



# MARION HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM

News from the Marion Historical Society

September 2021



## LIGHTING PROJECT



### *President's Message*

#### INTRODUCING ROBYN IRELAND !

Our new Executive Director!

To be sure, Robyn needs no introduction to a large number of Marion citizens due to her previous position as Senior Reporter for the Marion *TIMES* newspaper. Being the chief chronologist of developments and events in and around town has brought her in front of virtually every political and business leader of Marion.

Her coverage of Heritage Center events and programs, coupled with a long-time interest in Iowa history and skills in research and communication all satisfy requirements of her new job. In addition to managing operations for the Historical Society, Robyn will continue as a free-lance journalist and author of family genealogies.



Robyn was raised on a farm near West Liberty. She attended Coe College in Cedar Rapids, and earned a BA in English Literature from the University of Iowa. In addition, she completed several classes of the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop.

WELCOME ROBYN! *Jay Kacena*



As announced in our July newsletter, an opportunity to upgrade the lighting fixtures in our exhibit gallery presented itself by the August derecho storm damage. While insurance proceeds will pay to replace the old equipment, our lighting contractor proposed a greatly improved lighting system for an additional investment of only \$2,300. To raise that sum we asked for donations aimed at creating a specific fund for that purpose.

We are happy to report that contributions ranging from \$500 to \$25 have been received so far to cover nearly 50% of that cost. As we observed about the project, quality LIGHTING is a high priority in any museum display area. Now is the best time to make the needed improvements.

Everything about the upgrade makes sense: more and better lighting - cheaper to operate LED bulbs and reduced fire risk. Needless to say, this is an opportune time to make such an improvement - except for the money. Can you help? If so, address your "lighting fund" contribution to the Building Committee c/o Marion Historical Society P.O. Box 753 Marion 52302.

#### Marion Historical Society Mission

The *Marion Historical Society* is a membership organization that serves to engage the public in the history, traditions, resources and on-going preservation of the Heritage Center museum for the enrichment of the community.

For more information about joining call 319-447-6376.

E-mail to: [marionheritage@marionhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:marionheritage@marionhistoricalsociety.org)

See our website: [www.marionheritagecenter.org](http://www.marionheritagecenter.org)

[www.facebook.com/MarionHeritageCenter/](https://www.facebook.com/MarionHeritageCenter/)

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 753, Marion, IA 52302-0753

## MARION'S CEMETERY HISTORY

The city of Marion owns a cemetery that ranks among the oldest in Iowa. Although a cemetery was included in the Board of Commissioners' original city plat in 1840, today's Oak Shade cemetery actually consists of 44 different "sections" as a result of expansions, additions and acquisitions. Beyond the surveyors' original designation of land, parcels have been added by gift, purchase, and/or by simply re-drawing city block boundaries. In 1914, a private cemetery known as Gray's Oak Hill cemetery was essentially annexed when Oak Shade grew to include it. Another family cemetery became part of Oak Shade with the purchase of seven acres of land from Charles Canady in 1954. Today the entire cemetery covers about twenty-two acres.

According to early newspaper accounts "a Mr. Kellogg was the first person buried at Oak Shade, in 1840; the first female, 'Mrs. Woodbridge.'" Unfortunately, neither of these names appear in today's official burial index, so their grave sites are unknown! The same is true of others "said" to be buried here but only two 1840 graves, verified by headstones, exist today: that of John Tryon (7/27/1840) and Daniel Dodd

(10/21/1840). Complicating the question of which cemetery section was first is the fact that Mr. Tryon and Mr. Dodd are buried in different sections in spite of the fact they died just three months apart!

Oak Shade Cemetery in 2021 is the final resting place of nearly 7500 people who lived and died in Marion. Seven-hundred-twenty-one of them are veterans - men and women and boys like Mancil Root, recognized as the youngest veteran of the entire Civil War. Mancil enlisted at the age of 9 years and 11 months - claiming to be 17! Thomas McKean, was a veteran of three wars - he was Marion's only Brigadier General.

Colonel William Smyth, Commander of the 31st Iowa Volunteer Infantry rode into Savannah, GA with General William Tecumseh Sherman.

Inspiring stories about these heroes, pioneers and their families - like the Grangers and the Mentzers - like historian Marvin Oxley and the irrepressible Cherry Sisters are recorded and available for review in the Heritage Center Library. We hope you will take advantage of this resource - It's Yours!



### Marion Historical Society, Inc.

#### *Board of Directors:*

Jay Kacena, President  
 Vic Klopfenstein, Vice-president  
 Nevin Meredith, Treasurer  
 Erik Miles, Secretary  
 Vicki Barnes  
 Vicki Hughes  
 Mark Seidl

*Meetings are held the Fourth Thursday  
 of each month at 2:30 P.M.  
 at the Heritage Center.*

### *Sponsored in part by:*

  
*Hotel Motel Grant Fund*

## 2021 Art Show Winners



Giora Neta  
*Beaded  
Coffee Table*



Patsi Gann  
*Mount  
Shasta*

The twentieth Annual ART by Your Friends and Neighbors exhibit concluded on July 30th. For the second year it was displayed on line due to the COVID

pandemic and, while “attendance” falls short of a “live” display in the Heritage Center gallery, visitors by computer were able to vote for their favorite.

The top three vote-getters are pictured above and an award check for \$75 has been delivered to each of them. Please thank the folks at HILLS BANK for sponsoring this event again. We look forward to the opening of the twenty-FIRST show next Spring



Roger Wolken  
*Pastel Robin*



## The Fuel Question: For Peat's Sake

The Marion Heritage Center & Museum marks the one-year anniversary of the 2020 Derecho and the brush with disaster that left many Iowans without power for more a week, with an exhibit called “The Fuel Question,” which tells the story of the forgotten energy crises that haunted the State c.a.1850-1920, and the efforts of Iowans, led by a local resident, Jonathan Bundy (1803-1887), to provide the solution: fuel from peat. With his son, and close group of Quaker friends, Bundy established the first alternative fuel business in the West. Millions of dollars were spent in the northern US beginning in 1851 and continuing through WWI trying to develop a peat fuel industry in North America and the best engineering minds on the continent contributed their inventive talents, but peat defeated their best efforts. Only the con men, seeking to profit from our desperate search for an alternative fuel, succeeded. The Fuel Question lives with us still today, modified only by our awareness of climate change and the increased likelihood of catastrophic weather-events: "Where can we find the CLEAN reliable fuel we need to survive here?" Reviewing the history of fuel and the challenge of living in the Upper Midwest illustrates the importance of the all-hands-on-deck approach



In Collaboration with  
**NEXTERA**  
**ENERGY**  
RESOURCES

exemplified by the Heritage Center's exhibit partner, NextEra Energy Resources, the world's largest producer of renewable energy, which is contributing their interactive Microgrid Trainer and solar panel, simulating their approach to a resilient and sustainable green energy world integrating solar and wind power with reliable storage.

## Our HERITAGE is our INHERITANCE: and our RESPONSIBILITY to future generations.

Beneficiaries of income from retirement plans like traditional IRAs know that Uncle Sam wants his share when time comes to take it out. Do you know that you can escape that income tax, and satisfy your charitable wishes at the same time? By asking your retirement plan to make your Charitable Contribution directly, as part of your Required Minimum Distribution, you can support your Historical Society with money that would otherwise been paid in tax! You can direct this contribution to the Society to help pay for current expenses - or to the Endowment fund to help provide income in the future. Call for details.

At last report, that Endowment Fund, which is managed by Hills Bank & Trust Co, had grown to more than \$80,000 - even after contributing \$3500 to the 2021-22 budget. Please consider a gift to the ENDOWMENT to assure future income for the Heritage Center.



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Marion Heritage Center & Museum  
590 Tenth Street  
P. O. Box 753  
Marion, IA 52302-0753

