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Iowa State True or False

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Iowa State University, like most institutions of higher education, is proud of the work that has been done here. There are dozens of little reminders of these accomplishments dotting campus, pointy red plaques celebrating things like "The Birthplace of the Computer" and "The First Land Grant College of Home Economics." Years from now, however, after you've moved onto bigger and better things, what will you remember? To find out if you really know Iowa State, take this quiz (don't worry, it's True/False) and feel free to write home to mom about it.

T/F: In 1953, two student riots broke out during Homecoming.

TRUE

When you think of protests and riots, Iowa State University probably isn't the first place that comes to mind. So when I heard there had been riots at Iowa State, the first thing I thought was the late 60s, Vietnam, and maybe someone had mistaken Iowa State for another university. However, it turns out that Ames made national news during Homecoming week in 1953.

Traditionally, the typical Homecoming weekend was set up something like this: Football game on Saturday. Students celebrating on Saturday night and through the day Sunday. And no classes on Monday, so students could catch up on all the studying they missed because of Saturday's game (or recover from two days of heavy drinking). But 1953 was different. Students were no longer going to get a Monday holiday from classes.

On Saturday, October 17, the Cyclones played Missouri in Iowa State's Homecoming game. After an exciting 13-6 Cyclone win, the students began to celebrate. They were having so much fun they decided to keep celebrating all night, and then all day Sunday. But the students began to get worried: if this keeps up, they thought, we'll have to keep partying on Monday, but we have classes. What to do?

Around 10 p.m. Sunday night, a group of about 50 students began marching across campus and running through dormitories, urging their fellow students to march with them to the Iowa State president's house. By
the time they reached Dr. James Hilton’s home, the crowd had grown into the thousands, with some estimates numbering it as high as 4,000.

Unfortunately, Dr. Hilton was not home. So the crowd marched back toward Lincoln Way and stopped, blocking the road completely. Several students managed to further block the Campus Town intersection with drainage tile (which was sitting conveniently close by) while a four-piece band played Iowa State fight songs in front of the roadblock.

The Ames police did what it could to try to move the students, even firing tear gas grenades into the crowd. But the crowd stood its ground. The police, seeing their efforts were in vain, instead concentrated on redirecting traffic around the blocked-off street.

By mid-morning, with no solution in sight, the students disbanded and went home. School officials, thinking the problem had been taken care of, held class as usual on Monday. But by that afternoon, students were again rallying to march to Dr. Hilton’s residence. In a repeat of events, thousands of students blocked off Lincoln Way. But this time they built a bonfire in the middle of the street, tearing down wooden street signs to fuel it. The students then began chanting “Let’s Drain Lake LaVerne,” brought out the drainage tile (still conveniently nearby), and unsuccessfully attempted to drain the lake.

The protest was quelled only when Dr. Hilton emerged from his home and assured students he would allow a day off in the future to make up for the lost Homecoming holiday.

T/F: Jeffrey Dahmer was a student at Iowa State University.

FALSE

Jeffrey Dahmer, one of the most notorious serial killers in the history of the United States, had actually been a student at Iowa State, it would be just too easy to make jokes about how he majored in Food Science or failed out of the Hotel/Restaurant Management program. Fortunately for everyone’s sense of humor and decency, he never was enrolled at Iowa State.

But he did live in Ames for a while. His father, Lionel, earned his Ph.D. in chemistry at Iowa State. From 1962 to 1966, the Dahmers made Ames their home. And from 1964 to 1966, they actually lived in Pammel Cour, which is where the university family housing units were then located, just north of campus.

The buildings, which were actually small Quonset style huts, rented for thirty-two dollars in 1966 and had a reputation of being highly flammable. Most of the huts have since been torn down.

According to the Des Moines Register, the people who remember seeing Dahmer described the young man spending his formative years as “a loner...who just didn’t seem to fit in.” They also said Jeffrey mostly stayed inside with his mother, Joyce.

Although there is a good chance that Ames had little or no effect on the young Jeffrey, it’s kind of interesting to consider what a few short years here could be doing to you.
The Manhattan Project was the unofficial title of the work done during World War II in an effort to produce the first atomic bomb. The work was mainly done in New Mexico, Tennessee, and Washington, as well as hundreds of other known sites. One of these sites was here at Iowa State.

According to the Ames Laboratory website, "The process to produce large quantities of high-purity uranium metal was developed at Iowa State as part of the Manhattan Project during World War II. Iowa State provided one-third of the uranium metal used in the world’s first controlled nuclear chain reaction."

At the head of the project in Ames was Dr. Frank Spedding, a well-known metallurgist with the university. In an Iowa State Daily Student article from 1945, Spedding stated, "At no time was the city of Ames or the surrounding territory in any danger of being blown off the earth... although there was personal danger to the men working on the project."

And according to Peter Bacon Hales, the author of Atomic Spaces: Living On The Manhattan Project, "The plant at Ames presented a harsh lesson in sloppy and dangerous working conditions. Space was inadequate, 'the potential dust hazard...considerable,' and two doctors 'observed many workmen whose skin was slightly green in many areas because of exposure to this dust.'"

But don’t worry. That was over fifty years ago and the half-life of uranium-238 is only about 4.5 billion years.
T/F: Iowa State University has twice been listed among Playboy’s list of top party schools.

**TRUE**

It’s hard to believe that anything could top such accomplishments as having only one of 12 named journalism schools in the country, ranking “seventh in the nation as the university of choice among seventh and eighth grade participants in the nationwide MATHCOUNTS competition,” or being home to the finest blue cheese in the world. But some students, believe it or not, need something more, something to let them know that they belong too. Those few students can now step forward. They can now claim the prize that has eluded them these four, five, or six and a half years.

Only twice has the prestigious journal Playboy published its own list of party schools. The reputable magazine compiled the in-depth research and collected the extensive data necessary to form such a list in both 1987 and 2002.

And twice Iowa State University has stood tall among its peers. In 2002, Iowa State ranked 13th, ahead of schools such as Florida, Michigan State, and the University of Iowa. In 1987, Iowa State was not ranked but listed instead as an honorable mention, which is still pretty impressive when you consider the number of colleges nationally and, if I remember correctly (I was nine), 1987 was a particularly competitive year for party schools.