

*A Traveling Exhibit by the
Grout Museum District*

Yours Ever,

Your Own



Tales of Love From the Civil War

Sponsored by

Edward J. and Catherine Gallagher Family Foundation



JACOB RITNER

When the Civil War began, 33 year old Jacob Ritner was a teacher living in Ft. Madison with his wife Emeline. Married for ten years, they had five children; Evageline who died in infancy, Lulie age 7, Nellie age 5, Thomas age 2 and Kittie just 2 months old.

His first experience was as a private with the 1st Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry entering into service on May 14, 1861. After 3 months, he returned home to his family for a year where he worked as a recruiter for the army. On September 27, 1862, he was mustered into service as 1st Lieutenant of Company B, 25th Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry. The 25th took part in many battles including Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Sherman's March to the Sea. Jacob was mustered out of service on June 6, 1865 in Washington D.C.

His wife Emeline had her struggles with 4 children and taking care of the home and farm. Their life at war and on the home front is articulated in their letters which show their hopes, fears, dreams and strong love for one another.

The Ritner letters are found, with permission, in the book edited and compiled by Charles F. Larimer. The book is called "Love and Valor: The Intimate Civil War Letters Between Captain Jacob and Emeline Ritner."

The letters are part of the Grout Museum District collection and include correspondence from Dick to Emily; George to Emily; and from friends including letters from Emily's friend Jerusha to Emily. There are no letters from Emily.



WILLIAM 'DICK' THAYER

William Dick Thayer, who often signed his letters Dick, was a 22 year old single man from Jesup, Iowa when he enlisted along with his best friend George Abbott. They were mustered into the 9th Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Company C on September 24, 1861. Dick and George were musicians, and Company C was the color company made up of flag bearers and musicians.

George had a younger sister, Emily, who was 14 years of age at the onset on war. Dick also wrote to her plus other friends. When George died of wounds received at the battle of Pea Ridge, Dick continued writing Emily to console her as well as him. They fell in love through their correspondence and married on March 6, 1864. They spent the rest of the war corresponding as husband and wife.

William Thayer survived the war with few "scrapes." He returned home to Emily and eventually they would have a son.



During the Civil War, letters were often the only way for soldiers and loved ones at home to stay in touch. Although sending letters was slow and unreliable, when in the hands of the recipient they were of great comfort. “Forever Yours, Your Own: Tales of Love from the Civil War” relays the stories of two couples torn apart by war. How they lived, loved and survived the ordeal will be revealed in their own words. Excerpts of original letters and photographs enhance the exhibit helping visitors learn about the day to day life of the Civil War soldier and the women and children left behind on the Iowa prairie.

Exhibition Information

Content:

13 panels including a title board, plus 18 various sized accessory panels. Accompanying materials include a notebook which contains descriptions of all Thayer letters in the collection and brief description of Ritner letters.

Dimensions:

- 4 time-line panels (96x24in each) following Iowa troops during the Civil War.
- 8 Accessory panels (48x24in each), fit above and below the time-line and include 2 story lines that follow Jacob Ritner and William Thayer during the Civil War.
- Title Board (24x36in).
- Various other text pieces ranging in size from (11x17in) to (24x36in).

Running Feet:

60 feet

Shipping:

2 boxes and one large artwork bag. Large box (100x28in), small box (52x28in), artwork bag (33x43in). Available for pick-up or delivery-rates apply.

Participation Fee:

\$500 per 12 week (3 month) period.

Sponser Requirements

Security:

Minimum security requirements. Must be in a secure, permanent building that will be locked during non-business hours. No food or drinks allowed in exhibition space.

Environmental Controls:

All objects shall be protected at all times from rain, excessive humidity, excessively dry conditions, or extreme changes of temperature. All objects shall be protected against fading, scorching, reticulation and cockling caused by direct or reflected sunlight, strong artificial light, ultraviolet radiation from fluorescent tubes or proximity to heat sources.

Handling and Insurance:

Borrower must provide experienced handlers for unpacking, installation and repacking of exhibit. The exhibit is fully insured while in borrowers care. Each borrower must complete and submit a condition report after unpacking and repacking an exhibit. Borrower must also submit a proof of liability to Grout Museum District no later than 28 days prior to receiving an exhibit.

Booking Information:

The exhibit will be booked on a first-come, first-served basis. Dates of availability can be found on the reverse-side of this page. Contact William Bisbee at (319) 234-6357 or william.bisbee@gmdistrict.org for information or to confirm a booking.



Other Traveling Exhibitions Available

1954 Korea: After the Korean War
The Show Must Go On: The USO in Korea
Forever Yours, Your Own: Tales of Love from the Civil War

Bluedorn Science Imaginarium

Plant Genomics



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For scheduling and other traveling exhibition information, please contact William Bisbee (william.bisbee@gmdistrict.org) or the Grout Museum District at (319) 234-6357. Don't forget to visit our website at www.groutmuseumdistrict.org.

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