

Beadle descendants visit town he founded

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Cresco - Augustus Beadle, the founder of Cresco 150 years ago, has long since passed, but his DNA will be here in the form of his great-great-grandson and great-great-great-granddaughter—Judge J.D. McKay, retired, and daughter, Amanda.

"I was always aware that Augustus Beadle was my grandmother's grandfather," McKay said. He also knew Beadle was the founder of Cresco.

The two descendants of the Founding Father will arrive on Thursday afternoon. It will only be the second time they have been in the town. The other time was in 2006, when McKay's father passed away. They came through Cresco on their way from the Green Bay, Wis. area to Des Moines.

"We pulled into town, and I wasn't familiar with anything. I pulled up to the Chamber of Commerce, walked in and said we were looking for Beadle Park. [The receptionist] said, 'Well it happens to be right across the street.'" McKay mentioned she was looking at two direct descendants of Augustus Beadle, but it didn't click with her, and an opportunity passed.

Beadle's relatives will get a hearty welcome this coming weekend, though. On Friday McKay will be saying a few words at the opening ceremony at 1 p.m. in Beadle Park (of course) and visiting the Cresco Public Library's Genealogical section from 2:30-3:30 p.m. He will have a few family mementos on display as well, including a family Bible.

On Saturday he can meet a rendition of his great-great-grandfather during the "Spirits of the Past" Cemetery Walk at Oak Lawn Cemetery at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. He will conclude his visit with a ride in the grand parade on Sunday, starting at 1 p.m.

McKay is a retired Wisconsin circuit court judge. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin Law School, and he practiced law for 28 years before he took the bench.

He was a judge for 16 years before he retired at age 71.

Besides having ties to the Founding Father of Cresco, one of McKay's grandmother's sisters is possibly the personality behind Miss Beadle (the teacher in the Little House series by Laura Ingalls Wilder). It makes sense as Augustus' wife, Eliza, was an educator, and the Ingalls family lived just over the hills at Burr Oak for a year.

While in Cresco McKay and his daughter will wander the streets their ancestor created, and maybe they'll make a little history themselves!