

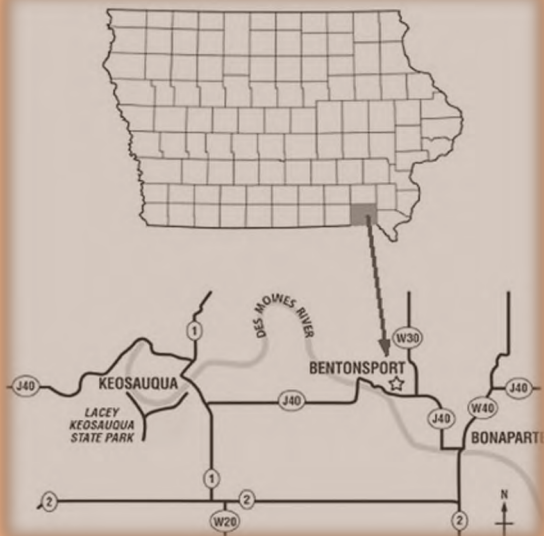
Bentonsport National Historic District

Platted 1839

Population 42

For more information and pictures of
Bentonsport's lodging, shops and other
facilities go to bentonsportheritage.org.

This brochure was produced by the Bentonsport
Activity Committee. Photos were contributed by
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Bentonsport National Historic District

Relax
Reflect
Refresh

**Bentonsport
is waiting for you**



Once a thriving steamboat port along the Lower Des Moines River that outfitted settlers headed west in the 1840s to 1860s, today Bentonsport is a quiet, scenic home to artists, craftsmen, and those who appreciate its history.

Nature hikes, paddling, fishing, a campfire, starry skies, and friendly villagers and shopkeepers are among the laid-back experiences that await you here, far from the hustle of city living.



Things to do

When you hear water running over rocks and the peal of an eagle; see a flash of red fur disappearing behind a log on the riverbank; you know you are in Bentonsport. Wildlife is just as

much at home here as you will be.

Paddle your canoe/kayak in the Des Moines River and watch herons, kingfishers and raccoons fish along the banks. Under bridges witness the aerial feats of swifts. Near a snag, you may startle wood ducks with their brood. If the river is too swift or low, Lacey Lake and Lake Sugema are close by.

Pick up a copy of the Bentonsport Self-Guided Tour and stroll through the village as you read about the historical homes, commercial buildings, churches, and schools still used. Inside foundations of a mill pond and its mill is the **Rose Garden**, created and maintained by volunteers.

A place not to miss is **Tony Sanders' Indian Artifact Museum**. He has collected more than 5,000 arrowheads and artifacts, as well as prehistoric mammoth bones. Even more fascinating are the hand-tooled mosaic cases and mountings Sanders has made from native woods.

Bentonsport Timber trailhead and parking are just northeast of the Presbyterian Church at the hill crest. This trail winds through 60 acres of prairie and woodland and alongside a **fishing pond** stocked with bass and crappie. Whether you are paddling, hiking or strolling, **with binoculars you are likely to identify over a hundred bird species**. About 250 bird species live, migrate or or visit the nearby Bird Conservation Area.





On the north side of Hawk Drive, Iron and Lace, The She Shed, Greef General Store, Addie May Fudge, and Treen Wood Works offer delightful pottery, ironwork, handmade goods, antiques, woodware and cutlery for that special memento from your trip. Down the street to the southwest is Sisters Vintage & More, a new business on the first floor of the Oddfellows Building. You'll find antiques, vintage items, collectibles, and handmade décor there. The upstairs houses a museum of Iowa Odd Fellows history.



▼ *Fishermen catch flathead and channel catfish, striped bass and walleye in the Des Moines River.*



Lodging

Bentonsport guest accommodations are open throughout the year and are spacious and comfortable. Reservations are recommended.

Mason House Inn

Built in 1846 by Mormon craftsmen, the hotel served steamboat travelers. Today the Mason House Inn offers nine rooms, each with a private bath. Decorated with many of the original Mason House possessions, this place is ideal for reunions, retreats, murder mysteries and get-a-ways. Free wireless Internet and a full country breakfast is included. MasonHouseInn.com



Alexander's Cottage

This 1840s story and a half home was completely renovated into a two-bedroom, one and one-half bath guest cottage. Decorated with antiques, the cozy accommodation includes a full kitchen with open living and dining area, WiFi, Smart TV, and sleeps up to four people. Relax in the quiet surroundings on the deck or front screened porch. To rent, call 319-592-3152.



Bentonsport Campground and Shelter House

Owned and operated by Van Buren County Conservation, this shady campground along the river has 23 modern sites with gravel camp pads, fire rings, picnic tables, 30 and 50 amp electricity and pit toilet. An adjacent picnic shelter with nearby playground has restrooms and showers open 24/7 during warm weather. Walk ins are welcome on non reserved sites. To reserve a site go to mycountyparks.com. To reserve the shelter house, contact the office at 319-293-3589 or email cduke@vanburencounty.iowa.gov.



Facilities

Historic Presbyterian Church

Constructed in 1855, this church has been maintained just as it was. The building is open to the public May 1 through Oct. 31. Non denominational services are held Sundays at 9 am June thru Labor Day. The acoustics are exceptional, so it is a popular venue for music programs and weddings. Call 319-592-3222 to reserve the church.



The Stone House

Originally a two-story duplex built in the 1850s, the Stone House was recently rebuilt into a modern community meeting place. It accommodates up to 80 people, is accessible, and has a full kitchen. To rent call 319-592-3222.

