



"Where History Meets on 10th Street"



Marion Historical Society Newsletter

Including news from *Granger House Museum* and the *Marion Heritage Center*

January 2009

Marion, Iowa

The Marion Historical Society, Inc., was formed to discover, interpret, and preserve the unique history of the region, and to provide activities for the instruction of citizens, visitors, the community and the surrounding area regarding these historical treasures.

Events in Brief:

Thursday, January 15 – *"Communication by Mail" Fresco placement, Marion Heritage Center, Time TBA*

Wednesday, January 28 – *City of Marion, Brownfields Informational meeting (open to the public), Marion Heritage Center, 5:30 p.m.*

"Free the Fresco" Update

It was hoped that the "Communication by Mail" fresco would be in place at the Heritage Center by now but ripples of events occurring well beyond our borders can often effect us here and so it is with this project. The plan was for Tony Rajer to return at the very beginning of December to oversee the mounting of the mural on the Heritage Center wall and to begin the final cleaning of the face of the mural. Unfortunately, Tony was in India during the Mumbai terrorist attacks and while not directly impacted by the attacks, Tony and his wife were unable to leave India on schedule and so the work planned for December was pushed back to January. The current plan is for Tony to arrive in Marion on January 14 and then on Thursday, January 15th, in coordination with the good fellows at Barnes Manufacturing, hoist the mural up into place. Start time is yet to be determined, but if you are interested in watching, call the Center on Wednesday afternoon for the latest information.

Who Knows?

Every now and then, someone comments about a honeycomb of tunnels that existed/exist underneath uptown Marion. I've been told that these tunnels were used for a variety of reasons ranging from stock deliveries from the train depots to more covert uses by hometown bootleggers or gangsters on the lam from Chicago. Can anyone out there shed any light on this persistent bit of local folklore? While I'm asking, here are a few other queries that have gone unanswered over the past year and perhaps you can help: Where along Indian Creek is Eagles Nest Bluff located? Where have Marion's various sewage treatment plants been located over the years-when was it located at the west end of what is now Hanna Park? When did Marion share a plant with Cedar Rapids near the mouth of Indian Creek on the Cedar River? Does anyone have a photo of the Marion Hobby Shop when it was located in the current Maidrite building? Does anyone have any photos of the A & W Root Beer Stand that was next to Thomas Park? Does anyone have any photographs or information on Todd's Indian House restaurant, in particular, photos of the original house on the restaurant's building site? Call Karen at the Heritage Center, if you have any answers!

The Granger in Granger House

In the midst of her adventurous trip to Israel, Barb Feller managed to send along the following bit of history on Earl Granger:

When 19 year old Earl Granger arrived in Marion in the mid 1850s, the rich prairie soil was difficult to turn, the weather was bad for crops, and Iowa was suffering from an economic depression. Earl decided to leave the Morgan horses and farmland he'd been sent by his father to supervise and join other adventurers at the height of America's Gold Rush. Who could blame him?

No written accounts survive from those days, but apparently Earl made it as far as Cripple Creek, Colorado where he struck a small vein of silver, hardly worth mining. Family legend has it that Earl didn't give up, though. Instead, he met success through capturing animals for the Barnum and Bailey Circus! Whatever the truth, by the outbreak of the Civil War, Earl Granger had apparently sown enough wild oats to move back to Marion.

Upon his return, he resumed working the family farm with his father and brother. To keep his independence, Earl began experimenting with investments in the beef cattle market.

This did not prove lucrative but, once again he didn't give up. When Earl was hired to replace a worker from a local meat market who had enlisted in the Union Army, he finally found his calling. In 1866 he opened his own butcher shop and was successful enough to hire a partner. Originally located north of town, not far from Indian Creek, a fire forced the partners to move their business to Main Street in the heart of town. *Granger and Howe Slaughterhouse* quickly became the leading store of its kind in Marion.

Financially successful at last, Earl turned to marriage. His first wife, Clara Lockhart, succumbed to consumption after only one year of marriage. With the family strongly behind him, Earl managed to keep on going, much as he had in his work. Earl met his second wife, Dora Krouse, at the Marion hotel where she worked as a waitress. In 1873 the young couple rented the property on Tenth Street which they would purchase five years later.

Throughout the years, the Earl Grangers remained close to others in the family. They focused their efforts on *Granger and Howe* and their own six children but continued helping the others to breed, use, and sell Morgan horses on the original land. Living an essentially urban lifestyle new to Iowa at the time, the family frequently attended plays, lectures, and local events, including an early performance of the Cherry Sisters: "This evening I went to the Cherry Girls Concert. It was a dandy. I have not laughed so hard this winter."ⁱ And their home, situated as it was, on a busy farm-to-market road in Marion, became a local icon, forever after to be known as *The Granger House*.

"Old Uptown Marion"

The "Old Uptown Marion" exhibit continues at the Heritage Center. Livery Stables, cafes, banks, hotels, hardware stores and more, Marion has had businesses of all kinds over the years and this exhibit details their history. Some of you will be surprised by what you learn, others will be reminded of old haunts, all will be impressed by the collection of information, photographs and artifacts currently on display "Old Uptown Marion. This wonderful display on Marion's businesses before 1960 will only be here through April so make a point of stopping by soon! A nice compliment to the "Old Uptown Marion" exhibit is Judith Hull's newest book "Around the Park, Marion Merchants." Published by the Marion Historic Preservation Commission, this book has over 300 pages of photographs, history and stories regarding the Marion Business District from its earliest days to the present. The Marion Heritage Center has a limited number of copies of the book available now for purchase and is also taking orders for additional copies.

New and Renewing Members

(Since October 2008)

The following people have renewed or become new members in the Society since our last newsletter:

Thank you to all members, donors and sponsors for your valuable support!

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| <i>Carol & Mel Holubar</i> | <i>Joyce & Ray Stow</i> | <i>Robert & Alberta Burkardt</i> |
| <i>Kim & Susan Ketelsen</i> | <i>Chuck & Diane Kent</i> | <i>Jim & Joan Rosche</i> |
| <i>Earl & Dora Bohlken</i> | <i>Onalee & Milton Arnold</i> | <i>Pat & Charlie Kress</i> |
| <i>Vicki Hughes</i> | <i>Patti Marolf</i> | <i>Sara Fishel</i> |
| <i>Pat & Vic Klopfenstein</i> | <i>William & Kathleen Huebener</i> | <i>Mel Meggers</i> |
| <i>O.O.P. Club</i> | <i>Jay & Kathy Kacena</i> | <i>Harold & Beverly Klink</i> |
| <i>Iowa Popcorn Company</i> | <i>David & Eileen VanGorp</i> | <i>Nancy Beadle</i> |
| <i>Karen & John Clark-Hansen</i> | <i>Russell & Nancy Hansen</i> | <i>John & Bonnye Fowler</i> |
| <i>Karen Taylor</i> | <i>Maurly & Vivian Barnes</i> | <i>Evelyn Hollister</i> |
| <i>Bernice Harstad</i> | <i>Marlyce Murdoch</i> | <i>Lloyd & Noma Lucas</i> |
| <i>Billie & Dick Enneking</i> | <i>Connie & Charles Bennett</i> | <i>Doris French</i> |
| <i>Lucille Novotny</i> | <i>Marilyn Sippy</i> | <i>Claire Fernow</i> |
| <i>Kate Hawkins</i> | <i>Will Ogle</i> | <i>Emil Koval</i> |
| <i>Jim Bouslog</i> | <i>Mona Morgan</i> | <i>Brent & Pat Harstad</i> |
| | | <i>Howard & Joyce Parks</i> |
| | | <i>Eldon & Pat McMillen</i> |
| | | <i>Edith & Phil Moorhead</i> |

We couldn't do it without you!

The Marion Historical Society Board of Directors and Staff

Marjorie Reynolds: President, Vic Klopfenstein: Vice President, Mark Morgan: Secretary, Barb Robison: Treasurer

Other Members on the Board of Directors: Jim Rosche, Paul Rehn, Sam Dillon, Granger House Director: Barbara Feller, Marion

Heritage Center Coordinator & Newsletter Editor: Karen Clark-Hansen, Membership Administration: Eula Wood

You may contact us at: P. O. Box 753, Marion, IA 52302-0753, at (319) 377-6672, or 447-6377

Please remember to let us know when you add or change your e-mail address or phone number, for we often let our members know what is happening through these means. Your privacy is respected by the Society: your personal information is used only for internal correspondence. And, as always, thank you for letting us know what you think concerning YOUR Historical Society!

