



From the Executive Director

I want to thank everyone for allowing me the time to lead the museum into new pathways! Ever since my first day, it has been full of adventures, stories, new acquaintances and more! For this newsletter I wanted to talk about new exhibits I plan to curate into the Heritage Center. If you're familiar with our Martin Bruhl exhibit previously stationed in the original main entrance, it was relocated under the rotunda. This fabulous exhibit highlights the remarkable life of Martin Bruhl's concert piano career with his original piano, letters, suit, and more. Our dedicated staff and volunteers helped move the display into a parlor setting with comfortable seating around Bruhl's very own Steinway baby grand piano. With a fresh coat of paint in the room and new studio lighting, these changes really transform the room into a cozy space. As a ragtime and classical pianist, I will be starting weekly piano concerts to fill the historic halls of the museum with music Martin Bruhl would have played in his time. Please come check out our new exhibit. You will surely enjoy it!

As we roll into 2023, we have several exhibits in line that we can't wait to start curating. For those who have fond memories of the Heritage Center being Burlington's original old public library. I plan on making an interactive exhibit in the library stacks that reintroduces the history of the library, how it rolled over to the new library, and how we became the county's main museum. This exhibit will allow our famous "Hypatia" to be seen closer, glass floors to be viewed from the underside, stamp your own check in/out card, learn the Dewey Decimal System, and much more. On the other side of the stacks, we invite the community to share extensive personal collections with us to educate the public why personal collections are very important to museums. Please visit us soon and give us your feedback on what you would like to see represented about your community here at the Historical Society.

From the Assistant Director

After a month in the role as your new assistant director, I'm excited at the sheer potential that this Historical Society has given our collections, resources, and community! In the past month we have had the pleasure of welcoming hundreds of passengers from the American Duchess and American Countess Riverboats into our Heritage Museum and The Garrett-Phelps House. We were also excited to welcome local musicians Aaron Lotzow and The Hillsiders into The Bart Howard Lounge to perform for our groups of boat passengers. Both the Heritage Center and Garrett-Phelps are preparing to see hundreds more guests with the future dockings of the American Queen and Viking Riverboats.

Colton, LaVon, and I also had the pleasure of representing the Historical Society at the 2nd Annual Chamber of Commerce Golf Classic held at the Burlington Golf Club. We connected with members of the community and local businesses offering complimentary mugs and a brief exhibit on older golf clubs from our collection. The weather was great and we look forward to making an annual appearance out on the 16th hole!

Finally, for those involved with Burlington High School Football program, be sure to listen in to the press box coverage of the game. We've recently partnered with Pritchard Broadcasting to sponsor the pre-game "History of the Series" for the entirety of the 2022-2023 season. As always, we encourage anyone to stop in and have a chat with us to share any ideas you may have.

Upcoming Events at the Heritage Center

September 10

Rodney Botts: Early Street Cars in Burlington

1 to 3 pm

Ever wonder how people got around in early Burlington? Ever wonder about street cars? Rodney Botts will be discussing early Burlington street cars. Please use the Columbia Street door (with the blue awning). Doors open at 12:45.

September 24

Dave Lotz: The Railroad in Burlington

1 to 3 pm

Dave Lotz, a railroad historian, will be discussing the role, growth, and decline of the railroad in Burlington. From the earliest iterations of the CB&Q to the Burlington Zephyr to the BNSF, Dave will cover it all! If you are a railroad enthusiast, you will want to attend this Town Hall Meeting. Please use the Columbia Street door (with the blue awning). Doors open at 12:45.

October 20

Mark Tabbert: History of Freemasonry in Burlington

6 to 8 pm

Please use the Columbia Street door (with the blue awning). Doors open at 5:45.

November 12

Bob and Janet Hesler: The History of Danville

1 to 3 pm

Bob and Janet Hesler will be discussing the history of Danville and its evolution from a stagecoach stop to a thriving small town in SE Iowa. They will also discuss the Anne Frank pen pal connection and museum. To find out more about these interesting topics, you will want to attend this Town Hall Meeting. Please use the Columbia Street door (with the blue awning). Doors open at 12:45.

All events are held at the Heritage Museum, 501 N 4 Street.
Please use the Columbia Street entrance. Look for the blue awning!

For more information, please check our web page, newsletter, social media, and the Heritage Museum staff.

Our Mission: Provide Opportunities for education, research and the preservation of Des Moines County History

Calling All Volunteers

This summer will prove to be one of the busiest and most exciting times for the Des Moines County Historical Society. In addition to adding the world-class Tibbits crinoid collection to the museum, both Viking and American Queen are set to dock on our shoreline a number of times between now and the end of October. Volunteers are needed more than ever to help us provide the best experience to those coming to Burlington.

If you would like to help us share our history, please consider volunteering for one or more of these dates. It will take at least 4 to 6 people at each location (Heritage Museum & Garrett-Phelps House) each day to accomplish this. A full list of docking dates and other pertinent information is available if you call the office at 319.752.7449.

If you are more of a back office person, volunteers are always needed to help catalog and preserve artifacts, prepare exhibits, and maintain our facilities. Please talk to any of our staff about all the opportunities.

Many thanks!

Board Openings

The Des Moines County Historical Society currently has openings for at-large board members.

Board members' full terms are three years with monthly board meetings at 1:00 pm on the second Thursday of each month. Board members are expected to attend DMCHS events and actively serve on a committee such as Marketing, Collections, Fundraising, Events, or Facilities.

This is a perfect opportunity to serve your community, lend your expertise, and actively be involved with really cool artifacts.

Interested parties should forward their résumé to the attention of either board members LaVon Worley at ljworley227@gmail.com or Don Weiss at don.weiss2@outlook.com for immediate consideration.

Check Out Our New Website

The DMCHS website has been completely overhauled with a fresh, new look, new content, and new capabilities. You can now renew your membership, become a volunteer, and make donations online with our secure credit card processing system. You can download archival issues of the monthly newsletter and keep abreast of news and scheduled events at the Heritage Center. Check it out and let us know what you think!

Des Moines County Historical Society Board Members

LaVon Worley
Paula Logan
Don Weiss
Terri Dowell
Eric O'Brien
Josh Schier

2021-22 Officers

President LaVon Worley
Vice President, Treas Don Weiss
Secretary Paula Logan



Offices located at Heritage Museum
501 N 4th Street Burlington, IA 52601
Voice: 319-752-7449 FAX: 319-753-2449
dmchs@dmchs.org

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Out of the Attic: The Grand Staircase

By Julie Martineau



This object is something that those of us who are familiar with the old Public Library, now the Heritage Museum, will remember. It dates to between 1894 and 1898, and this oak, varnish, and metal (in the form of nails) embodies the Gilded Age style that is both beautifully crafted and useful.

Over time, the once-gleaming oak staircase in the Heritage Museum has matured, and 124 years of use have left indelible marks on the surface of the wood. We are unsure when someone added an early form of plastic stair protectors, which are still in place many decades later, although they too are showing their age. While a staircase may seem fairly mundane, a closer look reveals just how incredible our staircase truly is.

The newel post at the bottom of the stairs features an intricately carved ball that may have been meant to represent the Globe of Knowledge, supported on a pedestal. Below that, the Eastlake style post mimics an Ionic column, complete with scrolls at the top. The bottom is decorated with lovely hand carved leaves and Griffon feet. The face of the post continues the Eastlake gingerbread carving theme found on the main level.

If you were to look at the staircase spindles, you might notice there are three different styles on each stair level. We don't know the exact reason why, just that they are different, and that each one is hand turned, according to DMCHS

records. Next, your gaze moves to the wainscoting, or paneled sides, where you will notice the coffering. Coffering consists of one or more sunken panels. In our case, the coffering is lined with wooden beadwork, another common theme. The coffering again can be found throughout the main and upper level, and especially all along the staircase. It is even underneath the stairs that lead to the tower, again reflecting the idea that things should be both beautiful and useful. These same motifs are common in many houses in both the Heritage and North Hill neighborhoods, and are also commonly found throughout the Heritage museum.

Our Grand Staircase is still intact, and still serves foot traffic moving from the main level to the second floor, and tower, as well as the downstairs archives and the Bart Howard Lounge.

Would you like see the staircase for yourself? Come to the Heritage Museum during regular business hours, we would love to share the many wonderful things on exhibit in our building!

Photo credit: Don Weiss Photography



Our Mission: Provide Opportunities for education, research and the preservation of Des Moines County History

Donations & Memberships

Names are for receipts dated from the 15th through the 15th of each month.

In Memory of
Suzanne Bloomer
Jerry Bloomer

Memberships
Patricia Steiner
Elaine Eisenmann
LaVon & Judy Worley
Bill Ell
Leroy & Sandi Bickel
Megan Brincks
Doyle Ruble Jr.
Russ & Mary Smith
Ralph & Nancy Montrone
Kathy Murphy
Bob & Vicki Gerdes
John & Joyce Wauters
Suzanne Brueck
Rick & Jill Helmuth
Wayne & Nancy Tolander
Vicky Summerson

Donations
Salinger

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

I am making this donation (Select one)

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DES MOINES COUNTY
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 Heritage Museum • Bart Howard Lounge
 Garrett-Phelps House • Crapo Park Log Cabin
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Museum Hours

Heritage Museum: Open Tuesday through Friday from 10 to 4 pm and Saturday from 10 to 3 pm.

Garrett-Phelps House & Crapo Park Log Cabin: Open Sunday from 1 to 4 pm.

Updates will be posted through Facebook, email and our webpage: www.dmchs.org.