



# MARION HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM

News from the Marion Historical Society

June 2023

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to summer at the Heritage Museum! We currently have the hottest art in the city showing and gracing the upstairs gallery.

Everyone is welcome to attend our Annual Meeting scheduled for July 27, at 4 pm. We will have two open slots on the board this year. Serving in this capacity allows members a fun way to have a direct impact on Heritage Center fundraisers, policies, and decision-making.



The exhibit being planned for the fall/spring is "From Coal Cars to Thomas the Train," and honors Marion's significant railroad history. In its heyday, the Milwaukee line ran 53 trains per day through our town, both passenger and freight. Many of our citizens remember, as children, getting on the train to go visit relatives. Adults recall shopping trips to Chicago or Omaha. Merchants can relate stories about either shipping or receiving goods.

Stop in and visit the History Center any Thursday through Saturday, from 1-4 p.m.

*Robyn Ireland*

### 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/)

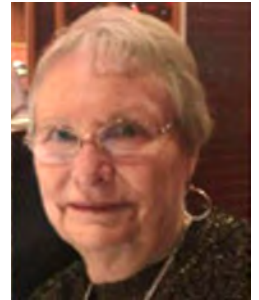
**Mailing address:**

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

## In Memorium

# Pat Klopfenstein

Virtual inspiration and founder of the Marion Heritage Center, Pat Klopfenstein, passed away on Sunday, May 21st, at the age of 91. The long-serving "First Lady" of Marion, Pat was recognized year after year for her many contributions to the community as a volunteer to numerous groups and causes, from the Food Pantry to the Friends of the cemetery. In 2011 she was named Marion Citizen of the Year by the Marion Chamber of Commerce. The Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park was named in honor of Pat and her husband, Vic.



Pat's enthusiasm for the history of Marion is demonstrated by the nearly 100 volume collection of records, newspaper accounts and agendas to be found in the Pat Klopfenstein Library at the Heritage Center.



THE  
**McIntyre**  
FOUNDATION

*Encourages Your Membership in the  
Marion Heritage Center and Museum*

# ART

BY YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

“One of the Best!” according to many visitors to the 2023 twenty-second edition of Art by Your Friends and Neighbors exhibit. With visitor count down somewhat due to disruption of Marion Arts Festival from City Square Park, Society member visits take on extra importance! Remember that you can vote for your favorite work of art EACH TIME you visit. If you had a hard time deciding ... you can vote for each! Each of the top three vote-getters will be receiving a check from Hills Bank for \$100!

Entrants this year include four new artists - all in the display cases with three-dimensional art: We're proud to present the talents of so many of our Friends and Neighbors in this popular annual event which closes on July 29th.



Sponsored by



# WELCOME HOME SOLDIER!



**A**lthough restoration of the Union Soldier statue damaged in the 2020 derecho was not a project of the Historical Society, two of our board members, Erik Miles and Jay Kacena were invited to serve on a Parks Department committee to consider his future.

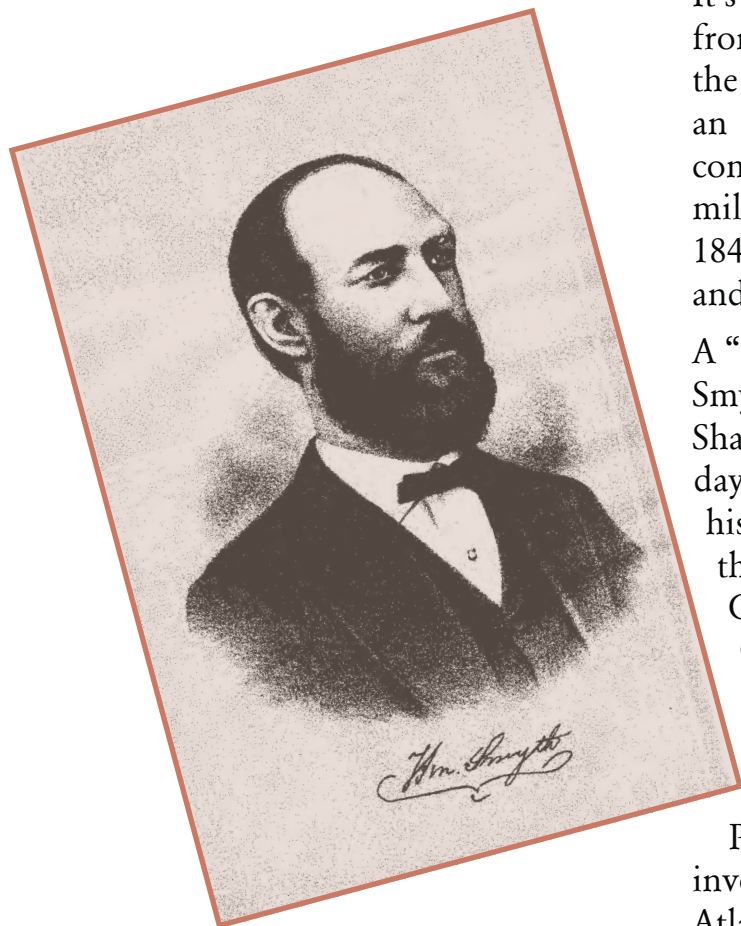
As commemorated by the plaque attached to the base on which he stands, the statue was placed at its present site by the Women's Relief Corp in 1914. With 109 years of service under his belt, an early decision of the committee was made to replace or repair the landmark if at all possible within a budget based on a limited insurance offer. According to an 1882 catalog of the its manufacturer, the Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, CT, the statue, entitled simply, "An American Soldier," had a list price of \$1,500. Replacement was ruled out immediately (\$40,000) and repair seemed likely impossible because of the limited availability of metal worker/artists with the expertise to do the job. Finding anyone with the experience and skill to repair monuments of "zinc" or "white bronze" is difficult but after several months and negotiation, a craftsman with the ability and the motivation to restore our monument WAS found ... in Mississippi! At one point we even proposed to meet him half-way to save on shipping!



Ultimately, it was innovation and volunteers, working with the Parks Department that made it possible: What could we do ourselves to make it happen? Last October our soldier came back - but not before his restoration was complete. Thanks to the generosity and craftsmanship of Wade's Auto Collision here in Marion, the finishing touch was applied to perfection in weather resistant paint. Thanks to Barnes Manufacturing for engineering advice and Coonrod Crane Service of Cedar Rapids for lifting the 800 pound finished product back to his pedestal in City Square Park.

# VOICES FROM THE PAST

## *The Honorable William Smyth*



It's 1845. IMAGINE, if you can, a trip to the frontier - IOWA - at the age of 21; admission to the bar following two years of study and by passing an examination at which both you and the committee are sitting on a log outside a cabin two miles from the town of Vinton! A year later, in 1848, you become the first Linn County Attorney and in 1853, Judge of the Fourth District Court.

A "meteoric rise"? In fact, the entire life of William Smyth was meteoric: he was laid to rest in Oak Shade Cemetery at the age of 46 years and 270 days. The chapters of his story between the law and his business interests, include his famous home that became St. Berchman's School for Boys, Civil War leadership and his election to the U.S. Congress.

The record of Colonel William Smyth as commander of the Thirty-first Iowa Infantry is contained in a volume on his history in the Pat Klopfenstein Library. It details his involvement at Vicksburg, Lookout Mountain, Atlanta and Savannah. In two years of fighting two thirds of Col. Smyth's troops were killed while he, himself, contracted dysentery, which eventually led to his death.

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## *"It's Yours!"*

Wondering when would be a good time to get more involved in "your" Historical Society? How about **4:00 o'clock on Thursday, July 28th**? That would follow a little break for refreshments after the regular Board of Director's meeting. It's the time set for our Annual Membership Meeting. Questions, answers and the election of officers for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

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**Marion Historical Society, Inc.**  
*Board of Directors:*

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

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

*Support comes from the*



*Hotel Motel Grant Fund*

## Thanks For Your Support!

When you support the Marion Historical Society, you are helping our community retain some of its most valuable assets.

Sponsorship donations may be directed to the donor's area of interest. Naming opportunities and other sponsorship packages are available.

Membership helps us to maintain the Marion Heritage Center & Museum as well as provide fascinating displays and events throughout the year.

Historical Society Endowment income helps to cover long-term operating expenses of the Heritage Center and Museum. There are several ways to help grow the Endowment:

- Direct contribution of cash
- Donation of securities convertible to endowment assets
- Designation of Endowment as beneficiary of life insurance or annuity
- Qualifying distribution from an IRA or retirement plan