations rather than tourist-fashioned themes. Promoting themes based on the local physical and cultural idiosyncrasies—the regional architecture, the auction house and stock yards, the old water tower, the grain elevator, the old train trestle, the abandoned railway and the forgotten river—could strengthen community roots and identity. Celebrations based on regional and local landscape and agricultural practice, such as Algona's Prairie Harvest Festival, Lime Spring's Sweet Corn Festival and Nevada's Lincoln Highway Festival could create stronger ties between community and land.

Mark and celebrate important buildings *in situ*. The functions and the meanings inherent in an artifact are erased when it is uprooted from its original site.

Maintain and invest in long-standing traditions and reuse and recycle existing abandoned buildings and farm structures instead of creating new traditions and building new attractions. County Fairs, farmers markets and concerts in the band shell at the city park should be maintained. Abandoned barns and other farm structures should be recycled and reused as community centers. Likewise, the city of Manning, known for its dairy industry, should acquire the dairy barn that is located close to downtown and house a Holstein museum in it rather than importing a Hausbarn from Germany as a town's attraction.

Develop fresh relationships between Iowa culture and

Iowa landscape—and this is equally true in other states and provinces. Instead of themes based on consumption, themes based on conservation and social needs need to be developed. The city of Osage, Iowa, does not consider energy conservation as its theme; nevertheless, the town is well-known for its community-wide energy savings that boost the town's economy by allowing greater local investment. Similarly, Belle Plaine does not consider elder care to be a theme. However, the community has made affordable housing and services for the elderly, an expanding population in Iowa, a viable strategy for economic development. And Cedar Falls holds the Cedar Festival, a day in which the community gathers to clean the Cedar River of waste and debris and have a good time as they paddle canoes and clean the environment.

Conclusions

Rural small town tourism development is a new venture that motivates the formation of theme towns. Town theming contains many pitfalls and opportunities. It could transform a community into a commodity, or it could help preserve a sense of place and a sense of community. Choosing a theme, or several themes, and planning thematic development should be carefully evaluated and incrementally implemented. Small communities should be critical of image-making advice that is spread by professionals at private or state tourism offices and influenced by mass-tourism tastes.

A tourism brochure that invites tourists to visit Iowa's east central region reads: "Discover the real America when you jog off I-80." The image on the cover—the Statue of Liberty rising from Iowa's corn fields—encapsulates the tender absurdity of the tourism industry. Soon a small town along the interstate may embark on the idea and erect a miniature Liberty statue in the midst of a corn field and build a parking lot and a viewing dock. But, until then, let's leave the Statue of Liberty in the Hudson River with skyscrapers in the background and Iowa's cornfields in the Interior Plain surrounded by open space and endless skies.

¹Janet R. Jenkins, "The Cliffdwellers: Albia, Iowa, Residents Reclaim Downtown Second Floors," *Small Town*, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 10, 1986.

²Randolph Hester and Marcia McNally, "Manteo, North Carolina: The Perils of Boom-or-Bust Tourism," *Small Town*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 4-11, 1983.

³Randolph Hester, "Community Design: Making the Grassroots Whole," *Built Environment*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 45-60, 1983.

⁴Erik Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 15, pp. 371-386, 1988.