

Iowa County History

Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society

Volume XXXV

No. 3

July 2010

Potpourri

ICHS Directors

Ice Cream Social *Thursday, July 22, 2010*

At the Museum
1301 N. Bequette St.
Pie, Ice Cream,
Plate Lunch,
Your Friends,
Your Music

Serving from 5:00 — 7:00 pm

Come for the fun of it
Come for the food of it
Everybody Welcome

Missed the Floyd School? It will be open all afternoon.

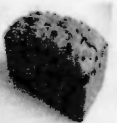
Caution ... Sundae dish not furnished.



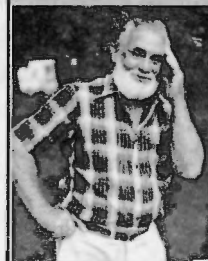
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Tom Carkeek

Builder of the Courthouse
Pictures and stories needed.

Page 7

See page 2 if you wish to learn of one woman's battle to honor her ancestors. **Barb Weinbrenner** has successfully tackled the great mystery of Cornish cooking. Read about saffron bread, and how to extinguish your craving for saffron cake. A warning ... It will not be easy. Barb also covered the **Hyde Smithy Days** at the **Ruggles Stagecoach Stop** on May 25, 2010. She is a busy volunteer.

Janette Hartmann has accepted an appointment as **ICHS Museum Curator**. She is researching and rearranging Society archives resulting from the influx of donations which have created a storage challenge.

Orange crates were once "Library Corner" furniture in **Floyd School**. See page 7. If you can help with the donation of crates and a bit of construction, we would love to have them for an exhibit. Call **Janette** at the museum.

The **Floyd School Box Social** auction on **May Day** saw money changing hands at a goodly rate. Rumor is that **Tom Wilson** laid in a winter supply of lunches packed with food and affection. Thanks to all. Page 3 asks if the rural school culture still exists. Meanwhile, our thanks to **Auctioneers Jack and Marian Reynolds** for the lift you have given to the **ICHS**.

Saffron Bread Gone Awry

by Barbara Weinbrenner

In 1880, when my 29-year-old great-great grandfather **John Hutchins** came to Wisconsin from **Devonshire, England**, via **Quebec** or **Halifax**, he didn't bring many possessions on the ship, but one thing that he may have had in his pocket or bag, was his mother's recipe for saffron bread.

After John married **Jane Cottle Shanklin**, a French-Canadian whose husband had been killed while felling a tree, they settled on a farm outside of **Waldwick**. Jane, who may not have been familiar with the food of southwestern England, learned to make saffron bread for John and then taught her daughter **Hazel**, who taught her daughter, which is my grandma, **Bernice J. Flora Fieldhouse**. It was time for me to learn and I anticipated no problems. I had visions of it turning out just as yellow and yummy-looking as Gramma's. It didn't. I didn't even get to bake it.

Everything started out well. I bought a packet of saffron at the **Corner Drug Store** in Dodgeville for \$5, money which Gramma promptly refunded to me in case the bread didn't turn out. She didn't want me to be discouraged by a very expensive, and possibly imminent, failure. I assured her it would be fine. After all, I had made bread from scratch before, with yeast even, so I felt pretty confident. It was short lived.

Saffron comes in a fairly small, but cute, envelope. It is fair to say that with this spice, a little goes a really long way. *It is expensive because, according to a March 2009 article in Economic Review, "It takes 75,000 blossoms or 225,000 hand picked stigmas to make a single pound." Harvested mostly in Spain and Iran, this little packet came a long way.*

I got out a bowl and slowly slid the thin rusty-orange fibers out of the envelope so that I could examine them. They smelled nice to me and the unique sweet scent was immediately reminiscent of Gramma's kitchen. I am told that some people don't care for the smell of saffron, and in fact, I was told that one of our relatives, who shall remain unnamed, thought that it smelled so bad that it shouldn't be allowed in the house. I think that this tale is just a silly rumor though. Who couldn't like the smell of saffron?

I swear I did everything right. I soaked the saffron in warm water. I carefully measured all of the ingredients. I diligently checked the temperature of the water before I combined it with the yeast and I mixed

Potpourri Again

The other day I read a short article informing that the United States Army Recruiting service spent about \$21,000 for every young American recruited in a recent year. *I said WHAT?* and preceded to reminisce about the way I was enlisted more than sixty years ago. I drove to the recruiting office, about 7 miles, signed up and drove back to the farm. A couple days later I drove to the train station, left my '31 Chevy for Dad to drive home, enjoyed my free train ride to Chicago, raised my right hand and became a member of the US Army. I didn't cost much. A museum addition? \$21,000 would help, so would \$42,000. Perhaps I should enlist again? Dream on. Editor.

just the right amount for just the right amount of time. And, once I added the strained saffron liquid to the dough, wow, I had never seen anything so orangish-yellow in my life. I marveled at my creation and then set it in the warm nest I constructed for it, which consisted of a cardboard box and two heating pads (*baking hints from Gramma*).

It sat in there all toasty warm for a few hours, but when I peeked, it hadn't expanded at all. It looked exactly the same. I decided I would have to be patient, so I waited another couple of hours. Nothing. Both heating pads were going full blast, and at one point, I really think it did expand a little bit, but after 10 hours, I cut the power and admitted defeat.

I dialed Gramma and gave her the news. I thought I'd never have to say – my bread was a dud.

The thing about a good grandma is that they have resources. She consulted her neighbor, **Ruth Ann Thull**, who promptly lent us a recipe for saffron cake, which is very similar to the bread but does not require

yeast. I made a quick run to the Corner Drug Store for more saffron, and it turned out so nice that I may never have to make saffron bread again. Well ... saffron dough, I may never have to make saffron dough again.

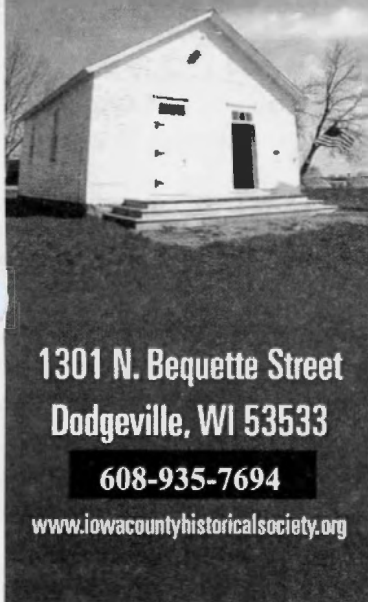
I think about that bread and I can't give up on it, not just yet. It was important enough to John Hutchins to bring it all the way across an ocean, so I owe it another try. Perhaps one of these 100-degree summer days, I'll try again to get that heavy dough to rise and maybe, with a little luck, it will this time.



A School ... A Bookmark

Floyd
School

May Day
Celebration
2010



1301 N. Bequette Street
Dodgeville, WI 53533

608-935-7694

www.iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org

Floyd School District No. 3, Iowa County, Wisconsin, was formally organized on May 28, 1849. Classes were held in a log cabin prior to that date thus making the District one of the earliest in Iowa County. The August 1854 town clerk's report showed that 81 students between 4 and 20 years of age were eligible to attend this one-blackboard school. Moving from the log school in 1856 to a newly constructed building, later destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1886, this sturdy structure dates from that year. This tiny building reverberated with the sounds of learning as the eager ears of all students of all grades heard every class recite from books by McGuffey, Towns, Ray, Parley and Penne, thus becoming scholars ahead of their years. The last classes were held in May 1961 as consolidation continued.

A Few Details

The text above is a revision of the wording on the back of the bookmark as printed for the May Day Box Social. It is added here as a bit of Floyd School history which is deemed appropriate as the ICHS adds to what has become more than a century of rural school cultural history.

We are told the box lunches were more than tolerable ... They were edible. Is that the right word?

See the July 2009 Newsletter under "**Burned to the Ground**" for the missing links in the supposed fire of 1886. We believe it happened but why didn't it get a headline in the Chronicle of the following week? The fire at the base of the stove, reported in 1908, has a creditable sound, and it did make the Chronicle. Accept our gratitude and a bookmark as your reward if you succeed in finding a published story about the 1886 fire. Editor.

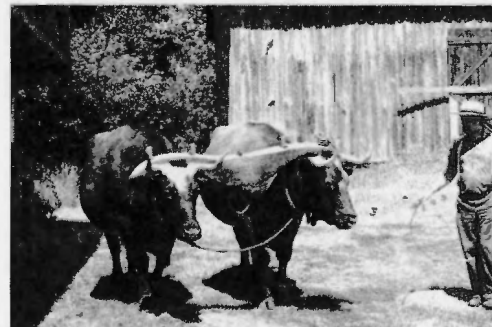
Which Came First?

Here in Iowa County, Wisconsin, it was probably neither the chicken nor the egg but more likely the oxen or the railroad. When **Tom Thumb**, the first American made Locomotive, puffed and gasped his way from Baltimore to Elliott's Mills and back again in about two



Tom Thumb restored

hours in 1830, it was considered to signal the human wish to do more, to do it faster, and to make a profit doing it. **Peter Cooper**, businessman and forward thinker, was the diligent inventor of Tom Thumb. Many more had the same idea in England, Wales, Germany and the USA. The fevered competition for ideas and investors caused the formation of numerous railroad companies and set every town, large and small, against every other town for the magic economic access railroads provided for shipping food and raw materials to the population centers of the Eastern Seaboard. Marketing was the key and Middle America was in it with the big towns of the East. Here it was symbolized by teams of slow moving, docile oxen methodically pulling the big wheeled ore waggon (settler spelling) to waterways, traveling on ridge roads, or perish the thought, to an early rail line which over-



Wisconsin oxen, fresh from the ox wash.

came obstacles to connect the people to the product. It didn't take long for the continent to be spanned by Tom Thumb's cousins. But first Iowa County was crisscrossed by ore wagon trails. The trick is to find them now. They do show on surveyors' maps and the ICHS challenges you to grab a map, activate your GPS and start the search. We await a flood of artifacts.

Scrapbook Recollections ... Postal Service

Compiled by Dan Evans

Immersed in Iowa County history as told by and about the people of the county, Dan Evans was a steadfast spinner of the tales and truths inscribed in his books. This one, "Scrapbook Recollections" is from Dan's "Profiles in The Uplands" published by the Dodgeville Chronicle in 1983. Used with the permission of Elaine Evans, Dan's widow, a limited supply of Dan's books are available at the Museum.

Human nature makes us prone to ills of the present. During oppressive summer heat, thoughts revert to winter cold when we reverse our wishes for summer's warmth. To us the present is ever ordinary, often actually by our standard of values, but with a crust of age, a new interest develops and nowhere can there be found a better source for ancient and crusty tales than can be found in a scrapbook. Even duplicate incidents take on a different perspective when related by words of others.

The following is a partial direct quote from an undated page of yester-year's **Dodgeville Chronicle**, titled, *Snow Rough on Rural Carrier; Must Make Route or Be Docked*. Now a mailman's job hasn't changed since the days of Pony Express, delivering mail to patrons along his route. The big differences are the means of meeting prevailing conditions of weather, conveyance and the changing generation of mailmen. Let me take you back to that generation during the tenure of **Fred James, Roy Evans, Leon Ranney and Virgil Fieldhouse**.

A Platteville mail carrier expressed his sentiment by saying, "Snow, sleet and blizzards, all have contributed to make life for the mail carrier in Wisconsin 'hell'." Few of us ever reflect upon the difficulty of our mailmen to meet the responsibility of seeing that everyone's mail is safely deposited in their box. There

are those who complain if an expected letter is a day late; should a piece of mail arrive at the wrong address because the mailer failed to properly address it or to perform legible information. A mailman is expected to arrive with the mail at precisely the earliest possible moment, and if he is even a few minutes later than usual, grumbling results.

The old scrapbook takes us back to a time only the aged recall from experience and a younger generation may doubt in words found in the mentioned article. I quote: "Roads that have been opened have been only the main highways, and very little of the rural route man's route follows the main highway. The result has been that he has had to cut fences, cross fields, do everything that no other individual would care to do if he didn't have to. Many days every one of our four mail carriers have been the only source of supply for those 'snowed in' out in the country."

Unlike today, with modern equipment manned by highway crews, the worst of the blizzards are soon brought under control and highways are cleared for reasonably safe travel. Not so back in those days when the first road-choking drifts came, they remained until the sun melted them whether it be a January thaw or until the day spring truly arrived. Further, those so called main roads were little more than the equivalent of the worst specimen of a town road to be found.

Simply put, an axiom prescribed, "Fools walk in where angels fear to tread" fittingly describes the plight mailmen of that period found themselves obligated to overcome. I was keenly familiar with our mailman, who was Virgil Fieldhouse. One reason for this, he was innovative. At an early period before the auto reached a practical status for a mail carrier, Virgil had converted and adapted Model T Ford wheels to fit his buggy. Later, when he was more dedicated to the auto, he devised a tread that fit over the auto's driving wheels and the wheels of the secondary axle. I remember my tremendous enthusiasm at the first sight of each of these odd vehicles and insisted dad follow suit.

Most carriers kept three horses to be used on the route. This gave each horse a day of rest every second day. Virgil's route was 29.3 miles long, the number of patrons was probably much greater than today's figure is.



Dan Evans working at the campground

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Again I quote directly from the article. "Leon Ranney, who has the best team of them all, a pair of thoroughbreds, likewise is forced to make his route almost entirely through fields. Mr. Ranney has used this team during bad weather for the past three winters. He gives them the best of care, and every morning they are as fresh as ever for the route. His route goes west by the George Oxnem farm to within one mile of the Asylum, through the Bloomfield neighborhood, south and east around by Dodge's grove, north to the Blotz Bros., and west over Furnace Ridge. On this route, he also has to do considerable retracing, covering more than 29 miles when the roads are good."

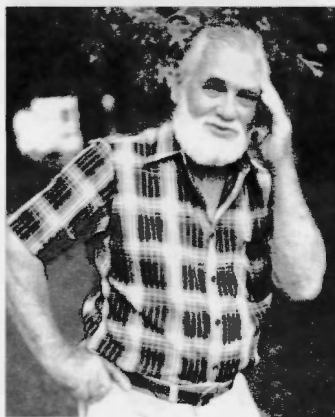
When we moved from the old home farm in 1953, we were first served by **Roy Evans**, at our present location, **Hideaway Acres**. His fine service caused a little apprehension when he retired and a new man was to take his place. Old mailmen are like old shoes, they are comfortable, they are dependable, and often hard to replace. There was no cause for alarm when Roy retired because Fritz Bilkey, his replacement, seemingly, never missed a stride of Roy's footsteps. His tenure was somewhat brief and death claimed while delivering on his route.

Again I return to a scrapbook version chiefly for a closer affinity to a tradition of which I am only vaguely familiar. "Roy Evans and Leon Ranney, routes 1 and 4 respectively, are the only two carriers on the whole force who have escaped the 'sickness epidemic' and have been on duty every day. However, during the worst of the period, there were three or four days that no carrier was able to make his route, although he was on duty at the post office.

Mr. Evans' route of 28.1 miles has been stretched by detours caused by snowdrifts. While during the good summer months, the carriers could make the route in a couple hours, going on duty about 11 o'clock with their cars and returning early in the afternoon, they now report before 8 o'clock and are out all day, sometimes long after dusk. Mr. Evans uses three horses, changing off one each day. He has built a high top box to protect him from the wind, and although it takes away some of the coldness, yet like all the rest he has to get out and walk some of the time to try and warm up. Fred James must have been the junior member of this group, for he outlived all of them and only recently received his final call. Once again, I will resort to direct quote from the scrapbook, "Only one of

the regular carriers has been off duty much, and that is Fred James, who has been forced to remain at home and 'entertain' the chicken pox the past couple weeks. His father, Neil James, although in his 60's is substituting for him and is making the route in true form like the other boys. Regularly his route, no. 2, is 27 plus miles, but it exceeds the 30 mile stretch by far. His route covers Union Mills, Standart, and Otter Creek territories. He is using four horses alternating two each day, and a sleigh to cover the territory now."

I suspect this sequence surrounding mail carriers was placed in the scrapbook because its compiler happened to be a daughter of a Dodgeville city mail carrier, **Bernie Jenks**. He and **Jack Persons** were regular carriers and **Fred Stratman** acted as their substitute. The manner of city delivery has not changed greatly and it is afoot today over those same treacherous walks, banks of drifted snow, sub-zero temperatures, semi-vicious dogs and grumpy patrons who savor an excuse to vent their frustrations.



Dan remembering

In today's market a penny has little significance, but I must relate a final touch of memorabilia which took place even before what has been related here. My father-in-law, Orson Dyer, was a Vernon County rural carrier at a time when the mail service let out routes on bid. Orson had won the bid for several terms, and feeling job security placed his bid to the government. When the bids were opened, another man had underbid him by one cent. Orson was out of a job.

While putting this tale together, for a few minutes to relax from struggling with thoughts to jot on these pages, I went to the mail box for our daily mail, and in addition, it arrives in a time slot between 1:30 and 2:00 p.m. I suggest mail is still one of the greater means of communication. Unlike video, it is repeatable. One can read, and then re-read portions of interest. It can also be saved for scrapbook content, or, it can be filed in the wastebasket just as a vast portion of "junk" mail is handled by all us. The daily mail is a constant source of good tidings, birthday cards, anniversary cards and just about any message bearing love from one person to another.

Hyde Days and the Art of Blacksmithing

by Barbara Weinbrenner

On May 15, over 100 people traveled to **Klint and Wanda McCutchin's farm**, once known as the **Ruggles Stagecoach Stop**, on County Road H about four miles north of **Ridgeway** to attend the Hyde Days events. Visitors toured the **Hyde Blacksmith Shop**, a stone building built in 1883 by **H. Bawden** and restored through the efforts of the nonprofit organization, **The Hyde Historical Territory**, observed blacksmith demonstrations, took part in horse-drawn wagon rides, listened to music, shopped for books, and lunched on refreshments.



Smithy close-up

Up on the hill just outside the wide wood doors of the Hyde Blacksmith Shop, **Robert Bergman** demonstrated the art of blacksmithing that he has been practicing and refining since 1969. Although it is no longer common to see a blacksmith shop in every town you might travel through, there are craftsmen still practicing the trade. Bergman is one of them, working full time in his shop in **Blanchardville**.



Tool making at the anvil

Bergman, owner of **Postville Blacksmith Shop**, does repair work of all kinds and claims to be able to fix anything except a broken heart. Bergman was trained in ornamental ironwork, but also does gunsmithing, welding, industrial work, and tool production for various trades. The word blacksmith comes from the color of the oxides that metal develops as it is worked and the person who works it smites, or hits, the metal.

As visitors listened, Bergman explained that the blacksmith was of great importance to a developing community because other trades relied on them to produce the tools they needed. Since it was expensive to transport heavy supplies, a blacksmith might arrive in a community with only a hammer and anvil and then set about making the rest of the tools that were needed. When the shop was outfitted, the blacksmith would then make the tools for the other trades and workers in the area. For instance, if a blacksmith arrived in a mining area, picks and shovels would be top

priority.

The inside of a blacksmith shop was usually noisy, hot, and dirty with only low light provided. The low light served a valuable purpose, however, because the blacksmith would judge how hot the metal was by its color, which would range from red to yellow. If the metal was too cool, it might break when the blacksmith hit it, and if it was too hot, it might shape too easily.



The forge

The shop would usually contain a forge for heating the metal, a bellows to provide air for the fire and a barrel of water to cool the metal. Common tools, besides an anvil and hammers, might include tongs, punches, chisels, and a vise.

Bergman added that the blacksmith was an **early recycler**. Once a wagon wheel was worn out, a blacksmith might make horseshoes out of it and once horseshoes were worn out, they might be turned into nails. In the early morning demonstration at Hyde Days, Bergman worked outdoors at a portable gas-powered forge to recycle a metal file into a knife as visitors looked on.

Near the blacksmith demonstration, **Rod Anding** and his team of horses, brothers named **"General"** and **"Duke,"** took visitors for a tour a short ways down County Road H and back. Anding's team are a **Suffolk-Punch** breed from **England**. "These horses are known for versatility," he said. "They could be plowing in the morning



Rod Anding .. General & Duke

and pulling the carriage at night."

Along the front of the farm facing the highway, **Klint McCutchin** also had a number of vintage automobiles on display so that everyone could take a peek inside. His collection included a number of well cared for **Studebakers**.

Visitors also shopped for books written by **Jeannie Lewis** of Dodgeville, and the **Iowa County Historical Society**, and lunched on beef sandwiches, brats and other refreshments.

Acquisitions

Beverly Zimmerman, Dodgeville, WI: Book, genealogy of Chappel and allied families of Prideaux, Eva, Polkinghorn, James and Hambley.

Tom Adams, Mineral Point, WI: Cheese tryer and rennet measuring glass used by **Gerald Adams** Cheesemaker.

Mel Hendrickson, see later issue for details.

Delia Wunderlin, see later issue for details.

Thomas Carkeek

Life Details Needed

I have been searching for information on **Thomas Carkeek**. He was a masterful stone mason. He is the architect and engineer for the Iowa County Courthouse. He also built the **Old Rock School** in north Dodgeville and the **slag furnace** on Spring Street. **Mary Knudson** has researched his genealogy to the early 20th century. Surnames of his descendents include **Thomas Carkeek, Jr.'s** children, **Elizabeth Carkeek Suydam's** children, **Mary (Minnie) Carkeek Strong**, **Nellie Carkeek Harrison** and **Hattie Carkeek Chapman**. If you have information on this family, *especially pictures, please send it to Iowa County Historical Society to the attention of Janette*. You can use the mailing address on the back of this publication or the email address. Thanks in advance for your help! *Janette Hartman, Curator*

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 June, 2008
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

Brick walls may tumble if you search ICHS microfilm using the index of obituaries.

Membership Application

Iowa County Historical Society

MAIL TO: Treasurer, Iowa County Historical Society

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



Orange crate furniture

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



Orange crate furniture

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City _____ P. O. Box _____
State _____ Zip _____
Membership Period _____ Amount enclosed _____

*I am interested in making a tax deductible gift to the
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Signed _____

Volume XXXV No. 3 July 2010

Iowa County Historical Society

1301 N. Bequette St.
P. O. Box 44
Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

MEMBERSHIPS

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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

ICHS SERVICES -GENEALOGY-HISTORIC RESEARCH

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

**Museum: open year-round except for holidays,
weekdays 1-4 pm and by appointment
at other times.**

Museum Phone 608-935-7694

Email: ~~ichs@icahs.net~~ ichs@icahs.net

Web site: iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org

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Calendar of Events

Ice Cream Social

Thursday, July 22, 2010

**At the Museum
1301 N. Bequette**

**Pie, Ice Cream,
Plate Lunch,
Your Friends,
Your Music**

Serving 5:00 pm ...

7:00 pm

Come for the food ... the fun

Everybody Welcome

Visit the Floyd School ... this day



"Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone?"

**A History of the Cheese Factories and
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Author Dan Evans and his cat