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Keokuk High School’s Senior Visual Artists and Creative Writers

Keokuk High School is blessed with a wonderful art program and instructor. This year several students won prizes for their work and received recognition at the Keokuk Fine Arts Council show in which students’ work was displayed in the Keokuk Public Library Round Room. Here are a few biographical details of some of our senior art students:

Emily Seaver creates large-scale acrylic paintings. She likes to get her ideas from other artists, but she also likes to put her own twist on them. Painting helps Emily to destress because it’s the one thing she can control. She said, “Painting is a nice relief from problems.”



Kaylee Adams

Kaylee Adams, a senior at KHS, enjoys Advanced Art classes. “It gives me a calm part of my busy day. It’s a chance to take a breather from writing papers, doing homework and applying for scholarships.” She paints in oils from her personal photos and experiences.

Jill Cannon has experimented with a lot of different media. Three years ago she started working with digital arts. She bought her own tablet and has learned a lot through online tutorials. She often loses track of time when she’s working on her art.

Justin Walte is a senior who likes photography. This year he won a Scholastic Art and Writing Award for a photo he took of his cat. “I enjoy photography. It’s a nice way to express myself and to vent and relax.” He spends a lot of time looking at professional photos like *National Geographic* which has given him a better understanding of the world around him.



Photo by Justin Walte

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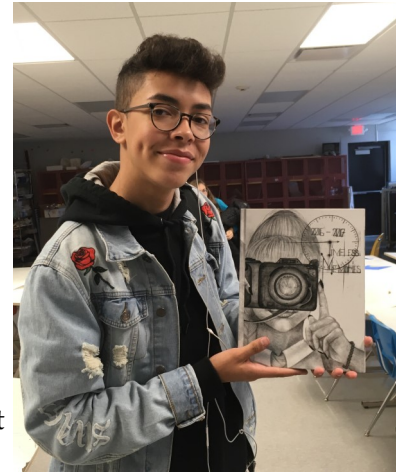
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Last summer, Tayden Seay received a scholarship from the Keokuk School Foundation to attend the Belin-Blank National Scholars Institute at University of Iowa. He will be returning to Iowa in the fall since he has been accepted into the UI Art program.

Lucas Masterson, Jared Knox and Eli Johnson have been active participants in the new Videography class. They have done a lot of work for the school district and other groups recording meetings and making promotional videos.

Students have also volunteered their services in the community in other ways. Yancey Quesenberry did the graphic design for pamphlets for some local organizations. Hayley Householder helped at "Fright Night" at the park last October painting the faces of little kids.

The enrollment in art classes is high, but could be even higher if the program were allowed to grow. There has been talk of adding more design and video classes that could include web design and broadcasting while maintaining the studio classes. This forward-thinking, student-initiated plan, called "Full Steam," would be beneficial to students, staff and the community. It would be like no other high school art program in the area if this dream of our students comes to fruition.



Tayden Seay



Nolen Logsdon

Restart

By Emma Evans, Keokuk High School Student

Whoa.

I peer down to my toes on the edge of the tallest building I could reach in twenty minutes. It wasn't the Empire State, but still one of New York's finest. If I was planning on living tomorrow then I would schedule a trip there.

Well, it's almost time.

I grab my plate of chocolate cake and sit down on the edge of the rooftop. I'm allergic to chocolate, but it tastes amazing and I won't have to deal with the consequences. I eat slowly, enjoying every bite while sipping my milk. I eat and think about all my sorrowful mistakes. The love of my life, killed in a car accident, my lost job, my eviction, and this stolen cake because I can't afford a whopping four-dollars-and-fifty-four cents... Then I shovel the air onto my fork where my cake was supposed to be.

Let's go.

I crawl up on top of the ledge and look around. *I have to go, and I have to go now.* I turn around so my back is to the edge. I know if I were to belly flop, I would suffocate before I hit the ground. Plus, I don't want to see the ground getting closer.

A second has passed. I'm ready to rid the pain. I lift my head, close my eyes, and leap into the nothingness behind me.

Oh. My. Gosh.

I am flying. Soaring. This feels amazing, but the pain isn't gone, it's only slightly muted. I thought the comfort of it all being over would help. Good thing it was only a two-second fall.

Darkness descends.

Where am I?

It's so dark. And crowded. *Really* crowded. It's squishy. What's that screaming? I thought heaven was all white and frilly and sweet. Even if I didn't go to heaven, I didn't imagine death like this.

A woman is screaming in agony. It's muted, as if there was a thick wall between us. I yearn to go help her. Why? I don't think I know her...

But I do. I love her. I've never said a single word to her, but she's incredible. We've bonded in a very special way. But I don't know how.



Photo by Justin Walte

Ugh. That light is blinding.

It looks like when you zip open a purse, but it's different. It's like I'm inside the purse. Are those hands? Massive hands are reaching down towards me. They have blue plastic gloves on them. They're huge. I squirm and thrash as they wrap around me with ease. He's pulling me out of the strange dark purse. I'm terrified, but it feels good to have some room to move again. Once I'm out, it's hard to breathe.

"It's a girl!" A booming voice calls.

The big hands smack me on my back, and I gulp in a huge breath. With that breath, I start screaming. I feel as the hands pass me around, but I can't open my eyes. Then I feel another set of hands wiping me off with a soft towel. I'm so cold. I feel so exposed. At least the woman isn't screaming any more, and that puts me at ease that her pain is gone.

Wait. Pain? I was so upset before. So depressed, so broken that I committed suicide? Now all that pain is fading away? The memories are there, just not hurting me. Is this what heaven actually is?

That's when I had my epiphany.

Oh. Oh!

Was I... Reincarnated? Was the strange purse a... womb? Those hands are so huge because I'm the one that's so small! I was reincarnated as a baby!

Through all of this realization, only about three seconds have passed, and I was still being wiped off with the soft towel. I stop crying, knowing I'm not in any danger. They are making all sorts of noise testing me, but I ignore it.

The woman is my mother. I want to see her.

Then I notice that I'm being carried. Hopefully to her. Now I'm in her arms. She's crying, but not in a sad way. I love her so much. I had a mom before, but she died when I was fourteen. I decide to open my eyes.

I see her. She's beautiful. Her skin is so soft. So warm. I love her.

In this moment I can tell that it will all be okay. What happened in the past is behind me. This is my clean slate. I am happy. This is everything I was searching for.



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The Night Before Christmas but Every Stanza has a New Yorker Stereotype or Two

By Carson Sargent, Keokuk High School Student

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all over New York,
Italian gangsters were eating their pasta with forks.
One went outside, but he had no cab fare,
So he went for a stroll, yelling "I'm walkin' here!"

The New York children were sleeping, hotdogs in their
hands,
They were dreaming of getting more 'dogs from the stands.
Their parents were working late, driving their taxis,
Assorted drunk winos passing out in the backseat.

From above the apartment, there came quite a noise,
Mafia Claus had appeared with some toys.
He had some planned robberies, I won't try to hide it--
The toys were to convince all the kids to quiet.

His gangsters were with him, they all had their Glocks,
While the kids were distracted, they whipped out their
socks--
They wanted presents too, even if they had to be taken,
But the kids wanted their toys, and some noise they were
makin'.

They snuck out in the night, their sacks filled with
silverware,
Hoping their getaway car soon would be there.
All of the sudden, NYPD appeared,
But sadly, the cops weren't who the mobsters feared.

A firefight started, bullets flew through the night,
Fuzz versus Mafia, wrong versus right.
The shooting was loud, the shooters were quick,
Suddenly all the guns locked up with a click.

The safety was on, and that couldn't be fixed.
The gunfight had been stopped by the real Saint Nick.
He came down in his sleigh, which was yellow like a cab,
He took off his shirt and let loose all his flab.

He was angry, which everyone there could for sure see,
"If you like fighting," he yelled, "come and fight me!"
Nobody stepped up, for the challenge was daunting.
Plus, Santa's huge belly was certainly haunting.

He took everyone's weapons, and ascended to the sky.
"Wow," cried the kids, "reindeer really can fly!"
The gangsters were arrested, so now all was well.
But everyone was wondering: What IS that smell?

It was awful, despicable, horrible, rank,
Santa had eaten a chili dog, and man, his burps stank.
They had left a green cloud floating up in the air,
And everyone hoped the Febreze guy soon would be there.

Santa just chuckled, from miles afar.
He was happy that his rancid burps were on par.
He loved to pull pranks like that whenever he fought.
And while in New York, well, that was a lot.

He went on to get cookies, but found hotdogs instead,
And all the kids sleeping in their taxicab beds.
They were dreaming of Broadway, of big stores and
parades,
Of traffic jams, honking, and mob bosses' blades.

He left them their presents, tickets for the Mets,
And for their parents, packs of cigarettes,
For the girls, a Barbie "I can be a Rockette,"
For the guys playing at jazz clubs, a brand new drum set.

He left them their presents, then walked out the door,
Because New York apartments don't have chimneys
anymore.
He got back in his sleigh, and flew off with a zoom,
And disappeared into the sky with one last "bada bing,
bada boom."

This poem won first place for the Iowa Reading Council creative writing contest.

The Library

By Gabriel Jones, Keokuk High School Student

There's nothing more satisfactory than the crisp sound of opening a new magazine and the smell of its paper. It is akin to opening the pearly bright gates of Heaven, and letting God's righteous light wash over you, radiating calm warmth. The library is a sanctuary of pleasing stimuli and my favorite place. It's ironic that I can't read, but when the gazes of other library patrons wandered to my person, I could pretend with the best of them. The heavy stillness of the air created an atmosphere of order, and the deafening silence was music upon my ears. I couldn't even identify what magazine I was "reading," but it did not matter. I crave the euphoria of senses rather than the mediocre contents of a women's magazine. Every turn of the page blew wafts of new magazine smell into my nostrils. No amount of sex or drugs could compare.

I continued to aimlessly leaf through the magazine with my eyes closed, even at the risk of looking aloof. Suddenly, my enjoyment was ruined by an invading smell of a terrible women's perfume. I must've accidentally gone over a test sample. The outright perverting smell caused me to make an audible yelp, attracting the attention of everyone in the humongous room and breaking the silence. Echoes bounced back and forth throughout the complex until once again the library was silent. A distant snuffle disturbed the heavy stillness of the air. I craned my head towards the abrupt sound, taking my face out of the pages. Much to my dismay, a group of gorgeous girls giggled at my expense. Their perfect teeth bared like a cat after prey. Their shiny blonde hair moved with every stifled chuckle. Their jiggly bodies bobbed up and down, taunting me. My face grew hot and red. Abashed, I ran out of the library while holding back tears. My sanctuary had been conquered by intellects, scholars and beautiful women. This revelation coupled with the fact that I had left my new magazine inside let loose a torrent of tears. My face flooded with salty secretions as I broke down on my hands and knees in front of my ruined castle.



*Armor and weapons constructed
by Hunter Starnes*

This story won first place for the Iowa Reading Council for the eleventh grade.

The Breeze

By Philip Dunlap, Keokuk High School Student

Wind blows through the trees
Like a white angel's soft breath
Faintly heard throughout



Photo by Olivia Smith




Photo by Justin Walte



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Floating Oddities

By Dean Klinkenberg

In May 1925, 45-year-old Sidney Helms traveled from Keokuk, Iowa, to St. Louis on a 6-foot-long Red Cross Kapoc Mattress. Yes; a mattress. He put the mattress on an 8-board frame, attached an outboard motor to the back, and set a box on top of the frame that served as his pilot's chair. At seven o'clock in the morning of May 20, he boarded the craft, sat on his box, and pushed off from Keokuk, pointing the mattress toward St. Louis.



He was quite a sight, dressed in a dark suit coat and white shirt with a bow tie while floating on a mattress. It's no wonder he became an international sensation. Newspapers and news reels told his story to folks across the U.S. and Europe.

Helms owned a furniture store in Carlisle, Iowa. The Red Cross mattress company financed the trip to showcase their product, the latest in mattress technology! Stuffed with kapok, a fluffy, waterproof fiber harvested from the seeds of the Ceiba Pentandra tree, the company bragged that the mattress was lightweight and not Helms pattered on his mattress for four days, vermin-free, to cover the two hundred two river miles.

When he reached St. Louis, several hundred curious people welcomed him at the riverfront. He treated them to a quick demonstration of his mattress boat, then the crowd watched as young women in bathing suits paraded around on a similarly adapted mattress. Only moisture resistant but also disfavored by moths and bed vermin.

HERE'S A THRILL FOR YOU! DON'T MISS IT Down the Mississippi River on a Mattress

Sidney Helms, who is coming down the Mississippi River from Keokuk to St. Louis on a Red Cross Kapoc Mattress, will arrive Saturday, May 23d, just below the Eads Bridge. Following Mr. Helms' landing, a special water circus with bathing beauties will be held.

Be sure to see the finish of this most novel and hazardous trip. The entertainment will be instructive as well as amusing.

The Red Cross Mattresses used by Mr. Helms are similar in all respects to those sold by all good furniture dealers in St. Louis. They are the most sanitary Mattresses on the market and come packed in individual cartons. The Kapoc with which Red Cross Mattresses are filled is a floss from the South Sea Islands. It is surprisingly light in weight, will not absorb moisture, and positively prevents invasion by moths and bed vermin.

Be sure to inspect the Mattresses used by Mr. Helms on his river trip. Remember the date, place and time. Saturday afternoon at 3:30 just below the Eads Bridge.

After the trip, Helms returned to Carlisle, Iowa, to his store, secure in the knowledge that he was the world's first—and probably only—successful mattress boat pilot.

Helms's mattress boat was surely unique, but it's not the only unusual boat to hit the river from Keokuk. Seems someone in the area needed an adventure a few years ago, so he converted an old milk truck into a boat and traveled down the Mississippi River past St. Louis. The trip was immortalized in a 1995 song by Keokuk native Brian Butler called *Bread Truck Comin' Round the Bend*.

"The boat you see before you, I built with my hands
An unusual combination, truck and a catamaran
Lying on her side in a field today
But in the Mississippi, she was a sight to see"
I've never seen a picture of that boat, and no one I've talked with remembers it, so maybe it's more urban legend than history. Either way, it's a great story.



Dean Klinkenberg (Dean@TravelPassages.com) is working on a history of the Mississippi River. You can sign up for updates about his work at www.MississippiValleyTraveler.com and support his writing at www.patreon.com/DeanKlinkenberg.



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Frank J Weess Family History

By Sandy Seabold & Alison Weess Laurent

Author's Note: When Tom and I came back home to Keokuk in 1976, we purchased a large home that had been built in 1880-81 by Frank J. Weess. We knew nothing about Frank or his family. In recent years we have met two of the builder's great-great granddaughters and they have shared family photographs and stories with us. With the help of a very fat abstract of the property and several historical write-ups about the Weess family, I have written this Keokuk family history in collaboration with Alison Weess Laurent.

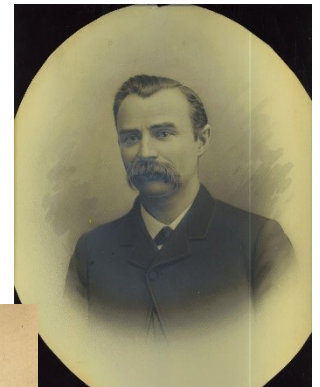
--Sandy Seabold

John Christian Weess and his wife Margaret (Wehrle), along with their children, arrived in Keokuk on May 15, 1849. John was a native of Germany. As a young man he moved to Holland. There he met and married Margaret, and they started a family. John continued his occupation of butcher when arriving in Keokuk and had a very successful business. A Keokuk city directory shows his shop located at 8th and Main Streets. John passed away in Keokuk in 1883 having worked up until two years before he died.

The Weess' oldest son, Frank J. Weess, was nine years old when the family arrived in Keokuk. According to the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Lee County, Iowa*, published in 1887. Frank was a "remarkable example of energy and industry" even in his boyhood days. As an adult he followed his father's footsteps and opened a butcher shop at the northwest corner of 4th and Main Streets. In addition to the butcher shop, Frank was the owner of three farms in Iowa, several businesses on Main Street and many pieces of property throughout the city. He was also a stock holder in the Central Stove Works, the Keokuk Commercial Bank, the Keokuk Water Works and the Keokuk Building Association. The home he built at the corner of Third & Morgan Streets (now 226 Morgan) was described as the finest in the city.

Frank J. Weess married Miss Louisa Lorentzen, a native of Germany, on February 14, 1861. Frank J. was a Republican in politics and the family attended the United Presbyterian Church where Frank was a trustee. The couple had seven children, five of whom were living in 1887: daughters Emma (later Flowers), Mary (later Collier), and Frances (later Hanna) who went by the name Frankie and sons John C. and Arnot S.

According to his 1887 biographical portrait, Frank J. Weess "...was noted all over the State for his excessive industry, his honesty, and his upright dealings with his fellow- men. He has greatly aided in establishing and building up the industrial interests of the Gate City, and is universally respected for his upright moral character, true charity and kindness of heart. He has made for himself a position in this community as a man whose place it will be exceedingly difficult to fill when he shall have been gathered to his fathers, and his character will be held up as an example to future generations long after even his children shall have ceased the battle of life.



Frank J Weess



Louisa Weess



John Weess,
son of Frank



Mary Weess Collier

This should be his abundant reward for the labors of a long and useful lifetime, during which he has shrunk from no duty and evaded no responsibility as a citizen, husband, father and friend." Frank J. passed away in Keokuk in 1911 and his wife Louisa followed him in 1912.



*Junior Weess WWI
Anschutz Photo*

Daughter Mary Weess Collier inherited the house on Morgan Street when her mother died. She lived in the house for many years with her husband George and then moved to the Hotel Iowa around 1930. For 16 years the house was vacant but was well maintained both inside and out. Mary left the house to her brother Arnot when she died in 1946. In 1950 Arnot took his own life being despondent after his wife, Caroline's, death a few months earlier.



*Jack Weess &
his dad's Great Dane*

Frank's son, John C. Weess, married Nettie Strickler and they had two sons, John (Jack) and Frank Junior, both born and raised in Keokuk. In middle age, John C. became handicapped to such an extent that he was no longer able to work in the insurance industry, which had been his lifelong career. He spent his later years at St. Joseph Hospital of Keokuk where he passed away in 1922. Both of his sons served in the military in World War I. His son Frank Junior was very successful in his business pursuits and spent most of his career as a part of the Tide Water Associated Oil Company in Boston, Massachusetts.



*John (Jack) &
Frank Junior*



*Emma Flowers,
daughter of Frank J*

Frank Weess, Junior, (who was always called Junior) married Iola Cruett and had a son, Alan C. Weess. Alan married Nancy Dorman and had a daughter, Alison, and two sons, Jeffrey and Steven. Alan passed away in 2004. Tom and I had the pleasure of meeting Alan's daughter, Alison Weess Laurent, and her husband Daniel a few years ago when they came to visit and tour the house. Alison shared many family pictures and exterior pictures of the house with us. Frank Junior later married Martha Greene and had two daughters, Anne and Jane. Anne C. Weess married Kent Williams and had one daughter, Janet. Anne passed away in 2016. This year we met Anne's daughter Janet Williams Cannon, who also came for a visit and a house tour and brought us several family photos. The photographs in this article are from either Alison or Janet. When Frank Junior retired he left Hanover, Massachusetts and moved to Clearwater, Florida, and passed away there in 1963.



The original members of the Weess family are buried in a large plot at Oakland Cemetery in Keokuk.



*Alison Weess Laurent,
great great granddaughter
of Frank J.*



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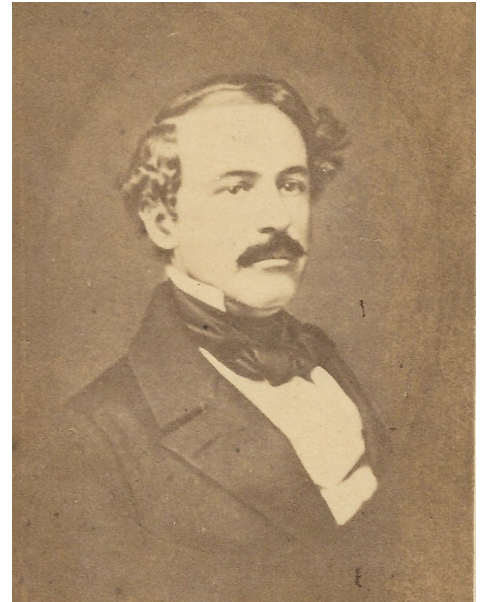
***Keokuk, Carthage, Kahoka
Fort Madison & Muscatine***

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A Keokuk Collaboration of National Significance: Lee and Meigs

By Tom Gardner

In the summer of 1837 two young army officers made their way from Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia to New York City to Pittsburgh to Louisville and then to Saint Louis where they waited for their equipment (mainly two “machine boats” for raising stone and the steamboat for towing them) to catch up with them before moving on to an area near the lower end of what were called the Des Moines Rapids, having been given this name because they were encountered just after the Des Moines River entered the Mississippi River from the west. This was a location the Native Americans called “Puckeshetuck” and that the few European-American settlers living on the west bank of the Mississippi River had much more recently decided to call Keokuk, after the name of a tribal leader who had refused to go along with Black Hawk, the principal chief of those Native Americans who had, just a few years earlier, crossed the Mississippi to attempt to reclaim tribal lands in Illinois that had been taken over by European Americans.



Robert E. Lee



Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs

The two young Army officers were both graduates of West Point, at this time the only engineering college in the United States, and they had ventured out to where the American frontier began to work out solutions to what were then the two greatest problems impeding the development of commerce on the Mississippi River: the hazards to navigation represented by rapids in the upper river and the silting up of the harbor at Saint Louis. The senior of these two officers was a thirty-year-old first lieutenant named Robert E. Lee. He was, by all accounts, a fine engineer, a brilliant strategist and an exceptional leader of men. He was to prove this on numerous occasions, both in the Mexican-American War and in the Civil War, when he became the preeminent general of the Confederacy.

Lee was accompanied on this expedition by Montgomery C. Meigs, who just a year earlier had graduated from West Point and was now a brevet second lieutenant, the brevet rank resulting from the fact that the United States Army was strictly limited then in the number of officers filling each rank. Meigs was undoubtedly Lee’s equal as an engineer and project manager, though he may have lacked Lee’s gift for leading men in battle.

The 2018 Power City Alley Cat Bike Rally

By Chuck Pietscher

On May 12, bicycle riders will gather at 511 Blondeau Street in Keokuk to test their speed and knowledge of local geography as they prepare for the start of the 2018 Alley Cat Bicycle Rally. But where does the race go? Riders will not find out until right before the competition begins.

An alley cat bicycle rally is a form of unsanctioned street racing on bicycles. Created decades ago by bike messengers, alley cats mimic the route a bike messenger might face in a typical delivery day.

Alley Cats send riders around a city to a series of checkpoints. Traffic, stoplights, potholes, pedestrians, and car exhaust are all part of the experience. Winners combine navigation skills with raw speed to complete courses that might crisscross a community for miles.

A list of checkpoints, *i.e.*, a manifest, is given out just minutes before the race and there is no set route from checkpoint to checkpoint. Riders must decide what route will be most efficient and make them a winner. Part of the strategy is deciding whether to take off and figure out the route along the way or figure out your route first then take off. At some checkpoints the rider will merely have an attendant stamp their manifest. At others, the rider will be required to complete a task or answer a question before getting the stamp.

Hosted by Keokuk Cultural & Entertainment District and Main Street Keokuk, Inc., and sponsored by Bickel's Bike Shop, this year's Alley Cat Bicycle Rally is not just for speed demons or ultra-fit cyclists. Bicycle riders of all ages and fitness levels are welcome. The event includes three classes: Sport (over 20 miles), Leisure (under 10 miles), and a family class that is kid-friendly and has prizes along the way. Riders from 4 to 80 years old have ridden in previous years.

From high-end road bicycles to bikes with training wheels and streamers, this event has it all. For more information and to register, call (319)524-5056 or email director@mainstreetkeokuk.com



2018 Back Alley Band Fest

May 25th is the date for the 12th Annual Back Alley Band Fest in Keokuk’s Cultural and Entertainment District. This music festival is a true community event showcasing the local talent of the Tri-State area and is open and free to the public.

Carole and Chuck Betts are co-directing the event in 2018. Carole Betts says, “It is an eclectic evening of live music provided by a variety of bands performing in the yards, garages, porches and patios of residents in the area defined as the Cultural and Entertainment District of this historic river community. Attendees can stroll the historic streets and sample the sounds of up to a dozen different bands.”

Marked by free live entertainment (with free will donations the only payment method for the entertainers), music in the various performance sites ranges from big band to folk to heavy metal—a genre for every taste. Maps to the various performance sites assist attendees in planning their route for the evening. At central locations, food and other amenities will be available.

Betts says, “Past performances range from the big band sound of The Bullis-Rutter Big Band to the acoustic guitar of Jesse Mazzoccoli to the Hard Rock of 13 Stitches. We try to bring together a list of bands to attract people with many different musical tastes.”

A family-friendly event, The Back Alley Band Fest offers an evening of outdoor strolling, live music, and a summer kick-off opportunity to meet friends on the street. Admission to performances is free with attendees reminded that the only pay for the bands are the tips they receive from those who stop by performance sites.

“We have had support from some local sponsors such as The Bott-Milllar Foundation and Dubuque Bank and Trust, as well as the donation of time and energy from volunteers who see this event as a positive piece of community engagement,” Betts offered. “Anyone interested in helping with final preparations and help on the night of the event can contact me by email at bettsongrand@gmail.com. See you in the Alley.”



Rent the Depot!

The Keokuk Union Depot is available for community, group or family events.

Rents range from \$100 to \$200 per day. Call Carla Celia at 319-524-4887 for further details and available dates.

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The Keokuk Fine Arts Council's Annual High School Art Show

By Pru Backlin

In late February and early March the Keokuk Fine Arts Council held its annual High School Art Show in the Round Room Gallery of the Keokuk Public Library. Works in six categories were judged and ribbons awarded on Monday, March 5th, by the judge, Sylvia Soule, an art instructor at St. Vincent's and Media Specialist at Holy Trinity Schools. The winners who were named in six categories represent eight schools in the tri-state area.

The categories and winners in each category are as follows:

Oil Painting:

First Place: *Rooster*—Logan Gutting—Clark County R1

*Second Place: *The Loner*—Jill Brivick—Hamilton

*Second Place: *Succulent Garden*—Vanessa Worrell—Central Lee

Third Place: *European Vacation*—Shannon Hillyer—Clark County R1

Drawing:

First Place: *The Old Barn*—Caleb Ford—Fort Madison

Second Place: *Promises*—Katie Denning—Holy Trinity

Third Place: *Molly*—Jossie Riesberg—Central Lee

Pastels:

First Place: *Eye of the Hawk*—Lauren King—Fort Madison

Second Place: *Smile*—Claire Graham—Holy Trinity

Third Place: *Yellow*—LilliAnna Scott—Fort Madison



Rooster by Logan Gutting



The Old Barn by Caleb Ford

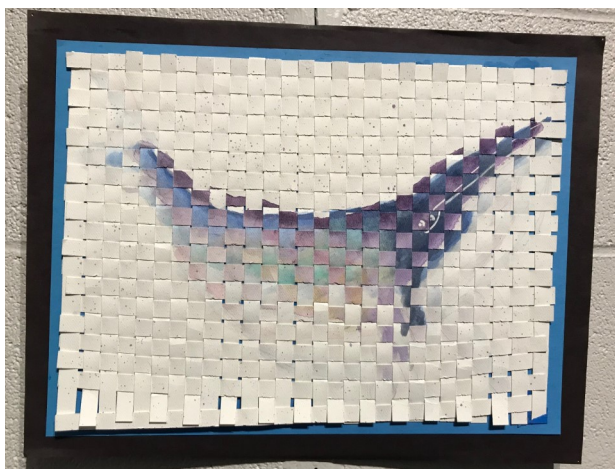


*Eye of the Hawk
by Lauren King*

Water Color: First Place: *Chicago*—Susannah Olson—Keokuk
Second Place: *Tootsie Pop*—Shayna Niggemeyer—Central Lee
Third Place: *Parrot*—Abi McNamara—Clark County R1

Mixed Media: First Place: *Dreaming Whale*—Dayeong You—Holy Trinity
Second Place: *Metallic Midnight*—Grace Leesen—Illini West
Third Place: *Pluck*—Cindy Riley—Winfield- Mount Union

Three Dimensional: *First Place: *Graceful Trio*—Olivia Smith—Keokuk
*First Place: *Geo Tree*—Sabastian Bright—Illini West
Second Place: *Mossy Oak*—Taylor Barnes—Fort Madison
*Third Place: *Pussy Cat*—Lexee Hartsock—Winfield-Mount Union
*Third Place: *Not Skyrim*—Alyssa Fincher—Fort Madison
Honorable Mention: *Eclipse Armour*—Hunter Starnes—Keokuk



Dreaming Whale by Dayeong You



Chicago by Susannah Olson

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Art instructors at the eight schools represented are, from Iowa: Martha Neff, Keokuk, Dana Sisk, Fort Madison, Jamer Jones, Central Lee, Steve Rung, Holy Trinity and Cindy Riley, Winfield-Mount Union. From Illinois: Linda Hardy, Hamilton, and Judy Stevenson, Illini West. And from Missouri: Kelly Nagel, Clark County R 1.

A reception and award ceremony for the artists was held on Sunday, March 25. Monetary prizes of \$75, \$50, and \$25 were awarded to the top three artists in each category. The prizes are due to the generosity of former Council board members Dr. Joseph Rapagnani and James Layfield.

**Two awards were given in several categories and award levels.*



Graceful Trio by Olivia Smith



Geo Tree by Sebastian Bright



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The House That Frank Built

By Sandy Seabold

According to the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Lee County, Iowa*, published in 1887, the Weess home at 222 Morgan in Keokuk was the finest in the city and was erected at a cost of \$28,000. The home, which was completed in 1881 was built by Keokuk businessman, Frank J. Weess.

A description of the house from the Keokuk *Daily Democrat* for August 1, 1887, expands on this praise:

“The house of Frank J. Weess at 222 Morgan Street is one of the most complete, convenient and beautiful in Iowa. It was built in 1880-81. Its main dimensions are 79 x 73 feet. It contains 17 large, airy rooms, arranged with a view to the greatest comfort and convenience. The foundations are built substantially of the most enduring stones, and it is one of the best substructures imaginable.*

“The house is of the finest quality brick, of ornamental construction, the plainness being relieved by imposing bays. The house is three stories in height. The interior is furnished throughout with hard wood in tasteful designs.

“There is a fine billiard room, stocked with all the materials for the indulgence in a game which is growing in popular favor as home amusement. There are wide corridors throughout the building, large reception and dining rooms, elegant parlors, library, living rooms and bed chambers.

“The noble dwelling cost \$24,000** and is as pleasant a habitation as the most fastidious and luxuriously inclined could desire. It is a credit to the city and its enterprising owner.”

The home also included a large carriage house on the alley which had several rooms for servants. The lot for the home is built up about four feet and is surrounded by a limestone wall and wrought iron fence.

Frank J. and his wife, Louisa, lived here with their children until their deaths. In 1910, both the Weess family and George & Mary Collier resided here. Mary was one of the Weess children. When George passed away in 1931, Mary moved to the Hotel Iowa. However, she had the house maintained for the sixteen years she was at the hotel. One Keokuk resident told me that as a child he and his friends would slip in a basement window and play in the fully furnished, unoccupied house.



He said they were always very careful not to disturb anything. Another man who was very familiar with the house told us that the billiard table had horses' heads that caught the balls and horses legs as the base of the table. He also described the impressive life-sized portraits of Frank and Louise and the grand piano that decorated the double living room on the first floor.

Originally, the dining room and kitchen were in the back of the house. The original kitchen's coal burning stove is still in place. It is a very elaborate New York Favorite wrought iron stove.



The other large room on the first floor held a fully stocked library which opened on to a large porch both in the front and the back of the house.

In the 1950's the property was sold and turned into six apartments. The carriage house was turned into a laundromat. I recall as a child in the 1950's coming to a beauty shop that was in the back part of the house.

The house changed hands a couple more times and in 1976 was purchased by my husband and me. Tom and I decided to retain one apartment in the back of the second story. We also opened an art gallery and frame shop, Art-

works, in half of the downstairs.

Although everyone seemed to think we were crazy to think we could have a successful business on a side street in Keokuk, Iowa, the store was prosperous, and we were in business for 35 years. The rest of the house was for our family. We removed walls, the dropped ceilings and several kitchens to make it our own. Due to Tom's many artistic talents, the home has again become a showplace while still being a very comfortable home.

Over the years we have made many changes to the home. We added a patio on the third street side of the house and installed a large wrought iron fountain that had originally been at a home across Morgan Street. We also added geothermal heating to the house which has made it a much more affordable house to maintain.

Since our children, Mark and Mandy, are now grown with children of their own, people ask us why we haven't moved to a smaller home. I'm sure we will do that at some time, but this house has become so dear to us that it will surely be a very hard decision!

**The foundation was laid in 1880 and was allowed to settle for one year before the house was built. The foresight of allowing the foundation to settle means that the floors in the house have stayed very level over the years.*

**Note the different costs shown in two different publications. Possibly one of the costs did not include the carriage house.*

Bill Logan and the “Fabulous Five”

By Shane Etter

Long before the days of Michigan’s Fab Five back in the early 1990’s, there were the “Fabulous Five” of the University of Iowa’s Hawkeyes. Iowa’s “Fabulous Five” consisted of Keokuk’s own Bill Logan, along with Carl Cain, Sharm Scheuerman, Bill Schoof and Bill Seaberg. These five young men had already become known as outstanding basketball players in their 1953-1954 sophomore season.

By mid-February of 1954, Iowa had won nine of its first ten conference games. Then Iowa lost on the road to Ohio State, 77-69, and lost in Iowa City to Illinois, 74-41. This was just a few days before Iowa had to be in Bloomington to face Indiana, the defending national champion who was 10-1 and well on its way to a second straight conference title.

It was to be a game that Bill Logan would never forget. Decades later, he told me, “In this particular game, after the pregame warm-ups were over, we were then informed of a change in the line-up. We were all surprised [by this change], that just a young group of ‘unknowns,’ a sophomore squad, would be starting. Well, those Iowa sophomores won 82-64 over the defending national champions.” Then Iowa went on to beat Michigan State and Ohio State to finish a very satisfying 17-5 record overall. Iowa also finished with an 11-3 conference record, which was good enough for second place behind that Indiana team with its record of 12-2.

As juniors, the Fabulous Five finished with an 11-3 record which was good enough this time to win the Big Ten Championship. Then they went on to compete in the NCAA finals and wound up as the nation’s number four team.

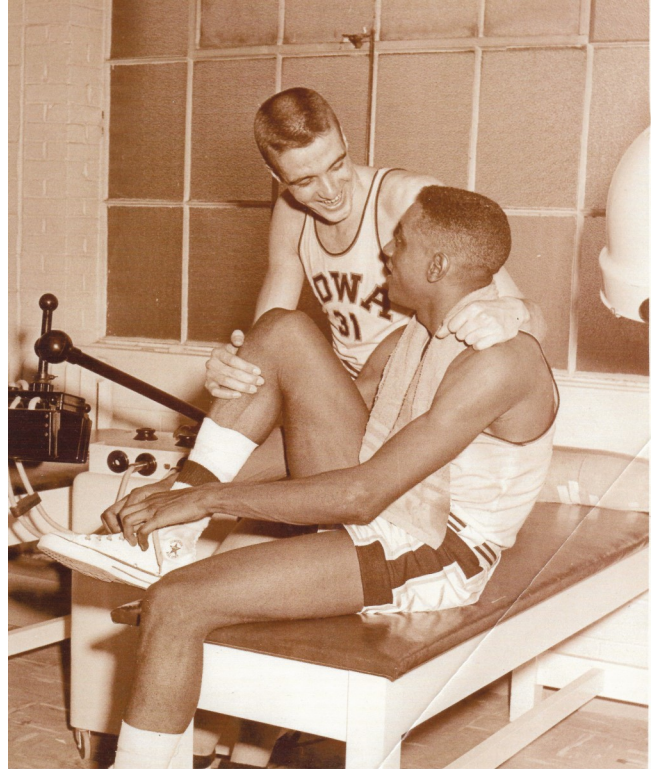
In their senior year the Fabulous Five claimed their second Big Ten Title with a 13-1 record. Then they kept winning all the way to the NCAA championship game before being stopped, 83-71, by the San Francisco Dons and the legendary Bill Russell. Russell, went on to win eleven NBA Championships, was a five- time NBA most valuable player and Hall of Famer who played professionally from 1956-1969.



Bill Logan at the University of Iowa.

In a sense, Bill's basketball career had come full circle with much success at each turn along the way. His first experience was winning at the high school level while playing for the Keokuk Chiefs. During his sophomore season of 1949-1950, the Chiefs finished third in conference play and lost in the first round at state. In his junior year, 1950-1951, the Chiefs were Little Six Champions and finished third at state. Bill's senior year, 1951-1952, the Chiefs repeated as Little Six Champions and finished second at state.

Bill's success at the high school level carried over and helped him prepare for the next step of his collegiate career and ultimately to the top of his game. While at Iowa he became a team leader, which undoubtedly helped prepare him for the next chapter in his life. In all his years after college, he fulfilled a leadership role in his community, was respected and admired in the banking community and was considered a leading business entrepreneur, as someone who took on numerous duties and roles during his long, successful career. He was, as well, a devoted family man and a great friend. Bill Logan will be greatly missed by his family, his many friends and by his community. He passed away January 25th, 2018.



Bill Logan and teammate Carl Cain discussing their Iowa Hawkeye Converse sneakers. Logan had been sized for a pair of size 13 sneakers but because they were a little too large, converse made him a pair of 12 ½ shoes that helped him with his inside moves. Logan's offensive move was to go around people and take an inside shot. His favorite short was his roll shot. Logan would either be fouled, make the shot or both. When the other team would double up on him, he'd pass it to another teammate.



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Two Poems by Joy Wellington Tillis

All Things Hope

Hope hides,
comes out at last minute;
Hope is a tap on your shoulder,
“you dropped your glove”;
a tiny earth crack
with crocus peeking through.

Hope is all who still believe in you,
and you, believing in them.

Hope climbs a fence
of vines in the mind,
searching for a blossom
or even a bud.

It is raining, the bus is coming,
looks like it will pass you by,
wipers flash, eyes lock,
driver stops.
Dared to hope.

Tiny hopes count too...
There is divinity in humanity.

Amidst the charcoal earth
Always pops a tiny green stem;
rains fall from the eyes and
the promise of a garden
gets planted in the heart.

Small town summer nights

A road along the sweeping water,
a glide on hilly river road;
The top of each rise,
a skipped heartbeat of pleasure,
no ceiling to the evening sky, convertible,
sweet sour smell of the river
and only faint stars,
along a floating playground.

Price tag: river bugs and emotions
carrying us away;
always headed somewhere,
even nowhere was fine;
Bored easily, what did we know?
So much idyllic beauty
our little town wrapped in green,
clothed in humidity.

The main street was our mecca,
where summer eves simmered
and all else waited: question was
“where is the party?”
A dance, a diner, the drive in,
haunts of expectation.

Mornings were birds chirping
and flowers you smelled before you
opened your eyes.
Treasuring this welcome
memory ambush.

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Calendar of Cultural Events

May

- 1 • *Southeastern Community College Opera*, 7pm, Grand Theatre
- 3 • *Open Mic Night*, 6pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
 - *KMS Spring Band Concert*, 7 pm, Keokuk Middle School
- 4 • *Star Wars Party*, 3-5 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
 - *First Wednesday Jazz*, 8 pm, Hawkeye Restaurant
- 6-11 • *Keokuk Art Center's 63rd Annual Exhibition*, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
 - *Opening Reception*, May 6, 2-5 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 8 • *KHS Spring Concert*, 7 pm, Grand Theatre
- 10 • *KMS Spring Choir Concert*, 7pm, Keokuk Middle School
- 12 • *Keokuk Power City Alley Cat Bike Rally*, 9 am, 511 Blondeau St
 - *Unlimited Dance & Tumbling Recital*, 2 pm, Grand Theatre
- 17 • *George Washington 4th Grade School Program*, 7 pm, Grand Theatre
- 19 • *Farmers Market*, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - *History of Keokuk Police Department by Jay Whitaker*, 1 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
 - *Tophatter II Recital*, 1 & 5 pm, the Grand Theatre
 - *Mississippi Rat Pack Car Club Cruise Night*, 5 pm, Wal-Mart parking lot
- 20 • *Class of 1943 Presentation with David Knowles*, 2 pm, Miller House Museum
- 22 • *Keokuk Killed in Action by Terry Altheid*, 6:30 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 25 • *12th Annual Back Alley Bandfest*, Keokuk CED and Main Street Keokuk, Inc., 6-9pm, Historic District
- 26 • *Farmers Market*, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - *Y Run 5K*, 8 am, Hoerner YMCA
 - *Raeann Dance "Blast from the Past" Recital*, 1 & 6 pm, Grand Theatre
 - *"Leaving Abbey"*, 7 pm, Rand Park Pavilion
 - *"October Rage" concert*, 8 pm, L-Treyn's, 1108 Main St
- 31 • *Mystery Dinner Theatre*, May 31-June 2, Time TBA, America's First Great Dam Museum

June

- 1-30 • *Canton Camera Club Exhibit*, Keokuk Art Center, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
 - *Opening Reception*, June 1, 5-7 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 1-2 • *Mystery Dinner Theatre*, Time TBA, America's First Great Dam Museum
- 2 • *Farmers Market*, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - *Glenda Dance Recital*, 6 pm, Grand Theatre
- 6 • *First Wednesday Jazz*, 8 pm, Hawkeye Restaurant
 - *Blank Park Zoo: A Very Musical Habitat*, 10 am, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 8-9 • *Flea Market by the River*, 9 am-4 pm, Southside Boat Club
- 8 • *The Boys Concert*, Modern Country, 7-9pm, Rand Park Pavilion
- 9 • *Farmers Market*, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
- 13 • *Fun Factory*, 10 am, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 14 • *Flag Day Ceremony*, Elks, 6 pm, Rand Park Pavilion
 - *Movie Night*, 6 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 16 • *Farmers Market*, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - *Summer Fun & Fundraiser*, Main Street Keokuk Inc.

June (cont.)

- 16 • **Mississippi Rat Pack Car Club Cruise Night**, 5 pm, Wal-Mart parking lot
- 20 • **Robot Dance Party**, 10 am, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 22-24 • **Singing in the Rain Jr.**, Great River Players, Friday & Saturday 7:30 pm, Sunday 2 pm, Grand Theatre
- 23 • **Farmers Market**, 7-11 am, River City parking lot
 - **"Bluezillion,"** Blues/Rock/Funk, 7:30 pm, Rand Park Pavilion
 - **Brushville Comes to L-Treyn's**, 8 pm, 1108 Main St
- 30 • **Farmers Market**, 7-11 am, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
 - **Craft Vendor Show**, All Day, Rand Park
 - **Kids Fishing Tournament**, 9-11 am, Rand Park
 - **Jones Family Carnival**, 5 pm, Rand Park
 - **Cruise Night at the Park**, 5-8 pm, Rand Park
 - **Micro Wrestling Federation**, 8 pm, L-Treyn's, 1108 Main St

July

- 1-31 • **Obscure Keokuk Photos**, Lee County Historical Society, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 1-4 • **4th of July Events**, Rand Park
 - **July 1 Disc Golf Tournament**, 9-3 pm, Rand Park
 - **July 4 Fireworks Display**, 9:30 pm, Rand Park
- 7 • **Farmers Market**, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - **Keokuk History Program**, 1 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 11 • **Absolute Science Program**, 10 am, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 14 • **Farmers Market**, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
- 15 • **Tri County Catfish Assn Tournament**, 7 am, Southside Boat Club
 - **Prairieland Barbershop Chorus**, 7:30 pm, Rand Park Pavilion
- 20-22 • **TBD**, Great River Players, Friday & Saturday 7:30 pm, Sunday 2 pm, Grand Theatre
- 21 • **Farmers Market**, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - **Mississippi Rat Pack Car Club Cruise Night**, 5 pm, Walmart parking lot
- 26 • **Billy Sunday by Craig Bishop**, 6 pm, Round Room, Keokuk Public Library
- 26-28 • **Summer Crazy Days**, Downtown Keokuk
 - **City Wide Garage Sales**
- 28 • **Farmers Market**, 7-11 am, River City Mall parking lot
 - **Becca Sutlive & Friends**, 7:30 pm, Rand Park Pavilion

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In order to add an event to this calendar, contact Carole Betts at bettsongrand@gmail.com. To advertise in the Confluence, please contact Dianne Stanley at mb450sl@msn.com. All ads should be approximately 3x5 inches in size and may be either vertical or horizontal. The cost is \$40 per ad.

Keokuk Cultural & Entertainment District

Cultural Assets in the District

- 1 • Estes Park
- 2 • Gateway Park
- 3 • Grand Theatre
- 4 • Katie John House
- 5 • Keokuk Art Center
- 6 • Keokuk Public Library
- 7 • Miller House Museum
- 8 • The Lost Canvas Gallery
- 9 • Plaza Cinemas
- 10 • Mississippi Water Power Museum

Dining in the District

- The Cellar - 29 S. 2nd St.
- First Wok - 300 Main St.
- 4th St. Cafe - 22 S. 4th St.
- Harrington's Restaurant - 18 S. 5th St.
- Los Tapatio - 706 Main St.
- Lost Canvas Coffee Bar - 719 Main St.
- Luckys - 528 Blondeau
- Rascals - 820 Main St.
- Meyers Courtyard - 629 Blondeau St.

Dining outside the District

- Angelini's - 1006 Main St.
- Beef, Bread & Brew - 2601 Main St.
- China Buffet - 1501 Main St.
- Chintz's - 1310 Main St.
- Dr. Getwell's - 11th & Main
- Fort Worth Cafe - 526 S. 5th St.
- HyVee Kitchen - 3111 Main
- Hawkeye Restaurant - 105 N. Park Drive
- Java River - 1000 Main St.



LEGEND

- Historical/Cultural Asset
- Restaurant
- Cultural Facilities
- Entertainment Facilities
- P Parking

Riverfront Legend

- A • Municipal Boat Ramp
- B • Hubinger Landing
- C • Southside Boat Club
- D • Riverview Park
- E • Keokuk Union Depot
- F • Geo. M. Verity Riverboat Museum
- G • Victory Park / Gen. Curtis statue
- H • Observation Deck (100 yr old bridge)
- I • Lock and Dam 19

Still, any list of Meigs' accomplishments is quite impressive: he surveyed, designed, and built the Washington, D.C., water supply system; oversaw the enlargement of the U.S. Capitol building and the construction of its new, larger iron dome; and designed and supervised construction of the Pension Building, now being used as the National Building Museum.

Meigs' most important position was as Quartermaster General of the Army, the position to which Abraham Lincoln appointed him in 1861. As quartermaster general, Meigs was responsible for supplying all of the Union's armies in the field as well as provide them with transportation by rail, wagon, and inland waterway. Thus, it was Meigs who, shortly after the Union defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run made it clear that the war would not be won easily or quickly, awarded the engineer James B. Eads a contract to build seven armored gunboats for the Army's Western Gunboat Flotilla. (Interestingly, Eads, another brilliant engineer, also started his career near Keokuk by recovering a sunken cargo of lead from the bottom of the Mississippi in 1842.) Eads' gunboats were all in service by February of 1862 and were clearly the most powerful warships in the western theater of operations.

Meigs acquired a reputation for being contentious and even somewhat arrogant, though at least a significant part of this reputation was undoubtedly due to his ceaseless struggle to control the costs of those with whom he contracted to supply and build whatever project he had been placed in charge of. He apparently worked well with Jefferson Davis, President Franklin Pierce's Secretary of War, but not so well with James Buchanan's Secretary of War, the incompetent John B. Floyd. It was Floyd who took Meigs off the project to supply Washington with water and sent him to the Dry Tortugas, a group of seven tiny islands at the far end of the Florida Keys, supposedly to supervise the construction of Fort Jefferson. Meigs' career seemed to be hopelessly stalled out.

Of course, all this changed when the Civil War started. Both Jefferson Davis and John B. Floyd sided with the Confederacy, Davis becoming its president, while Floyd became the incompetent general who, having lost the battle at Fort Donelson to an obscure brigadier general named Ulysses S. Grant, decided to sneak off in the night, rather than surrender. He left that job to his second in command, General Gideon Pillow, who also snuck off in the night, finally leaving the job of surrender to General Simon Bolivar Buckner. Meanwhile, Meigs returned from Florida to Washington where his sound advice was much appreciated by President Lincoln just prior to and in the very difficult early days of the war. He continued to advise Lincoln throughout the war — and was nearby in the Peterson house when Lincoln died there.

How well Montgomery C. Meigs and Robert E. Lee worked together when they were living near Keokuk in 1837 is a matter of conjecture. They had much in common. Both were born in the South to distinguished old families, although Meigs family was not from the South, nor did he grow up in the South. Meigs' father was a renowned obstetrician who had moved his practice to Georgia several years before Meigs' birth, but then moved back to Philadelphia when Meigs was a year old because his wife was so completely opposed to slavery.

Both Lee and Meigs not only attended West Point, but graduated near the top of their respective classes. Lee graduated second in his class of 1829, while Meigs was fifth in his class of 1836. Both men were consummate professionals and scrupulously honest. Lee is well known for having said, "The trite saying that honesty is the best policy has met with the just criticism that honesty is not policy. The real honest man is honest from conviction of what is right, not from policy." Meigs, in rejecting any and all efforts to be corrupted by unscrupulous contractors, once said, "Every action of my life... has been dictated by the desire to leave unblemished fame as the only heritage my children can look forward to."

However, neither man is recorded as having said much about the other with respect to the time they worked together on improving Mississippi River navigation. Meigs is briefly mentioned in Lee's letters to his wife and friends; there were a couple of occasions prior to the Civil War when Meigs mentions Lee in highly complimentary terms. He once described Lee as being "...then in the vigor of youthful strength, with a noble and commanding presence, and an admirable, graceful and athletic figure. He was one with whom nobody ever wished or ventured to take a liberty, though kind and generous to his subordinates, admired by all women, and respected by all men."

The high esteem that Meigs had for Lee completely changed with the start of the Civil War. Meigs quickly came to consider Lee, Davis and Floyd all to be traitors who deserved to be hanged. Indeed, when Washington's cemeteries were close to being full with the graves of Union soldiers, it was Meigs who proposed that Lee's estate, Arlington, just across the Potomac from Washington, be used as a national cemetery. He also insisted that burials begin as close to the mansion as possible, thus ensuring that Lee would never again be able to live there. Incidentally, Meigs also designed the superintendent's lodge at the Keokuk National Cemetery, where the interment of Union soldiers had begun about two years before Arlington was first put to this use.

In 1837, the year that Lee and Meigs came to Puckeshetuck, the biggest towns in the area were Carthage, the county seat for Hancock County, Illinois, and Warsaw, a Hancock County town on the Mississippi River that had grown up on and near the site of Fort Johnson and Fort Edwards. The forts had been built during and just after the War of 1812. Carthage and Warsaw each had several hundred residents. The next biggest towns would have been Montebello, also on the Mississippi River, nearest to where Hamilton is today, and Keokuk, across the river in what was then the Wisconsin Territory. The

number of residents in each of these towns would have been no more than a hundred.

Actually, Lee and Meigs weren't the first to map the Des Moines Rapids, nor were they the first to propose cutting a channel through the rapids for steamboats. In 1829 Napoleon B. Buford of the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, mapped the rapids, the first detailed map of this eleven mile hazard to riverboat traffic. He had graduated from West Point just two years earlier and would go on to become a general during the Civil War, as did his half brother and a cousin—only the cousin, Abraham Buford, fought for the Confederacy. John Buford, Napoleon's half brother, was a Union hero at the Battle of Gettysburg.

In 1836, Captain Henry M. Shreve, perhaps the person who did the most to develop the use of steamboats on the Mississippi River and its tributaries, came to the Des Moines Rapids where he not only corrected and updated Buford's map, but recommended where the channel should be cut through the rapids. However, Shreve's report did not exactly sit well with a number of Hancock County landowners. They argued that Shreve's channel, which would closely follow the western bank of the river all the way up to Fort Des Moines No. 1 (*i.e.*, the present location of Montrose, Iowa) would require the removal of such an enormous amount of rock that the project was unlikely ever to be completed. These Hancock County landowners petitioned the Army's Chief of Engineers, General Charles Gratiot, for a do-over.

General Gratiot, who was a member of one of the oldest and most distinguished families in Saint Louis, Missouri, came to agree with this conclusion and so sent Lee and Meigs to draw up a new map and to see if a better channel might be excavated from the river. He also instructed Lee to develop a plan to prevent the harbor at Saint Louis from silting up.

There was an island, frequently called “Bloody Island” because of the duels fought there, just upriver from Saint Louis but below where the Missouri River entered the Mississippi. The main channel of the Mississippi was forming on the east side of Bloody Island, causing the west side to begin filling with silt. In time, the waterfront at Saint Louis would become a marsh, unless the primary channel could be switched to the island’s west side. Lee came up with a plan that would do this, but because its execution was underfunded, it took another engineer, Samuel R. Curtis, to work out a lasting solution a couple of decades later. Curtis also did some work on the Des Moines River and became one of Keokuk’s leading citizens, first as its mayor, next as a member of Congress, and then, during the Civil War, resigning his seat in Congress to return to the Army, eventually rising to the rank of major general.

One of the Hancock County landowners who petitioned General Gratiot was a Dr. Adolphus Allen. He owned a significant amount of property a couple of miles upriver from Montebello. He was ambitious, with several ideas for developing his property, including a distillery and a town he laid out along the river which he called “Des Moines City.” He also rented a cabin to Lee and Meigs where they housed the men in their work party before finding quarters for themselves a bit further upriver, first in another cabin, and then, apparently, at Fort Des Moines #1, before they moved on up to the Mississippi River’s upper rapids near Rock Island, Illinois. There, Lee and Meigs found quarters on the upper deck and cabins of a steamboat that had sunk in the river. The location of the cabins Lee rented from Dr. Allen has been long lost, though it is interesting to note that Camp Eastman, the Boy Scout camp developed in the 1920’s and ’30’s, is located on land that originally belonged to him.

The future of Dr. Allen’s proposed town, as well as the future of Montebello, depended on river

commerce, and both locations lacked a good landing on the river unless the channel to be cut through the Des Moines Rapids were to pass by very close to them. This never happened, so Montebello ceased being a town by the time Hamilton was founded in the 1850’s, and Des Moines City never became a town.

Isaac Galland, an agent of the New York Lane Company, platted the city of Keokuk in June of 1837, an event that was soon followed by the first public sale of town lots. A steamboat came up from Saint Louis for this sale, filled with potential buyers. At this time, the only structures in Keokuk were a single row of buildings along the river, although there were already a fair number of people who were passing through Keokuk on their way farther west. Lee and Meigs arrived in the area a couple of months after the initial sale of Keokuk lots. Furthermore, many of the inhabitants in the area were members of the Sauk and Fox tribes. It had also been in 1837 that these tribes agreed to a treaty that allowed limited settlement of white farmers. Shortly after the treaty went into effect, white settlers began to migrate into what would become, within a decade, the southeastern part of the State of Iowa. Many more settlers began to arrive in 1842 when a second treaty compelled the Fox and Sauk to move farther west.

It seems unlikely that Either Lee or Meigs ever spent a night in Keokuk, though their work in mapping and in starting the process of cutting a channel through the Des Moines Rapids would have undoubtedly caused them to visit, or at least pass through, the newly platted City of Keokuk. Lee apparently never mentioned the town in anything he wrote, but Meigs would have had many occasions to do so after his retirement in 1882. This is because his son, Montgomery C. Meigs, Jr., moved to Keokuk in 1884, just a month after his fifth daughter, Cornelia, was born. This son was a civil engineer, having received his education at Harvard, with further study in Germany.

He came to Keokuk, after working for the Northern Pacific Railroad and for the Army Corps of Engineers at Rock Island, first as the assistant to Col. J.N. Maccomb, who was in charge of all improvements to the upper Mississippi, and then as the person in charge of the Des Moines Canal at Keokuk. Montgomery C. Meigs, Jr., was typically referred to as “Major” Meigs in Keokuk as a courtesy because the man who preceded him in this job was Major Amos Stickney. However, Meigs was always a civilian employee of the Corps of Engineers.

Major Meigs participated in the study that concluded a dam at Keokuk would be both feasible and desirable and was the Federal Government’s inspector and engineer in charge during the Keokuk Dam’s construction, 1910-1913. He remained in charge of the locks and all other government operations at the dam for a number of years thereafter. By all accounts, he and Hugh Cooper, the Chief Engineer for the construction of the dam, got along very well.

Cornelia Meigs, the fifth of Major Meigs’ six daughters, was a well known author, mainly of children’s books, during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. She won the Newbery Medal for her 1933 biography of Louisa May Alcott, titled *Invincible Louisa*, and had three of her books recognized as Newbery Honor Books prior to this. She grew up in Keokuk, graduating from Keokuk High School in 1901. She graduated from Bryn Mawr in 1907 and began writing books for children while an English teacher at St. Katherine’s School in Davenport, Iowa. Her mother had died when she was nine years old, and so she cared for her father in his old age, until his death in 1931. In 1932, she became a professor of English at her *alma mater*, Bryn Mawr, where she remained until her retirement in 1950, though she also kept a farm in Vermont from 1935. After her retirement from Bryn Mawr, she taught writing at the New School of Social Research in New York City. Then, in her final retirement, she divided her time between her farm in Vermont and a home in Havre de Grace, Maryland. She died there in 1973 at the age of 88.



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