

# Iowa County History

Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society

Volume XXXI

No. 4

October 2006

## Potpourri

The July Ice Cream Social was a huge success with record attendance. The attendees approved of the by-law change, enjoyed the food, Tom Peterson's blacksmithing, Janette Hartman's needlework expertise and Tom Bedtka's music. Next...the annual Meeting on Thursday, October 26th.

Loyal and diligent is the best description of volunteers Francis Portwine, Dave Pearson, John Martell, Bill Sievert and John Hess who scraped paint and painted the ancient east end of the Dodge Cabin.

Are you current with the payment of your ICHS dues? Our membership year is July 1 through June 30. If the date on your address label is 06/30/2006, your renewal is over due. We depend on membership dues to pay the costs of printing and mailing this newsletter. Thank you.

Matt Sweeny of Dodgeville recently volunteered to assume responsibility for the ICHS website at:

**lowacountyhistoricalsociety.org.**

Matt is a professional web designer employed by Copyco Solutions of Des Plaines, Illinois. ... The web site host is Coppermine, a free Multimedia Gallery. Study their features at the ICHS site.

Thanks to Chuck Peplinski of Dodgeville for getting the site off the ground. Volunteers like Chuck and Matt will shake the earth with their skill, energy and good will.

**Public Invited  
Annual Meeting  
Thursday, October 26  
7:00 p.m.  
Stonefield Apartments  
404 E. Madison St.  
Dodgeville  
Featuring  
George Walterschausen  
Illinois Central Railroad  
Historian  
Stories-Pictures-Drama  
Election of Directors  
light lunch to follow  
A new location  
A new date**

*The goal of the ICHS  
Board of Directors is not  
to get done but to get  
something done*

## ICHS Directors

Alice Griffiths, Pres.	935-0574
Boyd Geer, VP	930-9084
John Hess, Sec.	588-7082
Marie Sersch, Treas.	935-5752
Melva Phillips	924-5508
Helen Radtke	987-2892
Therese McCarrager	967-2232
Tom Wilson	935-7707
Neil Giffey, Editor	935-5557

[giffey@mhtc.net](mailto:giffey@mhtc.net)

## In This Issue

**Cornish Wrestling Rediscovered**  
Page 2

**George Walterschausen**  
Railroad Historian  
*The Illinois Central ...  
Highway  
to Small Town America*

Public  
Welcome



Details  
See  
Page 3

**Test Your  
Iowa County  
Knowledge**

People and Places  
from the past  
Page 4



Tom Wilson  
writes a letter  
Page 5

**Farming and the Railroad**  
Page 6

**Board Minutes Sept. 11, 2006**  
Page 7

## Cornish Wrestling Rediscovered

by Neil Giffey

In tribute to the Celts who abound in Iowa County, the Editor has determined to shine a bit of light on "Cornish Wrestling" hoping to stimulate the growth of Cornish wrestling in Iowa County. Being partly of Celtic blood himself, however, not so fortunate as to carry Cornish genes and not so calloused as to ignore the blood sport of his cousins, he is moderately pleased to announce that another Celt, an Irishman, resident on the Beara Peninsula of County Cork, Republic of Ireland, has become the World Champion of Cornish Wrestling! (*Weight class unknown and name held confidential to protect the guilty.*) The reader may ask, what is Cornish Wrestling? The simple answer is that it is a way to wrestle standing up! Famous in ages past it has few rules and many pitfalls.

The sport is very ancient and it is native to Cornwall. If for example, to slake his thirst, a traveler were to enter the Red Lion Hotel in 1826, he would have been served by a giant of a man with the neck of a bull, dark curling sideboards, piercing eyes and a determined jaw. That man would have been the famous champion, **James Polkinghorne**, native to **St. Keverne**. A plaque commemorates his great and inconclusive match with **Abram Cann**, champion of Devon, on 23 October, 1826. Next time in Cornwall observe as follows:

The wrestlers wear shorts covered by long canvas jackets on which all "grips" are taken. To succeed it is necessary to grip the jacket and the body of the man beneath the jacket and throw him to the ground. Points are scored depending on the number of pins touching the ground at the same time. (*Two shoulders two hips = four pins.*) Three officials, armed with

canes and called "sticklers," keep score and decorum in the seats and in the arena. The spectators become highly exercised at times. They are not "sticklers for good behavior." If a wrestler was thrown and three points touched the ground at the same time, the "thrower" was declared the winner. If less than three points touched the ground, the match continued for ten minutes and the wrestler with the most points was declared the winner. The individual bouts were often part of elimination tournaments.



Cornish wrestling is an ancient diversion from the trials of hard rock mining and making pastys. An account by **Geoffrey of Monmouth** in 1139 describes a legendary fight between the Celtic champion Corineus and the last remaining Cornish giant. The bout ended when Corineus threw the giant over a cliff. Documentation is unavailable. Where were

the sticklers? Surely Corineus did not swear to the wrestlers oath which reads thusly: *On my honour and the honour of my country, I swear to wrestle without treachery or brutality and in token of my sincerity, I offer my hand to my opponent. In the words of my forefathers "gwary Whek yu gwary tek" which translated from Cornish means "good play is fair play."*

A limited sighting of Celts in Wisconsin inclines this writer to the observation that they were not bred for size nor height, **James Polkinghorne** to the contrary. The advantages of modest size are twofold: 1- They were not qualified to serve in the Queen's Guard. (Well, most of them.) 2- If thrown to the ground when wrestling, they didn't have far to fall.

---

### Directors Nominated

The ICHS Nominating Committee has recommended the following for election at the annual meeting October 16, 2006: **Boyd Geer, Neil Giffey, Tom Wilson, Therese McCarragher and Eileen Arndt** who previously served as an ICHS director .

*Long-term Director Melva Phillips has declined to be nominated. We will honor Melva for her long and inspired tour of duty at a later date.*

---

### Dedicated Computer at ICHS

Thanks to the continued generosity of an anonymous ICHS Director, the Society now has a computer dedicated to Internet functions and various routine office duties. The other computer is kept busy by volunteers who catalog and provide a digital record of ICHS archives.

# Public Welcome

## Railroad Historian George Walterschausen to Speak at Annual Meeting

*Thursday, October 26 ... Stonefield Apartments  
Dodgeville 7 p.m.*

*Election of Directors and light snacks to follow*



Old 458 at Dodgeville September 14, 1941

*the power point show at Stonefield Apartments on East Madison Street in Dodgeville. Lots of seats available, enjoy the romance of the rails as applied to rural communities and have a light snack with your neighbors after the projector lights go dark.*

Guest speaker **George Walterschausen** has a passion to recreate the impact of early railroading on the lives of Midwestern citizens. After a long career as a Professor of Art at Monmouth College in Central Illinois, George has retired to De Soto in Crawford County, Wisconsin and is consumed by a desire to know all there is to know about the Illinois Central and the other railroad enterprises in southwest Wisconsin. He has researched and recorded both the human and economic impacts of the railroad industry on small rural communities such as still thrive in Iowa County. *If you know a railroad buff or two (and who doesn't), invite them to attend*



"High Bridge" trestle just east of Dodgeville

## Acquisitions

**Correction** July Newsletter listed Red Cross uniform given by **Barbara Arneson** and worn by her mother **Agnes Arneson** as worn by and given by Barbara Anderson and Agnes Anderson. We regret the error.

**Nordeen Gilbertson**, Spring Green, Wis.: Video-Clyde History-2004.

**Kathy Vergin**, Avoca, Wis.: Barneveld HS material incl. photographs of 1961 Barneveld HS junior prom.

**Barbara Smith Hohlstein**, Wauwatosa, Wis.: Smith Family Genealogy, Cornwall and Iowa County.

**Harold McCaulley**, Hollandale, Wis.: Photo-Spring Valley Cheese Factory.

**Mary E. Evans**, Sheboygan, Wis.: 7 scrapbooks, clippings and announcements, compiled by Martha Evans.

**Susanna Paull**, Ridgeway, Wis.: Postcards-Ridgeway and Cobb scenes.

**Harold Kurtz**, New Brighton, MN: Misc. photos Avoca and Eden Twp.

**Patricia Sommerfeldt**, Dodgeville, Wis.: Slides and photos Mineral Point, Hellum's workshop and Spensley furnace.

**Aletha Gibbon Miller**, Burlington, Wis.: WWI documents issued to Pvt. Reid Gibbon.

**Raymond Williams**, Fitchburg, Wis.: One-man and two-man saw, owned by William D. Roberts of Rewey, Wis.

**Julia Shreve**, Dodgeville, Wis.: 55 documents, awards, newspapers, postcards and reports mostly relating to local schools.

**June Olson**, Dodgeville, Wis.: School, Army and related material from collection of Fred H. Olson.

**Byron and Dorothy Peterson**, Madison, Wis.: Genealogy: The Christopher Peterson and Elsie Ulvind Fraurud Family.

**Randy Larson**, Indian Harbor, FL: Genealogy: Ancestors of Randy Dean Larson

## Test Your Knowledge of Iowa County History

Call, email or write the Editor with your identification of these Iowa County related people, events and buildings. Start with the Warrior Chief in the center and work clockwise from the top of the page ... A word of caution ... some of the subjects may not have resided in Iowa County all of their lives but ... they all contributed to Iowa County.



**Test your research skills?  
Five out of nine isn't bad!**

## “Hats Off” Department

Dylan Thomas and Kyle Calvert responded to a request for help preparing the Dodge Cabin for repainting. Their vigorous efforts were on Labor Day, no less. We salute them and hope to engage them again if the need arises.

To Joan Bennett for her diligent efforts and constant research to assure that **The Cheese Factories of Iowa County** will be as complete as humanly possible when it reaches the printer. By the way ... as Joan and others of the staff work, they continue to discover previously unrecorded cheese factories and creameries which must be included in the rapidly growing volume. The publication date looms further than just around the corner unless you help.

### Founding President John Helmenstine Visits the Society

On July 13 founding president **John Helmenstine** and his wife drove over from Milwaukee for a look at the Iowa County institution of which he was a vital part. At that time John was a history teacher in Barneveld. His recollections were that he wrote an editorial for the Dodgeville Chronicle stressing the need for a county historical society. Interested parties then met in the Courthouse, planned and held a variety of events which effectively publicized the need to remember our settler past.



### Newspaper Microfilm at ICHS

Arena Wis. Star, 1874-1876 and 1877-1886, becomes Dodgeville Star in 1883-1886, becomes Rural Eye, 1887-1887  
The Eye and Star 1893-1895 becomes The New Star, 1895-1896  
Rural Eye of Arena, 1887-1888 and 1888-1889 becomes The Eye and Star, 1890-1893  
Index to Wisconsin Miscellaneous Newspapers  
New Star, 1896-1897  
New Star, 1898-1900  
Dodgeville Chronicle, 1862-2004 ... complete  
Barneveld Banner, some issues missing  
The Hollandale Review, some issues missing

*Contact ICHS in advance to access, study and print hard copy of the stories you wish most to know.*

## Tom Wilson Offers An Opinion

Dear Editor:

I'm completing my first year as a Director for the Iowa County Historical Society. I do not claim to know much about the Society but firmly believe that there is a need for preserving the past.

I've attended about a half-dozen meetings at the Museum and have been impressed at the number of interesting people that have stopped in. Two different families donated/offered photographs of their families or special events and one offered photos of a former cheese factory near his farm.

My father, **James W. Wilson**, has been mentioned in different articles authored by **Leon Nelson**. Dad had a veterinary practice in Dodgeville from 1943 to 1967. This was at a time before refrigerated boxes were available for the veterinarians' trucks. My mother has thought about donating items from his veterinary practice to this Society but has decided to wait until the items could be displayed.

Most of us who have grown up in Iowa County have had similar experiences, but each of us also have experiences/backgrounds that are unique as well. I wonder how many items might be donated to this Society, if we had room to display them - and the many articles/items that the Society already has but must be stored due to lack of display area. Wouldn't it be great if you could read and learn about some tool at the Mu-



seum and then apply that knowledge when you run across old parts by an abandoned junk pile or near the edge of a field or pasture?

I hope that our Society is able to secure funding necessary to build an addition to the

Museum. It's been said that no farmer ever built a machine-shed too large for his possessions. I trust that the members and directors of this Society will determine how large an addition will be needed rather than decide to build an addition almost big enough.

Sincerely, Tom Wilson

## Farming and the Railroad

by Boyd Geer

*The ICHS has developed an interpretive program in the Ridgeway Depot to demonstrate the rapid expansion of Wisconsin agriculture as the railroads pushed through the land. The Friends of The Military Ridge is the group responsible for the well-done restoration of the old Northwestern railroad depot. Editor.*

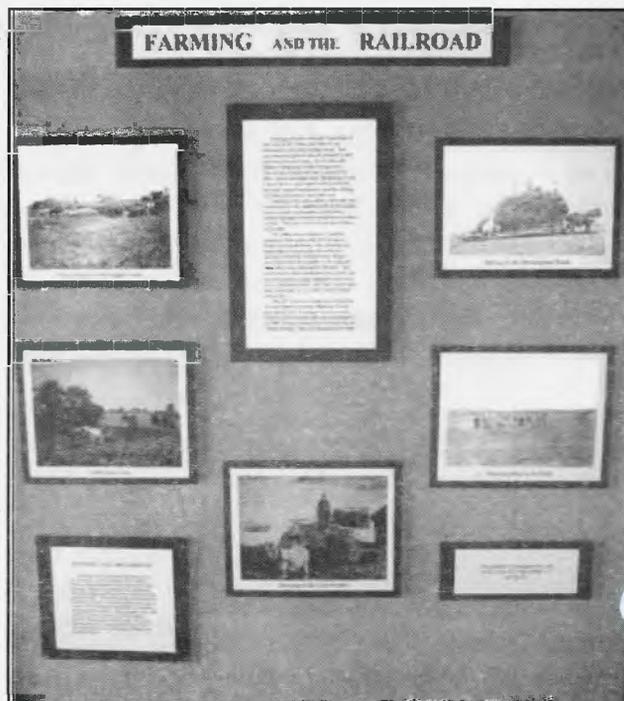
Farming started to become important in this area in the 1830s and 1840s in the aftermath of the lead-mining boom. The government legalized the sale of land in 1847 and wheat became king. By the time this Military Ridge line of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad was completed in 1881, wheat was dethroned. Replacing it was a more diverse agriculture which included dairying, animal husbandry and the raising of crops such as hay, oats and corn.

Starting in the early 1850s, railroads were constructed in the southern half of Wisconsin to serve small communities and farmers, connecting them to major markets and urban centers. This line was one of the last of these to be built.

The 1880 census counted 1.3 million people in Wisconsin, with 76% living on farms or in small towns. The railroad was important to rural areas; and with the opening of this line, farmers and villagers here finally had the benefits of the railroad that other areas had for decades. They could market their products more widely and quickly and have goods shipped to them at a more reasonable price. Also, they could enjoy daily passenger service that cut travel time drastically.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the automobile and the highway system. Highway 18 was laid out in 1933. Passenger service was no longer a vital necessity and was discontinued in 1950. Freight volume also declined and the "Ridge Runner" line was abandoned in 1982.

*Dodgeville resident Boyd Geer is the Society Archivist.*



A portion of the ICHS display in the restored Ridgeway Depot. Several early farm implements are included in the interpretive display.



Salvation Army Band at Rewey

### Look Familiar?

Captain Bayer and his Salvation Army Band were at Rewey for a week each year, boarding with the villagers and doing their outreach in a local church. We believe the scene is circa 1920. Surely there must be a reader or two who recalls the activities of this gently robust group. Contact the Editor if you can help.

The Salvation Army is a successor to the Cold Water Temple and other volunteer organizations of the 1870s and 1880s in small town America. A glance at the County History "1881" shows that temperance and political organizations filled a social need in those times which has been overwhelmed by rapid communication in this century.

**IOWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Synopsis ... Minutes of the September 11, 2006 Board Meeting**

Meeting called to order by President Alice Griffith at 10:10 AM at the Museum.

Other Board members present: Boyd Geer, Neil Giffey, John Hess, Therese McCarragher, Melva Phillips, Helen Radtke, Marie Sersch and Tom Wilson. The minutes of the August 15, 2006 Board Meeting were read, and accepted with a motion by Neil, second by Marie, motion carried. The Treasurer's report was presented, and accepted with a motion by Helen, second by Therese, motion carried.

**Hidden Valley Ad** - Jack Reynolds, representing the Hidden Valley visitor guide, solicited the ICHS for an ad for the 2007 issue. Distribution is about 110,000, and the cost is \$182 for a two color black and red ad. He suggested changes to last year's ad to include "Visitors Welcome". After his departure and discussion, motion by Helen, second by Marie to place ad in the 2007 edition. Motion carried 8-1.

**Email** - Alice advised Dorothy will check email every day that she is at the Museum.

**Annual Meeting** - Discussed plans for Annual Meeting with decision not to serve a meal but continue with the traditional refreshments and snacks after the meeting. Meeting date changed from the traditional fourth Tuesday in October to Thursday, October 26, to accommodate schedule of invited speaker George Walterschausen, who will do a power point presentation on the Illinois Central Railroad. Meeting will be at Stonefield, subject to availability on October 26, and equipment will be procured to accommodate power point presentation. Tom proposed extensive publicity to include inviting current property owners in the former right of way of the railroad.

**Nominations for Board of Directors** - Terms of five Board of Directors positions will expire in October at the Annual Meeting. Alice appointed the four directors whose terms do not expire to a Nominating Committee. Therese, Boyd, Neil and Tom agreed to be placed on the ballot and serve if re-elected. Melva advised she will not stand for re-election, but will continue to be active and serve on committees. Eileen Arndt, who previously agreed to stand for nomination, will also be placed on the ballot. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the Annual Meeting.

**Iowa County Fair books and videos** - Subject items used at the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Display Booth will be donated to the ICHS. Discussed how to utilize and display.

**Museum space utilization** - Motion by Boyd to place school desks in temporary storage to create much needed work space, and re-arrange furnishings to create two areas, one for research and one for exhibits. Motion seconded by Neil. During discussion John emphasized that the proposal was for temporary storage until Museum display space could be expanded. All other school room items would remain. Motion carried 6-3.

**Museum display case** - Discussed possibility of offering one display case to the Ridgeway Depot to free up space. Not action taken.

**Cornish Festival** - ICHS to have booth for book sales in Mineral Point Senior Center on Sept 23 from 10 AM to 2 PM. John to set it up and attend it.

**Upcoming events**

Point of Beginnings Meeting Sept 28 to include tour of Dodge Mining Camp Cabin and ICHS Museum. Directors scheduled for the tours.

Wisconsin Council for Local History SW Regional Convention Sept 30 in Prairie du Chien. Boyd, Neil and John will attend.

ICHS Bake Sale at Dick's Piggly Wiggly. Date set for Nov 4.

Next meeting will be the Annual Meeting on October 26.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM John Hess Secretary

**It Pays to Dig in the ICHS Attic**

While digging in the much maligned museum storeroom recently, a volunteer located a long forgotten electric typewriter. What a find! Ideal for very small office jobs and working its way into consideration as an antique artifact all by itself.



**Adobe Hut in Dodgeville?**

A few years ago a now deceased local historian informed this Editor that the tiny lot where we later placed the Dodge Cabin had been the early home of an adobe cabin. Demolished circa 1970, does anyone remember this desert climate structure? It seems that adobe would melt away in moist Wisconsin. Help ... help. Editor.

**The Last Buggy Whip Still Last**

Promised for this issue "The Last Buggy Whip" has been relegated to the January newsletter.



**Arrange for an appointment at ICHS.**

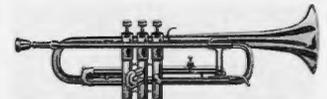
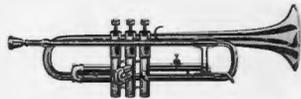
We can take your messages 24-7. We will reply as soon as possible. Leave your name, telephone number, mail address and/or email address for fast service. Call: 608-935-7694 or email: [ichistory@mhtc.net](mailto:ichistory@mhtc.net)

**Membership Application**

Iowa County Historical Society

MAIL TO: MARIE SERSCH

106 E. Pine St., Dodgeville, WI 53533



Individual-annual \$10.00	5 year \$40.00
Couples-annual \$15.00	5 year \$60.00
Historian-annual	\$25.00
Master Historian-annual	\$50.00

*Membership dues and categories*

*Membership year is July 1st—June 30th*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ P. O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Period \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

*I am interested in making a tax deductible gift to the Iowa County Historical Society. Please contact me at the above address.*

*Signed* \_\_\_\_\_

Volume XXXI No. 4 October 2006

**Iowa County Historical Society**

1301 N. Bequette St.

P. O. Box 44

Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

**MEMBERSHIPS****MAIL TO: MARIE SERSCH**

106 E. Pine St., Dodgeville, WI 53533

Individual-annual \$10.00 5 year \$40.00

Couples-annual \$15.00 5 year \$60.00

Historian, annual \$25.00

Master Historian, annual \$50.00

Membership year is July 1st-June 30th

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
DODGEVILLE, WI  
PERMIT NO. 86

Address Service Requested

**ICHS SERVICES -GENEALOGY-HISTORIC RESEARCH**

The Society has archives for Iowa County: history-cemeteries-  
obituaries-photographs-newspaper microfilm-artifacts

Open May-September

Monday-Friday

10 am-Noon and 1 pm-4 pm

All year by appointment

Phone us 24/7: 608-935-7694.

email: [ichistory@mhtc.net](mailto:ichistory@mhtc.net)Web site: [iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org)**Calendar of Events**

Visitors Welcome

Annual Meeting

Thursday, October 26, 2006

7 p. m. Stonefield Apartments

Learn Railroad History withGeorae Walterschausen

Elect Directors

Light lunch to follow

**Blue Mounds Rendezvous***Noon October 21 through noon October 22**Brigham County Park, Blue Mounds***The Building Fund Drive  
Continues  
Ask for Details****Bake Sale at Dick's Piggly Wiggly  
Dodgeville****November 4 — 8:30 a. m.****Bring something good****Buy something good****Spring Street Trestle  
Dodgeville****November 20, 1894**