

Iowa County History

Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society

Volume XXXVI

No. 4

October 2011

Potpourri

ICHS Directors

Annual Meeting ICHS

7 PM Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Stonefield Apartments, Dodgeville, WI

Writer Robert Grede tells the story of his great great grandfather, George Van Norman, an adventurous

and successful entrepreneur whose career began in Grede's historical novel of the Civil War "The Spur and the Sash."

Election and lunch to follow.

You are invited.



George Van Norman

Almost daily, visitors from all over the country open our museum doors to a great source for tracking their past, the records of East Side Cemetery in Dodgeville. They have long been a resource for family and Iowa County genealogy and history. In order to make our visitors even more successful, we are calling for our readers to contact the society if they have knowledge of East Side records for any time period. We know some early records have been lost but are convinced that others are hiding in old books and file folders. Please help the ICHS to rescue and copy these valuable records. Call any director or email the Editor. Contact information is on the top of this page. Thank you.

Remember Twin Forks School between Hollandale and Blanchardville? It was sagging badly when we did a story on it in the 90s and I understand it is completely collapsed at this time. Another good reason for the ICHS membership to feel pleased to have preserved Floyd School. Open to visitors by appointment.

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

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Potpourri

We are saddened to report the death of **Lyla Vinje** of **Hollandale**. She was a charter member of the Iowa County Historical Society and a long time President and activist. Lyla was a long time teacher and a firm believer in reaching out to young people. She will be missed.

A request from **Curator Janette Hartmann**

*As I update the Iowa County Historical Society website, I thought that it might be nice to have a page that lists the stone and brick masons of Iowa County. **Audrey Parkinson** of **Mineral Point** had published a nice list of the masons of Mineral Point in her book, **Stone by Stone**. I would like to expand this list to include all masons that worked in Iowa County. If you live or work in a stone or brick building, do you know the name of the mason who built it? Please email or mail your information to me at the museum. Thanks. Janette*

Mary Knudson has volunteered to assist **Curator Janette** update the ICHS website. **Matt Sweeney**, our present webmaster, has been very busy with his other activities and has requested that the Society provide a replacement. We offer a tip of the proverbial hat to Matt for his diligent and professional direction in recent years.

Lafayette, our sister county to the south, was created by the Territorial Legislature as a county effective on January 31, 1846. At the same time Iowa County was to be christened Montgomery County, Wisconsin. That moniker didn't stick and we became the highly favored **Iowa County, Wisconsin**. We are glad.

Copy from the **Darlington Republican** newspaper of 18, August, 1881 comes to the defense of **Colonel Henry Dodge** and the men who followed his lead in the **Black Hawk War** of 1832. Not that many survivors were around to strike a blow for the truth all those years after that bloody little conflict. Henry Dodge was almost uniformly admired by the citizens who saw him in action "in the field," but others who were dismayed by his untrained administrative style were eager to spread base rumors about his integrity long years after his

death in 1867. To do so while he was alive would have guaranteed a trip to the woodshed. A trip to the woodshed then and now is not the only way to settle differences or to vent one's spleen. However, it was surely the "Dodge Method" and well justified when looking at the litany of rumors which passed for fact among the Dodge haters of 1881. Colonel Dodge was accused of refusing to lead his militia in battle and refusing to replace musty barrels of flour, the unfortunate provision to Clarks Corps and on and on. None of it true and all is refuted by the men who followed Dodge into battle. Such is the fate of many brave leaders.

A useful way to trace your ancestors if you are on line, is to subscribe to Ancestry.com and search the various US census reports for the **known neighbors** of your ancestors. The census enumerator generally worked down the road, farm to farm or city house to house. For example, I recently learned that two of my paternal great grand parents did ship out from north Germany to New York in the year 1867. In their 70s, they were desperate and daring. Your Editor assumes they were content with the results of their voyage into the unknown.

Corrections

In the July Newsletter we misspelled volunteer **Mary Knudson's** name as **Knutson**. Sorry.

It really was July not June 2011 as posted on page 8 in the July Newsletter.

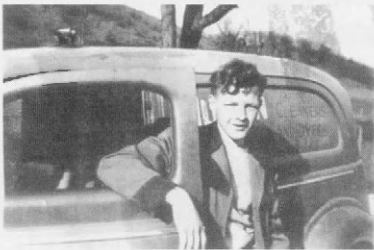
John Metcalf's musings about **Minerva Reese** and **Janie Harrison** on page 3 of the July 2011 Newsletter picked up on the wrong **Jane Harrison**. The other **Jane's** husband, **Don Harrison**, was descended from **Tom Carkeek**, not the **Jane** whose mother was **Minerva Reese**. The Editor continues to act human, perhaps he will improve. **John Metcalf's** recollections are extremely interesting and will be enjoyed by those with an interest in the human web of Iowa County history.

On page 4 of the July 2011 Newsletter we wrote that **Jacob Van Norman** will be the subject of **Robert Grede's** lecture at the annual meeting on **October 25, 2011**. Wrong ... the subject of the book is **Jacob's** son, **George Van Norman**. Our source material switched father **Jacob** and son **George**. They are a story you will enjoy on **October 25**.

Eager to Enlist

Leon Nelson Remembers When He Was Eighteen

On August 6, 1945, the U.S. Army Air Force dropped the first atom bomb on Japan and soon World War II was history, well almost. The peace treaty had not been signed but the Japanese had unconditionally surrendered. So when I went to school that fall for my senior year we, my buddies and I, felt that we were kinda' gyped, we were not going to be able to shoulder arms and defend our country from foreign aggression like all of our older cousins, brothers and school mates. It sure seemed the thing to do because that is all we had heard since December 7, 1941 when we were in eighth grade and our complete high school experience was wrapped in the aura of war. Many of our friends and relatives had



Leon Nelson in high school

fought and had been killed in combat and with the loyalty that is even stronger in youth plus the feeling of righting the wrongs and paying back for all the hated enemy had done to our friends and loved ones, we felt really left out, that we had missed our chance to contribute and to make the enemy pay for what they had done. But as the months rolled on, we found that they still wanted us in service, the draft board was still in force, and the men who were overseas and had served in combat were eager to come home. We were needed for an army of occupation all over the world where we would take their place and they could be released to come home to their loved ones. Well, we graduated from good old Dodgeville High in June, and **Homer Fieldhouse**, my best buddy in High School and in Scouts, turned 18 on June 10th and he promised to wait for me as my 18th birthday was just a little over a month later on the 11th of July. So we both went into the service of our country without having our "Mommies" sign permission slips for us; we went in as men signing for ourselves - how else would a guy go into the United States Marine Corps?

We filled a box car that had been outfitted as a troop carrier. There were three levels of bunks made with pipe with a canvas fitted over the pipes for a sleeping surface; a stainless sink large enough to hold a football (a basketball wouldn't fit). There was only one for the whole car, and not any toilet. Guess what we used for a urinal? There were regular box car doors which we had open during the day. Across the opening was a stout chain so that four or five guys on either side of the car could watch the passing countryside in comparative safety. The doors were open even into the night because as you remember this was in the middle of July!

Remember, too, there wasn't a diesel engine pulling us. No, it was an old coal burning steam engine, and you should have seen us when we went through a tunnel! It looked like we were a traveling minstrel show - we were covered with soot! Oily soot!



1940s steam locomotive

And we were not too excited about going to the sink to wash up, as you may guess! We also spent a lot of time on the siding waiting for the fast freight or high class passenger train to highball through. After making it to the east coast, we waited around in the freight yard for an "Eastern Seaboard Line" train to pick us up for the haul down to South Carolina. We finally made it to an antique day coach that would take us into the gates of Paris Island, U.S.M.C. Training Base. This old day coach really should have been sent to the Smithsonian Institute. Honest, it had wicker seats, three kerosene lamps swinging in the center of the isle from the ceiling, and a pot belly stove at the end of the car for winter heat. There were Marine recruit names and dates going back before the First World War, 1915! This train stopped at every cross roads to pick up a bale of cotton, and at each stop we made there were a couple of young black boys singing and dancing for us and we would throw coins from

continued on page 4

Continued from page 3, Nelson USMC

the window for them to catch in their hats and never did they miss one.

A couple more stops and we were within the confines of Paris Island "boot camp" where we were met by our "Drill Instructor" who marched this dirty, filthy group to a barber, had our heads shaved (twenty six strokes of the clippers), and then off to a gang shower where we were cleaned, de-loused and our civilian clothes were put in a bag with a number on it and we were informed that if we forgot our number we would never see those clothes again. "136" I never forgot. However, I need not have remembered, as they put our clothes in a big tumbler with hot steam all over them, over and over and over so you can figure out what a wool sport coat and wool gabardine trousers looked like after that treatment! Anyway, we now were given a suit of official Marine dungarees and were marched off to our barracks and assigned to our bunks, then off to the mess hall for supper and back to the barracks for more close order drill.

That first day it was "Forward march!, Left Flank, March!, To the Rear March!" Then just as we were catching on the Drill Instructor said, "O.K. now that you know some of the basics we will use Marine cadence!"

"Forward march" became "Frddd harch" and "Left Flank March" became "Halehf lank harch," and counting cadence "One, two three, four" became "Haonehaydareep-hayda reep-haydalup, hay-da-one, haydaone two threefour." It is amazing how fast you learn when you are scared out of your pants, you've been told you are no longer with your mommy and you are just so much garbage; it's going to be a hard job to make you into anything resembling a Marine because you are the sorriest bunch that ever came into this Marine Corps, and it sure is a good thing that the fighting



Marine insignia

is all over because we sure would lose the war if we were any sample of what was left to fill the shoes of those worthies that preceded us! Whew! You can imagine where our self-esteem was about now. Where ever we went we were learning how to march-march-march. Close order drill took on a new meaning to all of us. It was what we did going to breakfast, lunch and dinner and between and after, until it was time for bed. One of the "Boots" just didn't get it, he was anticipating commands and moved before he was supposed to. The DI put a bucket on his head and marched him off. He could not see anything and had to rely on what ever the DI said, he even marched him right smack into a building to teach him to change nothing till he was told to do so. It was a good object lesson to us all, however a little sadistic. The first time we had to fall in for our march to the mess hall the Drill Instructor had a clip board and called off the roll after telling us to "sound off" loud and clear when he called our name. He got to Rudolph Zabigneu Potzadecki, stumbled over it a few times and asked who that name belonged to. Rudy said, "That's me, sir!" "Well" the Drill Instructor said, "when I call "Murphy," you answer!" So that's the way it happened. Rudy bunked next to me and he said he had trouble with his name in school, too, but what could he do about it, that's the name he had! Some of the guys called him "Pottzy" and he didn't mind that. We were given 10 minutes every hour to rest and have a smoke and I learned to shut my eyes and fall asleep at once and in less than 10 minutes be wide awake and refreshed, ready for more close order drill. *Nelson is a longtime observer of Iowa County life.*

Alexander Hamilton Willard

Willard was born in New Hampshire and served with the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Ocean. He later lived in Missouri and Wisconsin farming in Lafayette County. Willard and his wife, Elenor McDonald, had twelve children. They retired to California, crossing the prairie in a covered wagon. He was the last survivor of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, living to the age of 90 years.



Potpourri Again

The **Dodgeville Chronicle** for August 4, 1876 shows this request for service listed under **\$10 Reward**: *I will pay the above reward for the arrest and conviction of the parties, or either of them, who assaulted my son and daughter with eggs, while returning from the days meeting at Standart's Grove, on the evening of Sunday, July 10, 1876. Chas Paull, Dodgeville, Wis.*

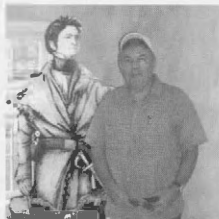
Please inform the Editor if you know of the possible consequences of the above message. Surely the great great grandchildren will know if the "egggers" were apprehended.

HATS OFF AGAIN

ICHS members, **Carolyn Meuer** and **Marie Sersch**, did a bang up job of cleaning the **Dodge Cabin** on a nice morning in August. The Editor, who was fretting over his plan to do the task sometime, ... was more than gratified by the effort put out to make the cabin presentable for a Comish Cousins Tour later that week. Carolyn was the designated tour guide for the tour of various Iowa County historic spots. Thanks, Carolyn and Marie.

After reading several times, the Jesse Stuart poem, "Man with a Bull Tongued Plow," I finally did a Google search and confirmed my wavering suspicions. The Bull Tongued plow is an early design of a walking plow used to break or clear heavy sod. Many of us started our teen years with at least a little work behind a walking plow. They could afford a hard day's work to a team and a farmer, and they are not thick tongued like the old Bull Tongue Plow.

Remember the **Hispanic Henry Dodge** from our interview at the Dodge Cabin in the summer of 2010? A great great great grandson of Henry Dodge and therefore a 2GG of **Henry Lafayette Dodge**, **Henry** and his wife **Brenda** continue to discover and record the blood connections between the Hispanic and English Dodge lines. Shortly after our interview, the Hispanic Dodges tracked down **Dean Sundberg** of **New Mexico** who has ready for publication a biography of that same **Henry L. Dodge** who first introduced Spanish and Mexican bloodlines into the Dodge line. Dodge was also **Iowa County**



Henry Dodge and
Henry Dodge at
Dodge Cabin

Haunted House

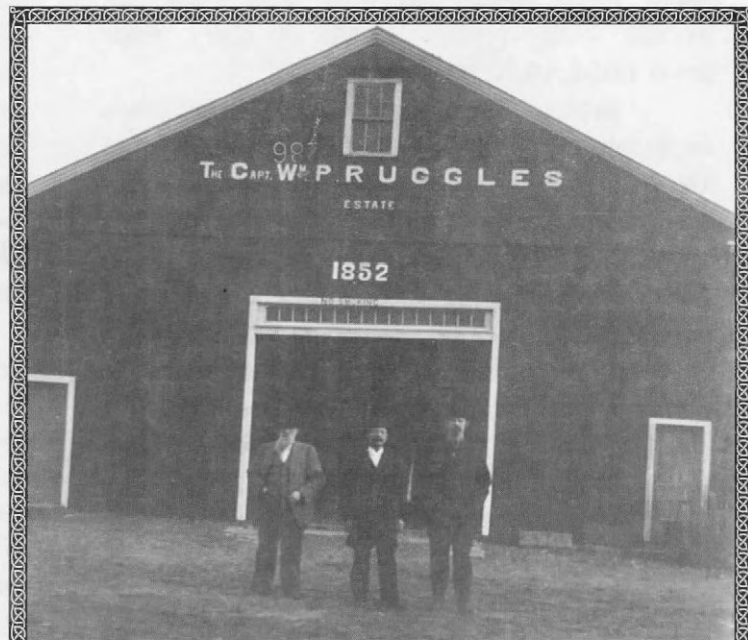
Continued from page 6.

Different families lived on the place. One of them happened to be an Irishman by the name of Pregler. The husband liked his whiskey and during one of his drunks, slit his throat. So the family had a doctor come and stitch up the wound. All the time the doctor worked on him the Irishman would curse, wanting to be left alone so he could die. He recovered from the injury and in time moved away.

Years passed. The house stood empty for a long time and eventually was torn down. The cellar and well were filled in and soon the site of the homestead vanished. The area reverted to crop land but to this day, the corn yellows and dries up and will not grow on the spot where the pioneer house had stood.

The mines have long ago been abandoned but the area of the mine shaft into which the old lady had flung herself is still visible as a slight depression growing full of cockle burr amid the surrounding fields of corn and hay. This then being mute testimony of a long dead past only to be remembered in the minds of an ever decreasing number of people. Thus the stories of long ago fade with each passing year, until they are completely forgotten or want to be forgotten even by their relatives.

The resemblance of the characters in this story to any persons living or dead is coincidental.



Three from the Past

William Gardner Ruggles on the left son of Wm. P. Ruggles original proprietor of the Ruggles Stage Coach Stop, poses with Oran Davies and Moody Price at the original (1842) stop south of present day Hyde, photo undated. Klint and Wanda McCutchin are the proud owners of Ruggles Farm and Stage Coach Stop in this century.

The Haunted House

Compiled by George Wallenkamp

The following is an account of a so-called haunted homestead which may have been in Iowa County.

It was a September evening in the year 1882. German immigrants, **Joseph** and **Betty Lauerson**, were quarreling with much anger in their feelings. The reason for the argument was because of whom their son Albert had decided he would take for his wife, Anna Prester. The father favored his son's choice. However, in her broken English the mother called this girl a "common woman." Now it wasn't that the girl was not a good person with character but was a little below the social standings which the old lady thought she was in. This being her proud German background.

Anyway the argument over the so-called "common woman" continued long into the night and early hours of that fall day. A witness to this story is a nineteen year old girl by the name of Luna Lobomotiv, who was the hired servant in the household and who stated that many times throughout the night, the old woman would repeat "You'll be sorry, papa never mind, you'll be sorry."

In time the bickering subsided and when daybreak arrived Joseph Lauerson noticed that his wife was no longer in bed. He thought nothing of this as many times before she would get up early to feed their chickens. He did notice an unusual thing in the room though. Betty had removed her religious items and placed them on the bed. Becoming more curious now, he glanced into the farmyard and in the early morning dew he could see tracks leading from the house to the site of the mine.

Now in the 1880's Southwest Wisconsin was a very productive lead and zinc mining region. The mines reached a depth of about 80 feet. The mines were being worked at this time and the descending openings were not filled in as was the case in later years. In some of these holes or shafts, timber and other equipment would be sticking out from the sides.

Lauerson followed the footprints which he thought to be his wife's to the edge of one of the open mine shafts. Neighbors were called and two men descended into the pit and there they found Betty Lauerson caught on one of the protruding timbers. She had not been killed outright in the fall but was now dying. When the would-be rescuers reached her level, she gave them such a piercing look that the two neighbors stated that they would never again attempt to recover a suicide victim.

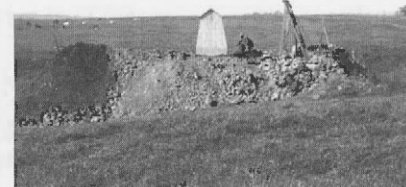
Following the old lady's suicide death, the town's people began to say that the place where she had lived was haunted. Various stories such as, "If you only knew what went on in that house, wash tubs rattling in the cellar or the sounds of someone ripping carpet rags coming from the walls."

Some years after Betty's death her daughter and family lived in the place. All the children born to them soon died. After they moved to a different place, they raised a large family. One

time when the daughter lived on the old place, neighbors gathered to help with the butchering. It was late in the day and the water used for scalding the pigs was not warm enough so the butchering crew went into the house for coffee. Later when they returned to the hog pens, they found the pigs were already dead.

Some years hence, a family from Louisiana moved into the house. They were miners and worked in the nearby mines. While living on this place the mother developed an infection in her hand. The infection progressed to such a state that the hand had to be amputated. It was then buried on the farm. A few years passed and this lady died. During her wake which followed, friends and acquaintances gathered to honor her memory. One of her sons was sitting on a chair that tilted against the door. All at once a rap sounded at the door. The son jumped up, opened the door and found no one there. He then walked around the house but could not find anyone who might have rapped on the door.

Please turn to page 5.



Early mine pit cover

Acquisitions

John Metcalf, Madison, WI: Booklet-50th Anniversary Dodgeville Chapter of Order of Eastern Star. (OES).

Della Gaurraci, Redmond, WA: Photographs—Rowe and Gaurraci families.

Nancy Clevinger, Portland, OR: Historic postcards of Barneveld, WI; letter, family history details.

Sandra Shan-DuBow, Pen Hollow Farm, Spring Green, WI: CD with 25 historic images of Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin.

Randal Poppe, Racine, WI: Photograph of May Mundy, teacher at Sneed Creek School; 5 digital images of students at Sneed Creek School; Christ Lutheran Confirmation class; Hans Hansen homes; Pete Paulson home.

Neil Giffey, Dodgeville, WI: Booklet-Civil War and Life Experiences of Herman Giffey.

Simon Eslien, Buckeye, AZ: WWI cap and jacket, document describing service and photo of Wilhelm Clarence Ameson of Iowa County, Wisconsin.

On the 150th anniversary of the Civil War may I suggest that you read some of the works of Ambrose Bierce. Not one to crack jokes, Bierce wrote of the lessons from the futility of war. Editor.

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

Membership dues and categories

Individual-annual \$10.00 5 year \$40.00

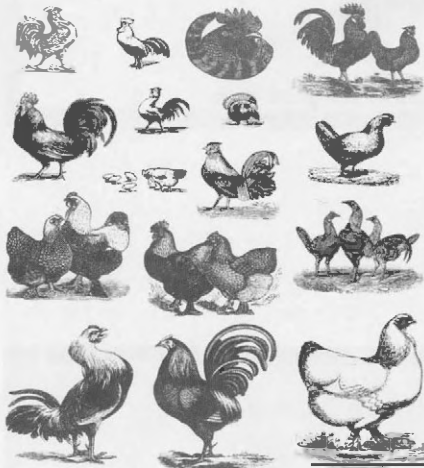
Couples-annual \$15.00 5 year \$60.00

Historian-annual \$25.00

Master Historian-annual \$50.00

Institutional Membership \$25.00

Membership year is July 1st—June 30th



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. 4 October 2011

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

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

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

Web site: iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org

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 PERMIT NO. 86

Address Service Requested

Museum open year-round except for holidays.

Weekdays 1-4 pm

by appointment at other times.

Website: iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org



Walking plow, see page five.

ICHS Annual Meeting

7 p.m. Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Stonefield Apartments, Dodgeville, WI



George Van Norman

The program begins at 7 pm with an illustrated lecture by Robert Grede who tells the story of his great great grandfather, George Van Norman, who brushes with romance and the Civil War in Grede's book, "The Spur and the Sash."

Nominations from the floor, Election of directors, and Lunch to follow

At 1 p.m. on Saturday

January 21, 2012

at Stonefield Apartments in Dodgeville

Susan Stratman White will speak on the folk music and folk tales collected by Iowa County native, Helene Stratman Thomas, during her long career with UW Extension.

Bring a friend.