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Issue #186



Library Happenings

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

We thank Our Generous Donors:

Dennis and Linda Krehbiel, Barb Schau and Carol Tull (Adopt-a-Book), and Linda Baxter.

A Note from the Library Director

As I prepare to retire and think about the past twenty-two years as Library Director, I am grateful for all who have supported the library. I am grateful for all volunteers who have helped me, whether with kids programming, covering books, working on the Proenneke Museum and sales, or volunteering in the Local and Family History Department. We currently have a student volunteer, Gavin Hasper, who has been learning about this kind of work and doing a great job. Thanks to everyone who has helped me in my career.

Preschool Story Hour

This past month, we made valentines, read books about bears, Valentines and lovesick porcupines, and the wind! We are having fun with our small group but urge anyone who knows of toddlers or preschoolers who are at home during the day, to join us on Tuesday mornings at 10:00.

Senior Crafternoon

For Valentine's Day, the seniors enjoyed a little pampering from volunteers Victoria Matlock and Toni Peterson. They got a foot bath, a manicure, and treats, such as a charcuterie board, home-made cookies, and fizzy drinks.

The next Senior Crafternoon will be held on March 9 and will be a St. Patrick's themed floral arrangement.



The Donnellson Book Core

The book club met on Monday, February 21, to discuss *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes. The group really enjoyed this historical novel about the horseback librarians in the Appalachian Mountains during the Great Depression. On March 21, they will return to a popular genre of book the club has enjoyed in the past, the story of an elderly curmudgeon. The book is *The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83 1/4 Years Old* by a person reported to be Hendrik Groen. Here is what Goodreads has to say:

A #1 international bestseller in the vein of Fredrik Bachman's A Man Called Ove: an irresistible, funny, charming, and tender-hearted tale about friendship, love, and an old man who is young at heart.

Technically speaking, Hendrik Groen is....elderly. But at age 83 1/4, this feisty, indomitable curmudgeon has no plans to go out quietly. Bored of weak tea and potted geraniums, exasperated by the indignities of aging, Hendrik has decided to rebel--on his own terms. He begins writing an exposé: secretly recording the antics of day-to-day life in his retirement home, where he refuses to take himself, or his fellow "inmates," too seriously.

With an eccentric group of friends he founds the wickedly anarchic Old-But-Not-Dead Club-- "Rule #3: No Whining Allowed"--and he and his best friend, Evert, gleefully stir up trouble, enraging the home's humorless director and turning themselves into unlikely heroes. And when a sweet and sassy widow moves in next door, he polishes his shoes, grooms what's left of his hair, and determines to savor every ounce of joy in the time he has left, with hilarious and tender consequences.

*A bestselling phenomenon that has captured imaginations around the world, **The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen** is inspiring, charming, and laugh-out-loud funny with a deep and poignant core: a page-turning delight for readers of any age.*

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

COVID Shots

COVID Shots will be given by the Lee County Health Department at the Library on Tuesday, March 15, from 3:30-5:30. Shots are free. This will be the Moderna shot only. Please get your vaccination or booster, and support those in the Community who need to be protected from this terrible virus.

Writers' Bloc



The February meeting of Writers' Bloc was held at 1 p.m. in the Local and Family History Department. Attending were a special guest author, Mike Krebill, plus regulars Jan Blankenberg, Marty Miller, and Aaron and Diane Kruse.

The meeting started with Mike Krebill who authored two books about the search for the most basic of life's pleasures – wild edibles direct from Mother Nature's Garden. His first book, *The Scout's Guide to Wild Edibles*, won the prestigious 2017 National Outdoor Book Award for Nature Guidebook. His second book *A Forager's Life* also comes highly recommended by other interested naturalists and authors. Although there are many compliments several are shared from the beginning of the book from a segment entitled "Praise for Mike Krebill and a Forager's Life." To name a few: Chelsea Ewen Rowcliffe, an Iowa naturalist and foraging instructor stated, "A *Forager's Life* contains nibbles and wild wisdom from a man with an unmatched passion for teaching and discovering wild foods." Mark "Merriweather" Vorderbruggen, Ph.D., a foraging instructor, and author stated "... a book for those who want to truly interact with the nature around them. It will teach you how to identify the plants and then sweep you into Mike's long history of using them." Mike donated a copy of his two books to the library which can be checked out for interesting reading for anyone who loves nature.

Although Mike's presentation took up most of the meeting, all in attendance had an opportunity to relate their experiences in writing. Jan showed copies of her six books written over the years

which can be found at the library under standard cataloging. She mentioned her interest in writing poetry and has won many accolades from the annual Iowa Poetry Association contest.

Aaron talked about his interest in writing westerns and police mysteries. Several of his books can be found at the library under either fiction, or westerns.

Diane relayed her interest in the local rural country schools and presented a draft of what has been written to date. She also mentioned that she was the editor of library monthly newsletter which was established in 2005.

Marty read an essay about an online class called Pranayama, the Art of Breathing. It was sponsored by AARP and is available nationwide. When she had to work unexpectedly, she explained she thought she should do the responsible thing and let AARP know that she would not be signing in just in case they were taking nationwide attendance. Marty explained she went online to cancel, as it was so difficult, so many steps, so many numbers to punch in which caused more tension. At that point she realized she needed to learn Pranayama - consciously breathing deeply to settle her mind and body--just to cancel the class. On a serious note, Marty is also interested in writing poetry and is a contributor to the Annual Iowa Poetry Association contest.

The meeting turned out to be one of the most interesting meetings the group has participated in over the years. We hope to see Mike return for more meetings. The next meeting will be 16 March in the library local and family history room at 1 p.m. ~**Written and submitted by Diane Kruse**

Richard L. Proenneke Museum



View from Richard Proenneke's beach in the spring at Twin Lakes. Upper Lake is clear and calm.

From "The Early Years" entry June 14, 1970

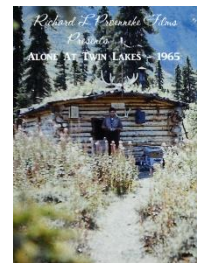
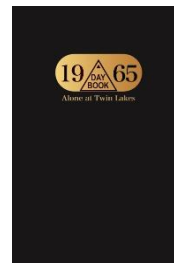
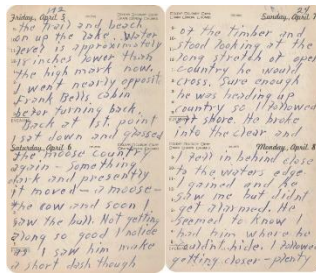
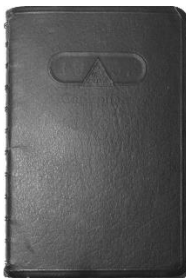
After five weeks of unhurried travel I was about to see Twin Lakes again. It was September 25, 1969 when I left and now I was anxious to see my cabin and cache. Reports had it that someone had used my cabin for a time during the winter. Probably not understanding my locking device (of wood) they had broken the lock. The lock would be a small problem and easily repaired. What I was concerned about was my cache. It was loaded with items of value besides provisions.

A stack of gas cans on the beach. Also, an empty cardboard carton of some sort. Some litter scattered about. Not a very tidy outfit. The rotating disk of the lock had been broken due to pressure on the handle with the disk in the locked position. It didn't look too bad inside. A couple of boxes of trach, empty cans, egg shells, paper towels etc. Better that they left it inside than scatter it outside.

From "The Early Years" entry April 12, 1972

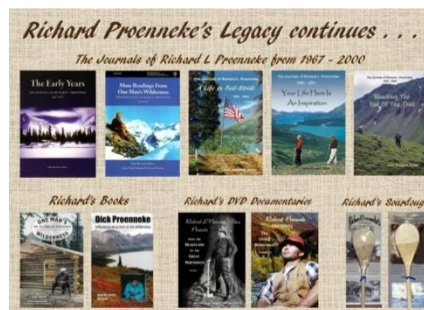
It was April 12 and late afternoon when I pulled out of Primrose, Iowa on my return journey to Twin Lakes, Alaska. A journey that would exceed 6,000 miles and take more than a month to complete. Only a few miles the first day. Only a few miles to drive back in case I discovered I had forgotten something.

Coming soon! The new Richard Proenneke Journal "Alone At Twin Lakes – 1965" and the accompanying DVD Documentary to be released on Richard's 106th Birthday, May 4, 2022.



The original 1957 Caterpillar Daybook & two pages from the Journal 1965"

Published Journal and DVD Documentary "Alone At Twin Lakes -



The complete set of the Journals of Richard L Proenneke and the book "One Man's Wilderness;" the "Reflections on a man in his wilderness; DVD Documentaries, "From The Heartland To The Great Northwest" and "The Living Wilderness;" The Homeland and Kodiak Sourdough Starter Spoons are all available at the Donnellson Library or at our website: richardproenneke.com

We have been most fortunate at the Proenneke Museum the past few weeks to have Gavin Hasper, a Central Lee High School Student, who is volunteering at the library. He has been of tremendous help to us in many ways, from helping us reorganize our storage room, to entering data into the computer, to converting RLPs slides to digital form for us. And, best of all is he is a Richard Proenneke fan!

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 us a line at: Brie Anderson, Richard Proenneke Museum Curator: brie@richardproenneke.com Brenda Knox, Librarian bknox@donnellson.lib.ia.us

A February Suggested Reading

This month's suggested reading is *Laptop from Hell* by New York Post reporter Miranda Devine.

Miranda Devine is a lifetime investigative reporter. Born in Queens N.Y., she grew up in Tokyo, Japan, and Sydney, Australia. In addition to the New York Post, she contributes to FOX News, the Australian Daily Telegraph, and Sky News.

Most regular observers of the daily news have at least a partial understanding of the involvement of Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden, in numerous financial dealings ranging from the Ukrainian energy company Burisma to financial investments from large Chinese corporations and banks. Although originally escorted everywhere on his business trips by the Secret Service, Hunter shed the presence of these watchdogs as he globe-trotted to meetings with clients which included those above as well as Russia and others.

A closer look at Hunter's financial dealings quickly gives the reader a clear view of a man with little understanding of such things as energy sales and financial investments. It quickly becomes clear that Hunter's business acumen involves mostly arranging for clients to receive favorable attention from Joe Biden, first as a Senator, then a Vice-President, and now as a President. This much-sought-after attention from one of the political elite has allowed those on both sides of the deal to profit, and includes members of the Biden family.

Laptop from Hell takes its title from the laptop computer which Hunter Biden abandoned at a repair shop. It became the property of the shop owner, who was entitled to copy the hard drives and found extensive (circa 25,000) emails of both professional and personal nature, as well as numerous photos and even videos. The shop owner lost the laptop to the FBI, but not before making his copies, one of which found its way to the author.

As of this writing, Hunter Biden is under investigation for his taxes. Anyone wishing to fully understand this investigation as well as the corruption at the upper levels of our government will find this detailed account of great interest. ~Written and submitted by Aaron Kruse

- **Note: We welcome book reviews from all readers.**



Local & Family History Department

The month of February turned out to be a busier month compared to the end of 2021 and January of 2022. Volunteers (Diane Kruse and Sharon Meierotto) still worked from home to keep on top of projects. Obituaries were alphabetized and made ready to be filed in the appropriate binders and files. Display information from previous months began to be removed from large envelopes and filed in the new 3-inch binders bought from a Friends of the Library grant. Filing in the binders will make the information more accessible to those interested in seeing the monthly displays through the years from November 2017 to date. Also, newsletter binders were updated so anyone interested in seeing the history of activities at the library from 2005 to present.

Like the library and the Proenneke Museum, the Local and Family History Department welcomed and appreciated the volunteerism of Gavin Hasper. His help in organizing our storage area was a huge godsend, especially moving boxes of Donnellson memorabilia from the floor space to easy-to-reach shelf space in one afternoon. Plastic tubs were purchased to house many of the donations received over the years as well as department supplies. Thank you Gavin for your support.

~ Kenny Tull is still working with the rural schoolhouses of Van Buren (#1) and Columbia (#6) and delivered several more pages of information to Diane Kruse to add to her Van Buren Township research information. In addition, the books Kenny used to digitize information were on loan from Jeff Buford, who was in possession of them because his father, “Charlie” Buford, was a great local historian. Since Diane has a big interest in the former local rural schools, four books of information containing notes from school board notes and attendance records were loaned for her personal review. All information received from Kenny and Jeff will be filed in the Van Buren Township research binder.

~ Sharon Meierotto donated a book entitled *Hidden in Plain View* written by Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, PhD. The book covers the history of the Underground Railroad using secret codes and a story of quilts. Book is filed in the Local and Family History with the Underground Binder and other books on the subject.



Local & Family History Display for February



During the Civil War thousands of slaves rode the Underground Railroad to freedom. As promised in the January newsletter, this month’s display for Black History Month covers the local stops and

the various difficulties, hardships, or problems, especially those which test one's courage, endurance, and resolve in the local area of Lee County concerning the Underground Railroad.

In addition to the previously mentioned areas of Denmark and Salem, IA, there are several more stories to add to the history of bravery in the Lee County area. The Local and Family History Department would like to add several stories written by Erma DeRosear from information passed on to her by those associated with this important, not widely known part of American History. According to Erma, information was rarely documented due to the secrecy of these operations. It was a network of safe houses, barns, root cellars and similar places where people who had escaped from slavery were hidden during their flight to safety. Below are five stories written in an article by Julie Nickell in 2006.

The Slave Hunter: On 2 June 1843, nine slaves working on the property of Ruel Daggs (born in Virginia and a farmer) near Luray, MO left the homestead. Daggs had not been mean to them, but he was living in an area where some people frowned on slavery, and he was thinking of selling them into the South. The slaves said they were afraid of being sold and decided to head north to freedom instead. Daggs and his sons hired two slave hunters to track them and bring them back.

One of the men was James McClure and the other was Samuel Slaughter, a farmer living in Section 33 of Harrison Township. They followed the wagon trails which lead to Salem, IA where they found themselves among the Quakers, who would not allow the men to take the slaves back to Missouri. Daggs decided to sue the Quakers because he said he had lost too many hours of work from their absence. Daggs was awarded \$2,900 from several of the Friends but never collected any of it because the ones who had been involved had willed or given all their possessions away so there was nothing left.

Conductor Benjamin Cook: Benjamin Cook came to Iowa from Ohio and married Susanna Hill in Lee County in 1851. They owned a farm in Section 11 about a mile and a half north of Primrose. They were Quakers, among quite a few in the area -- the Cooks, Carvers, McMillens, Hills, Hamptons, and others -- many of whom are buried in the Cook Cemetery which was located on his farm. In 2004, Cook family descendants revealed that great grandpa Benjamin had a hiding place for slaves in his home. The Atlas of 1874 shows Benjamin owning the bottom half of the southwest corner of the section.

The "Hidey Place": Edward and Helen (Kirchner) Hohl bought their old home place in 1914 on the west edge of Franklin from William Thomas. When their sons Jacob Hohl of Donnellson and Carl Hohl of Keosauqua tore it down in the 1980's, they found a trap door in the living room in the northeast corner of the house which opened to a "hidey place" in the basement. The floorboards, originally one-inch thick, were worn-down one-half inch with the knotholes still the original size indicating a lot of traffic or activity near the entrance to the trap door. Howard Raid, the historian for the Mennonite College in Bluffton, OH, had lived in Donnellson and felt sure that house was a station on the Railroad.

The Light in the Window: May Crowe of Charleston wrote this wonderful story for the library. The pre-Civil War house of Brian and Hazel Hancock stood in Section 31 of Charleston Township about one and one-half miles northwest of Argyle. The Hancocks had moved to this house in the 1950's. May says "When we visited Uncle Brian and Aunt Hazel, we admired the noble architecture of the large home, with floor-to-ceiling windows in the living rooms, the expansive views over the fields from the bedrooms upstairs. The unforgettable highlights of the house, however, were the Underground Railroad connections."

At the top of the house, possibly the third floor, small windows opened facing south. The station to the south was a house in Revere, MO. If an escaping slave was being helped, the Missouri people would place a lighted lantern in an upper window which made it visible in Iowa. If it was safe to bring the slave over, an answering lantern would be placed in the Iowa window.

We were shown the secret closet in the basement where the slaves were hidden after they arrived. The Lee County family then placed a signal in the north window and the next safe house north would signal back and receive the slave. The route ran north to Salem and eventually into Canada and freedom.

On a fierce windy day in April 1968, fire destroyed the house, but a new house was built in its place – by Howard and Joy Hancock. The 1874 Atlas of Charleston Township shows a lithograph of the old homestead.

Mary's Story: This last story was researched by Betty Eis of Bonaparte, Mary Savage of Salem, and Erma DeRosear of Donnellson.

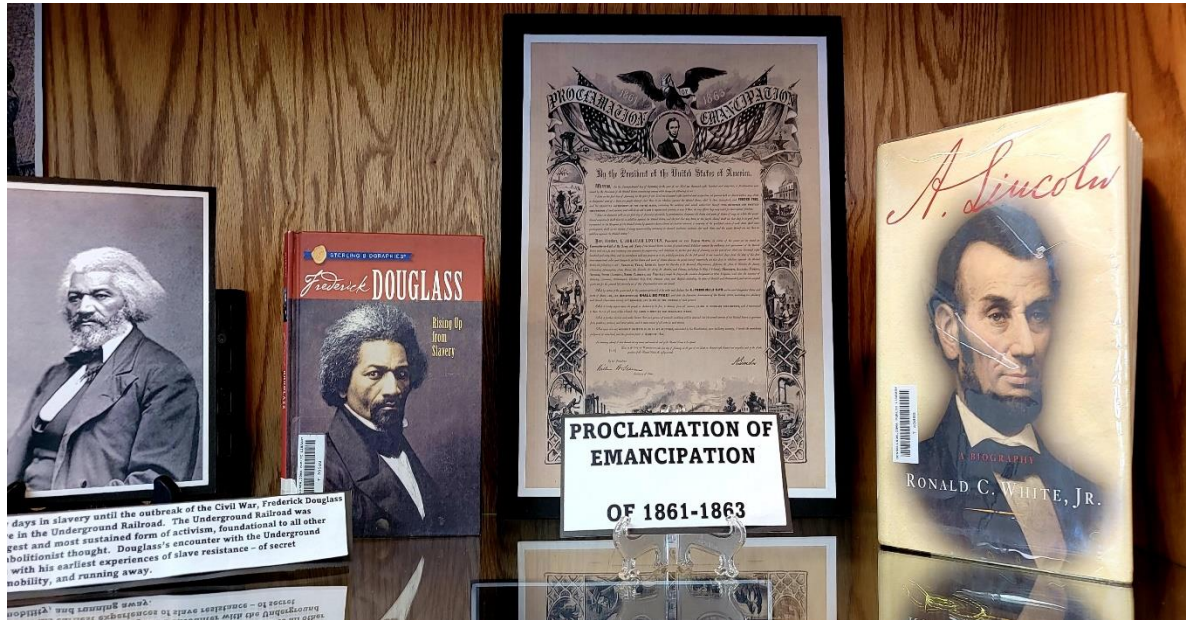
If you were caught harboring a slave in the mid-1800's, you were fined a \$1000. Henry and Eleanor Pickard, Quakers who lived in the New Garden area near Pilot Grove sheltered a little slave girl in their home. Lewis Savage, a historian and Quaker minister, and his cousin Mary Savage, came to the Donnellson Library in the summer of 2004 seeking information. They told of a slave on his way to freedom in Canada in 1857 that left his child with the Pickards saying he would return for her. He said her mother had been "sold down the river."

In 1933 Mary came to a Pickard Reunion in Donnellson as Mrs. Wm G. Mills. She had lived about 20 years with the Pickards and then left. Her name has been found as well as that of her parents; information was found on her marriage, where she worked, and where she lived and died.

In addition to Mary's Story, the Underground Railroad is still being researched and documented, adding information to a part of American history that is not widely known.

If you have information to share -- a story or a station site or even other historical information -- we would appreciate hearing from you. Our telephone number is 319-835-5545 or come in and visit our Genealogy and History Department.

Below are more photographs of interest from the display. Photos courtesy of Carole Landes Elston

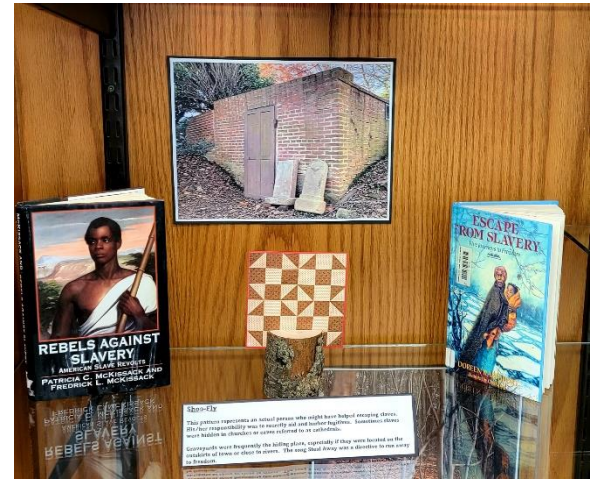


Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass with the Proclamation of Emancipation



Asa Turner, Denmark, IA

Deacon Trowbridge, Denmark, IA Anti-Slavery Society



Various hiding places for escaping slaves – top – log cabin used as a safe house, Quilt patches indicate safe refuge along with food and the patch to indicate the route to Canada and safety. Bottom - waterway with tall weed coverage. Right – hiding place in a storage building in a cemetery

If there is interest in learning more about this topic, a visit to the Lewelling Quaker Museum is worth the trip as well as checking out the books chosen for display. In addition, Denmark has a Historical Society which provides information on their part in the Underground Railroad.

The display for March will cover the history of the library.

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

