

WEST DES MOINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



**WEST DES MOINES
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Preserving the past for the future.



SPRING ISSUE

MARCH 2014

President's Comments

Dear Friends,

Simply put, it's been a brutally cold winter. Last week, my heating system decided to call it quits after 24 years. This week it was the plumbing after a minus 8 record cold night. Your West Des Moines Historical Society, however, continues to make steady progress despite repeated visits from the Polar Vortex. Let me outline the principal areas of forward movement over the past 6 months.

Membership

After catching an earlier error, our membership numbers now total 130 through the end of February. While we added substantial numbers after our fall campaign kickoff, we need to continue to expand our base of support. Please help us get to 250 by year end by asking friends, family or your company to join as members or major supporters, or by giving our office a call and making a referral. We will gladly add interested parties to our newsletter and event mailings. Membership and other Society information is available through the office or by visiting our website.

Capital Campaign

We kicked off our \$200,000 capital campaign, which is principally focused on addressing more than a decade of deferred maintenance at Polk County's oldest home, the Jordan House. The original portion of the home dates back to the 1850s. With the generous support of Bravo Greater Des Moines, the City of West Des Moines, and **Prairie Meadows' Community Betterment program**, I am happy to report we have raised \$118,000 to date. With your help, we believe we can reach our goal before year end. Work is expected to begin this summer and stretch over two to three seasons with a desire to engage local vendors in this legacy community project. Specialty woodworking may enlist the support of Iowa Prison Industries, which manufactures an array of wood products from student furniture for the Regent's universities to specialty pieces for the Governor's office.

Operating Budget

The Society's operating budget requires a combination of support from grant funders, members, corporations, foundations, and other major donors. The \$1/head we charge for students covers less than 1% of our operating budget. If we are going to be finally sustainable as an organization -- operating two historic museums for the benefit of area school children at virtually no cost -- we need more help. At present, we are making good progress toward funding a core annual operating budget of \$125,000 but we need an additional \$50,000 of an-

nual support to close the gap. If you are an individual, please consider joining as a member. If you represent a corporation or foundation, we would be delighted to have you pledge over a one, two, or three year period. Multi-year pledges help provide stability to our funding base.

Upcoming Special Events

Please visit our website, WDMHistoricalSociety.org, for the latest on upcoming events. We are expanding the ways our supporters can experience the beauty and ambiance of historic Bennett School and Jordan House. In addition, we are experimenting with the use of Jordan House by breakfast clubs and other small groups who wish to learn about and experience the hospitality of Uncle Jimmy's house. For more information, contact the office.

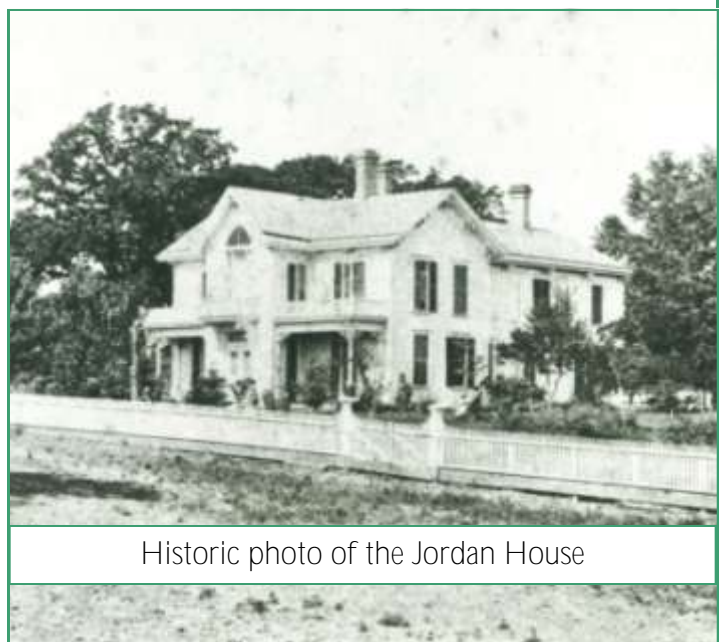
Open Hours

The Jordan House is open each first Sunday of the month at 1 pm and 2 pm for 45-minute guided tours. It is also open Fridays at 11 am and 4 pm for guided tours. Additional tours may be arranged by calling the office.

Thank you again for supporting the West Des Moines Historical Society. We aim to bring you a rich menu of local arts and culture while preserving and sharing two important legacies for future generations. If you have any suggestions for us, please don't hesitate to contact the office or myself. You can reach me at john@tblventures.com. Happy trails!

Sincerely yours,

John Norwood
Chair, Board of Directors



Historic photo of the Jordan House

2013 Visitor Numbers

by Katie Getting, WDMHS Project Manager



Des Moines Adventist School students on a tour.



The West Des Moines Historical Society hosted over 3,200 visitors in 2013 at the Historic Jordan House and Bennett School! The 2013 season also saw an increase in the number of events held by the Society, as well as an increase in the number of open house hours at the Historic Jordan House.

Over 1,250 school children from all over the metro area visited the Jordan House and were able to learn about the Underground Railroad along with all the important accomplishments James C. Jordan had during his lifetime. A number of student groups also did projects on James Jordan for various classes and clubs. The Valley High School Hyperstream Club created a video of the Jordan House that can now be viewed on our website. Additionally, students from Central Academy created projects focused on James Jordan for History Day. This year's History Day theme was "Rights and Responsibilities," and they felt that James fit that description and should be the highlight of their projects.

The Bennett School played host to the Jordan Creek Elementary School Spelling Bee in November, which brought in over 700 students and 50 adults. The Jordan House hosted various children's groups including Minorities on the Move, Boy Scouts, exchange students from around the world and area homeschooled groups. We are excited about all the different groups we had the opportunity to reach this past year and to teach about an important period in Iowa history.

In addition to the large number of student visitors, there were 1,943 visitors from the general public. We host visitors not only from around the Midwest but from around the world! Last year, among other countries, we had visitors from Germany and China. The story of the Underground Railroad to freedom is a powerful one. Visitors come to see the rifle abolitionist John Brown gave to Mr. Jordan on his last journey through Iowa, leading slaves on their way to freedom. Six months later, Brown would be hung subsequent to his famous raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry and capture by Col. Robert E. Lee -- a flash point in the lead up to the Civil War.

To tour the Jordan House, you may visit during our open house hours on the first Sunday of each month at 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm, or every Friday at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm--just show up a few minutes before the scheduled time! You may also schedule private tours at the Jordan House or Bennett School. Please visit our website for more information.

Volunteers Needed

As the West Des Moines Historical Society has started to bring in additional visitors and school groups, our need for volunteer tour guides has grown. These volunteers would be asked to help lead group tours on an as-needed basis. If you or someone you know would be interested in helping us to meet this need, please email us at wdmhs@valleyjunction.com.



Des Moines Adventist School students in the parlor.

2014 Major Supporters & Corporate Partners

Legacy - \$10,000+
Anonymous Donor



Freedom Seeker - \$5,000-\$7,499



Statesman - \$2,500-\$4,999



Trailblazer - \$500-\$999



Additional Corporate Partners & In-Kind Support



PETERSON PEST & TERMITE CONTROL



2014 Members

Thank you to our generous donors! To become a member, or to renew your membership, please complete the remittance envelope enclosed with your newsletter. If you have questions, please call us at 515-277-6652.

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Vicki Baker	<u>PATRON - \$500-\$999</u> Don & Ann Beeson	Robert & Patricia Jester
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Linda Corell	<u>SENIOR-STUDENT - \$10-\$24</u> Robert Parks Judi Prohaska	Judy Winkelpleck

*Represents donors who gave between March 1, 2013 - February 28, 2014

West Des Moines Historical Society Events

2014 Annual Meeting

Join us for our Annual Meeting to review 2013 and discuss the future of our fine organization!

Thursday, April 24th
6:30pm
Bennett School
4001 Fuller Road

We are in full planning mode for 2014 events! Please check our website WDMHistoricalSociety.org to find more information about our upcoming events:

- An evening concert
- Shakespeare on Our Lawn
- A **summer children's concert** at Bennett School
- Evening storytelling
- Fall theatrical event



Performance by Iowa Shakespeare Experience.

West Des Moines Historical Society Tours

Jordan House Tour Times

Every Friday: 11:00 am & 4:00 pm

First Sunday of each month: 1:00 pm & 2:00 pm

Private tours, breakfast groups and evening group receptions may also be scheduled for groups of eight or more by calling 515-277-6652.

Jordan House Tour Prices

Every Friday and First Sunday tours

Adults 13+: \$5.00

Children 6 - 12: \$3.00

Children 0 - 5: FREE

Private Tours: \$5 per person (minimum of \$40)

Bennett School Tour Times & Prices

Private tours may be scheduled by calling 515-277-6652

Private Tours : \$5 per person
(minimum of \$40)

New Experimental Use Policy

Breakfast Groups (Bring your own food & drink):

\$100 + \$5 per person (up to 20)

Evening Group Tour & Reception (option to bring wine & cheese): \$100 + \$5 per person (up to 35)

*Subject to availability and WDMHS discretion.



Students in the train room at Jordan House.



137 5th Street
West Des Moines • 515.222.3642



**Farmers Market
&
Music in the Junction**
Thursdays
May 1 – October 2
excluding July 3

Historic Valley Junction
West Des Moines



2012 Winner

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2014

Event SCHEDULE

April

- Earth Day in the Junction Sunday 6
- Spring Gallery Night Friday 11

May

- Cinco de Mayo Saturday 3
- Spring Art Market Sunday 18
- Smokin' in the Junction Saturday 24
- Smokin' in the Junction Sunday 25

June

- Mustang Car Show Sunday 1
- Summer Antique Jamboree Sunday 8

July

- July 3rd Street Dance Thursday 3

August

- Sizzling Sidewalk Sale Friday 22
- Sizzling Sidewalk Sale Saturday 23
- Sizzling Sidewalk Sale Sunday 24

September

- Fall Antique Jamboree Sunday 7
- Fall Art & Upcycle Market Sunday 14
- HGF Car Show Sunday 21

October

- Fall Gallery Night Friday 10
- Pumpkin Walk Sunday 26
- Chillin' in the Junction Sunday 26

November

- Jingle in the Junction Thursday 20
- Small Business Saturday Saturday 29

December

- Jingle in the Junction Thursday 4
- Jingle in the Junction Thursday 11



West Des Moines Historical Society
PO Box 65563
West Des Moines, IA 50265

The mission of the Society is to educate, to preserve, and to promote the heritage and history of West Des Moines.

www.wdmhistoricalsociety.org | 515.277.6652

Endow Iowa Tax Credits

Did you know Iowa taxpayers can receive a 25% Iowa tax credit in addition to the normal federal tax deduction for qualifying charitable contributions? It's true.

The Society, a 501c3 charitable organization, is partnering with the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation to set up a long-term endowment fund for this very purpose. Over time, once this endowment has grown, annual distributions will provide continuing, long-term financial support to the Society to maintain facilities and operations.

All Iowa individual and corporate Taxpayers are eligible to participate. Donations may include gifts of cash, stock, land, grain, gold bullion or other assets of substantial value. Bequests can also be structured to provide a future tax benefited gift to the Society. All inquiries are confidential and donor anonymity will be protected upon request.

For more information, please contact the office or Wade A. Den Hartog at the Community Foundation at 515.883.2626.



ENDOW IOWA

