



Historical Resources

## Railroads, Mining Camps, + Circus Camps

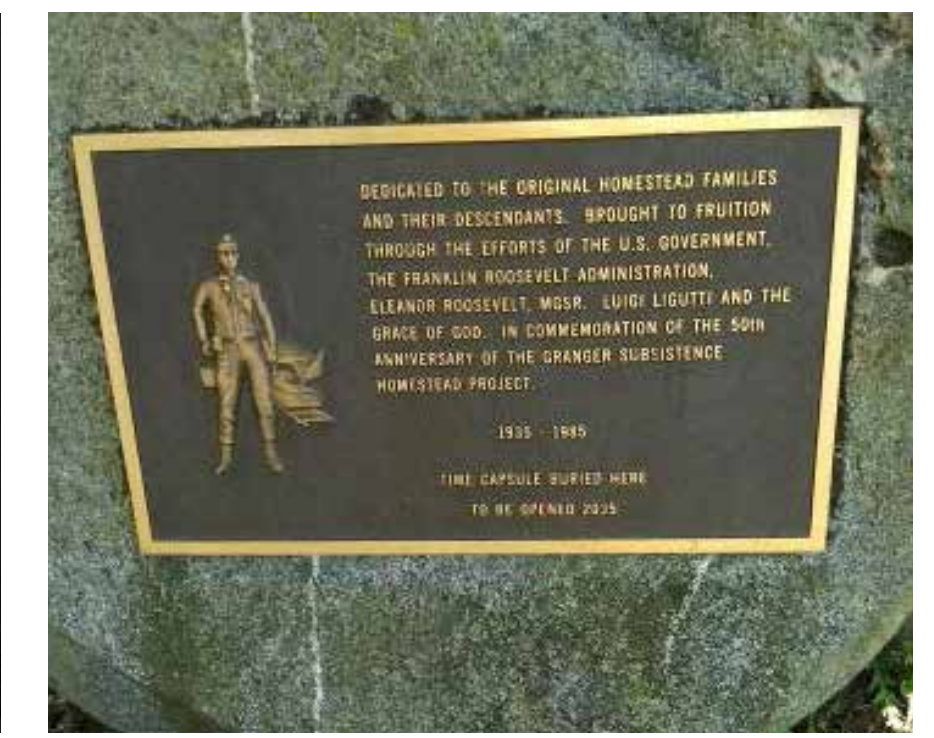
As a waypoint on two key railroad lines in central Iowa, and named for railroad man C. T. Granger, the city's history is intertwined with transportation infrastructure. As early as the 1880's, freight rail traveled through the area, carrying coal from local strip mines to distant cities. Impoverished coal miners and their families lived in squalid camps nearby, until the Federal government loaned money in the 1930's to build the Granger Homesteads, which still exists as an adjacent development west of town. Later, a branch of the Inter-Urban railroad connected Granger to Perry and Des Moines into the late 20th century. These rail lines shaped the economy, culture, and geography of Granger (Highway 141 parallels the old Inter-Urban route), and remained the primary lifeline connecting Granger to other communities into the 1960's. Most remarkably, the Yankee Robinson Circus, which ranged across the midwest, was born in Granger and called it their off-season home for many decades. Local families would gather at the railroad tracks to watch the circus wagons, animals, and performers load and unload each season. The circus' winter quarters property to the southeast of town is now being developed as residential expansion has extended east of Highway 17, and elephant bones have been unearthed during the construction of these new neighborhoods! The Community Visioning projects proposed for Granger strive to pay homage to this local history, with an eye towards current and future transportation needs of the community.



Inter-Urban Railroad Depot



Granger Homesteads



Yankee Robinson Circus Winter Quarters



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