

## RAGBRAI Geo-pedia

### Pedal Through the Park

Just before crossing the bridge over the Wapsipinicon River entering the town of Anamosa, you will pass the west entrance to **Wapsipinicon State Park**. On the banks of the Wapsipinicon River, the park hosts beautiful flora, fauna, and picturesque cliffs over 70 feet high! The bedrock exposed in the park is entirely composed of Silurian-age (~425 million years ago) **dolomite** (limestone's magnesium-rich cousin). The dolomite in the park belongs to the **Scotch Grove Formation**, named after exposures near the town of Scotch Grove, also in Jones County. You may notice that the rocks near the west entrance to the park appear to be slanted or dipping, and you would be correct! Typically sedimentary rocks, like dolomite, form flat-lying layers; however, some of the rocks of the Scotch Grove Formation were deposited on top of existing mounds at the bottom of the ocean.

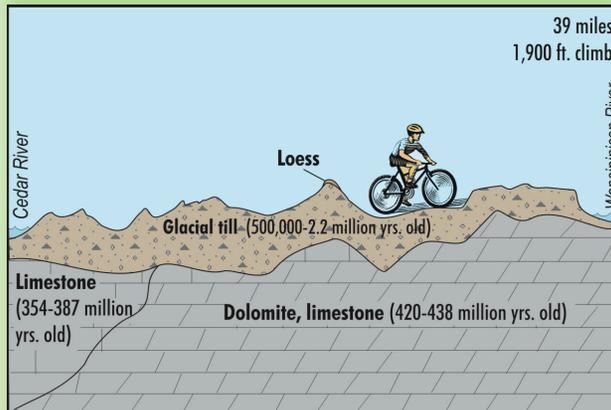
These mounds have been observed to be over 1,000 feet in diameter and over 100 feet high! It is thought that these mounds may have been coral reefs at one time. What we see today are tilted rock layers that are essentially "draped" over the mounded rocks beneath them.

The park is also home to several caves that you can walk into on your own, like Horsethief Cave (below left) and Ice Cave (below right).



COVER PHOTO: Wapsipinicon State Park sign. (Photo by Raymond R. Anderson)

### Day 6 Milestones



**Start:** Cedar Rapids

**Iowan Surface:** 8 - 33.5 miles

**Eastern Iowa Drift Plain:** 33.5 miles

**Mt. Vernon Paha:** 14 miles

**Cornell College Campus:** 14.5 miles

**Stone City:** 31.5 miles (2 miles north of intersection Fairview Road & X28)

**Wapsipinicon State Park:** 36 miles

**Anamosa State Pen.:** 2 blocks north of route on North High Street

**Finish:** Anamosa – 39 miles



### For More Information...

Anamosa State Penitentiary Museum  
[www.asphistory.com](http://www.asphistory.com)

Silurian Geology of Linn and Jones Counties  
<ftp://ftp.igsb.uiowa.edu/igspubs/pdf/GB-11.pdf>

To schedule a tour of the Weber Stone Co. quarry in Stone City go to:  
[www.weberstone.com](http://www.weberstone.com)

Wapsipinicon State Park - Reservations, Maps, etc.  
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Destinations/StateParksRecAreas/iowasStateParks/ParkDetails.aspx?ParkID=610132&idAdminBoundary=218>

# 40th 2012 RAGBRAI

## Learn about the Land

Friday, July 27

# Day 6



### Iowa DNR – Geological and Water Survey

109 Trowbridge Hall  
Iowa City, IA 52242  
[www.igsb.uiowa.edu](http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu)

### US Geological Survey - IA Water Science Center

400 S. Clinton St.  
Iowa City, IA 52240  
<http://ia.water.usgs.gov>

### Iowa Limestone Producers Association

5907 Meredith Dr., Suite A  
Des Moines, IA 50322  
[www.limestone.org](http://www.limestone.org)

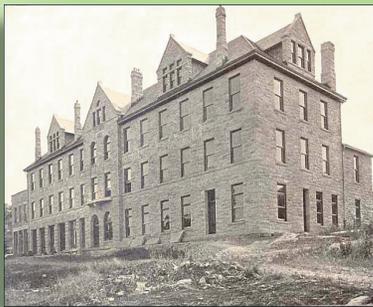


### A Beautiful Campus

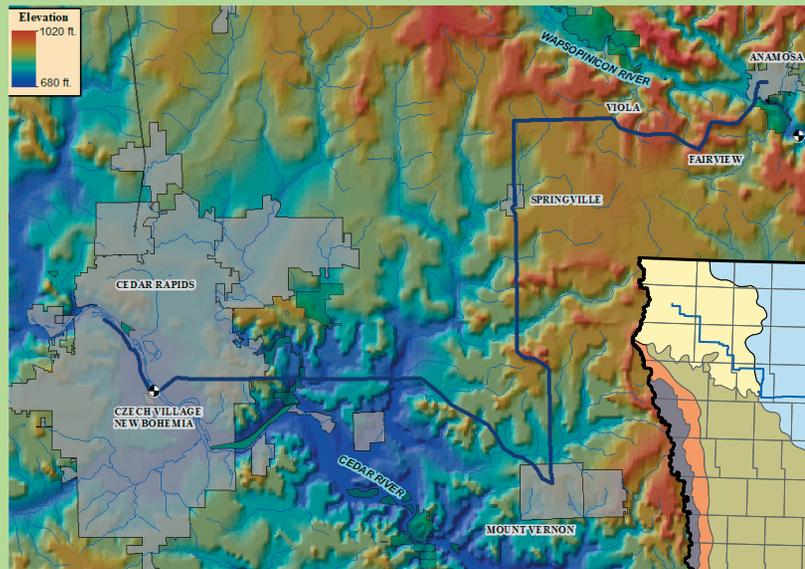
**Cornell College** was founded in 1853 and was named in 1857 after William Wesley Cornell, a prosperous merchant whose distant cousin, Ezra Cornell, founded Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) a decade later. Cornell was the first college west of the Mississippi to grant women the same rights and privileges as men, and in 1858 was the first Iowa college to graduate a woman. The college was among the first to recognize the science of education in 1872, when it began offering education courses. Cornell's Department of Geology is the oldest in Iowa, with course offerings dating to 1855. The college is located on a wooded, 129-acre hilltop in Mount Vernon, Iowa, a charming town with a mix of historic buildings. Cornell was the first college campus to be listed entirely on the National Register of Historic Places. The central geographic feature of Mount Vernon is the **hill (paha)** on which it sits, measuring one mile long, 1/4 mile-wide, and nearly 100 feet (30 m) above the surrounding landscape. Uptown Mount Vernon is aligned with the southeast end of the ridge crest, while Cornell's campus crowns the northwest end of the ridge.

### Stone City - the Real "Rock City"

The town of Stone City was founded in 1850 by settlers who utilized the area's extensive exposures of Silurian age dolomite building stone. By the 1880s, several quarries were opened to extract large blocks of dolomite, primarily for bridges and bridge piers for the continental railroads as well as foundations for large buildings. Between 1859 and 1895 over 150,000 railroad cars of stone were shipped from Stone City every year and the town began to grow. A three-story hotel and opera house complex, **Columbia Hall**, was completed in 1883 using 500,000 tons of stone. Numerous other houses, a church, school, barn, and businesses were constructed of the local rock; many of which remain today and are included on the National



Register of Historic Places. Weber Stone Company continues to quarry "**Anamosa Stone**" from the Stone City Quarry, producing a variety of cut stone products that are used locally and throughout the United States. Recently, their Anamosa Stone was used for the facing of the new Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.



### Stone City Art Colony

During the summers of 1932 and 1933 three Iowa artists, most notably **Grant Wood**, along with Cedar Rapids gallery owner Edward Rowan, founded the Stone City Art Colony. With the help of a grant from the Carnegie Foundation ten acres of land was leased for the colony, including an old stone mansion that was used for offices and a dormitory. The faculty included such noted artists as Grant Wood, Francis Chaplin, and Marvin Cone and the colony attracted a number of young artists including Lee Allen, Isabel Bloom, Conger Metcalf, and Daniel Rhodes. The colony ended after its second year due to financial difficulties and Grant Wood's commitment to the New Deal's Public Works Art Project (PWPA).



### This is 'Paha-bly' the Hilliest Day of RAGBRAI

In northern Benton County, between Garrison and Vinton, riders will cross or ride near several elongate ridges in an otherwise flat landscape. These features, called **paha**, are found throughout the Iowan Surface landform region. Paha are named for a Dakota Sioux word meaning 'hill' or 'ridge' and are oriented northwest to southeast, occurring most commonly near the boundary with the Southern Iowa Drift Plain landform region. Paha are erosional remnants associated with the development of the Iowan Surface between approximately 16,500 and 21,000 years ago. Stratigraphically, these ridges consist of a thick mantle of loess (wind-blown silt) over glacial till with an intervening paleosol (ancient soil horizons). Additionally, the town of Mount Vernon sits atop a classic paha, with Cornell College on the northwestern end. You will ride along the axis of another paha approximately 3.5 miles north of Mount Vernon and cross a third paha two miles south of Springville.

### Just Visiting

One of the most spectacular stone buildings in the State of Iowa is the **Anamosa State Penitentiary**. Constructed of the same "Anamosa Stone" that is quarried at nearby Stone City, the maximum security penitentiary houses 1,107 inmates and employs 355 staff. The prison was established in 1872 and was constructed with dolomite

quarried 1.8 miles from the prison using inmate labor. A railroad spur transported prisoners to the quarries and the stone to the prison site. The prison's walls enclose about 13 acres, and its castle style inspired the nickname "The White Palace of the West." In

the early days the prisoners also operated an adjoining farm that provided food for the inmates and staff. If you enjoy stone architecture you cannot pass up a visit to this breathtaking building; bring your camera.

