

DES MOINES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Heritage Museum • Bart Howard Lounge • Garrett-Phelps House • Crapo Park Log Cabin
501 N 4th Street • Burlington, IA 52601 • dmchs.org • 319.752.7449

Volume 45 No. 1

January 2022

Newsletter

GPH Christmas Teas Support Porch Project

Our Garrett-Phelps House Christmas Teas were a wonderful success!

When the Garrett-Phelps family lived in the house, teas were held later afternoon around 4:00pm and were more of a light supper including biscuits, crust less sandwiches and sweets.

Both the Thursday and Saturday Teas were sold out. The Teas were part of a fundraising effort to have the south porch on the Phelps house replaced. Over years of weathering, the stability of the porch declined and fell in over the summer. The hard work of the Tea Committee raised over \$600 towards the Garrett Phelps House south porch project. Guests enjoyed appetizers, meats, cheeses and assorted desserts which were all served family style in the dining room. Those in attendance were treated to stories of the Garrett and Phelps families entertaining neighbors and dignitaries. The Teas were so well received the committee is considering having them again in the next few months. As soon as the dates are determined, reservations for twelve on each date will be available.



Christmas Sleigh Ride Enjoyed by All

What is more holiday than joining your friends for an evening of music, drinks and snacks?

Lewis Knudsen graced the Bart Howard Lounge with his guitar and wonderful voice to sing us the sounds of the season. Lewis is a multi-instrumentalist and song writer and has toured coast to coast. Lewis has even toured internationally to Korea, Germany and the Netherlands.

Lewis resides in Rock Island, IL with his wife and shared with us that they are expecting their first child in the spring! Lewis entertained the crowd with antics, life lessons, and wonderful music.

Everyone in attendance sang along with songs we all know and love such as "All I Want for Christmas is You", "Feliz Navidad" as well as some of his own original songs and of course "Fly Me to the Moon" by Burlington's own Bart Howard!

The Historical Society would like to extend a HUGE thank you to U.S. Bank for sponsoring this musical event!



Bird's Eye View

This month I turn the reigns of this newsletter over to our staff, and in particular, Kaela Reynolds, our Event Coordinator. Kaela has a keen eye for design and I know she will do well with the help of our Public Relations/Marketing Committee chaired by our Business Manager, Taylor Standard. In the last 6 years helming the design and content of the publication we have seen many challenges: uncooperative printers, intense fact checking, incompatible file formats, new forms from the post office, new rules for pre-sorting and counting. Oh goodness! Then of course there was COVID which literally shut us down for several months.

I am so proud of the entire staff. They continually shine when faced with these challenges. On "print, fold and sort day" everyone pitches in, sometimes even board members have lent a hand. Once the newsletter is mailed we all feel a great sense

of accomplishment. I know this will continue with Kaela's creative force behind it. I'm not sure if there is a term for someone whose brain is ambidextrous; who can use design and analytics side by side. I am really excited to see the process continue. I hope you will provide feedback including ideas for things you might want to see included each month. Email Kaela at dmchsevents@dmchs.org or kaelar@dmchs.org.

In the meantime, I have been asked to develop a comprehensive Grant seeking and Planned Giving program for DMCHS. Many opportunities exist that we haven't explored for funding. I consider it a privilege to move forward with this in 2022.



Robin

Gift Shop Goodies

Birthdays, anniversaries, and just because gifts for all in the DMCHS Gift Shop! With a wide variety of jewelry, books by local authors, local souvenir magnets, kids toys and so much more. Let us be the place you come to find that gift you just can't find anywhere else!

The newly remodeled gift shop is located in the lower level of the Heritage Museum and is open Wednesday thru Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm and other hours by appointment. Just call 319.752.7449.



Reminder—we carry all three of Jane Sutter's books, "**Sutter's Soda's Satisfy**" and "**Beloved Burlington**" volumes 1 & 2. In addition, we have a limited supply of her husband, Gary's novel, "**As Beautiful as This.**"

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Carrie Bloomer



For Your Entertainment



Kaela Reynolds

Saturday, February 12, 2022—“Funny Little Valentine” Nathan Timmel is a comedian extraordinaire. His unique brand of “funny” sets him apart along the road from town to town. This “Comedy Night, Done Right” will have you and your Valentine cozying up and laughing in the Bart Howard Lounge. Be sure to watch this column for updates on this “hysterical” night of love, romance and humor.



**Nathan
Timmel**

Friday, March 18, 2022 —“Blame Not the Bard” - This trio has appeared on stage at the Bart Howard Lounge for us in 2018 and 2019. Their Celtic music and charm will once again be on tap for our St. Patrick’s Day celebration in 2022. Look for more details to follow soon!



Blame Not the Bard



Cokeena

Friday, February 25, 2022—
Music Bingo w/Cokeena

Back for the next adventure in “Bingo for Your Ears.” If you haven’t attended one of these fun-filled nights, you really do need to join the party! There are 3 completely different games throughout the event! Songs ranging from various decades, to food fights, movie themes, etc. the fun doesn’t stop after “B-I-N-G-O!” is called. Drink specials begin when the doors open at 6pm and the wild and crazy games begin at 7pm.

Be sure to stay up-to-date on all our events through email and social media. If you are not currently on our email list, send your name and level of interest to kaelar@dmchs.org and you will get added to the list. If you have changed your email—or have another email to add to our list—let Kaela know as soon as possible.

YOU DON’T WANT TO MISS ANY OF THE FUN!



FRANK — *Since 1864* —
MILLARD
AND COMPANY, INC.

107 Valley Street • Burlington, IA
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Out of the Attic: Cookie Cutter Edition

by *Julie Martineau*



These objects are not actually a part of the collection. They are what we refer to as “Found on Shelf”, meaning that they were donated to DMCHS, but have never gone through the formal accessioning process. This means they do not have a unique identification number assigned to them at this time.

Using molds to shape our food goes back to at least 2,000 BCE, when the Egyptians utilized stone and wooden molds to shape their breads and cakes. Fast forward to the Tudor era, when the Court chefs for Henry VIII were using wooden molds to shape both sweet and savory foods for their tables. Henry’s daughter, Elizabeth, was known to have gingerbreads shaped and iced to look like her favorite courtiers.

In the early 1800’s, a German carver decided to experiment with tin, to see if he could get a sharper, more consistent cut than he was getting with wood, and a tradition was born. Itinerant tinsmiths soon began to offer the newfangled devices to their customers, with the most common shapes being simple ones like people, stars, birds, American Eagles, and something called distelfink (a Pennsylvania Dutch motif that includes birds and stars).

It wasn’t until 1869 that cookie cutters were mass produced by the Dover Company. And soon, others followed suit. They were usually made of tin or copper, and contained many of the common motifs that we see today. Cookie cutters and cut out cookies became so popular that flour mills were soon offering them as premiums

to promote things like lard or baking powder.

Unfortunately for us, we don’t know the origin of our cookie cutters. The tin cutters are thought to have been hand made by a tin smith sometime before 1900, while the copper cutter is a little newer, and was most likely mass produced around the mid-20th Century.

Today cookie cutters are available in metal, plastics, and silicone, and come in all shapes and sizes. But nothing beats using the metal cookie cutters that have been handed down through the generations, using the family cookie recipes and telling stories of the glories from Christmases past to help share that sense of nostalgia that this time of the year brings.

Photo Credit: Don Weiss



JANUARY

Word Search



by *Taylor Standard*

J K M J M E T B B O O T S S T B S S C W G V K D
 N A G G O B O T S L E D D I N G U A J A L K V G
 R A I B H G E O L E N N A L F G R M L W J Q B N
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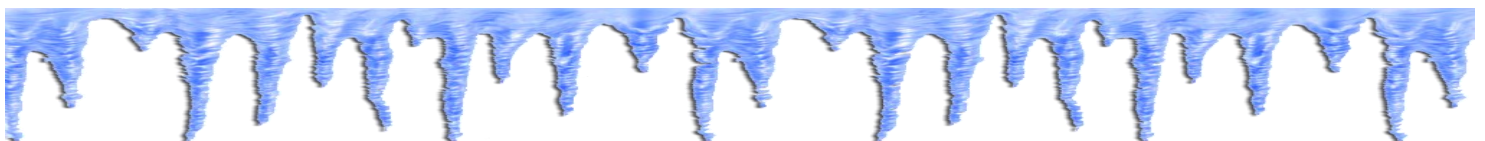
Beginning
 Blanket
 Blizzard
 Boots
 Carnation
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 Cold

Delays
 Earmuffs
 Evergreens
 Fireplace
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Gloves
 Hat
 Holidays
 Hot Chocolate
 Icicles
 January
 Layers

New Year
 Resolutions
 Scarf
 Shovel
 Skating
 Sledding
 Snowman

Sweater
 Toboggan
 Vest
 White
 Winter
 Wonderland
 Wool



Snake Alley Origins

Linda Hall



Snake Alley was once featured as the “Crookedest Street in the World” by Robert L. Ripley in “Ripley’s Believe It or Not”. Now it is considered “Unbelievably Crooked” and the “#1 Odd Spot” in Ripley’s Guide to the Curious Corners of America.

Formerly known as Sixth Street, Snake Alley is located between Columbia and Washington streets. The entrance to Snake Alley is located between the Garret Phelps House and the First United Church of Christ on Columbia Street.

Getting downtown to merchant stores wasn’t too hard, but getting back up the hills was a bit of a challenge for the people who lived at the top of the hills.

The merchants and businessmen of the town wanted a shorter way to get downtown. Charles Starker who emigrated from Germany in 1848, arriving in Burlington in 1850, thought of a way to do this. Starker was a banker, architect and landscape engineer. Where he came from in Germany, there were many vineyards located on the sloping hillsides that reminded him of the Burlington landscape. He believed curves would solve the problem and make access between the downtown and the North Hill area achievable on Sixth Street.

The city engineer at the time was William Steyh. He agreed with Starker and together they hired George Kriechbaum who was a paving contractor and had done the first brick paving in Burlington in 1887. The digging began in the summer of 1894. The job was completed in November of that year. Only picks and shovels were used and of course manpower was utilized to do the digging and laying bricks.

The bricks were laid at an angle and each row was a fraction of an inch higher than the one before. This was so the horses could get a footing (as well as people) for the trip down the hill. However, it wasn’t a functional thoroughfare to go up, so eventually it became a one way down. Limestone and blue clay bricks make up the alley. To keep the high grade to the outside, the slant was constantly changed from one curve to the next. There is a 21% grade with a rise of 58.3 feet and a distance of 275 feet from Washington Street to Columbia Street including five half-curves and two quarter-curves.

From May 1 until October 31, the Garret Phelps House at the top of Snake Alley is open on Sundays from 1-4 and is free to the public. Snake Alley is maintained by Burlington Parks Department.



DONATIONS

Roof Fund Donations

Rosemary Witte
Olive Sullivan

Exhibit Fund Donations In Memory of Elaine Baxter

Angela Witte

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Garrett-Phelps House South Porch Donations

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Donation Form/Membership Renewal

Check (# _____) Cash Credit Card (For credit card please call the Heritage Museum @ 319.752.7449)

Please send completed forms to DMC Historical Society, 501 N 4th Street, Burlington, IA 52601. Make checks payable to DMCHS.

Name _____

Address _____ City, St, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

This donation is to renew my membership (Select only one:) Individual \$25 Family \$50 Bronze \$250

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Happy New Year!



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The Heritage Museum will be closing
at 1pm on Friday, Dec 31st and will
be closed on Saturday January 1st,
2022 for New Years day!

Museum Hours

Heritage Museum: Hours will be Wednesday thru Saturday 10 am to 3 pm.

Garrett-Phelps House & Crapo Park Log Cabin: Closed until spring.

We will continue to post updates through Facebook, email and our webpage: www.dmchs.org