

*Preserving the Past
Enlightening the Present
Giving Vision to the Future*

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

Nov 1, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 1

Our first Newsletter:

With the publication of this first Newsletter we hope that you will find it of interest, enjoyable and perhaps excites memories of Your Villisca. Let us know what you think, what you would like to see in future editions and anything of special interest to the members of the Society.

In this issue:

Planning Started on Villisca's Sesquicentennial.

The Armory

Remember When? Guest Column

We offer you a chance to exercise your memory and to submit articles for the Remember When column. Please feel free to contact the editor.

Digging for Roots

Spotlight on History

Villisca Historical Society Inc Updates

President Mary Hansen

Villisca Looking Ahead to Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce, the city of Villisca celebrates its 150th Birthday at Heritage days in the year 2008. The leaders are looking back and recollecting memories and photographs of the 100th birthday celebration of 1958. Plans are underway for window displays in the downtown district using material that is submitted to the Villisca Historical Society. According to Villisca librarian Pat Means, the celebration will feature the proud history of Carnegie Library. The cornerstone bears the date, "1908." The Library will be 100 years old! A showing of the newly

Days. Officers from the Villisca Historical Society were among those Villiscans represented at the premiere showing at the State Historical Building in Des Moines on Thursday, October 11. Artifacts excavated from the John Palmquist farm near Stanton were on display.

A crazy-quilt handcrafted during the early days of the 20th century by Villisca seamstresses is currently on display at the State Historical museum in Des Moines. According to Mary Brubaker of Des Moines, it will make its way into the hands of the Villisca Historical Society upon conclusion of its current venue.



released movie about the Ioway Indians. produced by Kelly and Tammy Rundle of Fourth Wall Films, will also be featured at the Rialto Theatre during Heritage

Remember When

Guest Columnist, *Audrea Larson Higgins.*

Mark your Calen-

dars: The annual meeting of the Villisca Historical Society, Inc. is scheduled for Saturday, January 26, 2008, at 2:00 PM at the Villisca Community building. All members and other interested persons are invited to attend.

Quips and Quotes

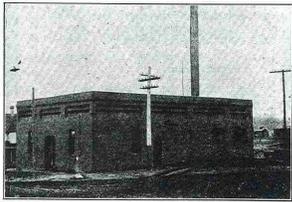
History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time, it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity.

Cicero, Roman Author, orator and politician.

When my family moved into Villisca in August 1931, there was an abundance of grocery stores. Those I remember were Edwards Bros. , near the bank which is now City Hall; Chas. Johnson Grocery, located next to the bank on 4th Street. His candy cases were a delight for school children on the way to the Lincoln building. He had lots of penny candies and most kids then didn't have 5 cents for a candy bar. Farmers store on corner of 4th Ave and 4th St. Lewis Grocery and Meat Market, south of Honeyman's Drug on 3rd Ave, a few doors from the Rialto. In the next block south on 3rd Ave was Wayne Spargur's Meat Market. On down the street was Jimmy Whitney's Grocery Store. I can still smell the coffee beans being ground, the fragrance of sweet pickles in kegs, peanut butter you bought in paper boats and Oh! Those delicious cookies in open boxes ginger snaps and chocolate marshmallow with raspberry jelly inside.

Oh my how times have changed. Ed Weiner and Joe Kaiman started a grocery store, Villisca Fruit and Grocery I believe on corner of 3rd Ave and 6th Street about 1933. Mr. Kaiman went to another town and Ed soon married Tillie and they operated the store for many years. Later they moved to the East side of South 3rd Ave and built a new store that is today's only grocery in Villisca.

Use Electric Lights



If your home is not wired for electric lights let us put them in now. The cost will be small and the convenience to you great. We have all the latest fixtures and can give you the best of service at a reasonable rate.

LET US FIGURE WITH YOU
VILLISCA ELECTRIC CO.

Photo of early Electric Company in Villisca, circa 1908. Courtesy from The Villisca Review.

What is that?

From a Villisca Review publication, 1908.

The terms "Black Squirrels", "Golden Dreams", and "Moose". What are they referring to?

The prize? A free all expense paid trip to Tenville and your name in the next issue.

Family Research

The internet is chock full of genealogy information that is easy to tap. The rise in popularity and use of the "net" has enabled research for those interested in pursuing family history. Difficult and cumbersome methods of manual research have been overtaken by the internet and the wide range of sources available to the average and expert genealogist. Although detail record searching through public and private archives is still required, significant information is now at your finger tips. Major genealogy web sites such as Family History and Ancestry.com as well as Family Tree Maker are essential research tools that will enable you to fill in those missing blanks in your family tree. Nominal fees are usually required to access many of the public statistics to include census records, social security records, birth and death records, marriage, deeds and military records. Be sure and include Internet searching to enhance your family records. See Related Article, *Digging for Roots, Pg 3.*



VILLISCA'S HISTORIC ARMORY

Digging for Roots By Susie Enarson

The time has come for a real team effort if we are to save the Armory. Most if not all of us have had some connection with the Armory through the years. For me I remember playing elementary school basketball during the halftime of the High School Varsity games. Wow, that was something. The Armory gave it's all for many years, supporting the various civic organizations, school activities and most importantly serving as the training and assembly location for our National Guard. How far back that service goes is not known to me at this time, but it brings to mind many great times and memories of bygone days. The citizens of Villisca both present and past are confronted with a monumental task that can only be achieved by total cooperation among the many civic organizations, citizens and philanthropic entities that should be energized with one common goal, Save the Armory! This is not the time for petty rivalries or "better ideas" Solutions to the one single problem are required working together to get it done! This is probably the most significant Historical preservation project that Villisca has undertaken. It's scope goes way beyond the present owner's capabilities. I think we can learn from other preservation initiatives like this and do the right thing. It wont be done without the total cooperation and commitment of everyone involved. That includes people, organizations and every resource capability that can be committed to achieve preservation. Working together is the only way, so let's eat this elephant one bite at a time!.

Susie Enarson is pictured with her new "Internet Friend" Arne outside the church in Klæbu, Norway.

I was asked by Dave Higgins to pass on some information about how I traveled to Norway and searched for the Enarson family roots. Since Tom never travels, I was the "Ambassador" who went and brought home the pictures and information.

Actually, I knew before I went exactly what I wanted to see. I have been emailing with a volunteer researcher, Arne Sivertsen, from the Norwegian Emigration Museum in Stavanger for about 4 years. I was introduced to him (online) by my cousin, Mary Ann Duncan. He had helped her locate information about our mutual relatives, and then he started looking for information about my husband Tom's relatives.

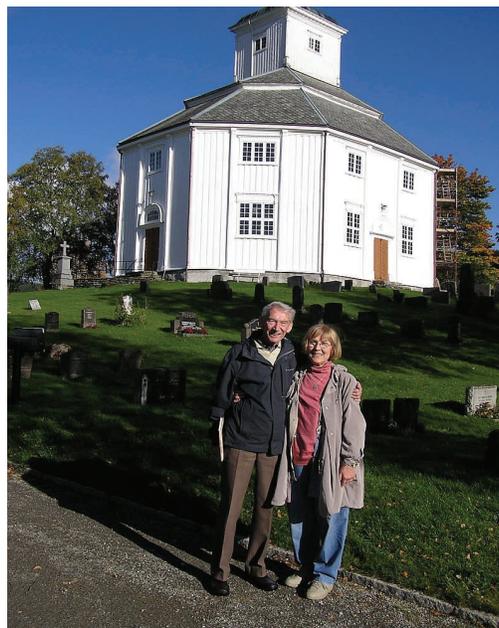
He found information about his grandmother's family, but had difficulty locating the emigration information about his grandfather's family. A year ago, I received a copy of his great-grandfather's marriage license, which listed the hometown of his family. That was the magic word, which unlocked the information he had been searching for.

I soon received detailed information about Tom's great-grandparents and their families. Included in the information was the name of the church where they were confirmed and their first child was baptized. There is a site on the web, which shows some of the old Norwegian churches, and this church, which was built in 1790, was shown there.

I had already made plans to join my friend Mary Hansen, who was leading a tour to Sweden and Norway in September this year. When I told my new Norwegian friend Arne that I was going to be in Norway, he told me he would meet me and take me to the location of the Enarson home and their church.

I boldly made the decision to leave my tour group for three days and travel with Arne to see these places. I met him in Trondheim, he had quite a few people lined up to show me around and two families entertained us in their homes. I was very impressed by the friendliness and wonderful generosity of the people I met.

I was not disappointed in what I saw and what I learned. I met a 4th cousin of Tom's, saw the very church that his great-grandparents attended, saw the farm his great-grandfather grew up on and learned much about Norway of today. My memories of Norwegian terms and customs of which my own father spoke, came back to me as I traveled. As always, the more I learned, the more questions I had. I came home ready to read and study more about Norway.



**Villisca Historical Society, Inc
Newsletter**

Today is Tomorrow's History!

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We're on the Web!

Spotlight on History

Villisca a City of Homes

“After all that can be said of the beauty, enterprises and resources of Villisca, it is in the character of her citizens that lies her proudest boast. They are intelligent, moral and progressive. The home-seeker rightly demands among the first prerequisites that the place where he is to live shall offer the right environment and education to the children of his household. In these respects cities much larger offer no stronger inducements than does Villisca, which is pre-eminently a city of homes, and, moreover, the right kind of homes”

From the Villisca Review, 12/20/1906

Visit these sites for related and historical information:

<http://www.iowahistory.org/>

[.www.historychannel.com](http://www.historychannel.com)

<http://www.familyhistory.com/>

<http://www.villiscamovie.com/>