

Building the Rising Generation and All People Through Our Own IRON Stories

People learn the best lessons through storytelling. Children will remember stories they have either read or heard forever, and the emotions, values, and virtues they experience through stories will not only help them learn valuable life lessons and skills at the time they learn the story for the first time, but these stories will continue to teach new insights throughout the life of an individual as they experience new things and grow in maturity. It was once said that each visit to Zion National Park is a completely different experience each time as the time of day, the position of the sun, the color of the sky, the weather, the season of the year, the angle of view, all make a new scene of rock, of crevasse, of shadow, of color, which was never observed before.

Stories are so much more than a video, a "lesson", a PowerPoint, or some other audio/visual medium of communication. Stories bring the hearer or reader into the story as the character who is experiencing the elements of the story, giving them room to form their own visual images of the story as they understand it. This personal experience is not easily forgotten and continues to teach throughout life and into future generations as stories are retold time and time again.

There are tens of thousands of stories right here in Iron County, or that are known by people here, that can teach the most valuable lessons of life to our children, families, and all people. Why is it that so often the first time we hear certain stories about the people around us is at their funerals. And there are so many other stories from the lives of these people that will never be told in public or even in their families because they were never written.

Just imagine having a digital and even a physical library of stories from local individuals and families which could become a "Toolbox" filled with resources on many subjects which can help teach children skills of living and of life. Further imagine that school counsellors, teachers, parents, children, and anyone else could access all of these stories in an online library, uncopyrighted, available for printing, sending, downloading, for use in our schools, in our homes, or anywhere else. Imagine this story library continuing to grow over time with new submissions from many people as we all continue to experience life or as memories come back to us from our past experiences.

Also imagine the family ties and multi-generational traditions that would grow and be preserved in our community through the writing and sharing of stories for use in our community and for creating and preserving personal and family history elements.

With this "Story Library" in place, teachers, parents, and others could even request the author of a story to come and talk to their class, their group, their family, etc. about their story and what it taught them. Community engagement in our schools and other organizations would soar, and both children and adults would be exposed to, and become acquainted with, a wide range of people and perspectives.

There are many ways by which this vast local resource can be utilized to enrich the lives of children, adults, families, teachers, schools, and our communities at large. This living "Story" model can preserve our culture and values from being lost in a world of change and decay. As our students complete their formal K-12 education here, no matter where they go or what they are dealing with, they can always return to their roots in Iron County and again feast on the wisdom and experiences of the wonderful people here through online access to this story-telling medium.

Of great concern should be that we not only lift the current rising generation through sharing our insights and experiences with each other now, but that we also pass these tools along through family and community ties to future generations who will also have access to the same resources, to continue to instill and sustain the traditions and values they have learned through succeeding generations.

The following are a few points of consideration for the IRON Story Library concept.

- The following entities could be invited to give input and assistance in developing and implementing this project.
 - Most importantly, individual citizens who have an interest in preserving our rising generations by preserving our values, our heritage, and individual and area histories
 - Utah Historical Society
 - Daughters of the Utah Pioneers
 - Sons of the American Revolution
 - Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis clubs
 - Chambers of Commerce in the County
 - Iron County Commission
 - City Councils within Iron County
 - City Libraries and school library staff from each area
 - ICSD Administration and School Board Representatives
- We foresee a permanent digital library/archive of all submitted stories for use both now and in future generations as a “story history” of the people of Iron County
- An appropriate, redundant digital backup system would need to be put in place to assure that this historic information would not be lost through a technology failure of any kind.

Here are a few Ideas on a “Two Tiered” “IRON Story Library” structure for the purposes of the entire Iron County community, families, ICSD and other local school entities, Churches, youth clubs and organizations, SUU, and any other individuals and organizations who have an interest in learning about and utilizing the combined experience and wisdom of the people of Iron County.

- An independent virtual general IRON Story Library
 - This base library will serve as a repository of stories for the entire community to both receive story submissions and to organize and utilize stories within the library.
 - All story submissions would be reviewed and unless there were concerns with inappropriate content, or violations of the library Mission, these stories would be accepted into the General Story Library (without the limitations of State Education Code).
- The Iron County School District approved IRON Stories for school curriculum
 - A committee of individuals representing parents, families, community, and school concerns would systematically review all “new” story submissions brought into the General Story Library on a monthly or quarterly basis and select all stories with appropriate content which can be used as curricular resources in our schools.
 - Selected stories can then be submitted to the School Board and District Administration for review and ultimately approved or disapproved by the School Board as official ICSD Approved Stories for use as curriculum in various venues for student instruction within the district.
 - ICSD can host links to the Iron Story Library on their own website which will give access to all stories, but which will also identify those which are Board approved for direct use in the classroom.
 - The entire general IRON Story Library could also be used by students and families to individually access the broader offerings there.

Story Submission Format

A few suggestions for a Story Submission Form or format that will make finding stories that match the interests of needs of individuals or groups who want to access these resources in either the General Story Library or the ICSD Approved Story Library.

Title:

Subject: (main topic)

Key Words: (additional topics contained in story)

Synopsis: (teaser overview)

Story Source: Personal ___ Ancestral ___ Historical ___ Other ___

Story Location: (City, State, Country)

Story Location Coordinate: (option to paste in a GPS coordinate)

Word Count: (to determine length of story)

Suggested Age Range: (age appropriate)

Author: (author's name)

Current or Former Resident of Iron County? YES/NO

Street Address of Residence:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email:

Phone:

Are you willing to be contacted about your story? YES/NO

Are you willing to share your story personally by invitation? YES/NO

IRON STORY (SAMPLE FORMAT)

(STORY TITLE)

"Long ago when I was a little boy I had to walk 10 miles to and from school each day and it was uphill both ways
....."