



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

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3, June 2008

HAPPY BIRTHDAY VILLISCA



The celebration schedule and related articles are provided in this special issue of the Villisca Historical Society's Newsletter.

WEEKEND SCHEDULE – visit villisca.com for updates

Class Reunions throughout weekend

FRIDAY

1-5 p.m.	<p>2nd Annual Bluejay Classic Golf Tournament contact Trisha Owen - 641-322-3261 or Katie James - 641-335-9447 for tournament information Swimming Pool open</p>
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SATURDAY

7:00 - 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. following parade following parade through the afternoon	<p>Breakfast at Senior Citizen Center- Fundraiser PARADE - "Stroll Down Memory Lane" Kenneth and Audrea Higgins, Grand Marshals Root Beer Floats at the Public Library Children's Games and Activities in City Park Lions Club- Ferris wheel, Spin Art, Possibly Space Pillow St. Joseph's Catholic Church- Donna Shum- Variety of games Jay & Sheila Johnson- Turn table, Dime Toss Cheerleaders- Face painting A-C Youth Group ~ Reno Smith FFA ~ Boy/Girl Scouts ~ 4-H clubs Swimming Pool Open Antiques tractors and cars on display near the Square</p>
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Continued on page 2.

Continued from Page 1, **SATURDAY**

Noon Food	Strand Lutheran Church - Main Area in Park Presbyterians - Hair Kut Korner Advent Christian R.O.C.K. - in the park VFW Hall - Legion Club - D & D - Villisca Foods at their business locations
Following parade to 2:00 Following parade to 5:00 1:00 - 4:30 Noon to 2:00 Noon to 5:00 1:00 to 3:00 2:00 to 4:15 PM	City Hall open with History Displays Villisca Public Library - 100th Anniversary Celebration with Audrea Higgins Bingo at VFW Hall - Historical artifacts on display at VFW Hall Jam Session - Jim Wymore, Carl Orand, at the Bandstand History Fair - High School Gymnasium Book signings Special Historical Quilts on display ~exquisite model of the Lincoln School booths and displays by Chamber of Commerce ~ VAFA ~ PEO ~ Interchurch Council ~ Presbyterian Church ~ United Methodist Church ~ Lions Club ~ FFA ~ Past Heritage Days by Susie Enarson and Elinor Brown ~ Historical Society ~ Progress Club ~ Remembrance Book ~ others to be determined Fire Station and meeting room open with Historical pictures and displays Open House at the Villisca Power Plant Olson Linn Museum and the Ax Murder House – contact Darwin Linn at 641-322-4202 Villisca Historical Society Presentations at the Rialto <i>Lost Nation: The Ioway</i> Question & Answers regarding the Ioway ~ John Palmquist and the Rundles Reading from a forthcoming book on the 1912 Villisca axe murders/Q&A w/Dr. Epperly and the Rundles
Evening food 5:30 – 5:30 7:00 p.m. 9:00 - 1:00	Barbeque - Firemen on the Square Inter Church Ice Cream Social at the Senior Citizens Center "Nunsensations" Comedy-Musical at the Rialto Theatre. Street Dance with the X-Ray Glasses Band on the Square

SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. Noon Noon to 5:00 1:00 to 5:00 1:00 2:00 5:00 to 8:00	Interchurch Worship Service in the City Park Softball Tournament sponsored by Lions Club contact LuAnn Halda, 712-370-3254, \$60 per team, limit 10 teams, June 27 deadline for entries Brunch by the Advent Christian Ladies at the Community Center Lunch at the VFW Hall History Fair at the High School Gymnasium Swimming Pool Open Garden Walk Horse Show - Nodaway Saddle Club Arena "Nunsensations" Comedy-Musical at the Rialto Theatre Villisca Country Clubhouse open for evening meal
6:30 to Dusk at the Bluejay Football Field Dusk	Barbeque by the Villisca Chamber of Commerce Life Net Helicopter, Games, Carnival by the Public Library, DJ Music by Giblers FIREWORKS by Night Visions at the Bluejay Football Field

HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPONSORS SOME KEY EVENTS.

Award-winning “Lost Nation: The loway” film makes Southwest Iowa debut for Villisca’s Sesquicentennial Celebration

- *Documentary explores dramatic saga of loway Tribe*
- *Historian Epperly will participate in reading excerpts from forthcoming non-fiction book on 1912 axe murder mystery*
- *Infamous murder axe to be displayed by Villisca Historical Society*

VILLISCA – The critically-acclaimed film “Lost Nation: The loway” will be showcased in a special Villisca Historical Society screening event at the Rialto Theater in Villisca, Iowa on Saturday, July 5 at 2:00 p.m. as part of the town’s Sesquicentennial celebration.

From Kelly and Tammy Rundle, the creators of the award-winning documentary “Villisca: Living with a Mystery,” “Lost Nation” explores the dramatic saga of the loway tribe, from their pre-history ancestors to their present-day locations in Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Stanton resident John Palmquist, a certified amateur archaeologist and loway scholar, will join the Rundles for Q&A following the film. Palmquist introduced the Rundles to the story of the loway, and was made an honorary tribal member of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma.

We are pleased to share the story of the loway for this special Villisca Sesquicentennial celebration,” said Director Kelly Rundle. “loway leader White Cloud was assassinated in 1834 as he camped north of Villisca on the Nodaway River.”

The film recently won a Bronze Telly Award for ‘Outstanding Achievement in a Television Documentary’; garnered three top awards including ‘Best Documentary 2008’ at the Iowa Independent Film Festival and the Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival; and placed second, out of 40 documentaries, at the Beloit International Film Festival—one of four film festivals in the country hailed by the *New York Times* as an alternative to Sundance.

Continued from page 3.

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During the second part of the program, historian Dr. Edgar Epperly of Decorah, Iowa will join the Rundles on stage for a special presentation on the town's 1912 axe murder case. Epperly has studied the murders over fifty years, written numerous articles, and was the primary consultant on the Academy Award qualifier "Villisca: Living with a Mystery". He is currently co-authoring a book with the Rundles on the murder mystery. Excerpts from the book will be read during the program, and audience members will be invited to participate in Q&A with Epperly and the Rundles.

For the first time in several years the Villisca Historical Society will display the infamous murder axe. The weapon was acquired by Epperly during his research and donated to the Villisca Historical Society in October 2006. The artifact is currently on loan to the State Historical Society of Iowa in Des Moines.

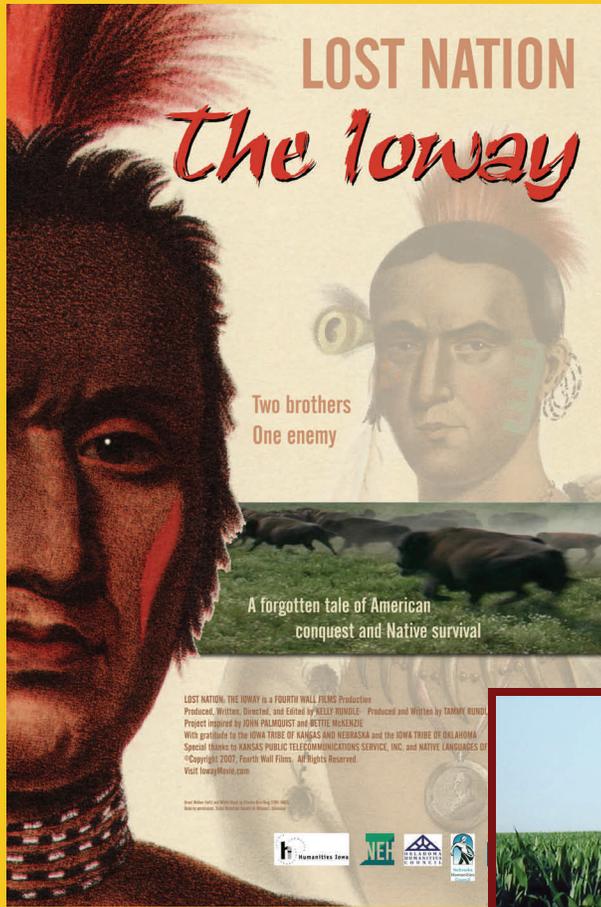
This special Villisca Historical Society event will take place 2:00 p.m.-4:15 p.m. on Saturday, July 5, 2008 at the Rialto Theatre, 422 S. 3rd Avenue, Villisca, Iowa 50864. Admission is \$5/per person and reservations can be made at 712-826-4270. Doors open at 1:30 p.m. Concessions will be available by the Rialto Theater Board.

The loway were early inhabitants of what is now known as the state of Iowa. They once claimed the land between the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, and as far north as Pipestone, Minnesota, and as far south as St. Louis, Missouri. The state of Iowa was named for the loway tribe after their removal from the state in 1837. The loway had village sites in Iowa, Eastern Nebraska, and Northern Missouri, and many have lived on a reservation that straddles the Kansas-Nebraska border since 1838.

"Lost Nation: The loway" was funded in part by Humanities Iowa, the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Kansas Humanities Council, the Oklahoma Humanities Council, Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



CONTINUATION OF THE GENEALOGY ARTICLE BY MARY ANN DUNKIN WILL BE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF YOUR VHSI NEWSLETTER

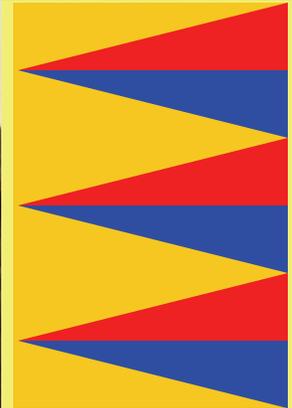
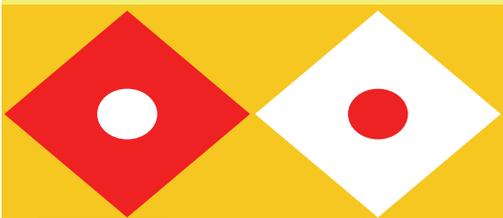


*Pictures associated with the Rundle's production of: Lost Nation, the Ioway
At left a promotion poster for their film which will be presented in Uillisca during the celebration.*

Below: Tammy Rundle, noted amateur archaeologist John Palmquist of Stanton, Iowa and Kelly Rundle on location at the site of the assassination of Chief White Cloud, north of Uillisca on the Nodaway river bottom.

Far Bottom: Tammy and Kelly filming a buffalo stampede "Tatanka". Shades of "Dances with Wolves"

Many thanks to the Rundle's for sharing their press release with us for publication.





TRAVELING QUILT SHOW

Villisca Names to be on Display At Clarinda; Red Oak Museums and During Heritage Days

Friendship quilts had special meaning for those who were traveling westward in the nineteenth century across the prairie, as they could look at the quilt and remember friends and family left behind.

A popular type of quilt made during the nineteenth century was the signature quilt, or friendship quilt. Indelible ink was available after 1840, making it possible to not only sign a quilt, but to add inscriptions including poetry or personal messages. Elaborate autographs and inscriptions are seen in quilts made even before the Civil War. Quilts in which all the blocks are the same pattern are called "friendship" quilts.

Each person made a block and then signed it. Sometimes one person made the quilt, and then every person--man, woman or child-- signed a block. Sometimes a person with exceptional handwriting inscribed all the signatures. Often the names were then gone over with embroidery stitches to insure permanency.

There was an apparent resurgence of interest in friendship quilts in and around Villisca in the 1920s, 1930s and early 1940's. The rural neighborhoods are reflected in the name groupings. Five of these quilts will go on display, first in Clarinda at the Nodaway Valley Historical Museum from June 21-29, in Villisca during Heritage Days (July 4, 5, 6) at the Villisca Community High School, and then in Red Oak, starting July 7 through August 1 at the Montgomery County Historical Society. Two of these quilts contain names of the wives of railroad workers in Villisca in the 1930's and early 1940's.

Antique Quilt Inspires Fond Memories

Kathy Wertman Hampton (Villisca High School Class of 1964) writes from Peoria, Arizona: "I just read your article concerning the 1927 quilt and was so surprised to see my Grandmother's name on it. My Grandmother was Leila Wertman. She was an inspiration to me growing up although she passed away when I was a young girl. I remember her as a fiesty, fun and warm person.. She taught me how to play canasta and cook Indian corn. She had the patience of Job! She took my brother and I to the city park in Clarinda to play. We always looked forward to spending the weekend with her. My Grandfather passed away when I was very young so I have limited memories of him. It was always my Grandmother and my Aunt Mary."

Retired Villisca Librarian, Audrea Higgins of Las Cruces, New Mexico writes: "My folks moved into Villisca to a house on the corner of West 6th Street and Stoddard Avenue when I was nine years old. At that time we kids walked all over town, alone, without fear, and knew where everyone lived, and were not afraid to speak to those we didn't know. My earliest roots were north of Villisca. I was born on the Frank and Eva Gourley rented farm, northwest of Sciola. My grandparent Anna (Larson) and Helen Powers lived north of Sciola on Highway 71, one farm north of the Skahill farm on the east side of the road. I remember well the summer Highway 71 was paved and what a great improvement that was. I also remember well the Morton Mills area. In the late 1920's and early 1930's there was a barber shop, two grocery stores (Prather's and Seaburg and Johnson), a bank, and a pool hall and restaurant operated by the Bryant family. McCracken garage was also there, and an oil station and a nice school, at which my aunt, Doris Powers Jergenson, taught at one time. We are looking forward to the celebration."

LEE GOURLEY. Lee's story was rekindled by some of the recent quilt stories and the recognition of the Gourley name

Fletcher and Maud(e) Gourley, farmers near Morton Mills, had six children who lived to adulthood: Ralph Elroy (Leo Gourley's father, born in 1898 who died 1974 and married Eula Burk (a quilt name); Belva Irene, born 1902, died 1985, married Fred Focht (Their children are Janice Lewis and Marvin Focht of Villisca); Asbury Floyd, born 1903, died 1967, Married Ferne Hyde, farmed north of Clearfield; Elzene Loletta, born 1906, died 1987, married Waldo Penton, farmed west of Villisca, (son Jerry Penton of Villisca); Fletcher Alvin, Born 1912, died 1991, married Lois Holdren, CEO Prairie Farms, Carlinville, Illinois; and Walter Leo, born 1915, died 1986, Married Betty Lindsey, farmed at Morton Mills.

It is Walter and Betty's son that is highlighted, for he was indeed a Villiscan worthy of celebration, a war hero who gave his life for his country during the Vietnam War era: Laurent Lee Gourley.

Laurent Lee "Buster" Gourley was born to Walter & Betty Gourley on September 5, 1944. (Walt died in 1986; Betty died in 2004.) Lee grew up on a farm at Morton's Mill, Iowa with his three siblings, Floyd "Butch", Elzene, and Fred. He was the only one in his country school class so transferred to Villisca in 8th grade. He graduated as Valedictorian from Villisca High School in 1962; graduated with Highest Honors from the US Air Force Academy with a majors in Astronautics and was Commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the USAF in 1966; and got his Masters' degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Purdue University in 1967.

By November 1968 he was an F-100F fighter pilot in South Vietnam. He volunteered for a 90-day assignment as FAC (Forward Air Controller). That's what he was doing when he was shot down over Laos on August 9, 1969. He was placed in Missing in Action status. He was promoted to the rank of Major December 2, 1969.

During 2001-2002, a joint U.S./Lao People's Democratic Republic team excavated a plane crash site in Xepon District, Savannakhet Province, Laos. Recovered remains were interred at the Villisca Cemetery in October, 2002.

VHSI DISPLAYS AT H.S. GYM DURING THE CELEBRATION

- Five friendship quilts (signature quilts)
- A replica of the honor roll board that used to hang on Andrews clothing store from WWII
- A display of books written by Margaret Posten, teacher
- "Memories", a book for sale by Audrea Higgins. \$20 per copy

We are going to include in this section articles from contributors that have provided information about Villisca or of their personal memories of growing up in those by gone days of yesterday! Feel free to provide us with your thoughts and memories. The following recollections are appreciated.

From Lorene Neal:

I remember

1947-- Captain Denny Neal returning from service in WWII being asked to re-organize Co. F., 168th Inf. 34th Division at the Villisca Armory. I (wife, Lorene) was unofficial company clerk for some time while men were being recruited. Albert Baker, home from service in the Navy, enlisted and as he had qualifications to be company clerk lost her job.

The military balls the company held annually with a local girl elected as queen of the ball. A colorful part of the ball was the Grand March with the men in dress or class A uniforms and ladies in their prettiest formals.

The company bringing in donkey basketball players to play volunteers from the company ranks.

A ring set up on the drill floor for a visiting team of wrestlers and getting to watch them practice their choreographed moves. This appeared to be more for show, not for skill.

The cooking school that was held each year with vendors' booths on three sides of the armory and a stage on the north end for musicals and other presentations. There many enthusiastic young people acted, sang and danced in the presentations--most being returned servicemen from WWII and their wives. They were ready for fun after their experiences.

A huge rummage sale in the armory put on by all Villisca's churches. Items sold so well that one of the women discovered that her coat with car keys in a pocket had been sold. Fortunately, someone remembered the coat and to whom it had been sold and it was returned.

And, of course, the excitement of Villisca's basketball games all being played there. Seating was close to the playing floor. The early comers usually sat in the balcony. The custodian in charge of the armory was always eager to get everyone out of the building right after the game and turned out the lights almost before people got out of the door.

FACTS AND TRIVIA

Iowa was almost 75 years old before the state flag was adopted by the General Assembly. Creation of the state flag had been suggested for years by patriotic organizations, but no action was taken until World War I, when Iowa National Guardsmen stationed along the Mexican border suggested a state flag was needed to designate their unit. This prompted the state's Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to design a flag in 1917.

Born **Donnabelle Mullenger** in Denison, Oscar Award-winning actress, **Donna Reed**, started her career at the young age of 16

Lewis and Clark celebrate July 4 Staging the first-ever Fourth of July celebration west of the Mississippi River, Lewis and Clark fire the expedition cannon and order an extra ration of whiskey for the men.

Remember When!

The Editor sez: I remember vividly the celebration in Villisca for our Centennial in 1958. At that time Mr. Tom Cooney was also recognized as Villisca's oldest citizen. I remember him sitting on his chair in the east side of his yard at his house located on the Northwest corner of 2nd avenue and 4th Street. He was always kind to the kids and talked to all of us when we saw him in the yard. I asked Mary Hansen to do some research for me about Tom and the following is reprinted from a Montgomery County History Book, circa 1957.

Tom Cooney, Villisca, who was 97 June 11th, came to Montgomery county from Pennsylvania in May 1857. Red Oak and Villisca were not on the map then. His family left Pennsylvania, came down the Ohio River to the Mississippi River boated down the Missouri River getting off at St. Joseph's Missouri, where their boat ran aground on a sand bar. From St. Joseph they headed north by horse and wagon, and settled in Montgomery county on a farm two and a half miles northeast of Villisca. Tom Cooney was eleven months old at the time.

About all there was in the county at the time were mills --- the Silkett mill, north of where Red Oak is now, Morton's Mill and Tenville Mill. Wheat and oats were the chief farm crops, but much blue stem grass grew on the rolling hills.

In 1902, Mr. Cooney left the farm and took up the carpenter's trade. The biggest wage he ever got was \$18.00 a month.

Cooney's favorite "work" was hunting and fishing. There were "millions" of prairie chickens in Montgomery county. Wild pigeons and wild turkeys were abundant. He molded his own bullets, which he used in his fourteen pound rifle.

The old West Nodaway River was Mr. Cooney's "stomping grounds". His first fishing pole was a willow branch, the line he made from sewing thread, and the hook was a bent pin. He has now gone 'modern' with fishing tackle. He has hooked wall-eyes, sun fish, shiners, bullheads and catfish in the river. In 1947 he caught a twelve and a half pound catfish with hook and line.

Mr. Cooney remembers when Montgomery county was prairie as far as one could see. He remembers there were Indians here when he came -- Pottawattamies -- who camped by Morton's Mill. They were peaceful Indians and never caused any trouble. He remembers too when the railroad started through the county in the fall of 1869.

But the West Nodaway River -- the river that Cooney says he'll walk along and fish as long as there is life in him, the river he doesn't know how many times he has fallen into -- the river is "his".

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

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We're on the Web!

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



Model, The Lincoln Building, Elementary School Built 1901, Cost \$16K

Model of Lincoln Elementary Building to be displayed during the celebration at the HS Gym. This model was built by Sharon Moriarty Pendleton. She attended Lincoln Elementary until 1951 when she and her family moved to Kansas City.

Many of us spent time in this building with fond memories. Recalling that there was playground equipment on both the South and North side. A basketball court was on the North side where many of us honed our BB skills. I also remember the fire escape drills and crawling along the ledge that was right below the first floor windows. I think I started in the SE corner in the basement in Kindergarten and then gradually moved through all the rooms until going into 5th grade. I think that was in the North East corner of the building. A coal chute was in the NW corner of the basement