

PRESS RELEASE

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THE ALEXANDER LEVI HERITAGE PROJECT: Celebrating 175 Years of Jewish Presence in Dubuque!

Move over east coast. The Midwest, too, has its own vivid early American Jewish history! 2008 is the 175th Anniversary of the city of Dubuque, Iowa. August 2008 will also mark the 175th (175th!!!) anniversary of the arrival of Alexander Levi in what is now Dubuque. A Frenchman, he not only was the first Jew in Dubuque, but also the only Jew in America to sign a state charter. A successful fur trader, he donated vast areas of land overlooking the Mississippi River to the city (current population 57,686) which has had a Jewish presence ever since. (And, according to church records even donated money to Father Mazzuchelli to establish the first Catholic church in Dubuque!)

The Alexander Levi Heritage Project is a museum exhibit currently in production - funded in part through a competitive grant awarded by the city of Dubuque - that will commemorate Alexander Levi's arrival and celebrate the vibrant Jewish contribution to Dubuque since the city's founding! Once completed the exhibit will be housed in a fixed location during the anniversary year and will then be available to tour. We'll be creating special live programming as well. In addition, Temple Beth El in Dubuque will be hosting a "Jewish family reunion" for current and past residents of the region sometime in late summer.

We need your help: We're searching for descendents of those early settlers (or any one else whose family may have been a part of Dubuque's Jewish life over these past 175 years). And, of course we would love to have access to research, illustrations and artwork, memorabilia, photos, stories and personal recollections If you or any of your Jewish family or ancestors ever lived in or around Dubuque, Iowa (or you know anyone else with a Dubuque "Jewish connection") please contact us at levi175@gmail.com. We'll give you instructions on how you can share your little bit of Dubuque history and we'll keep you updated on our progress so you can pay a visit to our beautiful city, enjoy the exhibit and attend the festivities

Visit our website at www.levicelebration.com to learn more about the project and the exhibit.)