

From the Executive Director

by Colton Overton

The inaugural Snake Alley Days took place from May 30 to May 31, and what a fantastic weekend! I was astounded by the level of community support for the Garrett-Phelps House, as were our board and staff. The Mary Ann Baker Foundation opened the Stack door to kick off the event, and the Heritage Center welcomed well over 180 visitors in the Grand Gallery, Atrium, and Rotunda with the introduction of our Stack chamber, our premier exhibit, “My Dear Vinnie,” and “Crapo’s Seashells.” Our board is grateful to the Southeastern Iowa Symphony Orchestra for the fantastic evening, Midwestern Energy for the electrical renovations, and the Burlington Public Library for supplying the information required for the exhibit. It was a true throwback to the glorious year of 1898.

Thanks to Mike Miginity’s collaboration and his innovative bandwagon camping on the Garrett-Phelps House lawn, we witnessed a lot more activity the following day. In addition to cooking using antique cookware, Mike and his team also played violin in the Garrett-Phelps Parlor, spoke with families about early pioneer medical habits, and much more! A teenage historical interpreter at the Heritage Center taught families how to put on corsets by dressing in period attire and bringing in her own antiques. Watching her stroll around the recently refurbished building while dressed in 1901 attire delighted our team. A truly momentous occasion!

I’ll be back at my grindstone searching for a ton more funding for ongoing restoration and restorative work between Garrett-Phelps and the Heritage Center as our staff relaxes after two years of restoration work here.

As a reminder, as early as June 2025, the Viking Mississippi River Excursions will be in town, and I want to

inform our hardworking volunteers of this. I’ve included the dates and timings below, but please be aware that they could still vary based on river levels.

If any Silver Cord students or volunteers would like to help steward our riverboat tourists, please call the Heritage Center at (319) 752-7449 or email Kay Swanson at kswanson@dmchs.org to schedule your availability.

As we open the locations for the season, we will also be releasing key access and scheduling for the Garrett-Phelps House and Crapo Park Log Cabin in May. If you are a frequent key holder and would like to pick up your key from me, please get in touch with us so we can arrange a time that works for you!

Viking Mississippi River Cruise Dates and Times

(May Change Depending on River-Levels)

Date	Day	Time
6/30/2025	Mon	9 :30– 4:30 pm
7/10/2025	Thu	8 – 5 pm
8/4/2025	Mon	9:30 – 4:30 pm
8/14/2025	Thu	8 – 5 pm
8/18/2025	Mon	9:30 – 4:30 pm
8/28/2025	Thu	8 – 5 pm
9/1/2025	Mon	9:30 – 4:30 pm
9/11/2025	Thu	8 – 5 pm
10/6/202	Mon	9:30 – 4:30 pm
10/16/2025	Thu	8 – 5 pm

Snake Alley Days: Newly Renovated Stacks Unveiling



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

Snake Alley Days: Garrett-Phelps House



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Upcoming Events

Sounds of the Past - Female Composers of America

Saturday, June 21

10 am to 12 pm

In the Heritage Center's atrium, Colton Overton, Executive Director, will play ragtime pieces on the historic Martin Bruhl piano. In addition, he will do demonstrations of the Edison phonograph on special occasions. Please utilize the main entrance on the east side at the top of the ramp, Fourth Street. Doors open at 9:45 am.

Sounds of the Past - Patriotic Rags and Riches

Saturday, July 19

10 am to 12 pm

In the Heritage Center's atrium, Colton Overton, Executive Director, will play ragtime pieces on the historic Martin Bruhl piano. In addition, he will do demonstrations of the Edison phonograph on special occasions. Please utilize the main entrance on the east side at the top of the ramp, Fourth Street. Doors open at 9:45 am.

Historic Newspaper Reading

Wednesday, June 4, 11, 18, 25

Wednesday, July 2, 8, 15, 22, 29

10 am to 11 pm

Historic Newspaper Discussion of current issues that can affect history, and pulling random themes/dates in Des Moines County History. Meet in Bart Howard Lounge.

Burlington History Club

Wednesday, June 4, 11, 18, 25

Wednesday, July 2, 8, 15, 22, 29

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Immediately follows the Historic Newspaper Reading. Are you looking for a research idea? Are you just enthusiastic about Des Moines County History and want to share your knowledge with a group? This club is open to all who are interested in anything history related and with a staff member allow in person digs for information within our collections.

SilverCord Walk-In

Tuesday, June 3, 10, 17, 24

Tuesday, July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

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.

Snake Alley Art Fair

Sunday, June 15

9 am to 4 pm

Don't want to leave the street but need to escape the heat? Adjacent to the Art Fair is the Garrett Phelps House Museum. We will be open with admission as part of our \$2 million initiative to restore Garrett-Phelps. Come see some of the oldest artwork and furnishings in Burlington, located directly on Snake Alley!

Executive Director Office Hours

Fridays, 1 to 4 pm

Research & Collections Help Office Hours

Fridays, 10 am to 12 pm

Do you need help with Research? Do you need to have an idea that is worth discussing? Come to the Heritage Center and we can assist you.

Memorial Brick Garden

**We have 235 blank bricks that could have your name!
Hey! 2 - 10 bricks, let's start the trend again!**

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 for a request form, or contact me at 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 Overton, Executive Director, by phone at 319-752-7449.

Want to Volunteer?

There is still time to volunteer to help make 2025 the best year ever for the Heritage Center, Garrett-Phelps House and Crapo Park Log Cabin.

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

2025-26 Officers

ChairDon Weiss
Vice Chair.....Paula Logan
TreasurerTerri Dowell
SecretaryKara Houston

DMCHS Staff

Executive DirectorColton Overton
Museum AssistantKay Swanson
Collections AssistantCora Hermann-
Wickham
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

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Out of the Collection

By Cora Hermann-Wickham

Object Number: P74-628

Pre-1900 Oil Painting: William Garrett

Artist: Unknown

Born in 1823, William Garrett was a distinguished figure in Burlington's history, known for building the original house at 521 Columbia Street in 1851. William's life in Des Moines County began in 1836 when he moved from Kentucky with his mother and stepfather. Despite having only a rudimentary education, William started work as a store clerk at age 14 and clerked in two other stores until 1843 before he went on to open his own business in 1844, which he successfully ran for nine years while also serving as Sheriff from 1844 to 1857. In May 1848, William married Martha Rorer, the daughter of well-known lawyer and judge, David Rorer, and they had nine children together, seven of whom survived into adulthood.

William's business ventures continued to thrive, particularly with his partnership in Garrett, Rhodes, and Company, which profited from supplying wagons heading west and fulfilling Civil War contracts. After the war, his career in public service flourished; he worked as deputy treasurer and county treasurer for twelve years, served as an alderman for two years, and held roles in the Aspen Grove Cemetery Association and Christ Episcopal Church.

In the 1870s, he doubled the size of his home, reflecting his growing prosperity. His role as a cashier in the Iowa State Bank from 1874 for 21 years further cemented his standing in the community. Unfortunately, Martha passed in 1893 and from 1894 to 1899 the house was leased to a group of Protestant ministers who started a hospital here. The nurses lived on the third floor and dined in the first basement, while the first and second floors were patients' rooms. During this time, in 1894, Snake Alley was constructed mere feet away from the home. William Garrett passed in 1895, leaving the home to his daughter, Jessie, and her husband, Edward Phelps who raised their family here.

This month, visit the Garrett-Phelps House during the Snake Alley Art Fair on Sunday, June 15, from 9 am to 4 pm to learn more about its history and the people who lived there!



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Donations & Memberships

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

In Memory of

Mary Krohlow
Barb Bonnett
LaVon Worley

Rudy and Hazel Lindholm

Don Lindholm

Donations

Lois Close (Blackhawk Rock)

Memberships

Kelsey Clark
Justin Hoyt
Gail Sullivan
Hope Haven Development
Bonnie Downes
Dwight and Sue Mulch
Alan and Cyndy Fabel
Kimberly Kracaw
Kent and Gretchen Lewis
Rosemary Witte
Carolyn Dorting
Don Lindholm
Scott and Joanie Power
Howard Rescot

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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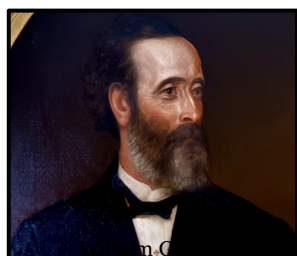
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Museum Hours

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.