



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

Volume 47 No. 3

# NEWSLETTER

March 2024

## From the Executive Director

by Colton Overton

Spring is almost here, and we can all certainly feel its warmth and apricity. While we are enjoying the spring-like defrost, we are also reminded of how powerful Iowa weather is, as it changes from hot to cold just overnight. While our staff is cooped up in the museum, waiting to get ahead of the yard work at the Garrett-Phelps House and Heritage Center, we continue with the cataloging and cleaning of our extensive collection.

We started a program for Silver Cord students who can actively work with our staff on all sorts of projects around the museum during walk-in hours Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Although it is open to DMCHS volunteers too, our students have really enjoyed learning about proper cleaning techniques for statues, portraits, and wood cabinetry. One big project our staff, board members, and I have been working on diligently is the conversion of the Grand Gallery into a much-needed research room and exhibit space. This involved the removal of the wooden boat pergola to accommodate the dozens of large pieces of pre-1910's furniture, portraits, and antiquities that belonged to our founders and were stored in our archive room. At the end of the room, rebuilt from the pergola, is a newly refurbished research counter where our staff will take requests. On April 1st, we will be launching new protocols and request forms to help our staff understand your research needs. This document will have different options pertaining to how you would like us to deliver scanned materials, historical perspective guidance, and peer research review.

While on the topic of research projects, we need your

support for local historian Russ Fry. Currently, he is campaigning for donations for his Black Hawk Rock Dig project. Located in a deep ravine north of town, buried in debris, is a famous granite boulder monolith attributed to the warrior Black Hawk. The scope of the project consists of raising \$6,000 to sponsor an archeological dig in the area for indigenous artifacts. This project will also deem the site a cultural impact area and historic landmark to early Des Moines County history. Currently, we have over \$1,500 to sponsor the dig. If you would like to aid the project, please make your donations to the Heritage Center and make sure you note "Black Hawk Rock" so we can organize it for the respective account. We are excited to be a part of this historic project with Russ!

We are also tickled to start back up the programming at the Heritage Center and Garrett-Phelps House for the months of February and March. If you are interested, we are still searching for a person who would like to share their collection for our "County Quirks" exhibit. We changed the name from "My Collections" to avoid confusion with the University of Iowa's ongoing sister program. The exhibit will last 3 months per collection in the Perkins display cabinet, and I will be kicking off the exhibit in March with my own personal collection. I will be giving a lecture on why people collect on March 2nd in the Bart Howard Room for a Town Hall Event. We hope to see you there! On behalf of the Des Moines County Historical Society, we thank you for all your support through your donations.

## Upcoming Events

### **Sounds of the Past**

**March 16, April 20**

**10 am to 12 pm**

Executive Director, Colton Overton, will be performing ragtime music on the historic Martin Bruhl piano in the atrium of the Heritage Center. Additionally, he will be doing Edison phonograph demonstrations. Please use the Fourth Street door (main entrance at the top of the ramp on the west side). Doors open at 9:45 am.

### **Town Hall Lecture**

**Saturday, March 2**

**11 am**

This lecture features DMCHS Executive Director Colton Overton in a new museum community project called "County Quirks." County Quirks is a project where selected community members bring in personal collections and talk about why they collect. Meet us in the Bart Howard Lounge at 11 am. Doors open at 10 am.

### **Town Hall Lecture**

**Saturday, April 6**

**11 am**

This lecture features local Burlington historian Rodney Botts who will be talking about the famous streamlined locomotive, the Burlington Zephyr. Rodney Botts will cover why the Zephyr train was created, who created the line, and how it was linked to the famous Aeolus. Come to the Heritage Center Bart Howard Lounge and enjoy this fascinating story. Doors open at 10 am.

### **Scones, Savories & Sweets**

**Tuesday, April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17**

**1 pm**

Now accepting reservations for a three-course Tea Luncheon, a grand social gathering in the Garrett-Phelps House dining room. \$25 per person. Maximum capacity 12 participants. Call 319-752-7449 to reserve your seat.

### **SilverCord Walk-In**

**Thursday, March 7, 14, 21, 28**

**Thursday, April 4, 11, 18, 25**

**4 - 6 pm**

All Silver Cord students are welcome to come to the museum if they need hours and do volunteer work with staff and peers.

### **Miss Lilly's Story Time**

**Tuesday, March 5, 12, 19, 26**

**Tuesday, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**

**10 am**

Kids story time for all ages upstairs at the Heritage Center Catfish Corner, elevator access is available.

### **Historic Newspaper Reading**

**Wednesday, March 6, 13, 20, 27**

**Wednesday, April 3, 10, 17, 24**

**10 - 11 am**

Historic Newspaper Discussion of random dates in Des Moines County History. Meet in Bart Howard Lounge.

## Memorial Brick Garden

Outside of the Heritage Museum, many of you remember our memorial brick garden. The bricks are the perfect way to show your support of the museums, memorialize or honor a family, or mark a special occasion.

Each donation of \$150 per 4" x 8" India red granite brick will include a maximum of two lines of 15 characters each. Spaces between words count as characters. The opportunity also exists for donors of \$1,000 or more to be recognized with a special, light gray granite brick.

Making a gift will last beyond a lifetime and will be a stepping stone towards the history and future of the Des Moines County Historical Society and our three historical locations.

For more information on adding your engraved brick, please visit our website at [www.dmchs.org](http://www.dmchs.org) for a request form, or contact me at [coltonn@dmchs.org](mailto:coltonn@dmchs.org) or 319-752-7449, and I will be happy to help. We need 2 more to meet the minimum of 10 to start the additional engraving process. Sign up today to have your name added to the outdoor classroom and picnic space!

## 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, by phone at 319-752-7449.

## Become a Volunteer

As winter turns to spring, the coming year will be one of the busiest and most exciting times for the Des Moines County Historical Society.

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.

## Board Members

Megan Brincks  
Martha Clyde  
Terri Dowell  
Michael Herron  
Kara Houston  
Paula Logan  
Don Weiss

Forest Gahn, Honorary Board Member

### 2024-25 Officers

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

## DMCHS Staff

Executive Director .....Colton Neely  
Museum Assistant .....Kay Swanson  
Docent.....Cora Wickham-Hermann  
Docent.....Jarod Shaffer  
Docent.....Amy Power



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

# Out of the Collection

By Colton Overton

Object# 72.795-51  
Crapo's Barnacle

While cataloging our collection, we continue to discover long-forgotten artifacts and objects. One of those is the Philip Crapo Seashell Collection. We are unsure of how many shells Philip Crapo (1844–1903) collected, but we estimate almost 1,000 individual specimens. We are unsure how the collection ended up in our possession, but we are thankful for receiving this donation.

During the early 1900's, prominent businessmen who were wealthy enough to travel often collected souvenirs to bring home. It is safe to say that Crapo had an affinity for collecting all sorts of exotic shells. As the century passed, laws were created to protect from human interference, poaching, and collecting, and many museums became a repository for thousands of specimens pertaining to natural history. This is a common practice museums are willing to accept and can address state requirements on curation, preservation, and public/scientific engagement. I have the privilege of handing the collection over for scientific assessment to our staff member, Cora Wickham to identify all specimens, the locality from which they could have been found, and develop signage for the exhibit. Cora will potentially be sharing this collection and developing a book on the seashells and Crapo's whereabouts while obtaining the collection. As I was once a collections staff member of the Museum of Natural

History in Iowa City, I will be guiding her through the process of proper identification.

One interesting specimen is a large 7 inch barnacle. There are other barnacles of less than an inch. The question is: why is one specimen massive compared to other identical specimens?

We know that barnacles attach themselves to movable objects. They themselves are incapable of moving since they have one large suction cup foot. Barnacles open up part of their shell with feeding parts to capture plankton and debris in moving, flowing water. Since barnacles are a nuisance to boats and, in clusters, can wreak havoc on other tidal ecosystems, they are scraped off by sailors before they cause structural issues for boats and docks. Whales and other large sea life can obtain clusters of barnacles but cannot scrape them off.

After asking our colleagues at the Museum of Natural History, we concluded possibly Crapo took the specimen off a beached whale. Once we look back at Philip Crapo's travels and personal recollections, it will be interesting to speculate how these specimens came into his possession and brought back to Iowa! Stop in and watch our staff prepare the collection for display!

Below is Cora viewing the collection for assessment.



# 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

**Donations  
General**

Mark Brugge  
Paula Logan  
John Phillips  
Fred Wetzel

**Garrett-Phelps House**

Olive Sullivan

**Black Hawk Rock**

Keith Schulz  
John Riessen  
Jerry Parks  
Rodney Botts  
Kathy Thomas  
David Camp  
Donald Kellar

Deb Bowen in honor of David Hoelzen

**Memberships**

Scott & Cathy Hazell  
Bonnie Downes  
Janet John  
Cindy Henry  
Michael Fitzgibbon  
Diane Sweeden  
Christina Cowles  
Kenton Klenk  
Travis Meisgeier  
John & Carolyn Rumley  
Lanny & Dana Hillyard  
Dave & Paula Trevitt  
Ken & Jane Friedel  
Don & Lori Weiss  
Karla Mundt  
Dan & Lois Clark  
Jeffrey & Joyce Taeger  
Barbara McRoberts  
Jason & Mary Ellen Cox  
Mark Brugge  
Paula Logan  
Rose Miller

Sandra Allgood  
Mary Ann Rhode  
Dave & Linda Riley  
Jim & Mary Priebe  
Marcia Stiefel  
Henry & Sue Ann Hentzel  
Jim & Pam Farr  
Mary Niehaus  
Olive Sullivan  
Louis Hemphill  
Lori Cox  
Thornton & Betty Stanley  
Roger Hatteberg  
Win & Gail Boyd  
Ann Distelhorst  
Dorothy Swanson  
Keith Schulz  
Fred & Marti Wetzel  
Travis Pilch  
Ryan & Caroline Jones  
William Patterson

## 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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501 N 4th Street  
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Part of the Philip Crapo  
Seashell Collection

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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: Please contact Heritage Center for private tours.

Updates will be posted through Facebook, email and our webpage: [www.dmchs.org](http://www.dmchs.org).