

# Iowa County History

*Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society*

Volume XXXVI

No. 2

April 2011

## Potpourri

## ICHS Directors

Alice Griffiths, Pres.	935-0574
John Hess, VP	588-7082
Eileen Arndt, Sec.	935-2623
Marie Sersch, Treas.	935-5752
Don McGuire	929-7494
George Wallenkamp	929-7676
Margaret Peat	935-5532
Boyd Geer	930-9084
Neil Giffey, Editor	935-5557
giffey@mhtc.net	

## In This Issue

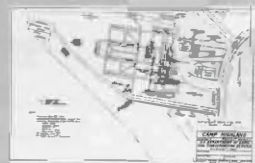


**Geers in  
Iowa County  
by Boyd Geer  
Page 2**

## Highland CCC Camp

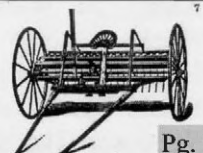
**Blueprints**

**Pages 3 - 4**



## Potpourri Continued

**Page 5**

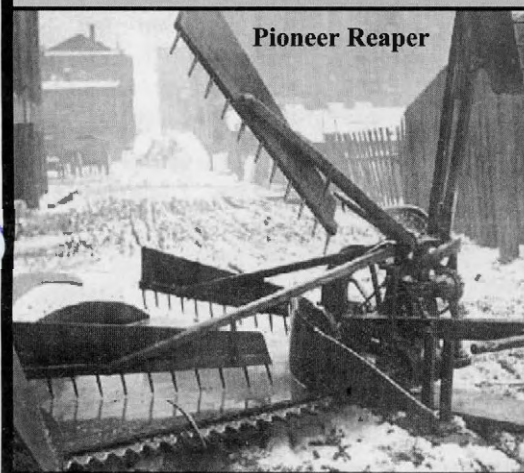


**Pg. 7**

**Hyde Smithy Days  
May 14 Hours 10-4**

*Not that you would forget  
However ...*

**The ICHS ICE CREAM SOCIAL IS  
THURSDAY, July 28, 2011**



**At the Museum  
1301 N. Bequette St.  
Dodgeville**

*We will major in having  
a good time*

**Food by Grandma Mary  
Open at 5 PM**

## New Books at ICHS

Old Tools shows veteran auctioneer **Jack Reynolds'** beautiful tool collection in a fine bound book. We can now say "*Jack knows tools.*" \$29.95.

**Frank Hess** has crafted Dover Ghost Town, available for \$25.

Dirty Hollow \$10 has been restocked. This informal history of the "Dirty Hollow" section of Dodgeville by **Dan Evans** has been a favorite for years. The late Dan Evans was a stalwart recorder of local history.

**Beverly Bilkey**, a former Dodgeville resident now living in Madison, recently brought a collection of historic pictures to the museum to determine if the ICHS has duplicates, more later. As we often suggest look in your attic, too.

**Della Rowe Guarraci** wrote to express appreciation for her reminisces triggered by the Floyd School and published in January 2011. **Jean Berns Jones** of the Dodgeville Chronicle sent a complimentary note. *We tip our hat to our supporters. A problem arises ... No one wears hats in 2011.*

*Please call to discuss volunteer opportunities.*



## Geers in Iowa County

by Boyd W. Geer

As a volunteer at the Iowa County Historical Society Museum, I meet many people from the area who, upon learning my name, ask "You're not from here, are you?" My answer usually is that I have been from here for the last 20 years but I started out life in Connecticut where my name is very common.

However, there were Geers in Iowa County in its early days and I have been able to find a good deal about them. I started with the discovery that the 1870 plat map in the courthouse shows property in **Wyoming Township** belonging to E. M. Gear. Then the 1850 census tells us, in addition to the census taker being spelling impaired, that **Edwin (Edward) M. (Mc) Gear (Geer)**, at the time



Boyd Geer & Dodge at Dodge Cabin



A portion of Wyoming Township—1870

39 years old, was born in Pennsylvania. His wife **Alcina (Alsin)**, 32, was born in Ohio. His daughter **Eunice (Eunis)**, 13, also was born in Ohio while his son **Elmer (Elmore)**, 11, and daughter **Margaret**, 8, were born in Illinois. Finally, daughter **Ellen (Helen)**, 2, was born in Wisconsin. This gives us a good idea of how the family migrated to Wisconsin and that they must have arrived before 1848.

A search at the Register of Deeds office tells us that **Edwin M. Geer** purchased, on Nov. 3, 1849, the original patent for 40 acres of land located S. East of N.

East, Section 12, Town 7, Range 3. Eventually he owned the 260 acres shown on the **1870 plat map**.

The **Wyoming Town Chairman** has a record of most of the town's office holders back to 1849. E. M. Geer was Chairman in 1854, Supervisor in 1855, and Assessor in 1862, 1863, and 1867.

In the **History of Iowa County, 1881 Elmore Gear (Elmer Geer)** is listed among the Town of Wyoming men who were members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, Co. C.

The **Wyoming Cemetery** has a Geer plot with a gravestone for Elmer and his mother Alcina. The graves of Civil War veterans are marked with a flag but there



Wyoming Cemetery

was not one on Elmer's grave. My curiosity as to why led me to search the **Regimental Rosters** at the **Wisconsin Historical Society**. I learned that Elmer was taken prisoner at **Holly Springs, Missis-**

**sippi** on Nov. 29, 1862. He was paroled on Mar. 10, 1863 but from then on was listed as absent without leave. His gravestone gives his date of death as January, 1864. Alcina died November 22, 1875 at age 62.

At the museum there is a manuscript entitled "**Some Notes on Wyoming Valley**" by **Gene Hatch**. The author goes through Wyoming Cemetery block by block and tells what he knows about the families. "**BLOCK 11 – E. M. Geer**. He lived on ridge. (Geo. Smith farm) Had two daughters, Mag married Jim Rogers and went west. Ellen married Charles Reed, who lived on the Hatch farm. They also went west. Another daughter married another Reed, not related, and lived in Clyde. Believe her daughter, Ursula, is buried here."

There doesn't seem to be evidence that Edwin was buried in Wyoming Cemetery. A reference to him in the book, **Memoirs of Iowa County**, indicated that he was still in the county in 1881. The next plat map of Iowa County that was published after 1870 was 1895. It shows that his land was then owned by George Smith.

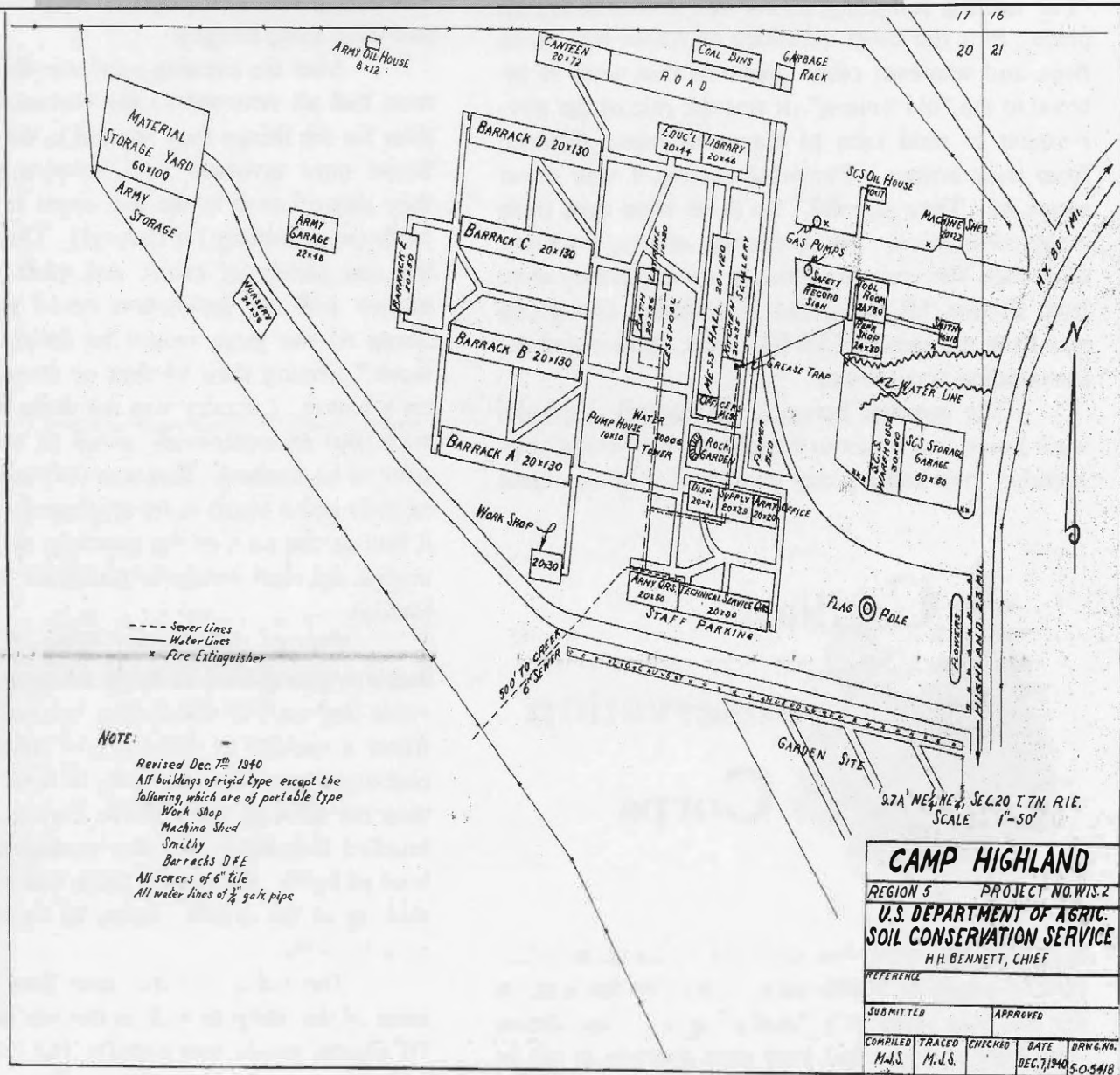
My interest in this family is not because I am searching for a lost ancestor since my ancestry is well documented in Geer genealogies. I am simply curious to know who these people were since they cannot be found in the genealogies and since the Geer name is rarely found in this neck of the woods.



# Highland Camp CCC

*The Experiences of Robert L. Cook*  
Continued from October 2010

Old History  
becomes  
New History  
before our  
eyes



While this was a new world for me, I was not apprehensive about the future. In fact I thought no further into the future than today or tomorrow or dinner time. I was not that concerned. At seventeen and in those days of unsophisticated youth, who was? I only knew I was here and not at home where I was bored and not particularly happy. I have always had an adventurous nature and this seemed to be something more than the ordinary of my humdrum life. I was too restless to be a good student at school. I wanted to get on with life. Fulfill some of my fanciful dreams. Go to new places and do great things. What did I know?

By the time the medical examinations were over the crews started coming in from the fields, dragging their tired bodies off the trucks and proceeding noisily into the barracks for a bit of rest before supper. "Supper" was the word for "dinner" in those days, and dinner was the word for "lunch." The "wash house" (located in the middle of the compound) was soon filled with soiled bodies showering or sloshing their faces from the blue granite pans that served that purpose. The long trough-like shelves that were equipped with hot and cold spigots were flowing freely as the men scrubbed the grime of the day from hands and faces. The "wash house" man had done his job, and the tank was full of good hot water!



*Highland CCC Camp, continued from page 3.*

In the barracks the men were now aware of the new “rookies” that had arrived that day, and the usual joshing and jibing of the new men was taking place. Plus the usual questions of where they were from, and whatever other questions that were of interest to the “old timers.” It was the rule of the government to send men to places of some distance from their homes. For what reason, I was never aware of. They just did. So there were men from many states there. I do not recall, anyone from any other than Midwestern states. In our camp they were from Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Our group was from the area of East St. Louis, Illinois and the surrounding small towns.

The passage between the barracks and the wash house had fallen to a trickle as the “chow” call sounded. We had a pretty good bugler by the name



of “Chalfont” who was also the “Educational Adviser’s” assistant at that time. This was the kind of job that was rated as a “cushy” spot. Your duties were light and you had your own quarters in the library. Not elaborate, but yours just the same! There was the usual rush to the Mess Hall. There are always some guys that were there before mess call. These are the “chow hounds” that every company has. The first in and the last out! The new men were a little hesitant, not knowing the routine. They joined the rest of the men in the milling approach to the tables and managed to find themselves a place in the far reaches of the back hall. The K.P.’s soon had the steaming bowls and platters on the tables and almost as quickly they were emptied as the men passed and scooped the food from them. Stacks of bread disappeared as quickly and condiments made

their way up and down the tables in rapid succession. There was not a fancy dish on the table, but everything was well prepared and wholesome. No one went away hungry.

After the evening meal was finished and the men had all returned to the barracks, they found time for the things they wanted to do or had to do. Some were involved with hobbies and crafts or they strayed over to the rec. room to play pool or cards (no gambling for money!). There was a soda bar and plenty of candy and stuff. Those with money and the inclination could go into town. Some of the guys would be doing their “home work,” ironing their clothes or attempting to sew on a button. Laundry was not done by the men as such, but an occasional piece of clothing would need to be washed. That was the time for a bucket of suds and a brush to be employed. Thrown over a line in the rear of the barracks and unskillfully ironed, the shirt would be ready for Saturday night liberty!

One of the “crafty” things that was done was a weaving kind of thing. A square frame was made and on this was strung (on nails) across the frame a number of windings of string. This was tied together at the junctions of their crossing and then cut through some of the layers. Then it was brushed thoroughly and this produced a “chenille” kind of finish. Of course, there was a design in the makeup of the article. Some of these things were very intricate.

The radio was the main form of entertainment of the camp as well as the rest of the country. Of course, music was popular, but there were also the radio dramas of the day. The ones that were popular with the country were also popular here. “I Love a Mystery” was big. “Mercury Theater” and “First Nighter” and, of course, the comedy shows. But the one show that stands out as the most popular was “Lights Out.” This show had the most realistic sound effects of any I have ever heard and the most gruesome stories, bones cracking and heads being crushed, blood dripping and flowing and all kinds of screams and moans. Of course, they were on late at night when the barracks lights were supposed to be out, it was time for the story to come on. In the dark those stories built night mares.



## Potpourri Continued

Just in case you didn't notice, **John Hess** of the Wyoming Valley has agreed to replace **Boyd Geer** as society Vice-President. John will continue to use his expertise to craft the ICHS budget and Boyd Geer will continue to work as the Society Archivist. We thank them both for outstanding service.

Word received from the **Contemporary Henry Dodge** in New Mexico that the elder of the sons of **Governor Henry Dodge, Henry Lafayette Dodge**, is to be honored with the story of his life (mostly in the Southwest) by **Dean Sundberg** also of New Mexico titled: "**Red Shirt ... The Life and Times of Henry Lafayette Dodge**". Sundberg is an accomplished researcher and writer. He has scoured the Central and Southwestern sections of the United States for accurate information about H. L. Dodge, easily the most romantic figure of the Dodge Family. Next winter is the probable release date, and you will want this book.

Recently Archivist **Boyd Geer** requested information about the early **St. Joseph's Catholic Church** needed for accurate information online with the **Herb Harris** postcard collection. St. Joseph's first dedicated church was built in 1882 with a small bell tower. A larger church was built in 1898 with a larger tower. That tower was removed in 1937 when approximately 35 feet of length was added to the 1898 structure. Sadly when the bell tower was removed the beautiful sounding bell was moved under the gable end of the enlarged church. The present church was built in 1986. While we were discussing houses of worship someone reminded me that the first church in

**Bob Speaker** of Florida emailed re the **Tom Carkeek** photo request in the January Newsletter that he knew of several local descendants of Carkeek. The Editor then contacted **Jayne Harrison**, learning that her late husband, a Carkeek descendant, did not have any Carkeek images, however, Jayne is alert for pictures of the master mason of Iowa County.

### *Grandma isn't a name.*

Remember that we discussed identification of old family pictures with real names?  
**Mabel Jennifer Jones** is a good example.

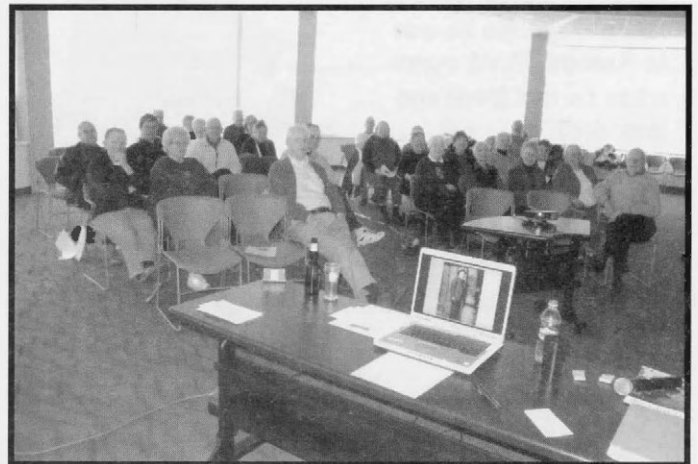
### "Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone?"

This best seller is now available at these local businesses:

***The Foundry Books, Mineral Point***  
***The Collectable Corner, Mineral Point***  
***Bob's Electric, Dodgeville***  
***Shurmans Wisc. Cheese Country, Dodgeville***  
***Iowa County Historical Society, Dodgeville***  
***Rural Route Popcorn, Hwy 18, Montfort***  
***Grandma Mary's Restaurant, Arena***  
***Fromagination on the Square, Madison***

Nothing beats a good **ICHS public meeting**. The 22 January event in the new **Community Room**, see below, of the **Social Services Building** drew about 40 citizens to a very professional presentation by **Gary Hess**

of the Hess Cooperage Family. Of course, there was a fine lunch after but the oak barrel lecture keyed an interesting story about the middle years of America.



### Cosens Quest

**Mrs. Richard Cosens, wife of Dr. Richard Cosens**, practiced medicine in Iowa and Sauk counties until her death in 1895. Her husband is listed in the "1881" history list of physicians on page 766 without a single detail about his practice, the area he served or his wife. Please inform the Editor if you strike a vein of information about the Cosen family profession.



## Writers on Parade

In this issue we showcase the writerly talent in Iowa County, Wisconsin, beginning with short articles on pages 2 and 6. Send us your story.

I am **Janette Hartman**. I moved to Iowa County in 1973, as a choice. I grew up in northern California and the rolling hills of Iowa County reminded me of home. I had always lived near the coast, so the only hard to imagine difference was I couldn't smell the ocean air. My mother's parents were from **Blair/Ettrick**, Wisconsin. They had traveled to the territory of **Alaska** as a part of a "New Deal" project to settle the territory. They went to the **Matanuska Valley** where Palmer is located. My grandmother didn't like "roughing it" so after a few years they returned to the states and settled in **Auburn, Washington**. My father's side was from **Ohio**. Grandpa's people were from a Mennonite community in **Findley, Ohio** and grandma's parents were immigrants from **Switzerland**. They had to leave the community because grandpa developed severe asthma and dry climate was necessary to stop his asthma attacks. There was no medication available that Mennonites could take at the time, so grandpa and grandma moved to the desert of **southern California**. My mom and dad met through a blind date. My father was in the army waiting to be deployed to **Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage**. So he was in Auburn, Washington when he met mom and they decided to get married. She went to Alaska with him. All her belongings were in a "trunk" from Model T. Nine months later I was born in the territory of Alaska.



### Culture Clash?

In the early fifties I lived in rural Barneveld. We had a farmer-neighbor who had brought home a "British War Bride" when he returned from service in World War II. One summer her parents came from England for a month long visit and while they were here, they walked the nearly 3 miles to Barneveld and back 3 or 4 days/week depending on the weather to enjoy beer at the "Pub." They seemed elderly and as a child I found it quirky and hard to understand. Looking back from adulthood, I'm guessing they were city folk and missed the social aspect in the rural farm setting in southern Wisconsin. Otherwise ... I'd assume they would buy a quantity of beer and take it home to drink.

*Anonymous*

### Fee Schedule for Archival Services

**Genealogy research— \$20 minimum up to one hour**

**Additional hours — \$15 each hour**

**Document copying—.50 each copy**

**Microfilm copying—\$1 each copy**

**Archival photos scanned — \$5 each photo**

**Photos printed on plain paper—\$1 each print**

**Photos on photographic paper—\$2 each print**

**Photos saved on a disc—\$1 each disc**

### Coming Up in the Next Newsletter

#### The Temporary Churches of Dodgeville

The community has about seven buildings which were, at least temporarily, churches. We can do a short story on each, with your cooperation.

#### List of recent cash donors-supporters

#### Stephens Farm by Fran Syverson.

A loving reminiscence of the former Stephens farm home in Governor Dodge Park.

## HYDE SMITHY DAYS

***Saturday, May 14, This Year!***

**10 am to 4 pm at the Smithy**

**North of Dodgeville on "H"**

***Demonstrations  
Music—Snacks  
You are invited***





## Accessions

**Jack & Bonnie O'Flahrity**, Dodgeville, WI:

Poster, geography book, fruit crate, Iowa Co. plat book.

**Deb & Gary Haag**, Dodgeville, WI: Child's book.

**Mary Boettcher**, Spring Green, WI: Gorman Family History.

**James Bennett**, Dodgeville, WI: Genealogy for Thomas Gorman and Gorman obituary collection.

**Lee Maso**, Madison, WI: Postcards of Dodgeville in 1909, postcards and ads for Strong's Bank, 2 milk bottles, 2 ash trays.

**Theodore Landon**, Mineral Point, WI: Stereoscopic view of Iowa St., Dodgeville, WI.

**Don Berryman**, McFarland, WI: 2 photos, North Survey Cheese Factory.

**Lonna Arneson**, Blue Mounds, WI: 2 photographs, Dr. Wm. Reese & Dr. Reese, Frank Bartel & Rev. Nerstrand.

**Telia Murphy**, Springfield, IL: The Dodger 1925, photo of 50th Reunion DHS Class of 1927, document, 50th Reunion, DHS Class of 1927, invitation to DHS Graduation June 1, 1893, book: The Orange and Black.

## 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, 2010

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

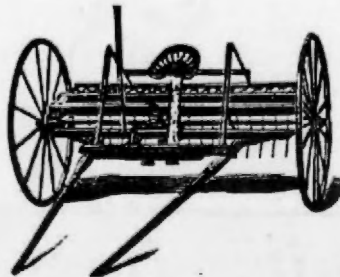
*Index to Wisconsin Miscellaneous Newspapers*

## Membership Application

Iowa County Historical Society

MAIL TO: Treasurer, Iowa County Historical Society

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



One horse dump rake

### Membership dues and categories

Individual-annual \$10.00      5 year \$40.00

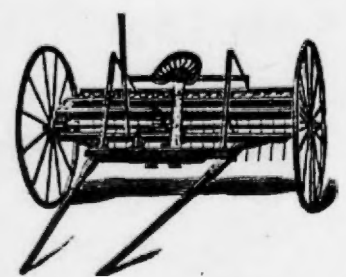
Couples-annual \$15.00      5 year \$60.00

Historian-annual      \$25.00

Master Historian-annual      \$50.00

Institutional Membership      \$25.00

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



One horse dump rake

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 XXXVI No. 2 April 2011

Iowa County Historical Society  
1301 N. Bequette St., P. O. Box 0044  
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

Institutional membership \$25.00

*Membership year is July 1st—June 30*

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-newspaper microfilm-artifacts

*Archivist: Boyd Geer, Curator: Janette Hartman*

Museum phone: 608-935-7694.

Email: [ichistory@mhtc.net](mailto:ichistory@mhtc.net)Web site: [iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org)

Museum open year-round

WEEKDAYS:

*By appointment at other times.*Website: [iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org)

## Calendar of Events

**Ice Cream Social****5 pm Thursday, July 28, 2011***Museum Grounds*

1301 N. Bequette, Dodgeville, WI

Pie, Ice Cream,

Plate Lunches by Grandma Mary**MUSIC, FRIENDS, FOOD**Tours of Society Facilities

It's up to you...  
*ICHS ice-cream or coffee or both...*  
Your choice July 28



The 16th International Gathering of  
*Cornish Cousins + Cornish Fest*

**AUGUST 10-14, 2011**

Mineral Point, Wisconsin

***Hyde Smithy Days***  
**Saturday, May 14 This Year!**  
10 am to 4 pm at the Smithy

North of Dodgeville  
on Hwy "H"

*Demonstrations*  
*Music—Snacks*  
You are invited

