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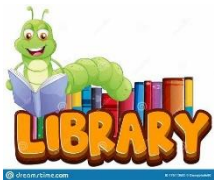
February 2023

Issue #198

Early Spring

*When light morning air
And the delicate fragrance of potted pansies
Have us turning faces to the softness.
I celebrate the lines and curves
Moving gracefully along the garden path.
The worn, imperfect pieces of garden art
Defining the space.
Gentle garden hues and textures
Set the mood:
Whimsical-intimate.*

~ By Jan Blankenburg from *Country Echoes*,
Prose and Poetry, page 43



Happenings

“Amid the hectic pace of our lives, a library is like a comfy chair in front of a cozy fireplace on a wintry day, where people of every age and status can sit down and feel like they've come home... to a world without boundaries, to the world of books.” ~ C.J. Carr

Library Happenings are written and submitted by Sunny Robbins, Director of the Donnellson Public Library, unless otherwise noted.

Preschool Story Hour

This past month we read books about friendship, Valentines, feelings, and inclusion! The daycare has made it a few times. Also, we visited the preschool at Central Lee and read stories about feelings.



The Donnellson Book Core

The book club met on Monday, February 20th, to discuss *How Not To Die Alone* by Richard Roper. The group found the book was written more from a perspective and less for plot. Those looking for plot did not like the book.

Next month's book is a classic *Sunflower Sisters* by Martha Hall Kelly. **Here is what Google Books has to say:**

Georgeanna 'Georgy' Woolsey is not meant for the world of lavish parties and the demure attitudes of women of her stature. So when war ignites the nation, Georgy follows her passion for nursing during a time when doctors considered women on the battlefield a bother. In proving them wrong, she and her sister Eliza venture from New York to Washington, D.C., to Gettysburg and witness the unparalleled horrors of slavery as they become involved in the war effort. In the South, Jemma is enslaved on the Peeler Plantation in Maryland, where she lives with her mother and father. Her sister, Patience, is enslaved on the plantation next door, and both live in fear of LeBaron, an abusive overseer who tracks their every move. When Jemma is sold by the cruel plantation mistress Anne-May at the same time the Union army comes through, she sees a chance to finally escape - but only by abandoning the family she loves. Anne-May is left behind to run Peeler Plantation when her husband joins the Union army and her cherished brother enlists with the Confederates. In charge of the household, she uses the opportunity to follow her own ambitions and is drawn into a secret Southern network of spies, finally exposing herself to the fate she deserves. Inspired by true accounts, *Sunflower Sisters* provides a vivid, detailed look at the Civil War experience, from the barbaric and inhumane plantations, to a war-torn New York City, to the horrors of the battlefield. It's a sweeping story of women caught in a country on the brink of collapse, in a society grappling with nationalism and unthinkable racial cruelty, a story still so relevant today.

Join the Donnellson Book Core by letting the librarians know you are interested. We will get you the current book. Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the library Activity Room.

Senior Crafternoon

Big thanks to Victoria Matlock and the Montrose Health Center for the Valentine Floral class! The next Senior Crafternoon will be held on March 8th at 3:30 and is a St. Patrick's Day wreath.



A SECOND CRAFT GROUP IS BEGINNING!

River Hills Village in Keokuk has generously offered to sponsor another craft class by Lee County Floral. It will be called Coffee, Craft, & Conversation on the 4th Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm. There will be 10 spots for the class, so registration will be required. The first class will be Thursday, March 23 @ 1:00 pm. Call the library to reserve your spot.

March Library Activities

11:30 am Energize
March 3rd, 6th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 20th, 24th, 27th, 31st

10:00 am Story Hour
March 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

3:30 pm Crafternoon
March 8th - call library to RSVP
Sponsored by Montrose Health Center

1:30 pm Early Out Activity
March 10th

2:00 pm Spring Break Youth Activities

March 13th - 17th

Monday – Let's all Lego!

Tuesday - Mystical Creations. We will make slime and pipe cleaner creations

Wednesday – Painting class. Be you, 'owl'ways!

Thursday – Spring Exploration. There will be an egg hunt, and we'll making/using bubble wands.

Friday - Movie "Darby O'Gill & the Little People"

5:30 pm Child Care Ready class

March 13th, 27th, April 3rd - Call library to ask about registration

5:30 pm Genealogy Workshop

March 14th & 28th - call library to RSVP

1:00 pm Writers Bloc

March 15th

1:00 pm CARDS

March 16th

7:00 pm Board Meeting

March 16th

5:30 pm Girl Scouts

March 20th

7:00 pm Book Club

March 20th discussing "Sunflower Sisters"

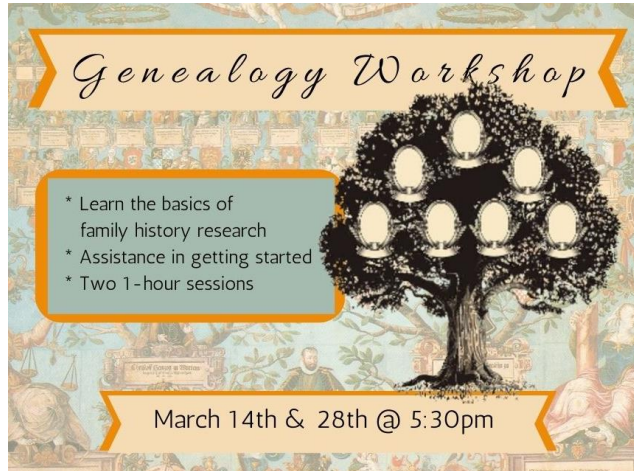
5:30 pm Friends meeting

March 21st

1:00 pm Coffee, Crafts, & Conversation

March 23rd - Call the library to RSVP

sponsored by River Hills Assisted Living in Keokuk



The Writers' Bloc meeting was held February 18 in the Donnellson Library Local and Family History Department. Attending were Jan Blankenburg, Diane Kruse, Marty Miller, and Tom Moeller.

Jan showed her talent in her poetry writing again this month. Several poems written and read were: *Mother Knows Best*, *Counting Our Blessings*, *Fingers*, *Lost in Thought*, *Taking Chances* (which is poetic and sounds like a song), and *My Valentine*. The valentine poem was written about a most

favorite person in her life, her father. With this poem Jan met the challenge of Tom Moeller's request at the January meeting. Jan didn't forget to mention Tom and his talents for writing poetry.

Jan's dream of being published in *Our Iowa* was met again. She was first published in the December-January issue and the article entitled *Morning Melodies* about her love of birds was published in the February-March issue. She spoke about her delights in listening to their songs which sound like "a morning chorus of a delightful choir". In addition to the many birdhouses in her yard she has butterfly houses which add more color to the choir.

Tom, as usual, had several poems to share with his talent to cover many topics. His colorful humorous side covered the entire poem of *Melvin and Sadie's Last Date* which was introduced briefly at the January meeting. The entire poem covered the theme of an old truck full of kids figuring about what to do on their joy ride through the country. Sadie had the best seat in "the house" so to speak – protecting the beer cooler. It is a story which one needs to read to get the full background of this funny poetic piece.

The second poem called *Dementia* was about someone who was unable to remember why he was pushing a shopping cart. When a little boy asked if he was going to the store to see Mr. Henry the man remembered how in years past he went to the store. Written with more prose than poetry.

Diane spoke about the progress of her book entitled *The History and Heritage of Lee County, Iowa Rural Schools*. The book continues to move forward for submission of a second draft manuscript to the printer. More information such as old rural school exams, standard consolidation, and the many teachers were added during February. Although a publishing date has not been set, an early-late spring deadline is planned. Diane met Tom's challenge of a valentine request not in poetry but in a show-and-tell presentation. The items included were old valentines which were sent in the days of rural schools and a decorated box used to collect the valentines for the students (and teacher).

Marty wrote a poem based on a somewhat blurry photo of her two year old granddaughter reading a pretend book to a ceramic cat. The thought was that nothing in the picture was real, but what was real was her love of sharing a book.

She also brought in a weird letter advertising some beauty product as an example of creative writing. The author went on and on for nine pages and it even had a copyright notice at the end. Marty thought it was an example of one way to make a living through creative writing. She did not reply to the letter, and surprisingly, Ed was not interested in buying the product.

Our Writers' Bloc group meets every 3rd Wednesday from 1-3 pm in the Local and Family History room. We invite you to share or just come listen to others as they present what they have written. Our next meeting will be March 15 at 1 p.m. in the Local and Family History Room.~ **Written and submitted by Diane Kruse**

February Suggested Reading: *Big Bend a Homesteader's Story*

This month's suggested reading is a humorous story of a married couple who in 1909 spend nearly all their money in a desperate ploy to cure the husband of chronic debilitating disease symptoms and at the same time provide a better home for their child. Betting all their resources on a better life, the couple homestead in the Big Bend country of Texas, a place so named because it lies in

the large loop carved out by the Rio Grande river. The couple, J.O. and Bessie Langford, accompanied by daughter Lovie, are attracted to this particular homestead by the hot mineral springs on the property, touted as a cure for everything from hangovers to gonorrhea and visited annually by a wide selection of people just for the chance to drink from and bathe in the mineral water.

While the gamble is huge and the journey to the homestead is difficult, the couple are welcomed upon arrival by a wide array of neighbors (some squatting on the homestead) who provide a warm welcome, help in settling in, and a wealth of advice and example which makes the transition to this new home a pleasure. J.O. discovers the mineral springs provide good drinking water which, along with the recommended 21 baths, actually eliminates his chronic pains and fatigue permanently.

J.O. builds a bathhouse with stone tubs, all fed by the mineral springs, and charges the revolving clientele a small fee per bath which, given their ever-growing numbers, brings in a steady income. Meanwhile, he engages in a variety of money-making efforts and the family lives off the land, eating quail, rabbits, and deer. The activities of the homesteaders, the antics of various neighbors, the occasional genuine danger – the couple come awake one night to find a six-foot sidewinder rattlesnake in the bedroom – make for an intriguing story, excellent pastime reading for anyone with an interest in the not-too-old West or perhaps the intent to try homesteading. Highly recommended. ~ **Submitted by Aaron Kruse**

Richard L Proenneke Museum



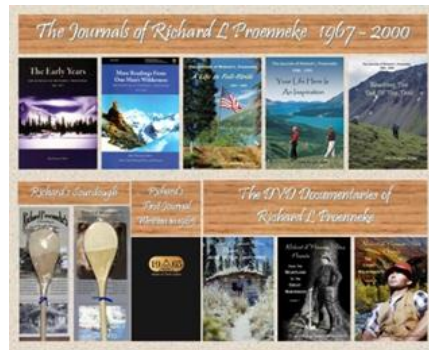
In a letter to Jake dated February 6, 1969 Richard writes:

Thanks for everything that I ordered and that you included but you wouldn't have needed to send that. I have lots of spuds and there is a couple gallons of instant spuds up at Spikes cabin. The candy bars and prunes come in pretty handy. Now to get at your letters while they are still fresh.

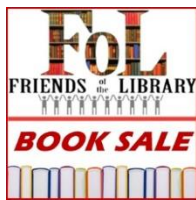
I think the lower lake must be much shallower and cools in a shorter time. Many lakes farther down freeze even earlier but of course they are smaller.

I have plenty clothes to keep me warm even at a -50° and my Japanese pacs with 2 pr. felt insoles and two pairs of heavy sox do pretty good but the pacs are coming apart. I have used the most of a spool of casting line to keep them going. They are not the best quality so I hope you haven't bought any. Spike has ordered me a pair of pacs from Eddie Bauer in Seattle and they will be in the next trip. They are only shoe pacs (leather tops) though but if large enough I can put on plenty of socks and I also ordered a pair of sheep skin liners from Sears which may go inside. If you have found a pair of G.I. mukluks though they will be welcome. If you haven't don't look farther as I feel the coldest temp. is past. Dec, Jan. Feb. the low temp came with the full moon and it is past for Feb. and I doubt that March will see a -50°.

I have been thinking about the fireplace situation. Do you suppose that in a properly proportioned setup that a high percentage of the air going up the chimney comes from the room? Could it be that cold air flowing down the back side and mixing with the warm at the smoke shelf makes the big volume. So maybe a 12" square chimney gives better performance than one 18"x7" because of the 12x12 greater depth? Ask your friend about that some time if you think of it. In your fireplace chimney specs. I see some 8 1/2"x13" and 8 1/2"x17" but none as narrow as 7". But there is one 8 1/2" round and one 13 round. Seems at least that the 8 1/2 round would give trouble if mine did.



Are you a Richard Proenneke fan? Would you like to learn more about this incredible man who grew up in our backyard? Consider joining us and lending a helping hand. Drop me a line at: Brie Anderson, Richard Proenneke Museum Curator: brie@richardproenneke.com or contact the new Library Director Sunny Robbins: director@donnellson.lib.ia.us



Friends of the Library Book Sale

With the first months of 2023 gone, it is time to start looking through books and deciding which books need to be weeded for the upcoming summer book sale. Although Friends does not have a definite date for the sale it will be here before you know it. As we get closer to making plans for a date, a day and time will be announced in newsletters and newspapers in order for books to be delivered to the library in a timely manner. We are always in need of collections of children and adult favorites, classics as well as selection of cookbooks, gardening, historical, political and military topics. CD's and DVD's are also welcome.

**Upcoming Local & Family History Display
March: National Reading Month**

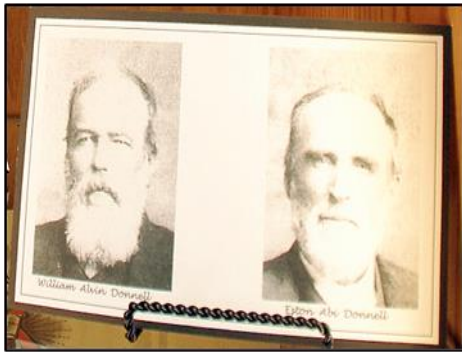


The Local & Family History Department will be celebrating **National Reading Month 2023** as a time for everyone to show how much they love reading and how exciting and fulfilling it can be.

National Reading Month is a month set aside to motivate Americans of all ages to read every day. Reading is fun and has many benefits, regardless of your age. It is a key component of education and professional development. Check out books on your favorite topic(s) or pursue a new topic at your library.

This month the display topic will present the history of Donnellson as their topic of the month. Visit the Local & Family History Department to read about the interesting growth of the town. Although some people may find the increased emphasis on reading to be boring, the increase in reading during this month (and every month) has significant benefits that will continue to pay off in the future. Reading is one of the best habits to develop; it strengthens the mental muscles, helps to improve comprehension and analytical abilities, and increases imagination and boosts memory.

Below are a few photos to peak the readers' interest.



~Town of Donnellson was named for the W.A. Donnell and Esten Donnell families



~The Donnellson Depot opened in 1881 and officially closed in 1969



~Beginning of the Donnellson Library in Dr. Ira F. Thompson who donated the west reception room of his practice in March 1935

February Display – Civil War Including Harriet Tubman’s Role

The display for February is the Civil War (1861-1865). Photographs on display show some of the many battles which took place over the four-year period and with several local patrons sharing their photographs of their ancestors and their role in the War. Many books filled with information are exhibited throughout the display to help patrons make a list of titles/authors to further increase their knowledge of the War. Thank you to Joyce Francis, Evan/Jan Blankenburg, Jean Kruse, Brie Anderson, Carol Sturdivant, Carole Landes Elston, and Sunny Robinson for your contributions to help make this display so successful. A special thank you to Dodd’s Printing for enlargements of several battles and decorative mats to enhance display. NOTE: By request, the display was held over for another week.

February is also Black History month and covers Harriet Tubman’s life after the Underground Railroad freeing of the slaves. It will show how she continued courageously as a Civil War heroine. She helped to coordinate a military assault during the Civil War which freed 700 people from slavery. When the Civil War finally began Tubman did not stand on the sidelines. She first served as a cook and a nurse then as a scout and a spy for Union soldiers in South Carolina. In June 1863, under the leadership of Colonel James Montgomery, she served as a key advisor for an operation in Combahee, South Carolina. Below are some photographs for the upcoming display courtesy of Carole Landes Elston.



~ Information donated by Carole Landes Elston



~ Ancestral photos loaned by Carole Landes Elston, books loaned from the library and poetry loaned by Jan Blankenburg



~ Ancestral photos and information loaned by Brie Anderson and Carol Sturdivant. Books loaned by Evan Blankenburg and library



~ Cross Stitch photo loaned by Joyce Francis and books on loan from Jean Kruse and Evan Blankenburg. Cannon by Evan as well.

~ Civil War plates/cannon loaned by Joyce Francis, books loaned by Evan Blankenburg and enlargement of battle by Dodd's Printing

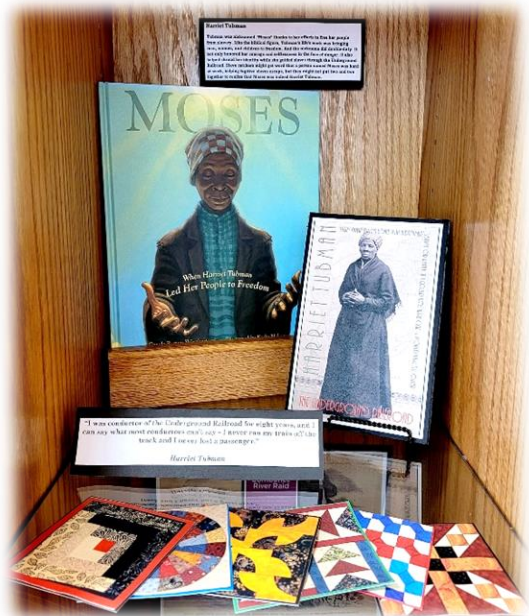


Beyond the Underground Railroad: Harriet Tubman's Journey From Slave to Spy to Historical Icon



~ Harriet Tubman during her Civil War days. She was an advisor for the June 1863 Battle of Combahee in South Carolina. Her continued courageous actions were celebrated by many including the CIA.

~ Civil War plate loaned by Joyce Francis/cannon, Book loaned by Evan Blankenburg, and enlargement of battle by Dodd' Printing



~ Photos of Harriet Tubman during her Underground Railroad days

Newsletter Editor: Diane P. Kruse