

Iowa County History

Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society

Volume XXXVII

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*Helene Stratman-Thomas
at the home of
Donalda La Grandeur
French Canadian folksinger*

Public Meeting Saturday January 21 at 1 PM Stonefield Apartments Dodgeville

Susan (Stratman) White will speak on the life of **Helene Stratman-Thomas** who has been called the "Wisconsin Songcatcher" for her works in the 1940's. Helene's style enabled her to capture the words and music of more than 30 of the different cultures and social classes that settled in Wisconsin. The depth of that collection was added to by the photographs that she took.

Susan's presentation will include some genealogy and some information on Helene's brother Warren and his research on tropical diseases.

ICHS Directors

John Hess, Pres.	588-7082
Boyd Geer, VP	930-9084
Marie Sersch, Treas.	935-5752
Ann Peterson, Sec.	532-6325
Scott Berrymen	712-6857
Don McGuire	929-7494
Margaret Peat	935-5532
Janell Narveson	935-9213
Neil Giffey	935-5557

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If you're an egg candler, what was your job? (Answer on page 6)

Annual Meeting Report

The 36th Annual Meeting was held on October 25 at the Stonefield Apartments in Dodgeville. The evening kicked off with the business end of things. It was announced that **Alice Griffiths**, **Eileen Arndt**, and **George Wallenkamp** would not be seeking another term on the board. They were thanked for their efforts while on the board. Alice has served as president for the past eight years. **Boyd Geer** noted that two of the major milestones during that time frame were the Floyd School restoration and the book **Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone?** Alice plans on remaining an active volunteer and looks forward to working with new members on the board. Eileen plans to continue the work she does with archiving and research.

The nominating committee proposed a slate of **Scott Berrymen** (Dodgeville), **Janell Narveson** (Dodgeville), and **Ann Peterson** (Avoca) as replacements. They were elected by acclamation.

(continued page 7)

Annual Meeting (Continued)

DOROTHY ANDERSON ... WE THANK YOU

By Alice Griffiths

In 2009 our Curator Dorothy Anderson broke her leg. Since that time she has been unable to act as the Iowa County Historical Society Curator. For more than 23 years before that time Dorothy worked with the Iowa County Historical Society. When she first began she brought young grandchildren in her care with her.

Dorothy's experience as a recently retired teacher provided the Historical Society with an experienced organizer with a bent for organization which was the order of the day because the Society had been manned strictly by volunteers before Dorothy arrived on the scene. Quickly Dorothy began a process for indexing donations as they came in at that time. She also researched past gifts and identified the source of many of the earlier donations. (The information on these items was not always easy to find.)

Dorothy did much to organize many of the source materials we now find so important to our collections, and she did it all on a shoestring budget as the rough recycled covers on many of our scrapbook collections attest. Our scrapbooks were compiled by Dorothy – thanks to her we have this resource at hand.

Dorothy compiled separate scrapbooks on local churches, cemeteries, obituaries, Governor Dodge and other parks, including local history articles, pictures and other information. Today these scrapbooks continue to be a valued research resource. A few months

ago the Wisconsin Historical Society featured some of the scrapbooks Dorothy compiled in their website feature on scrapbooks.

In addition to these assembled collections, Dorothy arranged & labeled exhibits, gave tours, and assisted those researching their genealogy. Dorothy worked tirelessly, and her efforts were invaluable in gathering facts and stories from people and helping to assemble the historical society's recent highly popular publication of Where have all the Cheese Factories Gone?

Dorothy made sure she was available to people who were traveling through, and she would open the museum especially for them whether it was nights, weekends or whenever the request arrived.

Dorothy Anderson worked tirelessly for the Society until a broken leg late in 2009 made travel and walking impossible. At this time Dorothy is a resident at the Bloomfield Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center. She continues to be available to the Iowa County Historical Society for consulting and continues her interest in the Otter Creek Lutheran Church. She also enjoys visitors. Now a word from the Society:

“THANKS DOROTHY FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION.”

Wanted:

Your stories, pictures, or memories of any of the flour, sawmill, sorghum, or feed mills in Iowa County. Help the Iowa County Historical Society in our efforts to unearth the hidden stories of Iowa County's early milling history for a new book. We are seeking information on about fifty mills known to have been in operation in the county.

The very first mill was built around 1830 east of Mineral Point. In 1839 fur trader **Joseph Roulette** teamed up with **George Hickcox** to build a mill north of Ridgeway. No mill incurred more court battles than the Hickcox Mill as the absentee landlord and the local residents clashed. Court cases with other mills often involved disputes over water rights between the mill and the surrounding land owners.

Although mills started as water powered, they transitioned into steam operated industries. Flour mills gave way to feed mills as large commercial mills began to produce flour. Several flour mills also did wool carding. Crops like wheat, rye, and corn were ground in these mills, but sorghum needed to be pressed. Special mills for pressing out the sweet juice and cooking it down will provide an interesting side story to the milling industry.

Please contact **Joan Bennett** or **Melva Phillips** at the Museum to share your stories, maps, sketches, photo's, etc. It will require your shared memories and memorabilia to make The Mills of Iowa County a success.



Percy Mill in Clyde

Latto or Standart ... they had fun

By Margaret Peat

The vanished community gathering place called "Latto" described in this article was located about 7 miles north of Dodgeville, Wisconsin approximately at the junction of highways 23 and 130.

In the early 1800s when **Standart** was a young settlement, they enjoyed having an excuse to party. Over time there have been two stores, a black smith shop, a cheese factory, a school, a post office, and still remaining a church. Picnics were a great way for neighbors to gather, have a pot luck meal, play games and visit with neighbors. After using different spots, **George Latto Hill** got to be a favorite site. Other than holiday picnics and reunions, it was used for lectures, Sunday School and other open air meetings in good weather. **Floyd School** was nearby so many events were held there, especially in bad weather. Consequently the **Latto Community** was often called the **Floyd Community**. Incidentally, the school was also used for religious purposes until 1884 when the **Standart Primitive Methodist Church** was built.

The 4th of July became a big extended family-community affair. The men, about 15 from the area, organized a planning group to promote the big affair. **Will Schloemer** group treasurer kept the cigar box and **Wesley Walker** was the Secretary.

Wesley Walker started the day with a big dynamite blast at dawn that could be heard several miles. At noon a big potluck picnic dinner was followed by at least one outstanding game of baseball with teams from surrounding towns. There was horseshoe competition and children's games. The ladies competed with baked goods and fancy work, all followed by a dance in the evening. A big concession stand served pop, candy bars, lemonade served from a barrel, hot dogs and hamburgers throughout the day.

About 1920 a hardwood floor was laid, and a well known band was hired to provide music for the crowd. To preserve the expensive floor, a Quonset or Butler type building was erected. Big gas lights were used to light the stand and the pavilion.

Admission was charged at the door for the dance and each person was admitted with a hand stamped "LATTO" in permanent red ink.

The grounds were no charge and non-profit.



Latto shelter

Protected by a crude fence from animals and errant two legged intruders, the Latto building was the center of the Standart community for all manner of entertainment and especially the 4th of July diversion.



The proceeds were used to purchase food and hire a band for the next July 4 celebration. Occasionally other dances were held on Saturday nights during the warm weather. More rules, paperwork and insurance were required as the state tried to tax the proceeds. In 1941 the last celebration was held. After that

Independence Day was no longer celebrated in Standart on George Latto Hill. The committee paid all bills and held a well attended oyster supper. All that remains now are memories, scarred oak trees and the deep ruts of the early wagon tracks. The land is now owned by Curt and Donna Peterson. World War II had begun so the building was sold and moved away in 1942, providing storage at the Cobb Canning Factory for crop dusting planes.

Slag Furnace Restoration Celebrated

By the Iowa County Community

The dedication of the Bennett, Hoskins and George slag furnace at Dodgeville was held September 24. The slag furnace was built in 1876, and it was quite high tech for the times. It was the result of them pondering how to profit from the unsightly stacks of partially processed lead which waited to be separated from the crushed limestone remnants of early mining in Iowa County. The furnace used new ways to salvage more lead mineral from the tailings piles. Word of the success of the Bennett, Hoskins and George slag furnace system spread across the lead region, and it was successful from 1876 to 1890. However, the depletion of the tailings piles and newer smelting methods spoke to the eventual closure.

Today's restored furnace is the culmination of a partnership of the Dodgeville Federated Woman's Club (**Ginger Jones, Catherine Tredinnick, Carolyn Meuer**, et al) and the Dodgeville Historic Preservation Committee (**Amber Westerman** and **Dan Meuer**). Catherine has been a consistent thread through the various restorations (1967 and 1983).

A star spangled group of local citizens took their turns speaking about the founding of Iowa County as lead and zinc miners with visions of becoming well-to-do. Alas it didn't work out that way for most of the early settlers but the tales told to the 60-70 spectators were all the more interesting because they were in the realm of real life experiences. **Mayor Jim McCaulley** led off followed by **Judge Bill Dyke** covering early Dodgeville history. Then **Tom Wilson**, dressed as an historic early surveyor, (a comic one at that) left us laughing. Our own Bard of Cornwall, **Jim Jewell** expounded on the Cornish influence in South West Wisconsin. **Don Berryman** gave a short lecture



Restored Slag Furnace, from the west
Photo by Neil Giffey

and closed with a couple of numbers on his musical saw. Retired Iowa County businessman **Bill Singer** spoke of the mining history of his ancestors. Ginger Jones recited the considerable history of the struggle of the Woman's Club to preserve the slag furnace. **Doug Miller** of Folklore Village did some great old time fiddling, and event organizer Carolyn Meuer spoke on the importance of preserving history. Carolyn should know - she spent five years piecing together the life story of the old furnace.

Afterward, the audience wandered about studying the posted history exhibits and visiting with their fellow guests. They finally settled in around the snack table enjoying Catherine's Cornish tea biscuits, saffron buns and other tasty treats. An informative brochure about the Slag Furnace and mining history is available at the ICHS museum. While there, check out the binder on the Slag Furnace.



Check out photos of the day at the Dodgeville Chronicle web site

http://dodgevillechronicle.smugmug.com/Events/Slag-Furnace-135th-Anniversary/19186993_Mj6bft#1495525077_kPMsWrX

Iowa County in the Civil War

By John Helmenstine

In 1860, there were 18,998 people in Iowa County and when the "Rebellion" started almost 9% of the population committed themselves to "Preserving the Union." More than 1,580 men from Iowa County served in the Civil War, most of them serving in the Infantry. About 90 Iowa County men served in the Cavalry. Approximately 45 served in Artillery units.

More than 200 local men died during their service in the Union Army. However, twice as many died from disease (140) as were killed in battle or died from wounds (66). This reflects the national toll of death with approximately 420,000 disease related deaths and 204,000 killed in action. This is similar to Wisconsin's 3,802 soldiers killed in action and 8,499 dying from other causes.

The Siege of Vicksburg was fatal to more local soldiers (10) than any other battle. Atlanta 7, Petersburg 6, Gettysburg 5, Bentonville 4 and Antietam 2, accounted for some of the deaths of Iowa County soldiers.

Of the states where Iowa County men died of disease, Wisconsin with 30 had the most deaths of local soldiers. The records do not explain if the men first became ill at home or came home with illness contacted at camp. The following is the death toll by community: Arena 4, Avoca 1, Bayfield 1, Dodgeville 2, Highland 1, Mifflin 1, Moscow 1, Mineral Point 4, Ridgeway 2, and Sheboygan 1. As they were the location of training camps, Madison with 4 deaths and Milwaukee with 6 deaths, were the most fatal to local soldiers. Tennessee 21, Arkansas 18, Mississippi 14, Louisiana 9, Georgia 7 and Missouri 6, added to the death toll of Iowa County men.

As one might surmise from their being the largest communities in Iowa County, Mineral Point with 312 volunteers and Dodgeville with 311 volunteers supplied the largest number of soldiers. The other volunteers from Iowa County are as follows: Ridgeway 163, Highland 156, Linden 125, Arena 113, Moscow 84, Mifflin 75, Eden 60, Pulaski 56, Clyde 35, Wyoming 32 and Waldwick 32.

Although the Civil War was long ago and far away from today's Wisconsin, we can see how important it was to the residents of Iowa County in 1861. By the census records of 1860, 50% of the U.S. population was female and Iowa County was no different. Also, in 1860, over half of the people in the U.S. were under the age of 20, and this was true for Iowa County. At the beginning of the war, there were about 18,000 people in Iowa County and so half were under the age of 20. Of the 9,000 adults, then 4500 would have been male. That means that the 1560 soldier volunteers

from Iowa County would make almost 1/3 of the adult males. This had to make it harder for the families of Iowa County to make a living with so many men gone off to war. It also must have placed many families under an emotional strain of worry and grief.

This information was composed from the Wisconsin Volunteers: War of the Rebellion, 1861-65, prepared by the state of Wisconsin in 1886. This source is available on-line at the web-site of the Wisconsin State Historical Society (www.wisconsinhistory.org). Also, available there is the Veterans Census of 1885, 1895 and 1905 that lists all Civil War veterans living in Wisconsin at that time. There is a section of the web-site called "Wisconsin in the Civil War" that has a digital collection of some 20,000 original documents. The collection provides ready access to dozens of diaries, regimental histories and book-length memoirs, thousands of soldier's letters, hundreds of newspaper articles, and more than 1,000 photographs, maps and other images.

Editor's Note: John Helmenstine was an early president of the Iowa County Historical Society and had been a teacher in Iowa County. He recently retired from teaching in the Milwaukee school System.

The following came from a Cornwall Newspaper:

15 JUNE 1855 ADVERTISEMENTS

I, JOHN RULE, a native of Cornwall, residing in the town of Linden, Iowa County, Wisconsin, U.S. of America, Tavern Keeper, received into my house RICHARD BERRYMAN, JOHN NICHOLLS, and JOHN BERRYMAN, of the parish of Gulval, Cornwall, Miners, who bore every appearance of being respectable men. Soon after their arrival they became sick, and in addition to their board and lodging, I furnished them with money to buy medicine, whereby a bill of several hundreds of dollars became due to me from them. Soon after their recovery, they were possessed of ample funds, but sold their property and absconded, probably to Cornwall, without paying me or the amounts due from them to the store-keeper, smith, shoemaker, &c, and friends for money lent to remit to their wives, in consequence of which I am now in straitened circumstances.

JOHN RULE

Dated Linden, America, May 1855

Acquisitions

Patrick Leary, Madison, WI: Antique egg carrier/crate.

Dorothy Weirich, Dodgeville, WI: Remington portable typewriter, nine bottles and cans along with various inks.

Jeanne Paquin, Dodgeville, WI: Two scrapbooks of Dodgeville focusing on changes and happening during the timeframe of mayor **Doug Schmoekel**.

Dave Flynn, Ridgeway, WI: Children's Book

Melva Phillips, Ridgeway, WI: Simpson Church 1861-2011

Phyllis Fritsch Cobb, WI: Booklets; Ridgeway Heralds; and Primitive Methodist Journal

Alice Griffiths, Dodgeville, WI: CD and book related to Helene Stratman-Thomas

Jane Schwoerer, Mt. Horeb, WI: various items including a Baptismal gown, post cards, cane, books

Rosemary Edwards, Dodgeville, WI: Children school books

Dennis James, Dodgeville, WI: antique 2-piece school desk set

Susan White, Wisconsin Dells, WI: various Stratman-Thomas items

What is an egg candler?

A recent donation to the Iowa County Historical Society was an egg crate from **Patrick Leary**. When **Marie Sersch** saw the egg crate, she said "Oh wow, you even have the flats and fillers!". Then she said she had once worked as an egg candler. Basically, this is a person who sorts eggs by using a bright light. This process is used in grading the eggs. Most newly laid eggs are good quality. Eggs not over two or three days old, if held under good conditions, will meet the specifications for Grade A. The only eggs to be removed by candling are those with bloody whites, blood or meat spots, and cracked shells.



The Wisconsin Book Festival

On October 23, the Iowa County Historical Society participated in the Wisconsin Book Festival held at the Wisconsin Historical Museum. **Melva Phillips**, **Marie Sersch**, **Carolyn Meuer**, and **Joan Bennett** offered their insights into the creation of **Where Have all the Cheese Factories Gone?**

I think most everyone that lives in Iowa County has had their lives impacted by this industry. I loved finding my relatives in the book. The book also gave me an appreciation of the scope of cheese making here. If you haven't seen the book yet, stop by the Iowa County Historical Society museum.

Thanks to all ICHS members that attended! Those attending also got to hear **Tony Hook** and **Mike Ginrich** speak on cheese making today vs. yesteryears.



Proposed Mail Route for 1838

To have some patience, to sleep sitting up, meanwhile driving a spirited team of four or six horses from a hard stage coach bench, to expect a sore posterior and to shrug it off realizing that you are part of the mind boggling convenience of a fleeting dash across country in the most modern, most convenient way to travel, the stage coach. Enough said?

Here are a few of the mail routes purposed by the United States Post office. Taken from the **Miners Free Press of Mineral Point, Wisconsin.**

PROPOSALS for carrying the mails of the United States from the 1st of January, 1838, (except as herein after stated,) to the 30th of June, 1842, on the following post routes in Wisconsin, will be received at the department until the 10th day of October next, inclusive, to be decided by the 21st day of said month.

On routes where the existing contracts have been extended to the 30th June, 1838, the new service (unless it be of a higher degree than that now in operation) will be made to commence on the 1st of July next. These cases are specially noted under their respective numbers.

WISCONSIN.

2901. From Chicago, Ill., by Half Day, Abington, Pike, Wis., Racine and Oak Creek to Milwaukee, eighty six miles and back three times a week in four horse post coaches.

Leave Chicago every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at four a m, arrive at Milwaukee next days by 12 noon.

Leave Milwaukee every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 1 p m, arrive at Chicago next days by 9 p m.

Proposals for a daily mail on this route will also be considered.

2902. From Racine by Mount Pleasant, Rochester, Foxville, Jonesville, New Mexico, Wiota, Otterburn and Willow Springs to Mineral Point, 143 miles and back once a week.

Leave Racine every Wednesday at seven a m, arrive at Mineral Point on Sunday by four p m.

Leave Mineral Point every Wednesday at seven a m, arrive at Racine every Sunday by four p m.

Service is to commence on the 1st July, eighteen hundred and thirty eight.

2902 a. From Racine by Aurora and Pleasant Prairie to Pike, fifteen miles and back once a week.

Leave Racine every Thursday at 1 p m, arrive at Pike same day by seven p m.

Leave Pike every Thursday at 6 a m, arrive at Racine same day by 12 noon.

2903. From Milwaukee by Chebowagan and Maintoowoc to Green Bay, 130 miles and back three times a week.

Leave Milwaukee every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 1 p m, arrive at Green Bay every Friday, Sunday and Tuesday, by eight p m.

Leave Green Bay every Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday, at 5 a m, arrive at Milwaukee every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday by 12 noon.

Proposals for stage service will be considered.

The guest speaker was **Robert Grede**. He spoke on his research of the Wisconsin 8th Regiment. The Regiment was also known as the Live Eagles because of their mascot Old Abe. Robert's initial investigation was an attempt to learn more about his great great grandfathers who fought in that regiment.

Robert wrote the novel **The Spur & the Sash** based on **George B. Van Norman** who had lived in the township of Moscow. Robert's talk was enlightening. One of the people at the meeting was **Bob Dott** who is a descendant of **Jacob Van Norman** (a brother to George).

HOW WELSH PIONEERS KEPT NAMES CORRECT

This article appeared in the Milwaukee Journal circa 1926 and seems to have been reprinted in the Dodgeville Chronicle shortly thereafter. Can some of our readers trace their descent from these worthies? The time period would have been about 1850 - 1900.

"Good morning postmaster, is there a letter for Williams, Ty Mawr?"

"No, it doesn't seem so. There is a letter for 'Thresher Williams,' and a letter for 'Mrs. Williams, Mainspring,' and a paper for 'Williams, Field House,' and a postal card for 'Williams, Ty Cerig.' But nothing today for 'Williams, Ty Mawr.'"

This dialogue might have taken place in the Dodgeville (Wis.) postoffice half a century ago when Welsh people named "Williams" and "Jones" were so numerous in the community that they were differentiated from one another by means of descriptive adjectives.

"Mrs. Williams, Mainspring," was so described because on her farm bubbled a generous and living spring of clear water and not because of any determination of the lady in question to be the whole works.

"Thresher" Williams acquired his name by purchase. That is, after he had spent some hundreds for a fine red threshing machine which he accompanied to neighboring farms in harvest time, he found himself dubbed 'Thresher.'

"Williams, Ty Mawr," and "Williams, Ty Cerig," took their titles from their homesteads, the first, because he lived in a "big" house, the other because his house was made of stone. Then there was "William B. Williams, 23," always so addressed, and there was "William Talog," the descriptive adjective meaning that the William's in question was a very tall man.

The Joneses were as bad as the Williams family with their descriptions tacked onto their names. "Wideawake Jones" lived in Dodgeville, and so did "William Jones, Captain." No one ever prefixed the military title to the name. When one said "Jones, Carnarvonshire," a newcomer to Dodgeville was given warning that the Jones in Question not only had come from Carnarvonshire, but that he never allowed his native county to be forgotten. "Jones, the Quay," on the contrary, owned a waterside experience.

"John Roberts, the Plow," and "Davis, Rock House," were names whose handles seem easily understood.

The descriptive cognomens hark back to the days when numbers of Welsh miners settled in southwestern Wisconsin where their descendants love today. --- Milwaukee Journal

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Iowa County Historical Society

1301 N. Bequette St.

Dodgeville, WI

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-artifact****Museum: open year-round except for holidays,
weekdays 1-4 pm and by appointment.****Museum Phone 608-935-7694****Email: ichistory@mhtc.net****Web site: iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org****NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
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PERMIT NO. 86****Address Service Requested**

Hope to see you at the **January 21** Meeting.
Come hear about Dodgeville native called the
Wisconsin Songcatcher.

**Archivist Boyd Geer
Curator Janette Hartman****Send your comments or ideas for the newsletter to Mary
Email: ichistory-news@charter.net****Grant County Genealogical Society Meets at Floyd School**

The Floyd School was studied with fervor by the Grant County Genealogical Society on July 12.