



## From the Executive Director

by Colton Neely

We were delighted that our traveling exhibit at the Burlington Public Library was a tremendous success on April 14th, 15th, and 17th. We brought a variety of objects from our collection in collaboration with the library's "Vacation Through Time" program, featuring a series of Titanic-related activities. When you started your journey through the exhibit, you were given a boarding pass of a real passenger and walked your way through various stations. At the end of your trip, you saw from a long list of passengers if you survived the sinking or not. You could stick your arm in ice water or tap urgent messages in Morse code to other ships. We provided a heavy iron coal poker for the family to feel what it was like to maintain the ship's steam engines. We also brought clothing from circa 1910, a menu that survived off the Lusitania, and many antiques related to the vessel. We were told more than 375 people attended. Thank you all for participating in this event in recognition of the great ship, Titanic. We also installed our fourth site attraction at the Hotel Burlington, which was founded in 1910 by a group of investors and contractors as a location for wealthy business owners to gather, clubs to entertain, and guests arriving from rail and automobile to stay. Since its closure in the 1980s, DMCHS has gathered a collection of memorabilia related to the hotel's occupation throughout the decades. We now have placed three display cases and information in the Hotel's main lobby for viewing. Please visit as we continue the construction of these exhibits.

As for the Garrett-Phelps House Teas, we thank our staff and volunteers for donating their time to serve our guests in the dining room. To date this year, 45 people attended teas or booked for future teas. The months of May and September are fully booked, but we still have 12 spots open in June and 12 July spots available in our classy

dining room. Spots do fill up fast. All proceeds go as donations for the Garrett-Phelps back porch repair. Recently, we removed the porch due to safety concerns for patrons and the house. Although the porch was not original to the house, we can rebuild it in the way the original family would have intended to use it. Most people did not know, but the original porch had a second level, accessed through the dining room, that faced south, looking over town and our historic Snake Alley. Donations are greatly appreciated for this reconstruction process. If you would like to donate to the various repairs to Garrett-Phelps House, please contact me at (319) 752-7449 for more information.

Summer is almost here, and we will need volunteers for Garrett-Phelps, Log Cabin, and Heritage Center. For all previous volunteers, please call (319-752-7449, visit, or email me at [coltonn@dmchs.org](mailto:coltonn@dmchs.org) to update contact information, key count, and availability. We certainly need your assistance this summer with programs and riverboat traffic that starts on the 4th of July. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities at DMCHS, including general patron assistance, collections, tours, and programs.

Are you parents looking for some summer activities for your kids while they are home from school? Then try our Heritage Center Kids Camp, located at the Heritage Center. Running Monday through Friday, July 24th to July 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am - 11:30 am, we will host STEM and STEAM historical museum-related activities such as Garrett-Phelps Parlor Games, Gird and Cleek Games, and Crinoid digs. We will be able to serve ages 7–12 with a maximum occupancy of 12 kids (\$75.00 per child). Members will receive a 10% discount! Come join us and register now at the Heritage Center. Spots are filling up fast!

# Upcoming Events

## **Town Hall Lectures**

### **First Saturday of Every Month**

**12 to 3 pm**

Every first Saturday of the month, the Heritage Center will host a speaker, historian, or lecturer to give a presentation to the community about a particular topic related to Burlington or Des Moines County. This program will typically be free for patrons; the only time admission is charged for this program is for *special* lectures. Each participating patron will get a sticker from our museum staff that allows free admission all day at the Heritage Center. Please use the Columbia Street door (with the blue awning). Doors open at 11:45.

## **Sister Susie's Sewing Club**

### **Every Tuesday through May 16**

**9 to 11 am**

This club gathers local sewing and quilting professionals, hobbyists, and amateurs in social collaboration by using donated thread and fabric to create materials by hand with antique sewing machines. You can register in person or by phone. Maximum capacity 14 participants.

## **Tea for Lunch**

### **May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, and September 19**

**1 pm**

Tea for Lunch is a grand social gathering in the Garrett-Phelps House dining room. Scones, Savories & Sweets will be served. Maximum capacity 12 participants.

**Cost \$25 per person**

## **Teen Curators**

### **May 13 & 27, June 10 & 24**

**Starting at 2 pm**

This Saturday program is for teenagers (ages 15–19) who will work as a team with the Executive Director in building an exhibit for the museum. This program is for teens who aspire to work in the museum field and learn key research techniques, exhibit development, and exhibit fabrication. See the Heritage Center Calendar or website for fall dates and sign-ups. Maximum capacity 15 participants.

**Cost \$45 per person**

## **Heritage Center Kids Camp (Ages 7 - 12)**

### **July 24 - 28**

**10 - 11:30 am**

This summer program is full of STEM and STEAM-related activities with kids learning about fossils, flying machines, and more by playing games, creating art, and science experiments at the Heritage Center. Includes field trips to the Garrett-Phelps House and Crapo Park Log Cabin. Maximum capacity 14 participants.

**Cost \$75 each per person**

**Taste of the Holidays  
December 5, 7, and 9**

This holiday dinner at the Garrett-Phelps house hosts up to 12 people per night. The night will start off in the library, where our volunteers will serve wine and refreshments. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served while guests socialize in the back parlor. When dinner is ready to be served, our interpreters will guide guests to be seated in the dining rooms. As dinner is being served, our historians will give a presentation of the Garrett-Phelps house and family heritage. This holiday dinner experience is a beloved tradition in the community hosted by the Des Moines County Historical Society.

**Arancia Piano Quartet  
May 17**

**1 pm**  
Heritage Center



**Become a Volunteer**

This autumn proved to be one of the busiest and most exciting times for the Des Moines County Historical Society. It won't be long before a new season of American Queen and Viking dockings will be starting up, and volunteers are needed more than ever to help us provide the best experience to those coming to Burlington.

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.

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

**Board Members**

- Megan Brincks
- Martha Clyde
- Terri Dowell
- Michael Herron
- Paula Logan
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**2023-24 Officers**

- President .....Don Weiss
- Vice President.....Paula Logan
- Treasurer .....Terri Dowell
- Secretary .....Megan Brincks

**DMCHS Staff**

- Executive Director .....Colton Neely
- Museum Assistant .....Kay Swanson



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

# Out of the Collection

By Colton Neely

## Object No. 73.353

This oak library table with an oval top and octagonal pedestal within the collection has a rather significant amount of history. Its approximate size is 54 inches by 40 inches round and 29 inches by 12 inches high with a green felt-covered table top. This table was the property of the Burlington Judge, David Rorer (1806–1884), and it has been said that the first ordinances of Burlington were drafted on it.

An original, undated newspaper clipping from the Burlington Hawk-Eye, which was found in a circa 1970s accession book in our collection, is reproduced below.

### **Historic Table Is Placed in the Library Here**

An ancient oval table on which, according to Burlington tradition, the city's original charter was signed in 1834 has just been placed in the public library here through the old Des Moines County Historical Society. For several years, the table and an antique high desk of rich walnut have been kept for the society in the offices of the Hawk-Eye Gazette. The table and desk are said to have been relics treasured by the Tracy and Rorer families here for many years. They finally came into the possession of the late J. Tracy Garrett, former Hawk-Eye Gazette editor and former publisher of the old Hawk-Eye. Chief Blackhawk is said to have leaned on the desk many times in early-day council meetings."

It had been Garrett's intention to give the desk and table to the historical society on the assumption the old Rorer home, at 5th and Spring, would be used as a historical center. However, lack of funds prevented conversion of the house for such purposes, and the society sold the property recently. Garrett died in 1941 without seeing his dreams of a historical center realized. However, there have been suggestions made recently that eventually the present library building can be enlarged to afford housing facilities for historical relics, records, and displays. Capt. George Garrett,

son of J. Tracy Garrett, also wished the table and desk to be taken over by the historical society, and arrangements were made for their inclusion at the library. They will probably be made a part of the furnishings of the large newspaper room, where files of the Hawk-Eye Gazette and other Burlington newspapers for more than a century are kept for references. "We are very happy to get these fine old pieces," Elizabeth Lilly, librarian, stated. E. C. Cady, president of the historical society, also expressed appreciation for the gift. "We hope some day to have adequate facilities for many of the historical treasures of early Burlington."



In 1949, the Historical Society gave the Library \$9,613.36 in return for their agreement to establish and administer an historical display, as stated by E. C. Cady, president.

# Donations & Memberships

Names are for receipts dated from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**In Memory of**  
**William and Martha Pratt**  
Jeff Heland  
**Ilene Frank**  
Olive Sullivan

**Donations:**  
Olive Sullivan  
John Phillips  
Wayne Tolander  
Don Lindholm

**Memberships:**  
Mark and Sharon Vasicek  
Gail Sullivan  
Roger & Lynn Sheagren  
Joyce Harvey  
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Fred & Marti Wetzell  
Wayne and Nancy Tolander  
Nancy Guffey  
Todd Sladky  
Sharon Eisenmann  
Chuck & Ellen Fuller  
Dwight & Sue Mulch  
Don Lindholm

## A Gift in Your Will or Living Trust

A gift in your will or living trust is one of the most effective ways to provide for the future of DMCHS and allows you to retain your assets during your lifetime. In addition, your estate may benefit from a charitable estate tax deduction.

The gift may be easily included in your will when it is written, or it may be added through a simple codicil or amendment. You may wish to leave DMCHS a stated dollar amount; a percentage of your residual estate (what remains after debts, taxes and specific bequests have been made); or a specific asset, such as securities or other marketable property.

It can be as simple as adding the following language to your last will and testament: *"I give and bequeath to the Des Moines County Historical Society, presently of 501 N 4th Street, Burlington, IA 52601, the sum of \$\_\_\_ to be used for its general support."*

For further information, contact Colton Neely, Executive Director, at 319-752-7449.

## 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)

IN MEMORY OF      IN HONOR OF      ON THE OCCASION OF

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



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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](http://www.dmchs.org).