



*Preserving the Past
Enlightening the Present
Living Vision to the Future*

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

Today is Tomorrow's History!

Mar 1, 2008

SESQUICENTENNIAL SET FOR VILLISCA

Volume 1, Issue

An Update for the Society!

In This Issue:

- Society Updates
- History Page
- Digging for Roots
- Recollections
- Feedback
- Spotlight on History

“Ioway American Indian Documentary to Screen in Villisca's Rialto Theater

A forgotten tale of American conquest and Native survival will come to light when a showing of the documentary film “Lost Nation: The Ioway” is featured during Villisca, Iowa's Sesquicentennial weekend at the Rialto Theater on Saturday, July 5, 2008, 2:00-4:15 pm. The event is sponsored by the Villisca Historical Society, Inc. (VHSI) and will also include a book reading and a lobby display of historical items including the Villisca axe. “Lost Nation” placed second among 40 documentaries at the Beloit International Film Festival in January 2008. The film is also an Official Selection for the upcoming Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival and the Iowa Independent Film Festival in April 2008. Showings in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin have generated capacity crowds.

Film critic Linda Cook of the *Quad City Times* gave “Lost Nation” 4-out-of-4 stars and said, “The Rundle's ‘Ioway’ is perfectly complete...A fantastic documentary...You don't have to be a history buff to enjoy this film.”



In the November issue no one guessed the names of The terms “Black Squirrels”, “Golden Dreams”, and “Moosees”. Those were all nick names of Cigars!

We still have that all expense paid trip to Ten-ville or Milford, which ever you prefer! Where is Milford?

The Rundles screened “Villisca: Living with a Mystery” in Villisca in 2005, and on the following day they began filming the Ioway documentary by shooting along the Nodaway River just north of Villisca. It is believed that Ioway leader White Cloud, also known as Mahaska, was assassinated there.

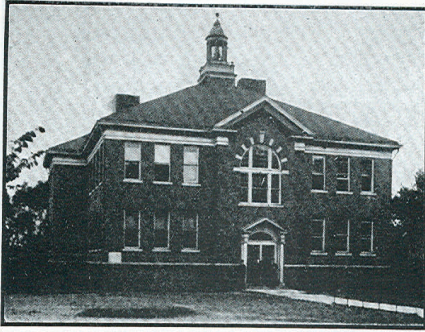
The documentary brings together commentary from historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, Ioway Elders, along with new footage of historic sites, historical photographs and documents, art from the Smithsonian Institute and other national museums, music, legends, dances, powwows and reenactments.

The Ioway film was suggested by former Montgomery County History Center director Bettie McKenzie and inspired by Stanton resident, amateur archaeologist, and Honorary Ioway Tribal member John Palmquist. Palmquist will join the Rundles for a discussion and Q & A following the film.

“Lost Nation: The Ioway” was funded in part by Humanities Iowa, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Oklahoma Humanities Council, and the Kansas Humanities Council.

See related picture on page 8 and continuation of this article.

Continued on page 8.



Lincoln School Building

History

Excerpts from the Review and other Tidbits

Quote:

History will be kind to me
for I intend to write it. —
Sir Winston Churchill



History Milestones

February 10, 1846

Mormons begin exodus
to Utah, cross from Illi-
nois to Iowa.

1868-Montgomery Cty.
Grant, Lincoln and
Sherman townships are
created with names
near and dear to Iowa
Vets of the Civil War
(1861-1865)

1941.

REA completes the elec-
trification of the county

2008 will bring the 150 Year founding of Villisca and the celebration is set for the July 4 week. Contact information is provided elsewhere in this Newsletter. Some interesting facts:

- First plat of town was laid out in Feb of 1858 by Mr. D.M. Smith.
- Representative of the Burlington and Missouri River RR
- Mr. Smith named the town "Villisca" an Indian name meaning pleasant view
- In 1906 Villisca was on the main line of the CB&Q RR and also served as the terminus of the Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs RR.
- In 1906 Villisca was served with 16 passenger, four mail and numerous freight daily stops.

From Review, dated Dec 20, 1906

NEWSPAPERS AT VILLISCA

The first paper published here was by a company of citizens consisting of Dr. F. Cooper, G. H. Pulver, John Patten, Joseph Mann and L. N. Gordon. It seems to have been some sort of a private or personal affair. Name and date of the paper were not obtained; it is said only two numbers were issued.

The *Villisca Journal* was started in the spring of 1869, by W. T. Sherman, editor and proprietor; politics, republican. It kept up about eighteen months, then died and went to newspaper heaven.

A seven-column paper called the Villisca Enterprise, was started by T. F. Willis; he issued two numbers, with the following notice attached for those to whom he sent copies

"If any objection, return the paper and state reasons why."

of his sheet:

It is told that the papers were all returned, with all sorts of serio-comic "reasons why" written on the margins. The poor editor wilted. The date of those papers was not obtained.

*From Montgomery County History Web Page
unless otherwise noted.*



DIGGING FOR ROOTS!

FAMILY RESEARCH TIPS AND RELATED ARTICLES.

In our first issue in November we had a feature article by Susie Enarson about her Norwegian trek and search for her and Tom's roots. Susie was aided by Mary Ann Dunkin in her quest. I have communicated with Mary Ann for several years exchanging family history notes and records. Mary Ann is a diligent and driven researcher and I think those are important attributes for success in pursuing your family history records. This issue begins a primer series on family research and the experience that Mary Ann gained while diggin'

YOUR FAMILY TREE

By Mary Ann Dunkin

Part I.

Do you remember when you first heard the phrase "Family Tree?" Maybe your first experience with "Genealogy" was reading Matthew 1:1-17. You may have seen the TV popular program "Roots" a few years ago. There is a good chance you will find your own family history just as exciting. We can call it our "roots" or our "family tree" or "genealogy." Now many are documenting their own family histories.

My first experience with the "Family Tree" was when our daughter, Ronda, was born in 1951, while we were stationed in Alaska. I was given a baby book which had a page called "Life Tree" with space for four generations.

We were transferred back to the "lower 48" early in 1952. While in Iowa I asked my Grandma Groff to help me with her family history information for Ronda's book. I was surprised when she told me to "let the dead rest."

I did let "the dead rest" for several years. I began the search for my "Roots" in earnest in 1976. I now have compiled several generations in her Groff-Spring families and the Hendrickson-Anderson and Dunkin-Linn families and their extended families.

I became interested in genealogy after my husband found the 1931 history book of the Dunkin-Cummings family of Indiana--which belonged to his father, Fred Dunkin. A few weeks later--Nov 1976--we spent Thanksgiving in Iowa. I mentioned to my father, Marion Hendrickson, that it would be great to write a Hendrickson family history too. He handed me a copy of a Hendrickson history--written about some Illinois Hendrickson families--which was given to him by his cousin--Milton (Buddy) Johnson. He said "that is not our family." I read it and did not recognize any names either.

We paid a visit to Buddy--he told us about our "new" Hendrickson relatives. He and his brother, Leonard, and Marshall and Julia Hendrickson--she was a correspondant for the Villisca Review for years--had been doing research on the Hendrickson family. He gave me a copy of what they had written on Gudmund Hendrickson--this is where the genealogy "disease" started for me. I put all these Hendrickson families in a book in 1996 - 319 pages.

I started my research the hard way--no computers and no internet! I sent out letters and Family Group sheets for people to fill out and return to me. It was important to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope in your letter if you wanted to receive responses. Now we have the option of sending an e-mail.

I typed all my information on the typewriter. Several years later we bought our first computer and I keyed that information into my computer. Not everyone has a computer, but you can still find your "roots" the old fashioned way.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

First, start with yourself and work back. It is important to follow only one line of your family at a time. Start with your own last name. I began with my maiden name--the Hendrickson line--which was my father's paternal line. I was not content with just the Hendrickson line--I started researching my fathers maternal line as well--the Anderson family.

My grandpa, Goodman Hendrickson married Sarah Anderson. You all know what happened with the Anderson line. The 5th of August 2007--the streets of Villisca were lined with cars of people attending the 100th Andrew K. Anderson family reunion at the Community Center--well over 200 people from across the country attended. If you have a computer you can put this on your browser address line and check it out: <http://www.villiscareview.com> Click on Family Album at the top and then scroll down to Family Reunions and click on the 100th Anderson Family Reunion.

To be continued-----

History Tid Bits!!

NEWSPAPER IN THE COUNTY

March 28, 1868, the first copy of a newspaper ever printed in the county was struck at Red Oak Junction. It was called the *Express*. Mr. Webster Eaton was the editor and proprietor. The paper was a seven column sheet, bright, sparkling and newsy. It was republican in politics, and in the presidential campaign of the first year of its existence, supported with great warmth the ticket headed by Grant and Colfax. It had an average weekly circulation during its first year of about four hundred subscribers. Many democrats of the county were its patrons, in spite of its politics, for local and other considerations.

From Montgomery County History Web Site.

VILLISCA RADIO STATION??

A recent visit with my Father, Kenneth D. Higgins of Las Cruces New Mexico revealed that there was a radio station in Villisca at one time. Okay that free, all expense paid trip to Tenville is still open. Where was it, what was the call sign of the station. Anyone remember?

MEDAL OF HONOR FLAG DESIGN

The issuance of a Medal of Honor flag to all future recipients of the medal was authorized in 2002. Its design was conceived by Bill Kendall of Jefferson, Iowa. Legislation was sponsored by Representative Tom Latham and Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa. The design was formalized by Sarah LeClerc of the Army Institute of Heraldry.

The first Medal of Honor flag was presented to the family of SFC Paul R. Smith, of Tampa, Florida. He received the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) for his action on April 4, 2003 during "Operation Iraqi Freedom

1941

The third Battalion of the 168th Infantry, 34th Division takes almost 90 percent of the men of eligible age. The division sees 600 days of combat, more than any other unit. REA completes the electrification of the county.

N Remember When!

CELL PHONES!

We are going to include in this section articles from contributors that have provided information about Villisca or of their personal memories of growing up in those by gone days of yesterday! Feel free to provide us with your thoughts and memories. The following recollections are appreciated.

From Boyd Holcomb, Detroit Lakes, Minn.. Boyd's Grandmother was born in Villisca.

re: old man Boyd Holcomb, farmer, officer, manager, meat inspector, black market investigator, accountant, mgr. of a wholesale--and then at last a CPA!!!!!!!!!!
Born at Detroit Lakes, Minn. in 1915 (don't count the years).

My memories of a childhood on a half-mile Minnesota lakeshore farm, are probably about the same as those of Villisca kids in conditions similar to mine.

As soon as I was big enough to hold a 22 rifle, perhaps 8 or 9, I was trailing my dog Penny, looking for crows. And if I shot at one, the noise scattered the nearby cows that we were supposed to be bringing in to the barn for "hand" milking, no machines. Unless my Grandmother Huston, born at Villisca, found that I was out there with a gun, and then the argument was louder than any "22". One of her sons had, in his youth, shot himself in his knee.

In those days, elderly parents very often had little choice but to live with their grown children. My Grandmother moved her bag between her 5 children who lived within a 15 mile radius.

Grandma Huston didn't talk much about her own "growing up" around Villisca. She said that was "old stuff"---and to not leave any food on our plates.

Walking to our 20 class country school, somehow getting the 4 or 5 miles to high school, no college. Maybe 10% of high school grads going to college.

Normal then.

Without college: correspondence schools, night classes, experience---eventually CPA. Then bought a couple of practices from retiring elders in northern Minn. And that, like Topsy, "just grew", to 14 partners when I retired at 65 and am now 92 with a lousy memory of yesterday.

Not much news for Villisca, but this gave me a chance to think back where my memory wanders.

Boyd D. Holcomb

A Sledding Memory

The editor cannot pass up a chance to talk about an old memory of his. In the Feedback section of the Newsletter, Mr. Coon talks about sledding down the 1st Ave hill which was East of where I grew up on 5th St. He mentions that Kings Hill was the best place in town to sled and many of us made the cold winter night treks up 3rd or 4th Ave to go down Kings Hill on High Street. If you could make it to "Frogs Hollow" then you had a good run. If you have seen the movie "Christmas Story", you know the one that captures Christmas in all it's glory in the 40's and 50's era. There is a scene in the movie about the boy who stuck his tongue on the light pole in the school yard on a dare! I had a friend that did that on Kings Hill and we walked all the way from High street to Moore's drug store with his tongue stuck to his sled. One of the Moore brothers relieved him of his trouble by pouring warm water on his tongue and releasing the sled! That was Bobby Klesath and I think his Dad may have been the mayor of Villisca at one time. I think he also worked at the Meadow Gold plant. Bobby lived across the street from me on west 5th street and we were probably about 10 or 11 when that happened.



Feedback from our Readers!

We received some great feedback from our first issue both email and snail mail. Here are some of those remarks.

Tom Fisher (Thomas Fisher) lives in Omaha) and wrote this letter after the newsletter came and shared these memories!

Dear Linda, (Linda Moore)

Just a note to let you, Susie and the rest of the staff know that I really enjoyed the first edition (A professional job!) This is my computer (a handwritten letter). Mrs (Flossie) Miller, my 2nd grade teacher at the Lincoln Bldg. taught me how to use it. In the next room your dear mother taught me basic arithmetic, how to read and many other valuable things.

I was one of those penny candy customers at Charlie Johnson's store. He also lived in our neighborhood and we used to play in his pasture. His daughter married Dick Runyan and moved into the last house on west 2nd Street, right next to our old house on the north side. Dick bought us a softball and taught us the game.

The future of the armory is a tough situation, but I'm sure the town leaders will make a proper decision. To me it was always the town's citadel, a grand looking building that just seemed to belong there on the north side (like some towns have court houses.) In the 1920's, my dad, Fen Fisher, and your dad, Collis Moore, were officers in the Guard. I remember one of the special inspection nights my mom took me and Ed (ages 5 and 6) to the armory to watch from the balcony. They put on a real show.

When Tenville was at the junction (Hwy 34 and 71) they used to draw people from 3 or 4 counties just to eat, drink, visit and dance to a jukebox. The young Omaha guy who cleaned my apartment said he and his wife had gone to Villisca to see the ax murder house and were thrilled; so who knows!

If Bill Day were still with us he would hire some of the VHS football players and put a roof on it in no time. (I think Kenny Westerlund was one of his trainees! Thanks again.

Tom Fisher

Marvin Coon (from Albuquerque) sent this to the Villisca Historical Society, Inc. along with a new membership.

Dear Friends,

My brother-in-law in Omaha, Tom Fisher, sent a copy of your newsletter. I very much enjoyed the articles.

I would like to become a member of VHS, inc. Dues are enclosed. I commend you for creating VHS, Inc. It is a worthy endeavor.

I was born in 1930 in the first house east of the Presbyterian Church. My wife, the late former Marjorie Fisher, was also born in Villisca. We attended school together until 1945 when my family moved to Macksburg, Iowa, where I graduated from high school in 1948. We attended several of Marge's class reunions. I therefore feel like a member of the VHS class of '48.

While attending grade school my family lived at 400 S. 1st Avenue, the SW corner of 1st Avenue and 4th Street. Tom Enarson's family moved into our house on the corner when my family bought Bob Pleak's (shoe store) house at 104 North 5th Avenue. Marge's brother, the late Bill Fisher, was in the class of 1950. He often spoke of Tom (Enarson). The last time I saw Tom was in 1980 when Ed Fisher invited him to lunch with our family gathering in the basement of the Methodist Church.

The house on 1st Avenue was an excellent location for a kid. I could walk out the back door and go to school or play on the school yard equipment. I could go out the front door and be at the top of the second best hill for sledding (we called it sleigh riding) in winter. When we moved to 5th Avenue, King's Hill (the best for sledding) was at the north end of that street. Life was good.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Mrs. Higgins and brother-in-law Tom (Fisher) mentioned buying penny candy at Johnson's. My favorite places were Dunn's Variety and Harry Lindell's store. Both had a table at the front of the store with candies on it: Jaw Breakers, Licorice Whips, pipes, cigars, plugs; Guess Whats, Paraffin bottles, etc.

Sincerely,
Marvin Coon
3408 Stardust Drive, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110-1416
Phone (505) 884-4416



Here are some emails we received after the first issue was distributed. Let us hear from you. If you are wired with email then we can move information around very quickly. It will help us facilitate putting the Newsletter together for each issue and we welcome any suggestions or volunteered articles. Give us your thoughts and ideas!

Just read the first edition of the newsletter. I want to thank you for mentioning both the Sesquicentennial and the Armory. If anyone asks, for more info on the Sesquicentennial, they could contact Laci Schafer, President of the Chamber at SchaferL@fcsamerica.com. If they want to know how to get involved in the Armory restoration, they can contact me, **Roxanna Sieber, Villisca Economic Development Director** at rtsieber@netins.net. Thanks. Roxanna Sieber

From Jerry and Carol Greenfield.

Just finished reading the newsletter and it was great. Glad to see the article from your mom with her recollections of Villisca. *The Electric Plant pictured stirred some discussion.* In fact, downtown the other day there was a discussion at the local coffee shop of its location. Jerry says it was on 9th street, south of the tunnel and south of 8th street, maybe on the west side. Others say it was directly to the right as soon as you left the tunnel going south. This would put it on 8th street. Still we wonder with the picture that we also had in an old book if it is the present power plant before it was added on. Maybe you can ask mom and dad and set us straight.

Jerry and Carol. I did check with Kenny Higgins and Dad said the Electric Plant was just past the under pass on the right hand side of 3rd Ave. That would be at the NW corner of 8th St and 3rd Ave. He also mentioned that it was later used as a storage warehouse by one of the utility companies.

Very well done! I will post a copy on the bulletin board of the Presbyterian Church! **Sandy Wainwright Rossander**

Well done and keep em coming! **Robert Moore, Jr., Atlanta Georgia**

1912 Villisca Murder Mystery Book Reading Featured

The second part of the Sesquicentennial program at the Rialto Theater will feature a reading from the forthcoming book on the 1912 Villisca axe murder mystery by Dr. Edgar V. Epperly and the Rundles. Epperly has studied the mystery since 1955 and interviewed several who were directly in the investigation. The Rundles award-winning film "Villisca: Living with a Mystery" examined the still-unsolved crime and its lingering effects. The book reading will be followed by a discussion and Q & A with Epperly and the Rundles.

Axe Returns to Villisca

For the first time in two years, a lobby display in the Rialto Theater of items related to the crime will include the infamous axe used by an unknown killer to murder the entire Moore family of six and the two Stilling girls. The implement is currently held in trust by the State Historical Society of Iowa for the VHSI. Epperly donated the axe in 2006.

Fourth Wall Films is an award-winning independent film and video production company formerly located in Los Angeles, and now based in Moline, Illinois. Visit FourthWallFilms.com, VilliscaHistory.org, VilliscaMovie.com, or IowayMovie.com for more information.



Kelly Rundle left, Ioway Elder Joyce Big Soldier, and Tammy Rundle at the premiere of "Lost Nation: The Ioway" where the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma presented the Rundles with ceremonial blankets and honorary tribal memberships

Villisca Historical Society, Inc Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2, March 2008

Officers

Mary Hansen President
 113 W. 5th St.
 Villisca, IA 50864
 mhansen439@netins.net
Linda Moore Vice President
Janis Sue Enarson Secretary
Elinor Brown Treasurer

Mailing Labels Placed Here

Newsletter Editor:
Dave Higgins
 azbirddog@msn.com
 520-378-4114
 8553 E. Double H Lane
 Sierra Vista, AZ 85650

We're on the Web!

<http://www.villiscahistory.org/>



Society Update

Visit these sites for related and historical information:

<http://www.iowahistory.org/>
<http://www.historychannel.com>
<http://www.familyhistory.com/>
<http://www.villiscamovie.com/>
<http://iagenweb.org/montgomery/>

As of the end of year, 2007, the VHSI treasury consists of 2,993.44. We earned in 2007 a total of \$12.70 in interest. We paid \$90 for our website (www.villiscahistory.org), and we paid for the printing of our first edition of our newsletter (Paper Trail, Shenandoah). The cost of the color printing of 200 copies is \$242. .

We will have some costs in 2008 connected with Heritage days and our event, the screening of **The loway** movie (\$500,) We are sure that new memberships and membership renewals will more than compensate for our expenditure.

- **Are you Internet Savvy? If so send us your email address to reduce the cost of distribution of the Newsletter: mhansen439@netins.net or azbirddog@msn.com**
- **Donations are always accepted and we welcome membership renewals (\$10 for individuals and \$25 for families**