

# Iowa County History

*Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society*

Volume XXXV

No. 2

April 2010

## Potpourri

### **BOX SOCIAL at Floyd School Do You Know the Drill? Saturday, May 1, 2010**



**Floyd School, 1301 N. Bequette St., Dodgeville**  
**3 pm Kids & May baskets, 4:00 pm short program**  
**5:30 pm Bidding Wars with Jack Reynolds**  
**Eat a box lunch with your lucky bidder**  
**Details Page 2 this newsletter**

### **Editor Gets Some Help**

Future editions of the Newsletter will be prepared with the skilled help of **Janette Hartman of Dodgeville**. Call her with story tips (Iowa County of course) at 574-2567. Janette will provide an opportunity for your Editor to spend more time doing genealogy on his own family and guess what, spending more time with local history and Governor Henry Dodge.

Just in from member, **John Metcalf**: The second floor of the former **Strongs Bank, Dodgeville** (now M & I) was designed to accommodate the meetings and ceremonies of **Williamson Post No. 109 Grand Army of The Republic, (G. A. R.)** According to a short item in the **Dodgeville Chronicle** for Thursday, June 6, 1935, the Williamson Post was organized on September 18, 1883 and moved to the second floor of Strongs Bank in December 1893. The **George H. Legates Post 125 of Mineral Point** was chartered on December 20, 1883. We welcome more information about these reminders of the American Civil War.

### **Letter of Thanks**

We received a letter from **Kathleen Riley**, daughter of **Bernadine Non-dorf Ternes** former Floyd School teacher, thanking us at ICHS for the interview in the January Newsletter. Bernadine made a welcome donation to the school and she will tour the school and other old haunts with her family in July.

## ICHS Directors

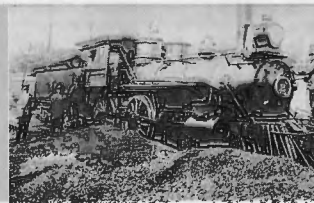
Alice Griffiths, Pres.	935-0574
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John Hess	588-7082
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### **Gerald Fritsch Remembers**

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Mineral Point and  
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**Locomotive at Ease  
on the Mineral Point &  
Northern, Circa 1905**



**Jenks  
Family  
Saga  
Concluded  
Page 5-6**

**Laura Goodsell Jenks**  
Always working

## May Day ... at Floyd School ... Box Social

**3 pm kids' May Baskets-4:00 pm Short Program - Auction 5:30 pm - Saturday, May 1, 2010  
1301 North Bequette Street, Dodgeville**

When was the last time you attended a "Box Social?" Food, Romance, Good Fellowship and Gossip, the Box Social had it all.

The secret pleasure of guessing who prepared which box and the special wrapping or ribbon that told the secret. Young men competing for a special ladies lunchbox, young ladies preparing their very special recipe, wags making a husband pay and pay and pay for his wife's special fare.

Even today parlors can ring with stories of a favorite Box Social.

**It will all happen again (3 pm for kids and May Baskets), Saturday, May 1, at Floyd School on the grounds of the Iowa County Historical Society. The auction starts at 5:30 pm. Jack Reynolds has agreed to be our auctioneer.**

So come. Be part of the festivities at the ICHS sponsored May Day Celebration. Learn about a Box Lunch Auction first hand, create your new parlor memories and share your old ones.

Ladies just bring a boxed lunch for two. Gentlemen, just bring money. Lots of money because we already have a number of very special boxes promised. After all, it's all to restore the Floyd School.

For the younger set that may not know: Each box lunch will be recorded/numbered and auctioned off starting at 5:30 pm. Each lady who prepared an auction box lunch and the gentleman with the winning bid share her specially prepared lunch. For gentlemen with an especially large appetite: Yes, you can buy as many lunches as you wish and eat until your money runs out. For those who prefer the 21st century to the 19th: women can bring their money too and **if anyone is willing to risk bidding on a man-prepared meal, recognize that the Iowa County Historical Society assumes no liability.** *(Attribution unknown)*



**Buy food, prepare it ... auctioneer takes bids ...  
eat lunch with the winning bidder**

*Caution... this grocery store does not have regular hours*

## Stephens Farm in Governor Dodge Park A Hit at January 23 Public Meeting



**Tiny citizens long ago in Gov. Dodge Park are Burrall D. Jones, family and neighbors in front of the Stephens home rented by Jones for several years, later incorporated into Governor Dodge State Park.**

The **Stephens Brothers** gave an engaging lecture on how, when and where their ancestors heard the call to cross the stormy Atlantic and make their way to Wisconsin. Their journey to America was prompted by a thirst for freedom and to banish hunger looming over their family.

**Dick Stephens** of St. Charles, Illinois and his brother **Jack** of Spring Green, Wisconsin with an assist from brother **Jim Stephens** of Baraboo, Wisconsin spoke of the trials of the early settlers, the moves from farm to farm, the beauty of the landscape, the tales of the settler neighborhood and finally how it all became Governor Dodge State Park. Safe to say ... the audience of more than 70 were among the most avid local history fans we have ever seen. Their participation with ques-

tions and reminiscences was exemplary and mind you ... no one slept.

*Vickie Stangel of the Dodgeville Public Library operated the projector.*

The next ICHS event is the May Day Box Social at Floyd School. Mark the date. May 1.



## Gerald Fritsch Remembers Whitson Junction ... The Mineral Point and Northern Railroad by Barbara Weinbrenner

The top of the Whitson Junction depot lay visible about one half of a mile from the farm that **Gerald Fritsch** was born on, near the town of Cobb, in 1921 on May 14. The train went by just north of the farm as it traveled from Mineral Point to Highland hauling coal, lead and zinc ore, and sometimes livestock. In all, Gerald's parents had eight children, five boys and three girls.

"Us kids didn't play around the tracks much," said Fritsch. "Discipline was different in those days than it is now and you just knew where you belonged and where you didn't."

Fritsch also remembers his parents locking the machine shed and chicken house to keep out any nighttime visitors hopping off the train near their farm. Sometimes the Fritsch's would share their food, but they didn't make a practice of it, because word would pass among the travelers and more would come. "The hobos would mark the train track in places where peo-

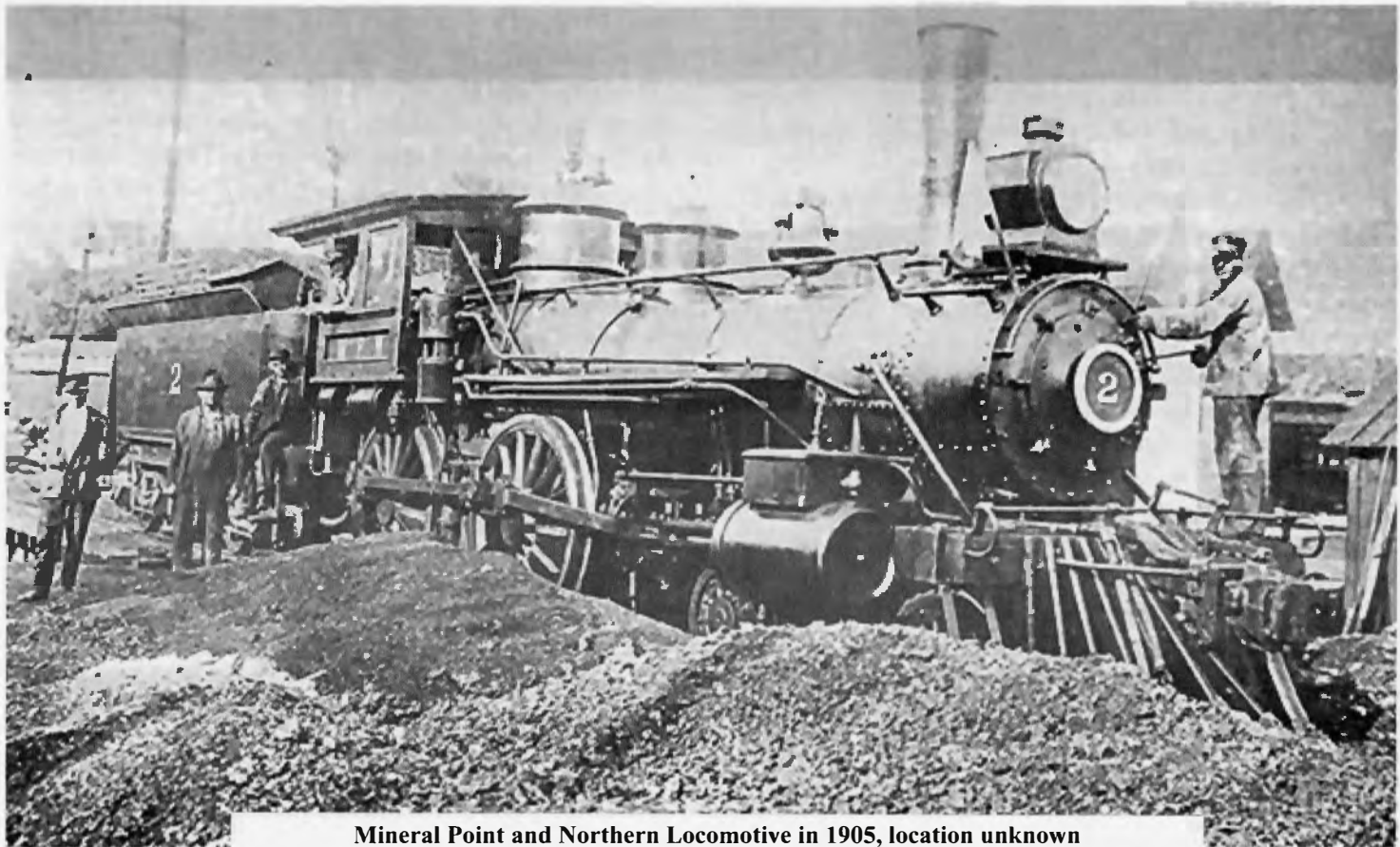
ple were likely to feed them," Fritsch said. "I suppose they used chalk or something like that."

Fritsch's mother walked over to the depot a time or two to ride over to Dodgeville and he might have come along, but he was too young to remember.

The train, led by the big black engine, usually came through at regular times, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, but the noise was not bothersome. "You got used to it," Fritsch said. Besides, the family kept busy with the farm and didn't pay much attention to the train. Sometimes relatives would come over to play baseball, but there was a lot of work to get done most of the time.

"We stayed at home a lot," said Fritsch, "but I remember going to the county fair in Mineral Point each year once us kids were bigger and we all liked that."

Christmas presents were quite a bit different then too. "If we got an apple, a pencil, some nuts and candy, well that equaled a pretty good Christmas,"



Mineral Point and Northern Locomotive in 1905, location unknown  
Courtesy of the Mineral Point Historical Society

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3) *Whitson Junction*

Fritsch said. "We didn't receive a lot, but we really thought a lot of what we did get."

Another treat in the wintertime, particularly around Christmas was when neighbors would dress up like ragamuffins, in old clothes with their faces covered, and walk from house to house to see if people could figure out who they were. "A lot of the time they had to walk, because the roads would be blocked.

People socialized in the wintertime through house parties, where a family would host all the neighbors and clear the floor for music and dancing.

Families might travel four to five miles one-way to attend a house party and Fritsch remembers a particular time when his family hosted a party. "I was as happy for them to come as they were to be there," said Fritsch. "Everybody came by horse and sleigh and there might be as many as eight to 10 sleighs in the yard." Horses were either kept in the barn during the festivities or covered with horse blankets to keep them warm.

Fritsch walked a mile and a half to school every day in the 1930s and in the spring it would get so muddy that people would go up to the highway with their teams of horses and pull cars out of the mud for \$3 a tow.

"That was before the cars had windows," Fritsch said. "They just had a curtain over the opening in those days."

Although Fritsch usually walked to school, every now and then when the weather wasn't too good, his father would come and get him with the lumber wagon.

In the mid-1930s, the family was able to hook up to electricity. "We were close to Hwy 18, so we were lucky, because the closer you were to the highway, the quicker you could get hooked up." Fritsch said that in order to get it, you had to have five families to agree to put in electric lighting. Some families far away from the highway waited up to five more years to get electricity.

"However, if the power was out," Fritsch said, "I still had to go out to the barn to milk the cows and do chores, so I would take one lantern with me for light."

Up until Fritsch entered his senior year at Cobb School, everybody had relied on horses. Just before 1940, the family purchased their first tractor, a shiny .

Fritsch remembers when the rails were picked up starting at Highland all the way to Mineral Point.

Red McCormick with steel wheels. A couple years later the family bought a **McCormick "H"** and added rubber tires when they became available."Everybody thought the tractors were wonderful", Fritsch said, "but I liked the horses." Fritsch kept a variety of horses on the farm all his life and frequently drove them in area parades. He only just sold his last team of Belgium's a couple of years ago.

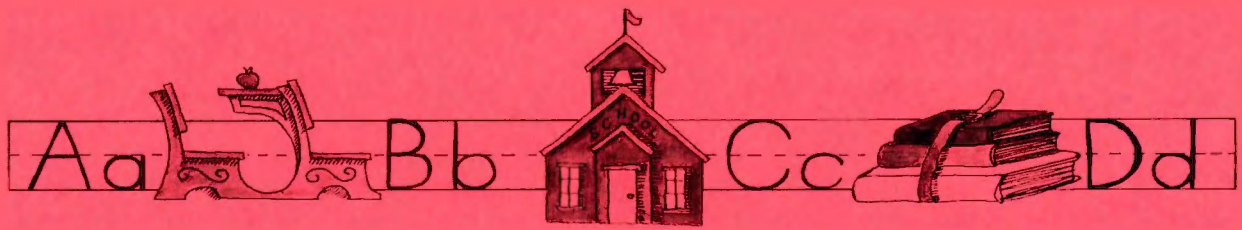
Upon graduating from high school, Fritsch stayed on the farm and continued to work it, but in 1948, he began commuting to Platteville Normal School, now the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, for a degree in agriculture. Fritsch didn't care for living in the off-campus housing, so he commuted from Cobb every day for classes. On his way to school, he picked up a couple of other students who needed to commute as well, and it was through them that he met his wife, **Rosella Hamilton**. Rosie passed away from cancer six years ago and is remembered for her kindness and willingness to help people. At Platteville she majored in home economics and then taught in the Potosi School District for two years. She taught in rural Livingston for two additional years before they married in 1952 then remained at home to help on the farm and care for their six children, two of whom were lost as adults to two separate car accidents.

The Fritsch's raised mostly chickens and were one of the first families to go to caged housing. When the buyers began demanding bigger flocks, they quit raising chickens and moved to hogs and dairy cattle. Soon they went to dairy cattle only and still have Holstein steers on the farm.

The farm grew over the years from the home farm to including two neighboring farms and an additional 115 acres to make 425 total acres.

Over the years, the railroad tracks disappeared. Fritsch remembers when the rails were picked up starting at Highland all the way to Mineral Point. Farmers used the uncoated wood for firewood and the creosote-coated wood for compost. The trestle just east of the farm near where the old depot stood is still there. Made from concrete, some local men tried to remove it with a bulldozer, but it wouldn't budge or break up. A smaller wood trestle that stood on their farm is now gone, used for firewood and moved to make room to plant more crops.

Cinders from the coal-burning engine were dumped on the railroad bed as the train chugged on later going to the farmers for fill on lanes and roads.



# Iowa County Historical Society

and

## The Floyd School

present

### *How to create a "boxed" lunch*

for the

May 1, 2010, 5:30 pm Auction at Floyd School

#### A few things to consider:

1. It is easiest to provide cold food, which can be kept cold with an ice pack.
2. You want to create the most delicious and attractive lunch, in order to get the most money for your lunch. For example, a lunch container of plain white with a bologna sandwich will not bring as much money as cold fried chicken in a pretty basket with ribbons! Be creative.
3. The maker of the lunch will eat lunch with the person who paid for the lunch, so the food needs to be enough for two people.
4. The money paid for the lunches is donated to the restoration of the Floyd School.

#### What to include in your boxed lunch:

1. This is a meal, so create whatever you think is a meal.
2. The entrée can be a sandwich, a piece of cold chicken, a wrap, Mexican empanada, an Italian companata, a Rueben, a breakfast sandwich of fried egg and bacon sandwiched between two pancakes, a pasty, etc.
3. You can include a side of fruit or veggies or salad.
4. You can include a side of chips or something pickled.
5. You can include a dessert of any kind.

#### You also need to provide:

1. Any silverware that will be needed to eat your lunch
2. Salt and pepper or other condiments
3. Napkins
4. Plates if needed
5. An ice pack to keep your food cold

Coffee and lemonade will be provided.





(Continued from page 4) **Whitson Junction**



**"Gandy Dancers" kept the rail repaired**

Farmers used the uncoated wood for firewood and the creosote-coated wood for compost. The trestle just east of the farm near where the old depot stood is still there.

Made from concrete, some local men tried to remove it with a bulldozer, but it wouldn't budge or break up.

Several years ago, Fritsch was at Singer Lumber in Dodgeville picking up some supplies and as he

wrote out his check, a gentleman asked him about the name at the top, "Whitson View." Fritsch explained that it was his family's home farm and that it was near Whitson Junction. The man then replied that his father met his mother at that depot, she was coming in on the train and he just happened to be there. The train not only transported coal, ore, grain and livestock



over all those miles - it brought people together too.

**Blotz trestle and Ladies**

## Jenks Saga Concluded

by Dorothy H. Jenks

*We conclude the Jenks Family story with a peak at the workman-like manner in which Judge Aldro Jenks and his wife, Laura Goodsell, achieved positive results in their large and devoted family. See the previous portions of the Jenks story in the April and July, 2009 ICBS Newsletters. We open in **Laura Goodsell's** kitchen. Editor.*

The food was prepared on a wood stove which was kept on after a bottled gas stove was installed in the 1920's. She felt that really important food could only be prepared on her familiar friend. I can picture her now, sitting on a chair in front of the oven and feeling for the temperature on her cheek and hand. It was an art to keep such a stove at the right temperature and a tribute to the artistry of the cook to turn out cakes and pastry under such conditions.



**Laura Goodsell Jenks**

Her children never remembered seeing her, while they were growing up, sitting without some handwork to be done. She made much of the clothing, knitted any sweaters, mittens or socks they wore, and (obviously) had much darning to be done. Such a work day called for early rising and constant labor with few or no labor-saving devices. It was a hard-working life and kept her constantly busy. However, it was the life of the average wife and mother of the time.

In common with many people who grew up on the frontier, with very little money available and living in a land where most possible wants could be supplied by hunting, farming and labor to turn the products of these activities into the final, usable product, there was little need for money on hand. Anything that had to be bought could be charged and **Aldro Jenks** often did the greater part of what shopping was needed. He was not mean with money, but never understood a woman having any need for it. However, as the 20th Century advanced, this changed.

While she was not physically able to do much shopping, she occasionally felt the need for some pocket money if only to buy gifts for her husband. **Aldro Jr.**, who stayed a bachelor into his 40's, felt his mother needed cash and made a habit of giving gifts of money for shopping purposes, instead of presents for birthdays, Christmas and wedding anniversaries.

In addition to her full-time job as the mother of a growing family and housekeeper (no vacuums, dishwashers,

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) **Jenks**

washing machines or new and improved powders or liquids), she found time to be active in church affairs and to help out her neighbors when she was needed. Of course, all the children had their chores to do. Each of the boys, when he got old enough, was required to prepare a cord of firewood (used for heating the house as well as cooking) each Saturday and naughtiness might be punished by setting a further amount of firewood to be prepared. **Isabel** became a fine cook under her mother's guidance.

Each of the three older boys was also required to look out for one of the three younger boys, making sure he was clean and decently clothed for school or Sunday school. As the members of the family aged, although all were part of a close and affectionate family, this responsibility forged a lasting closer bond between the paired boys.

**Frank Jenks** had to be operated on for osteomyelitis one year. He was taken to Dubuque and a bone in his lower leg was opened and scraped to get rid of the infection. During the slippery winter months his mother, faced with the problem of finding something for an unusually impatient and active 15-year old boy to do, taught him to cook. She had also given birth to her daughter, **Isabel**, about that time and he was set to baby-sitting, lying on the floor with a book to read and rolling the baby back and forth in the high wicker carriage then in use. His special responsibility was for his brother Aldro and this added his sister to their special bond; the three of them were close all their lives.

In the 1920's, **Laura Goodsell Jenks** suffered a great deal from arthritis, which eventually left her stiff, and barely able to walk. She got up in the morning and moved everything which could be moved until she moved as freely as possible, regardless of her pain.

She had a "hired girl" but continued to do much of the cooking herself. The great joy of her last years was to have as many of her children and grandchildren visit as possible. The help and support of her daughter, **Isabel Grunenwald** and the loving patience of her son-in-law, **Roy**, made this feasible.

Back of the house, leading out toward the barn, were three annexes, each leading into the next: the "summer kitchen" with a small wood stove and open, screened ends, used for canning in the early days; a laundry (a small dark room without any windows) and a screened back porch, used mainly for storage. Leading from that toward the barn was an arbor with grape vines with extremely sour grapes growing on it and

purple clematis vines in season. This arbor was a favorite of those small flying jewels, hummingbirds. I have seldom seen these birds since and did not realize at the time how lucky I was to see these birds closely. These birds seemed to have little fear of humans, since it is so easy for a small, fast bird to dodge.

This arbor led back to another path which went around the side of the barn to the "little house out back." After Laura's illness, a bathroom was installed off the kitchen in what had been the pantry. For awhile, the outhouse was kept because the Judge insisted it was necessary to his internal *economy*, but it was not limed regularly nor kept up as it had been when it was the main sanitary facility and it attracted rats. This was the final straw.

While he was gone to Milwaukee for some Masonic doings, she had it pulled down and the pit filled in. The first morning after his return he took the newspaper, as was his habit, and proceeded majestically through the three annexes, through the arbor, and down the path leading to the back of the barn --- and a filled-in pit! Her young daughter, **Isabel**, was helping her in the kitchen and watched this with lively interest, as her mother continued making breakfast without a word of warning to her about-to-be disillusioned husband. Nothing could be seen from the back kitchen windows as the arbor screened the path; but soon, the back porch door opened and closed, footsteps could be heard coming back through the three annexes, the outer door to the kitchen hall opened and closed, and the lord and master of the house stalked into the kitchen, looked sternly at the elaborately unaware back of his errant spouse, remarked "Think you're smart, don't you!" and took his newspaper into the new, unpopular bathroom.



**Jenks home in Dodgeville**

The house was set back from the street quite a way with a barn on the left to the back of the main lot and a driveway leading to it. To the right of the house was at that time a large lot for gardening, flowers and vegetables, and a root cellar near the kitchen porch.

*This concludes the Jenks Family saga, covering Victorian times and edging into the New Deal of the 1930s.*



### Acquisitions

**Mary James**, Mineral Point, WI: Charter of Pomona Grange, 4-27-1987; book— 1987 Digest of Laws, Patrons of Husbandry; book— History Township of Moscow, Iowa County, WI.

**Lois Short**, McFarland, WI: book Commemorative Biographical Record of Rock, Green, Grant, Iowa and Lafayette Counties in Wisconsin.

**Jo Ann Carden**, Barneveld, WI: postcard of Elam Falls now Stephens Falls in Governor Dodge State Park, Dodgeville, WI.

**Dauphne Kreuzer**, Plainwell, MI: three Dodger year-books.

**Margaret Peat**, Dodgeville, WI: lunch box with thermos.

**Dan & Patrice Thompson**, Houston, TX: baseball uniform for Goldmine team owned by Milo Anderson.

**Neil Giffey**, Dodgeville, WI: 6 CDs of images used to create the Iowa County Historical Society Newsletter.

### Newspaper Microfilm at ICHS

Adamsville Advertiser April 17, 1891 only  
Arena Wis. Star, 1874-1876 and 1877-1886, becomes

Dodgeville Star in 1883-1886,

Dodgeville Chronicle, 1862 through Dec, 2009

Barneveld Banner, some issues missing

The Hollandale Review, some issues missing

Rural Eye, 1887-1887

Rural Eye of Arena, 1887-1888 and 1888-1889 becomes

The Eye and Star, 1890-1893

The Eye and Star 1893-1895 becomes

New Star, 1895-1896

New Star, 1896-1897

New Star, 1898-1900

Miners Free Press, Mineral Point, 1837-1843, some issues missing

Miners Free Press, Wis. Tribune, Mineral Point

Mineral Point Home Intelligencer 13 Sept. 1860 and 31 May; 1862

The Gleaner, Arena, Nov 8-Dec. 6, 1894

The Southwest Wisconsin, Linden, 1854-1907

Index to Wisconsin Miscellaneous Newspapers

*Weekly newspapers and the ICHS index of obituaries are great finding aids at the Iowa County Historical Society.*

### Federal Census Microfilm

*These census microfilms were recently cataloged*

**Minn.** counties: 1880, Ottertail, Pine, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Carver, Cass, Chippewa, Chisago, Clair, Cook, Cottonwood, Crow, Wing, Dakota, Marshall, Martin, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Mower,

**Wis.** 1930, Dunn County.

**Oregon** 1930, Clackamas County.

*Most of above films are for out-of-state counties.*

### Membership Application

Iowa County Historical Society

MAIL TO: Treasurer, Iowa County Historical Society

P. O. Box 44, Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

*Pass along ...  
New members  
always welcome*

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*

*Pass along ...  
New members  
always welcome*

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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 XXXV No. 2 April 2010

**Iowa County Historical Society**

1301 N. Bequette St., P. O. Box 44

Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

**MEMBERSHIPS****MAIL TO: Treasurer, Iowa County Historical Society**

P. O. Box 44, Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

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

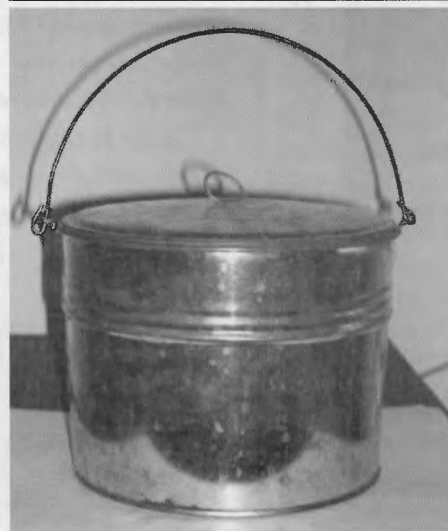
**ICHS SERVICES - GENEALOGY - HISTORIC RESEARCH**The Society has Iowa County archives for: history-cemeteries-  
obituaries-photographs-newspaper microfilm-artifacts and more**Museum: open year-round except for holidays.****Museum Phone 608-935-7694****Email: [ichistory@mhtc.net](mailto:ichistory@mhtc.net)****Weekdays 1-4 pm and  
by appointment at other times.****Web site: [iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org)**

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ORGANIZATION  
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# Calendar of Events

## MAY DAY BOX SOCIAL

**Kids and May Baskets at  
3:00 pm Saturday, May 1, 2010****4:00 pm Short Program****5:30 pm Auction by Jack Reynolds****at Floyd School near  
ICHS MUSEUM****1301 North Bequette Street  
Dodgeville, Wisconsin****Bring a box lunch for two*****Details ... Pages 1 and 2****"Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone?"***A History of the Cheese Factories &  
Creameries of Iowa County****\$39.00 ... Plus S & H***A best seller***Contact: Treasurer, Marie Sersch,  
ICHS Box 44, Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044****Box Lunches  
come in pails,  
too**