

MARION HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM

News from the Marion Historical Society

April 2020



A News Update for Members and Friends of the Marion Historical Society,

I don't know when we'll be back together, but I wanted to let you know we're still here working to make Marion history and culture accessible for our members and fellow citizens even in the midst of a pandemic. The corona virus forced us to postpone the opening of our 19th annual *Art by Your Friends & Neighbors* show, but I'm pleased to announce a new on-line virtual art show designed by Jack & Doreen Zumwalt. You can even vote for your favorite piece of Art! It's the next best thing to seeing it in person. . . which I hope will be soon. For details see the story on page 2.

The Director continues to plan our next history exhibit, *Trails & Destinations*. We'll announce a schedule when things get a little clearer. Meanwhile watch for her history mini-lessons on Facebook and in the *Marion Times*. There's a preview on page 3.

We deeply regretted having to cancel our pancake breakfast fund-raiser this year, but the new CARES Act offers some important new opportunities for donating, even for people who thought they couldn't itemize any more. Think about us at tax time. See the piece on page 4. and talk to your financial advisor.

We're grateful to the *City of Marion Hotel/Motel Fund*, *Hill's Bank* and the *McIntyre Foundation* for their continuing support, and to you for your membership and support. It is more important than ever.

Thank you.

Vic Klopfenstein, President, *Marion Historical Society*

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 447-6376

E-mail to: marionheritage@marionhistoricalsociety.org

See our website: <http://www.marionheritagecenter>

www.facebook.com/MarionHeritageCenter

Mailing address: P.O. Box 753, Marion, IA 52302-0753

If your mail was returned please call us.

Marion Historical Society, Inc.

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ART SHOW GOES *ON LINE!*

Several weeks ago, 60 local artists brought their creative works to the Heritage Center in preparation for the opening of our 19th Annual *ART by Your Friends and Neighbors* show. Only one thing went wrong: The COVID-19 pandemic caused the doors to remain closed.

Today, those paintings, drawings, photographs and three dimensional works of art, including glass, ceramics and wood carvings, wait silently in the dark gallery waiting for an opening which may never happen. What a shame for those artists and the hundreds of people who look forward to this each year.

No show would also be a disappointment for its sponsor, Hills Bank and Trust Company, which provides \$75 in cash awards to each of the three top favorites chosen by the visitors each year.



Where there's a WILL there's a WAY! Thanks to the expertise and work of Jack and Doreen Zumwalt at ZUM Creative, you can visit the 2020 Friends and Neighbors Art Show by going to the link below. Don't forget to vote for your favorite!

marionheritagecenter.org/artshow2020

ART

BY YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

Supported in part by
City of Marion
Hotel/Motel Program

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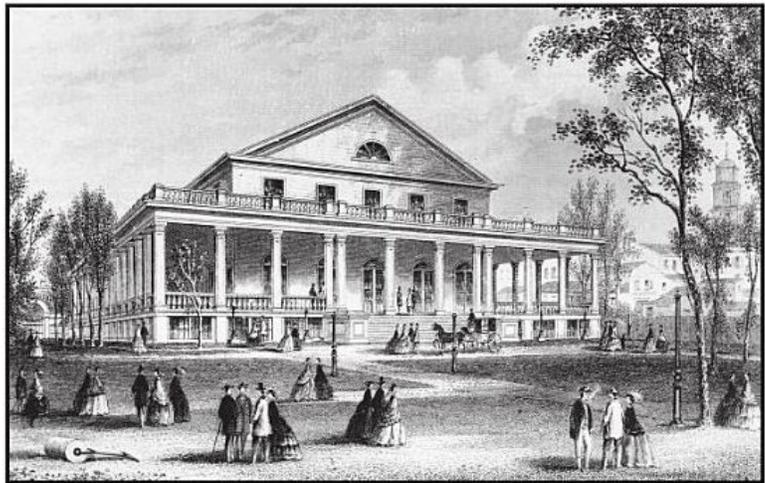
HILLS BANK

Leisure and Vacations in 19th Century Marion

Trails & Destinations will be an exhibit about leisure, the kind taken with family and friends away from home and town. Vacations were inconceivable to the average middle class person in the 19th century. "Vacation" meant time off from *school* not work. Only the wealthiest people could afford to take time away from business for traveling and relaxation. Idleness was a sin churches warned us, the "*Devil's Playground*." It wasn't until WWII that the average worker came to expect two weeks of paid time-off for a summer vacation. We're going to show you how we got there and took the *Devil* out of *Play*.

What's historic about vacations? A lot. Idleness was a sin in Puritan America, so we had to *sneak* up on leisure. First, by linking it to religious practices with church camp meetings, and physical health and well-being with excursions, and then with education in Chautauquas. We gradually got used to the vacation idea, though sociologists say even today many Americans remain conflicted about taking time off. New vacation industries and institutions developed over time hand-in-hand with the new modes of transportation including resorts, motels and State parks like *Palisades-Kepler*; travel agencies, and in publishing, travel guides; also camping, recreational fishing and bicycle trails. And we experienced all of it here.

Early in the 19th century when wealthy Americans adopted the European custom of taking extended fashionable tours to health spas to enjoy the fresh air and medicinal springs. The owners learned that catering to the healthy guests who accompanied the invalids was highly profitable, and they introduced bowling, gambling, billiards and other popular amusements. Soon healthy guests outnumbered the sick 40:1.



After the Civil War, a Marion paint shop-owner and decorator named Samuel P. Kennedy decided to cash-in on the health spa craze by opening one north of town on the banks of Indian Creek. He approached Sam Granger with a proposal to buy a 2-acre slice of the Granger properties north of the Central City Road (Indian Creek Road today). The area was well known locally as Sulphur Springs, and acclaimed for its highly mineralized spring water. It had long been used as a tonic to treat nearly every ailment. Kennedy planned to build a health spa there that would rival New York's exclusive Saratoga Springs.

R. D. Stephens, President of the *First National Bank*, rejected the idea outright when he heard of it. Was Kennedy seeking a loan, an investment partner or merely a public endorsement? We don't know, but Stephens' instincts were probably right. "Health" spas like Saratoga Springs were becoming notorious and the wealthy, largely female clients were mostly dedicated to changing their clothes 10X a day and being seen promenading on the lawns. The women were also breaking all of the conventional boundaries between the sexes by indulging in sports, drinking, gambling, dancing and even promiscuous (mixed) swimming. Could Marion's Sulphur Springs compete with Saratoga? Those kinds of activities might be fine for Cedar Rapids, but Marion was a church-going community. Did we want that kind of culture here? The Kennedy family didn't give up, and Samuel's children revisited his spa dreams often in subsequent years as the leisure/vacation industry evolved, eventually to accommodate even the working class. It's ironic that the Kennedy/Granger Sulfur Springs neighborhood saw it all--from watering hole to health Mecca, camp ground to fair ground, horse track to country club.



The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), which was signed into law last month, provides taxpayers a significant *incentive* for charitable giving and a great opportunity for the Marion Historical Society.

For 2020, the Act allows taxpayers to take a charitable deduction of up to \$300 – EVEN THOUGH THE TAXPAYER DOES NOT ITEMIZE! As you probably know, we are such a qualifying (501(c)(3) Charitable Organization.

MOREOVER...while the Act waives the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) obligation for 2020, IRA owners who have attained the age of 70 ½ may still make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from their IRA without incurring an income tax, unlike regular withdrawals. To qualify, the transfer must be made directly from the IRA custodian to the charity by December 31, 2020. We recommend that you consult your tax or legal advisor to fully understand these options.

FINALLY...for those receiving a “stimulus” check of up to \$1200 without a great need for it..... This might be the perfect time to consider a tax-deductible gift of some portion of it to the Marion Historical Society Endowment Fund. Contact Mark Ahlers at Hills Bank in Marion for details – (319) 447-8425.