

Jul-Aug-Sept
Summer 2023

Open Sat-Sun 1:00-5:00

Memorial Day thru Labor Day

Current Board

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A Note from Our President

Welcome to the newest issue of the Village Voice, a newsletter created for members of the Marion County Iowa Historical Society. This publication is being created and edited by our society secretary Terri Davis. Thank you in advance for all that you do for the Historical Society. It has been some time since we published an issue of the Village Voice. Nearly six years have passed. The last published issue was in the Fall of 2017. A belated thank you to our previous newsletter editor Marla Suter, who put in much time to create a great newsletter, setting the bar high.

Some things within our Historical Society have changed, some things haven't. What hasn't changed is our Historical Society Mission Statement: "Our mission is to educate the public about the history of Marion County and to enable members and visitors to appreciate our past."

Something else that hasn't changed is that we have a great museum and seven beautiful historic buildings in our village, filled with donated artifacts, each with its own history and many with a story to tell.

Our historical society membership is probably smaller than other societies, smaller than years or decades ago, which lately has made it very interesting for members to manage the buildings in the historical village, plus host activities to attract visitors. But what we lack in membership numbers we more than make up with great volunteerism and dedication. I would like to say a big thank you to all the members that have found the time and energy, volunteering to do all the things that need to be done. From attending meetings, volunteering to chair and plan a specific activity, cleaning, repairing and moving things, and finally... managing the museum and curating donated items in all the village buildings.

All tours are scheduled/managed through contact with our Curator, Kate Walter. Terry Fenoglio is currently managing the Chapel rental for weddings and other events, and a big thank you goes to the Marion County Conservation staff for mowing the village yards.

Dan Carlson, President

MARION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HALL OF FAME

In 2019, the Marion County Historical Society Board decided to create a Hall of Fame to honor individuals, past and present, who have devoted countless hours of their time and resources to preserve the history of Marion County, Iowa. The following individuals are now members of the Marion County Historical Society's Hall of Fame:

2019 Inductees

Jesse Adams

Jim & Lois Akins

Jack & Christa Belknap

Merle & Dorothy Betterton

Pauline McNeish

Chuck Walter

2022 Inductees

Charles & Elizabeth Barnes

C. B. Campbell

Helen Boertje

Cleo & Maxine Bennett

Phil & Kathleen Smith

2020 No Inductees

2021 Inductees

Pearl Culbertson Anderson

Max & Mary Noftsker

David & Janet Ritchie

Ernie Smith

2023 Inductees

Marye Goemaat

Edna Hemm

Carolyn May

James & Blanche Templeton

Watch for individual biographies in future issues.

New Curator

The Marion County Historical Society has been very fortunate to have had many Curators since it was organized in May 1955.

Kathleen Smith resigned her position as Curator on April 10, 2021, after serving faithfully for thirty-five years.

On April 12, 2021, Kate Walter was elected by the board to serve as Curator of the Historical Society.

Harvey Museum

Closes

The Harvey High School building in Harvey, Iowa, has been the home of the Harvey Museum for the past several years.

Due to lack of volunteers, the doors of the Museum were closed in 2020. Members of the Harvey Museum Board contacted the Marion County Historical Society to see if there was interest in some of the Harvey artifacts.

Members of the MCHS board took advantage of the invitation and selected several artifacts from Harvey to be included as part of the items on display at the Marion County Museum.

Come and visit us and view the wonderful collection from Harvey, Iowa.



CURATOR'S CORNER

The year is August, 1863, the famous Ford's Theatre was opened to the public of Washington, D.C., and others that traveled there for various performances. The Ford's Theatre was made famous for the assassination of our 16th President on April 14, 1865 by John Wilkes Booth. On display, at our museum, is a wooden brick that came from the original foundation of Ford's Theatre October, 1912, by E.L. Bangs, during repairs and alterations to the building.

Follow us on Face Book: [Marion County Historical Society, Knoxville, IA](#)

Website: marioncountyhistory.org

We Have Been Busy

To preserve the history of Marion County, Iowa, it is necessary that the eight buildings in our village, which house our artifacts, be maintained and repaired. The following is just a partial list of the work that has been completed by volunteers at the village since we last spoke.

In 2020, new roofs were placed on the Machine Shed, School House and Stagecoach Inn. This was, in part, due to the Derecho that paced through our county, damaging the roofs. Insurance proceeds were used for this project.

Also in 2020, several workdays were devoted to cleaning up in the various buildings with particular focus on the Machine Shed. Miscellaneous painting on the Stagecoach Inn, General Store and School House was done, including caulking around the Log Cabin. Volunteers worked diligently until Covid shut us down.

In 2021, fire extinguishers were purchased for every building in the village, the inside, upstairs and down, of the Stagecoach Inn was freshly painted, outdoor plug-ins were placed on the School House, General Store and Chapel, plus an additional breaker box; the Bob Sled was moved from the inside of the Machine Shed to the outside.

In 2022, the Cedar Shake roof was completed on the Log Cabin; an area next to the Bussey Depot, on the south side, was landscaped and the newly preserved and weather-treated coal car was placed on railroad rails and ties for display.

In 2023, all lights inside the Museum were updated to LED lights. This included all showcase lights inside the display cases.

CURRENT PROJECT

Plans are underway to replace the four columns in front of the Museum with columns salvaged from the VA Houses on Pleasant Street. The board voted to go with an outside contractor's bid for this project. The Society applied for and received a grant from the Marion County Community Foundation to aid in this restoration.

Donations by Bill & Chris Harvey Family

The MCHS was contacted by Bill and Chris Harvey of Pleasantville, Iowa, regarding family items they wished to donate to the museum. After a review of the items and discussion to accept, replicas of a stagecoach and horse-drawn school bus and a grain wagon were accepted. At the present time, the Harvey's are storing these items until permanent locations are available to move these items to the historical village.

Software

Our Curator is currently working to digitalize the hundreds of artifacts our museums hold. In May 2022, Past Perfect software was installed in our system to aid in a more efficient inventory of artifacts. Several board members have trained on this system. Our goal is to inventory all artifacts in each building and have them entered into our program.

Pioneer Day

The Annual Pioneer Day was held on Saturday, June 10 at the Marion County Historical Society village.

The day began with a flag-raising ceremony performed by the local Boy Scout Troop #377 and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Girl Scout member, Noelle Carlson. A hearty breakfast was offered between 8:00 – 10:30, prepared by the Knights of Columbus, consisting of pancakes and sausage.

Tony Pearson gave two presentations on the “Gosport Forty” and their involvement in the Civil War. This reference was to forty men from Marion and Lucas Counties who met under an Elm Tree at Gosport, Iowa on February 4, 1863, to travel to Davenport, Iowa to enlist wherever needed.

Live demonstrations throughout the day included a local quilting guild and rug weaving on a loom. The local quilting guild is “The Knoxville Piecemakers” and they were working on an old-fashioned pattern known as “English Paper Piecing”. Rug-weaving on the loom was being demonstrated by Dawn Flattery of Knoxville, and her mother and brother, Ardella and Scott Galvin, from South Dakota. The Galvin’s own several looms and demonstrating their craft has been a long-time family business. See more about the loom in this issue.

The Marion County Towns of Harvey and Tracy were represented with various photographs, artifacts, and information to share.

Displays and information booths were set up by the local Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), the Marion County History Buffs, the Marion County Genealogy Society, and the Marion County Pioneer Cemetery Commission.

It was a pleasure to have “The Bluegrass Blondies”, a family gospel band, perform from 1:00 – 2:00. The band has won several awards in the SPBGMA and BMAI music organizations. A local band, “The Jackson St. Edition”, entertained from 11:30 – 12:30 with some great music from the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. MCHS member, Terry Fengolio, Mary Burke and friends provided music in the Chapel from 2:00 – 2:30.

Lunch was offered on the grounds from 11:00 – 1:00. A choice of a walking taco with drink or beefburger, chips and drink were available.

Paul Sherwood shared his John Deere vintage tractor for the day.

At the end of our day, the annual MCHS’s Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony was held in the Chapel at 2:30. This year’s inductees were: Marye Goemaat, Edna Hemm, Carolyn May and James and Blanche Templeton. See Hall of Fame article in this issue.

This year’s Pioneer Day was deemed a success!

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE PROFILE

Jessie Davis was born August 12, 1895, to Milton and Milly Neely Davis in the Coal Port area of Marion County. Jessie began school at Coal Ridge, then when the family moved south of Knoxville, she attended the Brownlee School, and later the Elm Ridge School northeast of Knoxville. Jessie married Pearl Adams on December 12, 1917, in Centerville and returned to Marion County to make their farm home.

Jessie was a devoted farm wife who raised and dressed chickens to sell and churned butter every day for 25 years. But, because Jessie had enjoyed her time in country school so much, later in life, she had a dream to purchase and move a country school to the Marion County Park for others to enjoy.

Jessie had a tough time convincing the Marion County Conservation Board to allow her to bring an old schoolhouse to the county park. Their reaction was “who would want to see an old schoolhouse”? But, Jessie did not give up. She kept asking over and over and finally petitioned a friend, Mrs. Ray Dyer to ask her husband, who was on the conservation board, to support her efforts. Ray convinced the other board members and they voted to approve.

Now, Jessie had to find an old school. On the Marcus Stickle farm, southwest of Knoxville, stood the old Pleasant Ridge School house, full of dirt and mice. Stickle agreed to sell it to Jessie for \$75.00. Jessie contacted Snow Contracting to move the building and prepare the foundation. Iowa Power and Light and Bellamy Telephone Company moved the necessary wires at no charge.

The building had to be replastered and for the plaster to dry, there needed to be heat in the building. Jessie found a pot-bellied stove at an antique shop in Des Moines and Richard Tonda drove to get it. The next problem was that no one sold coal in Knoxville anymore. Jessie remembered that when trains stopped at Donnelley, they sometimes lost coal off their coal cars, so she went there and picked up several buckets of coal to fire the stove and the plaster was properly dried!

Jessie looked long and hard to find the double school desks and even went to Des Moines to find a mannequin to replicate the teacher. Jessie raised \$2,400 and added \$800 of her own money to come up with the total cost of \$3,200 for buying, moving and renovating the school.

The Pleasant Ridge School House was the first building to come to the Historical Village. A dedication ceremony was held on May 17, 1964.

In 2019, the inaugural induction ceremony of the Marion County Historical Society was held in the Valley Chapel at the Historical Village. Jessie Davis Adams was one of the first members to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

What a wonderful gift she gave the community.

Profile by Craig Agan

MEET THE BOARD

At this time, we would like to introduce you to a member of our board of directors.

Craig Agan has been a member of the MCHS since 2010 and is a lifetime resident of Marion County.

Craig has held the office of President of the Board, and is currently Vice-President. His past occupations include: businessman, farmer, sky diver, pro fund raiser, ski instructor, race driver and custom applicator.

Craig's family include his wife, Pat, daughter, Beth (Andy) Adamick and Layna; son, Jon (Kaysi) Agan, Reese, Reid and Rubie.

Some of the best things to say about Craig: he has never been in jail, broke a bone, crashed a plane, jumped off a cruise ship or hit a cop.

Marion County
Historical Society

RESTORATION OF WEAVING LOOM

In the spring of 2023, a conversation with Dawn Flattery, a resident of Knoxville, brought about the fact that her family had vast knowledge of the weaving loom, a craft of years gone by. Upon invitation, Dawn came to the village to take a look at the four weaving looms in our museum collection. The two looms in the museum were larger than what her family worked with, and the one in the Stagecoach Inn was smaller. However, the weaving loom in the Log Cabin, was the same type of loom familiar to her family.

Dawn's mother, Ardella Galvin, and Dawn's brother, Scott Galvin, still travel the region, demonstrating the art of rug weaving as a family business. The Galvins own several looms, of various types, and have been educating all ages in rug weaving.

The question was posed to Dawn, "Could the Log Cabin loom be restored to working condition?". Dawn said that it could and offered to make the loom one of her summer projects. The MCHS board discussed the proposal and decided to have the loom restored.

Dawn began working on the loom in late April and set a goal to have it in operation by June 10, Pioneer Day at the village. During several weeks of diligent work, the loom was taken apart, each piece being carefully cleaned with linseed oil, parts that needed to be replaced were handmade and put in place with period matching fasteners.

The finished restoration project fell just short of being ready to use as a demonstrating loom on Pioneer Day, but Dawn was on hand to summarize her project to those with interest.

Goemaat Family Donate Park Benches

The Marye Goemaat Family have donated two park benches in her memory.

Marye was a long-time member of the MCHS and served as a board member and officer.

Marye's family has placed an iron park bench near the Log Cabin and one on the Museum patio.

Upcoming Events

July BBQ, watch our Facebook page for date.

Movies in the park, games, grilled hamburgers and hot dogs with various sides and desserts.

Nationals Pancake Breakfast – August 9-12

The Historical Society will be serving their annual pancake and sausage, biscuits and gravy breakfast from the Machine Shed at the Marion County Historical village.

Annual Meeting and Elections

The Annual Meeting will be scheduled for November. The primary focus of this meeting will be to hold annual elections. More details to come.

Merry 'n County Christmas

The Merry 'n County Christmas Light Display will be held beginning in November through December. Tentative dates are November 17 through December 25, Fri-Sat-Sun 6:00-8:00 p.m.