

Search (Last 7 Days)

GO

One constant in today's changing world ...  
**OUR SERVICE.**  
C-CAT has been providing safe, professional termite and pest management for 50 years. You can rely on us.  
C-CAT, Certified Chemical Application Technicians, Locally Owned and Operated  
10539 Memorial Park Road, Burlington, IA 52601  
(319) 752-7675 or (800) 754-7675

Search the Archive

Site Directory

Printer Friendly | Email to a Friend | Leave a comment | SHARE

published online: 4/8/2010

# Film highlights Civil War letters

Narrative shares the story of Mount Pleasant couple.

By WILLIAM SMITH

wsmith@thehawkeye.com

## MOUNT PLEASANT --

One of the great untold American stories will be revealed in the new documentary "Love & Valor -- The Intimate Civil War Letters," which will play at 7 p.m. Friday night the Iowa Wesleyan College Chapel.

The narrative documentary tells the story of Union Army Capt. Jacob Ritner, who regularly corresponded with his wife, Emeline, during his service in the Civil War. Ritner was a Mount Pleasant teacher, farmer and abolitionist before the war and had to leave his wife with four small children and the family farm while he served his country.

"The movie took about seven years to make, which is much longer than I thought it would take. I thought I could do it in two years, but it became much more complicated," said Charles Larimer, who wrote and produced the film.

Larimer, who happens to be the Union captain's great-great-grandson, first stumbled onto his ancestor's history when he read Ritner's letters at the tender age of 8. His grandmother's sister typed the handwritten letters during the 1920s and '30s, and he first re-read them as an adult while helping his older son with a junior high history project.

"I re-read the letters and fell in love with them," Larimer said.

The letters inspired Larimer to write a book about his grandfather's life, so it seemed only natural he produce a movie carrying the same name. Much of the movie was filmed at Civil War re-enactments across the Midwest, and the Ushers Ferry historic village near Cedar Rapids doubles as Mount Pleasant.

The film, narrated by veteran actor Brian Dennehy, also is based on letters Emeline sent to her husband. According to Larimer, who obtained the letters from Civil War collectors, letters from Civil War wives are quite rare.

"There aren't very many women's letters that survived the Civil War," Larimer said. "She provides detailed stories about women's life. Women were taking care of farms and running the stores while their husbands were away."

Larimer was born and raised in Sioux City and said the film tells a story that is very much about Iowa. Much of the action takes place in Mount Pleasant, and Larimer was able to discover the grave of Jacob's father and Jacob and Emeline's first child in the Jagger Cemetery near Danville. The child died two weeks short of his first birthday.

"I felt a real connection," Larimer said. "I could imagine them standing there in grief."

The movie begins at 7 p.m. Friday, and there will a reception with light refreshments hosted by Larimer starting at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$5 and available at the door.

Proceeds from the showing will help support the preservation and development of the Harlan-Lincoln House at Iowa Wesleyan College.

For more information, call Lynn Ellsworth at (319) 385-6320.

Related Images:



Photo submitted  
"Love & Valor -- The Intimate Civil War Letters" will be shown Friday night at the Iowa Wesleyan College Chapel in Mount Pleasant.

Click for Today's Top Ads

## THE Sports

Hawkeyes, Leathernecks & Whatever Else Comes to Mind

- by John Bohnenkamp
- View from the Pressbox
- by Susan Denk
- Prep Sports
- by Chad Drury

## THE Community

- Super-Sized Me
- by Craig Neises
- Great River Reads Blog

## THE Food

- Sage Advice
- by Christinia Crippes

## THE Multimedia

### The Hawk Eye Multimedia

- White House to Southeast Iowa Tour
- Drake Relays-April 23, 2010
- Drake Relays-April 22, 2010

Gifts that say "Be Mine."  
Red hot prices on red hot phones for your Valentine.  
BlackBerry Curve™ 9330 smartphone  
\$299  
FREE

Total Connections  
116 W. Agency #7 (Walmart plaza) W. Burlington, IA 52655 (319) 758-0050  
103 S. Jefferson On the square by Subway Mount Pleasant, IA 52641 (319) 385-8989  
1225 Avenue H Across from The Democrat Fort Madison, IA 52627 (319) 372-0050  
550 South Gear Westland Mall West Burlington, IA 52655 (319) 753-0050  
verizon wireless  
AMERICA'S LARGEST AND MOST RELIABLE WIRELESS NETWORK

PRUGH FUNERAL SERVICE  
317 N. 4th St. Burlington, IA (319) 754-8241  
CLICK FOR MORE

HASS-THIELEN Funeral Home  
(319) 752-2828 877-752-2828  
For a Life Worth Celebrating™