

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

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4, Nov
2008

Today is tomorrow's history!



Season's Greetings

Grant Received for Continued Armory Study!

In This Issue

- ✓ Grant for Armory
- ✓ Country Schools
- ✓ Memories from the Past
- ✓ Family Research
- ✓ Depot Models
- ✓ Villisca Alumni Assoc.
- ✓ Editorial Comments

Interesting Articles.

We have some nice contributions to this issue of the Newsletter. Most of you know by now the discovery of the 8mm film that captures the very moment when the Pulitzer prize winning photograph of Maj. Bob Moore's return to Villisca was taken.

We also have some contributing articles regarding life on the prairie, school Marm memories and a more recent article concerning some prohibition shenanigans written by a former blacksmith in Villisca. I am sure those stories would be pertinent in any Midwestern town.

Hope you enjoy and thanks to the contributors.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS of SOUTHWEST IOWA

Audubon
Larry J. J. J. J. J.
James J. J. J. J.
Robert J. J. J. J.
James J. J. J. J.
Thomas J. J. J. J.
David J. J. J. J.

Cass
Royal J. J. J. J.
Nicholas J. J. J. J.
Evan J. J. J. J.
Mark J. J. J. J.
Robert J. J. J. J.
Gary J. J. J. J.

Crawford
Larry J. J. J. J.
Charles J. J. J. J.
Scott J. J. J. J.
Jim J. J. J. J.
Alan J. J. J. J.
Juan J. J. J. J.
Steve J. J. J. J.
Jim J. J. J. J.

Freeman
Kent J. J. J. J.
Christopher J. J. J. J.
Jon J. J. J. J.
Steve J. J. J. J.
Owen J. J. J. J.
W. J. J. J. J.

Harrison
Gail J. J. J. J.
T. J. J. J. J.
Susan J. J. J. J.
Chad J. J. J. J.
Nancy J. J. J. J.
Chad J. J. J. J.

Mills
Jo J. J. J. J.
Gail J. J. J. J.
Nancy J. J. J. J.
Robert J. J. J. J.
Robert J. J. J. J.
George J. J. J. J.

Montgomery
Dennis J. J. J. J.
James J. J. J. J.
Kevin J. J. J. J.
Robert J. J. J. J.
Jo J. J. J. J.
Nancy J. J. J. J.
James J. J. J. J.
Scott J. J. J. J.
Mark J. J. J. J.

Nage
Dennis J. J. J. J.
Gary J. J. J. J.
Jim J. J. J. J.
James J. J. J. J.
Jim J. J. J. J.
Robert J. J. J. J.

Robby
Tom J. J. J. J.
John J. J. J. J.
Joe J. J. J. J.
Dennis J. J. J. J.
Mark J. J. J. J.
Steve J. J. J. J.

Vice President Office
Dennis J. J. J. J.
12 South 55th Street
Ste 102
Iowa, IA 52242-0512
Phone: 562-2414
Fax: 562-2414
Email: dennis@montgomeryfoundation.org

October 16, 2008

Ms. Mary Hansen, President
Villisca Historical Society, Inc.
113 West 5th Street
Villisca, IA 50864

Dear Ms. Hansen:

It is with great pleasure I relay to you that at its October meeting, the Montgomery County Endowment Fund Advisory Board approved and granted \$4,000.00 for the Armory Restoration--A complete assessment and analysis of items needed to be done during restoration.

This grant is made possible through the Montgomery County Endowment Fund and any mention of the award should carry this fund's name. We would like to receive a copy of any articles related to this project that may appear in newspapers. Any materials released for publication should reflect that the Montgomery provided funding for this project.

Enclosed is the Grant Agreement. **This must be signed and return within 5 days in order to process the checks for all grant recipients.** This may be emailed to grants@montgomeryfoundation.org or faxed to 402-342-3582. **The distribution of grant awards will be on Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 4:00 pm. at the Montgomery County Courthouse south stairs.** Please be sure someone from your organization is there to receive the award.

A brief report on your project is due May 31, 2009. The report should detail what you accomplished with these funds, how this benefits others, what you learned from the implementation, and what you will do differently in the future if you continue this service. The evaluation format is available online at www.montgomeryfoundation.org click on the grants and scholarships link, southwest Iowa link and then your county.

The Montgomery County Endowment Fund wishes you great success as you apply these funds to further your organization's mission.

Sincerely,

Dennis N. Nissen

Dennis N. Nissen
Iowa Program Officer

Enclosure



Country School Houses, A part of Iowa and this nation's History



Above: Golda Stewart and class members. Rural Country School House



Tammy and Kelly Rundle's next project is a documentary on the Iowa Country School system. Without a doubt there are many of us who in some way or another have a connection to one of the rural country schools in the area around Villisca. Dick Focht, provided the picture on the left that identifies the old school as his Aunt Golda Stewart's school house where she taught. Two of the children are thought to be his father Lawrence and his Uncle Lester.

The picture below of East Township, No. 8 was provided by Mary Hansen of the Villisca Historical Society



East Township No. 8 - Fort Necessity, Gridley, Wendling

Section 30: Fort Necessity, Gridley, Wendling, No. 8. The 1883 map shows the schoolhouse in the southeast corner of the section. The school closed in the spring of 1952.

13 February 1913; Review: H.W. Gridley's house burned. For the present the family will live in the old schoolhouse which they recently purchased...to use as a granary.

... 58-241; Special deed: ...to Mary Opal Focht...

East Township No. 8 School

School Marm Memories



*Letter to Evelyn Williams from Mary Moore Lissandrella , 36 Hudson ST
Oneonta , NY 13820-2616 (Linda Moore's sister) (Collis Moore's daughter)*

My memories of my one and only academic year (nine months) of teaching in a one-room school were read at a gathering of former "country school teachers" in the Villisca, Iowa library July 3, 1999. This get-together had been planned by the library as part of Heritage Days in Villisca. I was aided in remembering the names of my eleven students by Evelyn Williams, who requested this version of the remarks I read that day.

It was a cold, bright morning, near the end of August, 1943, when I trotted down the dirt road, between clumps of wild asters and goldenrod, to the plain white schoolhouse called East Number Eight, in Montgomery County, Iowa. The temperature was in the 40's, rare for an August day in Iowa, and the wind was brisk. I had not expected to have to deal with my nemesis, the coal stove, on the first day of school.

Happily I saw a plume of smoke rising from the chimney as I came down the hill to the school. My first grader's parent, Waldo Penton had been there ahead of me to warm up the one huge room; but he assured me that night was a one time favor. After this I would be on my own.

I was told that there had been some discussion about opening the school that fall. There would be eleven students from only seven families, and my salary was to be \$950. (I was allowed the extra \$50 because I had earned a quarter's credits toward a college degree by attending the extension school in Corning, provided by Iowa State Teachers College.) My five dollars a day was the same wage being paid to older teachers with years of experience. I was lucky.

It never entered my head to ask how the \$950 was raised, who paid for the coal for the stove, or how the electric lights were paid for. Books were not new; we used text books that had been used for some years. They looked familiar. I had read from these same readers and geography books when I went to "town school" ten years before. Then, all children went to the high school building before school started, and books were distributed to us; very seldom were they new. For these much-used books, we paid rent. Those whose parents could not pay the rental fees had their names read out in class every six weeks, and received no report cards until the fees were paid. Humiliation was a powerful weapon in the 1930's.

But this was 1943, and I was eighteen years old and just out of high school. I had taken the two-year normal training course with Miss Edith Rusk. Miss Rusk had taught my parents when they were in high school. I thought she was ancient. (She was probably in her forties.) I did not want to be in the normal training class, but I wanted even less to be in "business," which was the only other option. In "business," I would not have earned all A's. I didn't want to run that risk. This Monday morning in August, 1943, was not my first visit to East # 8. I had been given the key at the teacher's meeting in Red Oak a couple of weeks before. (This meeting was called by Miss Lulu B. Reed, of whom more will be said later. Miss Reed was the superintendent of Montgomery County schools.)

At this meeting I saw only older women, no men, and no girls as young as I was. There had been an earlier time when country school teachers were usually men. It was thought that only men could control the big boys of fifteen and sixteen who were plodding their slow way through the educational system. My grandfather had been a country school teacher in the Fairview school, and later in North Page. For a year or two, he had been the county superintendent of schools in Logan county in the brand new state of North Dakota.

Besides Jerry Penton and Nancy Focht, there were Dick Focht, the oldest in sixth grade; Bonnie and Juanita McFarland; Johnny and Davey Minge, Leroy and Rex Eberle, Margaret Wagaman, and Maynard Dahl. Maynard was the only third grader, and a very bright boy. He was of Danish descent, and couldn't pronounce a "th" sound. (After some weeks of showing him how to say "throw" or "three." I decided it wasn't important.) One cold winter morning, there were only five or six children in school because a deep snow had fallen in the night. About eleven o'clock I heard the front door open and a commotion in the outer room we called the cloak room. The door from the unheated room opened, and in came Maynard with wet hair, wet overalls, red-faced...He had walked the three miles from his home in deep snow. Pg 4.

School Marm Memories

My mother also had taught a one-room school for two years, 1921-1923. She taught at the Sciola School. She had never attended a rural school herself, and neither had I. I had never lived in the country, but I had visited in country schools taught by Lydia Victor and Golda Stewart. (I liked being at "country school" on the last day, for the picnic.) I had garnered some romantic ideas from the Anne of Green Gables books. I had done two weeks of observation and practice teaching in the Morton Mills school, and I had substituted one week for a teacher who took time off to marry a soldier on leave. This experience had left me wondering what I was getting into.

In that school, there had been no obedience, no order, no respect. I need not have feared. For all my troubles at East # 8 with the coal stove and Miss Reed, I can say that never once did any child sass me, or refuse to conform, or use bad language, or show me anything less than courtesy. I found a big, heavy paddle in the steel cupboard, which I was told had been put to use in previous years. I was shocked, I didn't see how any of the little people in that school could ever have warranted such treatment. In fact, I don't recall that I ever had to raise my voice. I was not very demanding, to begin with. Since there were only eleven children, and fewer if someone were absent, I saw no reason why they should have to ask my permission to get up and walk across the room or confer in whispers over some problem. The tenor of the classroom was relaxed and home-like. Nancy Focht was my Gal Friday. It was Nancy the others turned to for advice, when I was busy—and I was always busy. I seldom sat down, except at noon, when we all ate cold lunches brought from home. Elzene Penton packed my lunch. At this time, I weighed eighty pounds, if that, and Elzene determined to "put meat on my bones." She failed, but I ate better than I ever had eaten in my life.

Waldo and Elzene Penton did more for the school, and for me, than was their fair share, because their only child, Jerry, was my only first grader. Jerry was five years old. If he had ridden the school bus into Villisca, he would have been in Kindergarten. The Pentons had decided that he would be better off in a small school close to home, rather than spending an hour or more on a school bus every day. The war affected every decision. Gas was rationed, and while farmers were allowed what they needed to produce food stuffs, trips to town were cut to a minimum.

Jerry spent a long, tiring day in the front row seat, babied by all the older kids, and excused when he cried or sucked his thumb, or otherwise misbehaved.

I allowed the youngsters to call me Mary. I was not a great deal older than they were, and I thought "Miss Moore" sounded too formal in those circumstances. They were all aware that our country was at war. The war was uppermost in their parents' minds, and in their efforts. In 1943 it was by no means certain that the Allies would win the war on both fronts, at least not very soon. Somehow this unifying awareness made titles and formalities meaningless.

I had two major problems to contend with. One was the long, cold winter, the icy, rutted road I trod twice a day, and the baffling, uncooperative coal stove. The other was Miss Lulu B. Reed.

Thanks to gas rationing, Miss Reed did not visit us as often as she might have. Dick Focht, in the back seat nearest the door, would call out the warning. "Mary, Miss Reed is here!"

Miss Reed did not knock—She entered! She wore lovely clothes and a felt hat, as was the fashion in the 40's. She kept her hat on. Miss Reed had always looked the same since I was a little girl in school myself. She was tall, thin, dignified, and imposing. I am sure she was a fine educator. I will say that she did not criticize me in front of my students. She waited.

Miss Reed would send the children out to the playground, and I would get the business. She noticed everything, things I had never given a thought to! The outdoor privies, the water pail, the muddy boots on the front stoop, the grime on shelves at the back of the room—nothing escaped her eagle eye. I must not use a push broom on the lovely hardwood floor. I must use a soft mop to preserve its luster. The boots must be cleaned, and lined up in a neat row. The water pail must be covered. Why was there no tea kettle humming on top of the stove? Her better teachers always made a pot of nourishing soup for the children's lunch, or baked potatoes in the ashes.

I'm sure Miss Reed considered me her problem child of the year. She asked me for five dollars, my dues for the State Teachers Association. Every time she visited, she asked me again. I was stubborn, arrogant, and disrespectful of authority; I would not give her a day's pay just because she had "always had 100% participation." I held out. At last she said, thinking to shame me into paying up, that if I wouldn't pay my dues, she would pay them herself. And no doubt she did.

(continued on page 5)

From page 4.

As I think back on those nine months, I feel great and sincere regret for certain things I did or didn't do. Oh, I think I was a good teacher, and I made art, poetry, and music a vital part of the curriculum. But because I had no car, and because I had never been to country school myself, and was allowed too much freedom, perhaps I neglected that important aspect of Country School, the people of the community. I never had a covered dish supper. The Christmas program at night was the only communal gathering I ever offered, and the only time I met the parents. I never visited the children's homes. I never had a parent conference. Worst of all, I held back two students without ever consulting their parents. I ended school the middle of May, so eager was I to be on my way—my own way. East # 8 continued for another year or two, but after the war ended, life changed very fast, and no caring parent would expect a child to walk miles to a school without running water or a modern heating system. The conditions at school were primitive, compared to the children's homes. Since I never visited their homes, I can't say for sure, but I would guess not one of them used an outdoor privy, or a coal stove, at home.

My father told me, as we drove past the schoolhouse after I'd finished college, that the building had been bought by a farmer who used it to house his pigs. The dainty little sharp hooves of pigs were dancing on Miss Reed's hardwood floors. I think, I hope, and I pray that the lives of the eleven good little people that I knew there have all fared better than the little white school house.

Villisca Alumni Association Seeking Input

I pulled this from the latest Villisca Alumni Association letter of November 2008. They have some pretty big projects that they have undertaken. Of primary interest is the All Class Reunion for 2009 that is set for the July 4 weekend in Villisca.

*They also have two other key projects that required maximum visibility. The first is the **Bluejay Hall of Fame program** which has been initiated and the first installment of worthy individuals is set for the 2009 reunion. Eligible candidates must have graduated from VHS or served prior to 1989. Dig out your scrapbooks and recollections of past accomplishments and contributions that may be noteworthy and worthy of Villisca Hall of Fame selection. Of particular interest may be the earlier halcyon years of the school and noteworthy individuals that excelled in the fields of sports, music, academics, or achievements after graduation. Nominations are required no later than 1 April 2009.*

Class Composite Picture Project. This project is seeking to collect all class composite pictures that can be located, photograph each one and eventually display those in a public place in Villisca. CD's are also planned of the pictures, by decade, to be put on sale. The following classes are missing, so please take a look and see if you can help in this important project.

1921-1934, 1936, 1937, 1941, 1944, 1945, 1947-1948, 1951. 1954, 1961, 1965, 1969 and 1972.

If you know of any of these class pictures or who may have any of them please contact VAFA, PO Box 45, Villisca, IA 50864 or email alumni@villisca.com

Memories from the Past

Historic Photo taken at Villisca Depot is revived with recent discovery of 8mm Home movie taken at the time of Major Moore's return to Villisca and his family.

Historic hug in motion



THE WORLD-HERALD

Earle "Buddy" Bunker won a Pulitzer Prize for this photo, shot in 1943 at the Villisca, Iowa, train depot.

■ Sixty-five years after a photographer captured "The Homecoming," a home movie of the event surfaces.

By STEPHEN BUTTRY
CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE

The most famous news photograph in Midlands history is now a video.

A home movie of photographer Earle "Buddy" Bunker snapping the historic picture surfaced this summer — 65 years later — in a wooden crate stored in a home in the Seattle area. The surprisingly clear color home movie shows "The Homecoming" — an exuberant hug between returning war hero Robert Moore and his daughter.

The instant captured in the video is unmistakable. When Iowa City native

Leyton Croxdale, Moore's great-nephew, came across it in August while watching his grandmother's home movies, he recognized the hug immediately.

"I said, 'Oh, my God! It's that photo!'"

Bunker and his bulky camera are clearly visible at the right side of the movie frame.

Bunker, a photographer for The World-Herald, won a Pulitzer Prize for that photo, shot July 15, 1943, at the Villisca, Iowa, train depot.

Lt. Col. Moore, a hero in North Africa, came home to train new troops being sent off to war. His homecoming was a

See Homecoming: Page 2



Bunker

On
Omaha.com

■ A video that includes clips of the home movie

■ Previous stories about "The Homecoming."

A terrific human interest story has unfolded recently with the discovery of 8mm home movies that were recorded by Eva Croxdale at the exact moment the famous photo was taken that captured Maj. Bob Moore's return to Villisca and his family. Leyton Croxdale, son of Dr. Michael Croxdale came in possession of the home video from his father, who passed away in Las Cruces NM in the early 90's. While looking at the film he realized that the famous photo and the events leading up to it were captured on the film. The film also contains video of Villisca to include the Moore Drug store where so many of us "hung out" as teenagers. Be sure and check it out at the link

[http://
gazetteonline.com/
apps/pbcs.dll/
article?
AID=2008710199990](http://gazetteonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008710199990)

Family Research, Digging for Roots!



BACK TO YOUR ROOTS

Continued from previous editions of the NL, by Mary Ann Dunkin--

Now - back to tracing your own roots. Start with the basics: write down all the birth, marriage and death dates of your parents, grandparents and great grandparents that you know. You will need some help from your families for that. Look in family Bibles, journals, certificates, any documents that might contain family information--including the cemeteries.

The next step is public records. County courthouses are great sources of ancestral data in the USA. These records contain wills, marriage licenses, death certificates, divorce records and land records, all of which will yield more names of your relatives and possibly important dates such as birth and deaths - for a small fee of course.

Here is how to go about it. If you know the state and county in which an ancestor was living during the year the census was taken, you can obtain census information about that person through your local libraries as they can order census records from their local branch of the National Archives. There are 11 branches of the National Archives in the United States. My branch was in Denver. Iowa's will be Kansas City.

When I started the Anderson family history I did not know the exact name I was looking for and I needed that for obtaining information from the Statsarkivet in Stavanger, Norway. The Norwegians have a different way of "naming" than we do. I knew it was Andrew Anderson in the USA, but probably completely different name in Norway.

Elsie Johnson, an Anderson relative, told me when her parents were in Iowa from Washington for the first Anderson Family reunion in Aug 1907--her Mother, Mary (Anderson) Johnson and her Aunt, Sarah (Anderson) Lee, went to Benton Co., Iowa to see if they could find her mothers grave. Elsie heard her Mother asking about the wife of Anders - using a last name that sounded like "Interval" to her. With that bit of information I wrote to Norway and they knew right away the name was "Ytrevold." This was the family farm name. You really need to have a "detective mentality." With that little bit of information the center in Stavanger was able to provide me information on the family. His name in Norway was Anders Knutson, Ytrevold - the son of Knut from the farm Ytrevold.

I was able to check their church for information. The Anderson and Knutson families had signed out of the Ardal Church Parish on the 26th day of April 1846 with the intention to emigrate to America. There were nine (9) family members listed. Andrew's father and mother and brother and sister and her son along with Andrew and his wife and two children.

I ordered the 1850 LaSalle Co., Illinois Federal Census record through the Public Library. I knew from past research - as my great grandmother was born there - the Anderson family first lived in LaSalle Co., Illinois.

This is the "worth it" part for me: the Library called that my Census record had been received - a pretty exciting day. I knew Knut Anderson was my great great grandfather's father and his name would be Andrew Knutson since he was the son of Knut. At first I was disappointed as I could not find their names - then - out of the blue -there they were! The census taker in Mission Township, LaSalle Co., Illinois had written the name Knut Anderson as CANUTE ANDERSON and Andres Knutson as ANDREW CANUTE-SON.

I learned one thing--everything is not always black and white--names are spelled like they sound to the person recording the information. Census records are not always exact. I have found that men like to give their age as older and women like to be younger.

I have had my biggest problem with the DUNKIN name - in most of the records for my husbands family - the name is spelled DUNCAN. I have found both spellings in the same record. It helped me to have a list of all the family members names that I knew and if the names matched the list - then I was on the right track.

Now, after you have completed some preliminary research and know the state and county your ancestors resided in 1880, you can check out the 1880 Federal Census records for free by putting this URL in your browser address line: <http://www.familysearch.org> When that comes up - scroll down the right side to U.S., British and Canadian Census - click on U.S. - and go from there.

Continued on page 8

(continued from page 7)

I found the ship the Gudmund Hendrickson family sailed on and the passenger list by putting this URL in my browser address line: <http://www.norwayheritage.com/>
When it came up I scrolled down the left side to the Index of Departures for the year I wanted. I knew Gudmund and Guri Hendrickson, left the farm Nessa in Norway for the USA in 1870. When that page came up - there were many ships listed. I checked out the Stavanger dates and passenger lists. I found one that looked promising and the passenger list had been translated. And it was! How exciting! It was the frigate Protector--I scrolled down the passenger list and found my great grandparents and their children: Christina, Martha, Henry, Lars and Ole. Their son Kleng had gone to the USA the year before.

Passenger list 1870 - frigate **Protector**
Captain Departure Arrival Source

H. Falck Stavanger Apr. 29 Quebec June 20 NAC C-4525 L40

- 119 Gudmund Henriksen Næss 50 m
- 120 Gurie Næss 55 f wife
- 121 Kristine Gudmundsdatter Næss 22 f dau
- 122 Halvor Gudmundsen Næss 18 m son (my ggrandfather Henry)
- 123 Malene Gudmundsdatter Næss 16 f dau
- 124 Lars Gudmundsen Næss 13 m son
- 125 Ole Gudmundsen Næss 11 m son

We went to Norway in 1998. We stayed with my "cousin" Halldis Mosnes (from the Hendrickson side of the house). She and her husband, Nils, took us to the Nessa farm in Ardal. Here is a photo of me "finding my roots." This is the exact spot where their house stood when they left for the USA in 1870.



Editors comment: Many thanks for Mary Ann's contribution to family research. The on line capabilities that are offered by the world wide web offer some of the most advanced techniques that will enable you to conduct your genealogy digging! Some of my own family mysteries have been solved by using the internet which is increasingly popular for genealogists. I will be reporting on one of those in the next Newsletter.

MRS. FOCHT RECALLS WINTER OF 1871

Mrs. P. S. Focht of Villisca harks back to the day that she arrived in Montgomery County with six brothers and sisters and her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Moates. With a covered wagon as their conveyance, the family started an overland trip from Franklin County for the Nodaway valley on September 20, 1871. Eight days later the party arrived. It was an uneventful journey with favorable weather. On the morning after their arrival they spied another covered wagon on a hill a mile away.

“Upon our arrival the first thing to be done was the erection of a house and prepare for winter,” Mrs. Focht says. The first house consisted of two rooms with no upstairs. Although it was quite comfortably warm it was pretty small for seven children and the adults. All of the children were under 13 years of age.”

“The first winter was a hard one,” Mrs. Focht relates. “There were no storage facilities and the small house was badly crowded.” Of those who came in those three covered wagons, three reside in this county now. They are William Moates of Red Oak, C. F. Moates and Mrs. Focht...the three oldest children of the family. The three other sisters and one brother all reside in Nebraska.

“Brother Fred and Father (J.F. Moates) preceded the party in May of 1871. They broke up a small patch and planted squash, pumpkin, musk melons and water melons. When they returned with the family in September the hill side was covered with melons and squash and pumpkins, which we relished”.

“We drove thirteen head of cattle through so that we had plenty of milk and butter, but still the living was terribly hard that first winter. We were still living in wagons when Chicago burned. Prairie fires were numerous. The men burned back fires to protect our home and this was not done any too soon as the first big fire came from the west one night and nearly destroyed all we had. The flames seemed to leap twenty feet in the air. The next year we had more ground in cultivation. We raised sod corn, potatoes, melons and vine fruits of all kinds.”

P. S. Focht also came to this county in a covered wagon with John Focht in 1857, coming overland from Ohio.

An Iowa Prohibition Story, circa 1919.

Mr. Shupe, a Blacksmith in Villisca wrote the following story which was contributed by his descendants who visited Mary Hansen on a recent trip to Villisca. Mary took them to the family home on West 6th street, referred to as the Hoyt Home but occupied by the Driskill family at the time of the story.

Iowa was going “dry”. Sale of alcoholic beverages had been prohibited after a certain date, and the population who enjoyed an occasional nip of the brew were in a quandary. How to stock up for the long dry spell ahead? Soon, a plan was devised. Each person put in their own order for their share, and a truck was dispatched to Canada, where the best was still to be obtained.

At about arrival time, by the strangest coincidence, my Mother and we children were to go to Villisca, for a visit with our Grandma and Grand Dad Driskill. The trip was without incident, and after a pleasant visit, we returned.

We had a piano. Perhaps the only really costly item of the furnishings within our home. Mother was a fair pianist, with a taste for the lighter classical music as well as the current popular tunes of the day. Having been away for a week or so, she felt the urge to sit down and play a little on her piano.

A few bars were played, and the foot pedals were pressed and scrutinized with some apprehension. Something was wrong. The piano did not “ring” with the usual clarity. It sounded dead and muddy in tone. What could it be?

Finally, there was only one way to find out. Open up the front panel of the upright piano, and look within, to see what might be causing this trouble. Mother opened it up and took one look.

Continued on page 7.

Continued from page 6.

“Carl” Her voice was one of dismay and anger. “Carl!”....again she called. He came running and stopped short when he saw the front panel of the piano open. His face reddened. He knew he was caught. He and Skeeter Gay!

The plan to get the liquor went without a hitch. Skeeter and Dad went into their purchases half and half. But the problem was to find a safe hiding place for the now contraband whiskey. It was all in pint bottles, for convenience of carrying. It also made it easy to place the dozens of bottles deep within Mother’s pride and joy, her lovely piano. Down deep, within each little space, was a pint of whiskey. No space had been spared. Some of them pressed against some of the larger, low not strings. No wonder the instrument sounded dead. It was suffering from an overload of Canadian whiskey.

For once, Mother objected. The ultimatum was issued. “Get that whiskey out of this house at once!”.....”Every bit of it”.....”Never, NEVER again are you to use my piano for such a crazy idea”....and that was that.

Where the whiskey went for storage until eventually it was all consumed, I never knew. But, unloaded of it’s contraband load, Mother’s piano sounded right again. Full throated it sang as she played. Left in Iowa when we moved to California, it always proved too expensive to ship west. We never had another one.

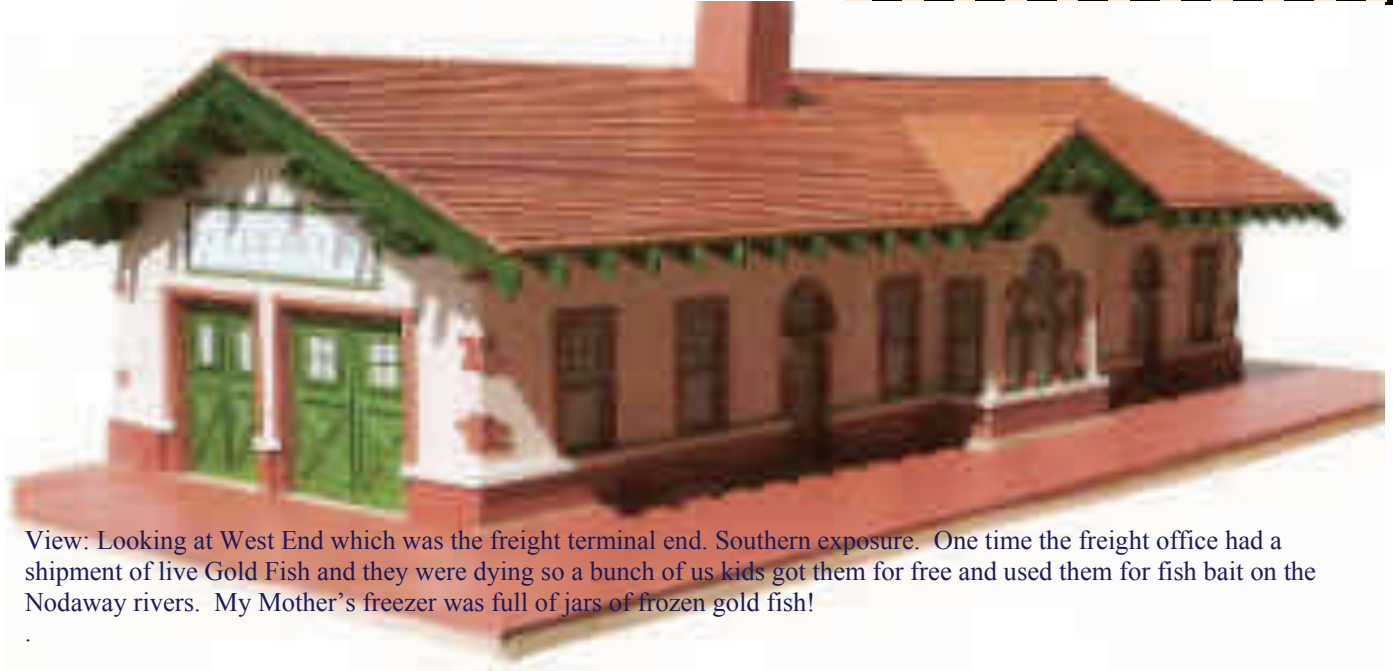
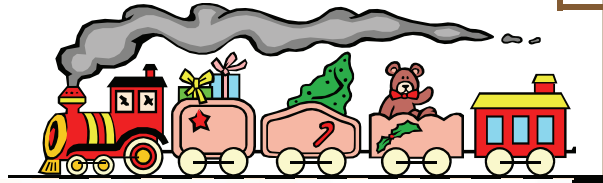


Hoyt House on East 6th Street at 118. Mary Hansen was visited recently by descendants of the family and they provided her with the pictures and the accompanying story.



Villisca Train Depot Models

Sharon Moriarty Pendleton's latest model



View: Looking at West End which was the freight terminal end. Southern exposure. One time the freight office had a shipment of live Gold Fish and they were dying so a bunch of us kids got them for free and used them for fish bait on the Nodaway rivers. My Mother's freezer was full of jars of frozen gold fish!



View: Looking at East End which was passenger terminal end. Northern exposure. The class of 59 departed and arrived there from their Senior Trip. I also recall the summer training for Company F and they would march to the depot to get on the train that would take them to Camp Ripley in Minnesota..

Historical Society Update and Sesquicentennial



Villisca History Society and Guests Host Luncheon for Kenneth and Audrea Higgins, Grand Marshalls of the parade. Editorial Comment: Villisca can be proud of this past summer's Sesquicentennial celebration. There were many volunteer hours expended to plan, organize, and execute the celebration. Villisca's untiring volunteerism is at the heart of the many and varied events that occur in Villisca. Next up is the 2009 All Class reunion for which planning is already underway. If you haven't found time to visit for one of their special occasions, please find the time to do so. It will be rewarding and fulfilling. I was especially pleased that most of our family was able to attend and to enjoy the simple pleasures of summer time in the heartland. The memories of Villisca Past are vivid and undying in many respects. For my sons and their families we were able to connect them to our heritage both on a family level as well as a cultural level. Our grandchildren, all of whom were able to attend, were very appreciative and respectful of the "small town" setting that is provided by Villisca and the other surrounding towns. All in all it was a terrific experience.

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4, November 2008

Officers

Mary Hansen President
113 W. 5th St.
Villisca, IA 50864
mhansen439@mchsi.com
Linda Moore Vice President
Janis Sue Enarson Secretary
Elinor Brown Treasurer

Mailing Labels Placed Here

Newsletter Editor:
Dave Higgins
azbirddog@msn.com
520-378-4114
8553 E. Double H Lane
Sierra Vista, AZ 85650

We're on the Web!

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

Stay current with Iowa History at the following web links:

<http://www.iowahistory.org/publications/historian/2008/historian-nov-dec-08.htm#LETTER.BLOCK3>

Villisca Historical Society Update:

Here is the amount in the bank account (Bank Iowa) for the Villisca Historical Society as of today, November 29, 2008. We have \$15,702.53. This includes the grant monies and special donations, some of which has been designated for the armory restoration.

Please get your Newsletter input to Mary or to the editor at azbirddog@msn.com. Pictures, stories, cherished memories are all welcome.