

**DONNELLSON PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWSLETTER**  
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The turning of the calendar from one year to the next has always been a time for summing up experience, bidding farewell to those we have lost, renewing old friendships, making plans and resolutions, and expressing our hopes for the future.

**“We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called "Opportunity" and its first chapter is New Year's Day.” ~ Edith Lovejoy Pierce**

### **Library Happenings**

**“The reflections and histories of men and women throughout the world are contained in books.... America's greatness is not only recorded in books, but it is also dependent upon every citizen being able to utilize public libraries.” ~ Terence COOKE (1921-1983)**

The Donnellson Library has been fully opened since the last week of 2020. Visitors to the library are still required to wear a mask, socially distance, and use hand sanitizer immediately upon entering. Computers are open for use and there is hand sanitizer beside each one. An hour time limit is currently in place, unless the patron is doing taxes, applying for jobs, or taking online classes. Please let the librarian on the desk know if you need more time on the computers.

Many newly released books have come in for your winter reading pleasure. We are well-stocked with the New York Times Bestsellers, as well as many of the top books of the year, as

recommended by several sources. We will be looking forward to the announcements for the Pulitzer and National Book Award winners in April.

This year, the Caldecott medal was won by Carole Lindstrom, for the book *We are Water Protectors*, illustrated by Michaela Goade. The Donnellson Library had already ordered the book, but because it was slated to win, it went on back-order. The Coretta Scott King award went to Jacqueline Woodson for the book *Before the Ever After*. The Donnellson Library had that book already. And, finally, the Newberry Medal went to Tae Keller for *When you Trap a Tiger*. We have a copy on hand.

### **The Donnellson Book Core**

Book Core members met in-person at the library on January 18 and discussed "Beartown" by Fredrik Backman. Twelve members attended the library, and one member joined on Zoom.

It was quite different from his first book "A Man Called Ove" which we all enjoyed.

Members were split between really liking it and not liking it all. The book started out slowly but picked up mid-way through the story.

We had a great discussion over small towns, high school sports (in this story, hockey), class and racial divisions, being part of a team, keeping silent, or doing the right thing.

There is a sequel to this book some members were planning to read as well. Our next book will be *Miss Benson's Beetle* by Rachel Joyce. We will be discussing it on Monday, February 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the library. ~ **Written and submitted by Debbie Bailey**

### **Looking Forward**

As we look forward to the warmer months, we have been planning a Summer Reading Program. It looks like we will have several fun activities for kids in Donnellson Railroad Park and implement an OUTDOOR READING CORPS for kids. The theme of the reading program this year is "Reading Colors Your World." We will be handing out art activity bags along with bookmarks and other fun activities. We will not be holding classes for large groups of kids in our Activity Room again this year, due to the virus. Please watch the newsletter for more information about our outdoor kids' activities for the upcoming summer.

### **Winter Weather:**

When there are traveler's advisories listed for our area, and icy or snow-covered roads, we may make the decision to close the library until there is an improvement in conditions. We would not want our patrons or our staff to venture out when road conditions are hazardous. Please call the library at 835-5545 if you think the weather conditions may have prompted a closure.

## Richard L Proenneke Museum

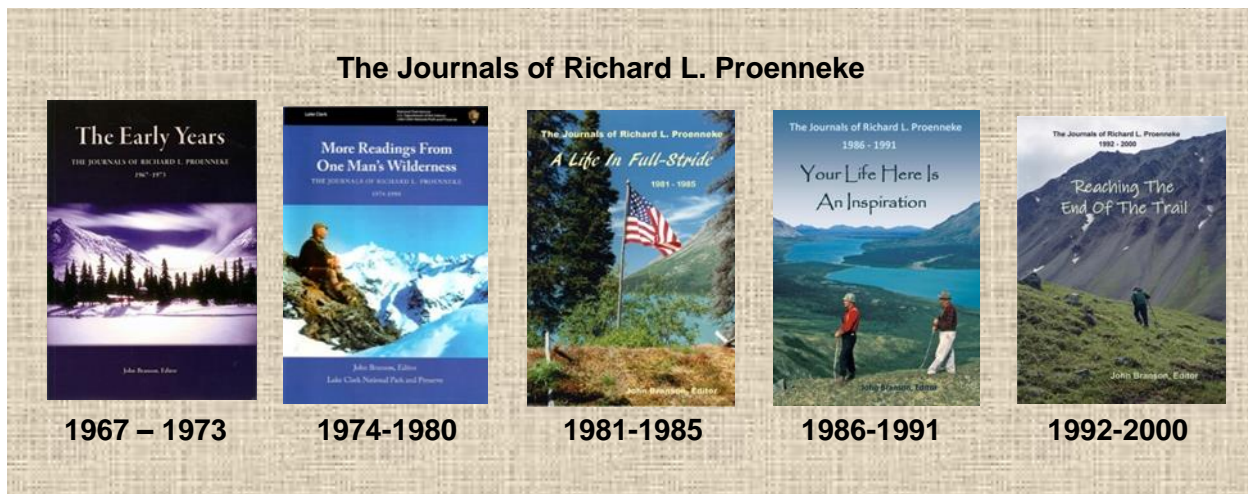
### LIFE'S TREASURERS

Every day I grow a little richer, come to own a little something new.  
Sometimes it's a greeting from a stranger,  
That cheers m y world and helps to see me through.  
Sometimes it is a bit of a special beauty, a lovely view I've seen before.  
Sometimes it's a chance for me to grow some more.  
Sometimes it's a moment warm with love,  
Every day I grow a little richer in the treasurers  
That my heart is fondest of.

Richard Proenneke was born and raised in Primrose, Lee County, IA, and ties his Journals to us through the people he knew here and the lives he touched on his many trips back sharing his film and knowledge of Alaska.



Richard Proenneke's first work experience outside of Primrose, Iowa was at the Frank Wilkinson Ranch just outside of Heppner, OR working as a ranch hand setting up remote camps for herders grazing sheep and cattle. The above images are taken from the upcoming DVD documentary to be released later this year.



## LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Richard Proenneke Museum is looking for a volunteer to help with the wide variety of functions related to the Richard Proenneke Museum with flexible volunteer hours.

We are needing someone with the following knowledge/experience and should have basic computer skills in the following:

Microsoft Windows 10, Microsoft Word, 2010, Microsoft Excel 2010

Microsoft Office Publisher 2007 or higher would be helpful.

If you are interested in volunteering and being a part of a wonderful and unique experience,

## A January Suggested Reading

Suggested reading for this month is *On Killing* by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman.

Putting aside the title for a moment, the author is a former army Ranger and Paratrooper. He functioned as a psychologist (professor and practitioner) at West Point and in the active-duty military. Beginning in 1998 he has devoted himself to teaching, writing, and training for both military and law enforcement organizations. As of 2009 when this book was published, he was the director of the Killology Research Group, which studies the impact of killing on the human psych.

Readers of military histories are largely aware of the tendency of new troops in combat to either freeze up in a firefight or fire into the air over the heads of enemy troops. As Grossman writes, “In World War II, only 15 to 20 percent of combat infantry were willing to fire their rifles. In Korea, about 50 percent. In Vietnam, the figure rose to more than 90 percent.” *On Killing* is concerned with the entire spectrum of efforts to teach new recruits to put accurate (killing) fire

on enemy troops and the overall effect – often quite damaging -- on the individual of killing another human being.

Grossman does an excellent job of laying out the many factors involved in the impact of killing on the individual, including authority received from supervisors, support of the group, the nature of the victim (just another soldier, or a known terrorist?), general combat or commission of an atrocity, etc. The coverage of desensitization and conditioning is covered in depth, to include the lasting changes in the psychology of the individual. Perhaps the very best of the research presented deals with the lasting impact of certain parts of our culture on children as they grow to adulthood.

For anybody who has interest in the military and police work or who has ever wondered about violence in our society – why the prevalence of school shootings? – this is an excellent piece of research. Highly recommended. ~ **Written and submitted by Aaron Kruse**

### **Local & Family History Department**

~ With the return of the regular library hours volunteers have increased their hours to keep the file drawers expanding. Roberta Krehbiel continues to clip obituaries and Mary Davis continues to paste and sort obituaries. Arrangements are made on a regular basis to pick up obits to be pasted from Roberta as well as delivering supplies to Mary so she can continue her part from home. Pat Morrison, a regular contributor of information to update our military records and our cemetery records, has volunteered to help with the Illinois obituary filing. Jean Kruse helped file Van Buren County obituaries and brought the file up to date. Thank you, ladies, for your assistance in helping keep the information up to date for the month of January. Action continues.

~ Forwarded information to Bradley C. Shark regarding genealogy information he requested on Albertine Wilson Grossman, daughter of Ralph E. and Esther Albertine Scheffler Hirschler and Clarence “Babe” Franklin Grossman. Action completed.

~ Work continues to update the list of donated family albums. The Donnellson Library Local and Family History Department has three shelves of family history albums for patrons’ use for family research. To date, the department count is 100 albums. However, Roberta Krehbiel has donated several more albums for review. In the meantime, the family albums, in alphabetical order, are in the rear of the room on the lower shelves. If you have a family album you would like to donate, we will be happy to accept your copy or make a copy and return the original to you.

~ A long-needed project was started during the month of January involving the rearrangement of Lee County, contiguous counties, local Illinois, and Missouri obituary records, as well as genealogy references. The new arrangement will make it easier for our patrons to readily locate their information. New record locations will be appropriately marked, and some records being transferred to larger binders because more information has been clipped from newspapers or donated by patrons. Action continues.

Another project was approved by the Library Board for more shelving in the Local and Family History Department. The first half of the project involves shelves being placed on the three black

filing cabinets and four-draw family file cabinet. This part of the project will ensure all obituaries for contiguous counties and local Illinois and Missouri are in a single location. Also, two shelves will be placed near the back desk. The project is scheduled to start within the next couple of weeks. The second part of the shelving project will be completed after the new fiscal year. Action pending.

### **Presbyterian College in West Point, IA**

The following article was researched and forwarded to the Local and Family History Department for their records by John Stuekerjuergen. In John's research over the past ten years, he learned West Point had been home to a college for a few years during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. He stated amazingly when it opened it was one of the only 150 colleges in the United States and stated there seems to be some uncertainty about whether it was intended solely as a seminary or allowed general admission.

In 1846, the Presbyterian Church of Iowa resolved to establish a seminary in eastern Iowa. After several months of consideration and efforts to raise funds, the Presbytery fixed upon West Point as the permanent location of the college, "partly on account of its healthiness, pleasantness, and the convenience of the place to the great thoroughfare, the Mississippi, and partly on account of the amount of funds raised in that place to aid the institution."

A decision was made to name the institution **Des Moines College** (a/k/a Des Moines Valley College.)

Marketing materials noted that the campus was pleasantly located in the village of West Point, ten miles from Ft. Madison, twenty from Burlington, and twenty-eight from Keokuk, with easy access in all directions.

The college commenced operations in May 1847. The Rev. Michael Hummer was the first president. The entire cost of boarding and tuition was estimated at \$40 per session, and it was possible to reduce the cost to less than \$30 with financial assistance. The faculty consisted of two members, at one point the Rev. J. Stratton, A.M., Professor of Languages, and Rev. J.H. Dinsmore, A.M., Professor of Mathematics.

The college building was the former courthouse, vacated and donated to the school when West Point lost its status as county seat. It was a two-story structure, the lower story divided into six "large and pleasant" rooms, designed as lodging rooms for students, who occupied them rent-free. The upper story consisted of a large hall, affording ample room for an audience of two or three hundred people.

The "college square" was improved and ornamented to accommodate the college. An adjoining ten-acre plot was acquired as a site for new buildings.

A library was started, with 450 books, and there were plans to add at least 60 each year.

The Annual Report (1851) of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the USA reported that the institution was making progress, but the trials of establishing a college in newly settled country were very great. The next Annual Report (1852) noted an enrollment of 50 students, and a plan of endowment by scholarships about to be undertaken.

By 1853, however, it became apparent that enrollment was falling well short of expectations. Among other factors, the California gold rush had lured away many of the older students. The

Presbytery of Iowa tendered the institution to the Synod of Iowa, and plans were made to move it to Dubuque, where it operated as Alexander College. The professors at Des Moines College resigned their positions.

Despite the Church's decision, officials of Des Moines College attempted to persevere with the West Point campus in some other manner. There was talk of changing the college's name to the West Point Collegiate Institute.

Sadly, however, Des Moines College did not survive the 1850s. One of its more notable students was Samuel Mercer Clark, who was the first Iowa-born member of Congress and editor of the Keokuk *Gate City* for 31 years. Information on Samuel Mercer Clark follows below.

CLARK Samuel Mercer , a Representative from Iowa; born near Keosauqua, Van Buren County, Iowa, October 11, 1842; attended the public schools and the Des Moines Valley College, West Point, Iowa; studied law; was admitted to the bar in 1864, but did not engage in extensive practice; editor of the Keokuk Daily Gate City for thirty-one years; delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1872, 1876, and 1880; appointed commissioner of education to the Paris Exposition in 1889; postmaster of Keokuk from 1879-1885; member of the Keokuk Board of Education 1879-1894, serving as president 1882-1894; elected as a Republican to the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Congresses (March 4, 1895-March 3, 1899); was not a candidate for renomination in 1898 to the Fifty-sixth Congress; resumed editorial duties; died in Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa, on August 11, 1900; interment in Oakland Cemetery.

The history of the West Point will be placed in the Local and Family History Department West File. ~ **Researched and submitted by John Stuekerjuergen**

### Local and Family History Department Displays



**The first display of 2021 will be next month and celebrates Library Lovers' Month and Valentine's Day.** We know all about Valentine's Day, but did you know February is Library Lovers' Month? This special month promotes the idea that libraries extend far beyond the four walls of a building – and everyone is welcome to use their services. During the pandemic libraries have been going above and beyond to adapt to our changing world by expanding their resources and continuing to meet the needs of their users. Whether people visit in person or virtually, libraries offer opportunities for everyone to explore new worlds and become their best selves through access to technology, multimedia content, and educational programs. Show your love by stopping in and saying hello to staff and volunteers, view the display of “Celebrate Library Lovers' Month and Valentine's Day”, and check out a few items while you are there.

~ **Newsletter Editor, Diane P. Kruse, Retirees4Now@aol.com**

