

# WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SEPTEMBER 2011

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## WCHS CALENDAR

### LOG CABIN FESTIVAL

Sat. September, 24

&

Sunday, September 25



Biscuits & Gravy

7 am to 10 am

Saturday

Sept. 24

### WCHS EXECUTIVE MEETING

Thursday, October 6

4:00 pm

### ROOTS MAGIC WORKSHOP

Saturday, Oct. 8, 10 am

### LOG CABIN FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 11

5:30 pm

Evaluation Meeting

### WCHS GENERAL MEETING

Tues. October 25th

7:00 pm

COAL MINING in IOWA

Doug Wilson, Knoxville

### WCHS VOLUNTEER DINNER

Tues., November 15

6:00 pm

Free dinner for all who have volunteered in 2011

## WCHS LOG CABIN FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 24-25

St. Marys, Small town with a BIG SPIRIT

**Both Days**—Crafts & Mercantile, Antiques & Flea Market, Historical Village Tours, Food Court, Inflatable Games, Market Stage, Music & Entertainment, Quilt Show, Scarecrow Building, Pioneer Demonstrations, Wild Rose Dutch Oven Cooking

**Saturday Only**—Biscuits & Gravy Breakfast 7:00 am to 10:00 am Museum Dining room  
Adults \$5 Children \$3

Parade 11:00, Starts at Warren County Administration Building

Royalty & Award Ceremony 12:30

Indianola Garden Club Giant Pumpkin & Sunflower Contest 1:00

Cattleman's Show Ring

Farmer's Market, All day

**Sunday Only**—Church 10:00

Antique Car Show, All Day

Pie & Cake Auction 3:00 pm

Quilt Raffle Drawing 4:00 pm



Log Cabin Festival provides the Warren County Historical Society with its primary funding for the year. We appreciate your help and support.

### Get 2011 LCF Quilt TICKET

at WCHS, Kerry's Flowers, or call Bev Dickerson at 961-2600.

Tickets are \$1 per chance or \$5 for six chances

The quilt raffle will take place Sunday, September 25 at 4:00 p.m.

## LOG CABIN FESTIVAL ROYALTY

King & Queen - Ted & Valerie Diehl

Parade Marshall - Bob Davey

Circuit Rider - John Long

St. Marys Honored Persons - Bill Brentano, Jean Hadsall, Frances Bussanmus, & Phil McCrea

## St. Marys' "TOONERVILLE TROLLEY" OR "DOODLE BUG" TRAIN

This was the passenger train that made a twice daily trip on the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad, which ran from Des Moines through a whole string of towns south and west of Des Moines, including St. Marys.

The Des Moines, Osceola & Southern Railroad built a narrow gauge track in 1881. There are several stories about why it did not go through the town of St. Marys. One story was that people wanted too much for the land and another that they were afraid of the noise. They by-passed St. Marys and built it 1/4 mile to the West, where west St. Marys stands.

The railroad serving St. Marys cut the northern tier of section 16 of Jackson Township into two pieces and then headed off for St. Charles. The railroad depot and small area surrounding the depot was purchased in December 1888 by the railroad from this original 240 acre piece of land that was owned by Nicholas Croat. It is also believed by some that Nic Croat thought it would be better west of St. Marys so it would divide his farm into a 160 acre piece and an 80 acre piece.

The depot was built in 1890 on the west side of the main tracks by George Durschell. To get to the freight platform there was crossing on the north side of the depot. This crossing allowed one to drive to the 100 foot long corner crib that was about 150 feet south of the depot. Across the two sets of tracks were a coalhouse and a three compartment granary that would hold 1,000 bushels of grain in each bin. About 50 feet south of this were the stockyards, consisting of four livestock pens, one of which had a roof over it. The St. Marys Shipping Association owned the large scale that was next to the stockyards. Hogs and cattle were loaded out on Sunday nights on the 9:00 pm freight. This got them to the Chicago markets for Monday morning business.

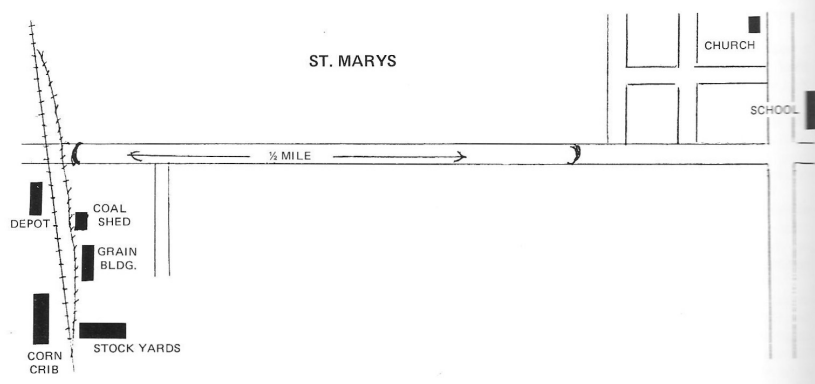
According to Hallie Ewing, this railroad was described as the most crooked, most round-about piece of railroad in Iowa. The saying was before you got over the twists and turns, the sun had shone through every window on both sides of the train.

The Burlington Railroad assumed control of the narrow gauge line and widened the tracks to standard gauge. From then on it was known as the CB&Q. The final conversion was accomplished in the first week of November 1896.

Now, it also had passenger trains that took St. Marys passengers 4 miles to Wick, about eight miles to Martensdale, on to Prole, Norwalk and finally Des Moines. This 25 mile trip took about one hour. In the 1930s it cost 60 cents to go to Des Moines. The passenger train was painted dark green with red-and-black trim and yellow lettering according to John McNeer. The passenger area was outfitted with green plush seats for about 24 people.

In the beginning the post office was in the depot and run by Frank Hennes, first depot agent, 1990-1910. Mr. Hennes also kept a small store where some groceries were sold. Other agents were John McClavy, 1910-1927 and M.G. Patrick, (Jim Patrick's father), who was the last agent, 1927-1931. Custodians served thereafter until the train stopped. They were Rosa McClavy, 1931-1939; Gertrude Gehringer 1939-1947 and Margaret Berning, 1947.

The CB&Q had asked to abandon this line but was denied. When the flood of Jun 4, 1947 washed out large portions of track, they were finally granted permission to never replace it. Train service to St. Marys was stopped immediately. The depot was later dismantled and removed.



## 2011 Warren County Historical Society Volunteer of the Year

Linda Beatty has been chosen by her fellow volunteers as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Warren County Historical Society” Volunteer of the Year”. Linda completed three terms as president of the society in 2010 and served as secretary for three terms before she became president. Linda has motivated many new volunteers, worked at all events, provided food for historical society dinners and kept the floors swept, display cases dusted, and the necessary painting done. She also writes the newsletters and directs the Pioneer School program. Linda is always available to speak about the organization, lead tours, and organize volunteers. She has researched all aspects of Warren County history for others and for her own enjoyment. Linda does what needs to be done in a cheerful and efficient manner and has earned the respect of her fellow volunteers and the Warren County Historical Society membership.

Linda and her husband Jerry have lived in Indianola since 1968. She grew up in Greene, Iowa. They have two children, Liz in Texas and Ted in Washington and are expecting their fourth grandchild (first granddaughter) in November.

Linda has always been interested in antiques and has been active in local Questers groups. She is especially interested in old buttons. Always active politically she served in the Iowa Legislature from 1985-1994 and Indianola City Council. She has also served in many volunteer capacities in her church and has supported the Planned Parenthood book sale each year with time spent sorting, collecting and selling books.

The Beattys have just returned from a two week trip to Ireland to visit Jerry’s ancestral church and home. Linda is proudly Swedish but enjoyed the trip as much as Jerry.

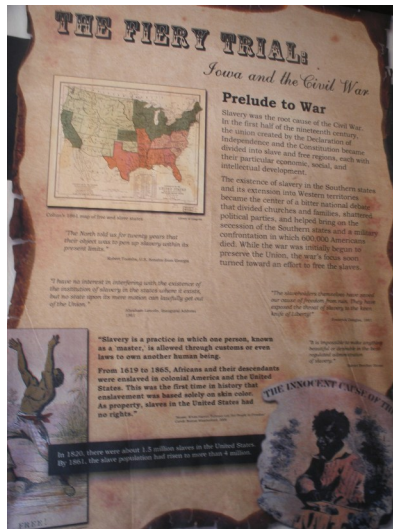


### THANKS



Thanks to the following volunteers who staffed “The Fiery Trial”, Iowa State Historical Society Exhibit, September 9th through September 13th at the Indianola Library:

Bob Davey, Max Morrison, Jerry and Beverly Wetzel, Steve and Ruth Hall, Harriet Herold, Lynne Davey, Juanita Ott, Susan Olson, Ronald Smith, Mary Jane Cassady, Dan and Kristi Porter, Kathie Farris, Nancy Kirkendall, Darlene Weybright, Lynne Van Clark, Jack Barker, Mary and Dwight McCormick, Simon and Kathi Stanfield, Kristen Graham, Karin Hooper, Liz Grimshaw, and Mary Peterson. There were 240 visitors and 28 volunteers. Hope you had a chance to visit.



### LIBRARY RESEARCHERS

Mickey Condon-the town of LOTHROP, Michelle Stanley and Chris Perry-SEYMOUR, Connie Freiermuth-CUMMINS, BRAMHALL, GREGG, CLYDE, & WARDRIP, Frank Heath, Grinnell,-COMMUNITY BANDS, 1850-1920, Frank Hamilton, HAM or HON, Ken Clark-Archibald- GLEN CLARK, B 1800—D 1856 Indianola, Linda Smith-HOUSTON & LUKE, Sue Nugent Neely-HUNGET, LUKE, SPORRER.

## 1866 INDISPENSIBLE HANDBOOK & GENERAL EDUCATOR

*The Indispensible Handbook and General Educator* was the most cherished gift for the new bride in 1866. This describes how the young bride could choose a fresh egg. It required all but a Cordon Bleu diploma.

*It is necessary to shake the egg gently. If addled, it gurgled like water. If the cook still was uncertain, she could shut one eye, frame the egg in the hollow of her hand, "telescope wise," and look at the sun through the egg with the other eye. If she could distinctly trace the outline of the yolk and the white looks clear around it, chances are it is a good egg. A fresh egg also will sink if placed in water.*

*Recipe for baby formula: Ingredients are 1/2 ounce of each, \*wheaten flour, \*\*seconds, and malt flour; 7 1/2 grains of bicarbonate of potash; water; "new Milk." When cooked, it was drained into muslin.*

\*Irish bakers often added potato starch to flour. Wheaten has no potato starch.

\*\*Irish flour after being ground and cooled is brushed through wire cloth of different sizes and so separates into different parts: fine flour, seconds, fine middlings, bran, twenty penny and pollard.

Brides often wrote notes by various recipes. This is one such hand written note. "Breakfast potatoes are one of the best remedies in the world to take the 'sharps and flats' out of an ill mannered husband and failure to cure ought to be ground for divorce."



### SAMUEL IRWIN



Was born in Ballybay, Ireland June 1834. He came to Harrison County, Ohio with his parents when he was eight. In 1853 he went to California but returned to Virginia Township in Warren County in 1855. He enlisted in the 3rd Iowa Volunteer Infantry May 1861. He was promoted from private to second and first sergeant and then to 1st Lieutenant. July 1863 he was taken prisoner and sent to Libby Prison. He and two companions escaped and traveled 240 miles through brush and swamps, but when within 12 miles of Union lines were recaptured on July 12, 1864 at Jackson, Mississippi and imprisoned at Danville Prison. He spent a total of 20 months in various prisons till exchanged in March 1865.

He farmed 320 acres in section 32 of Virginia Township. He married Isabelle Steele September 28, 1865. Children were Ann, who married Hugh P. Anderson St. Charles; Cora, who married H. A. Mueller St. Charles; James; William; Samuel; Mary, who married Ed Reed; and Alexander J.

Samuel Senior served on the Warren County Board of Supervisors for 8 years. He was also elected to the Iowa House of Representatives in 1876. He died August 1879 and is buried in New Virginia.

From **History of Madison County, Iowa and Its People, Vol. 2**, edited by Herman A. Mueller

### WARREN COUNTY TIDBITS

04/6/1911, *The Advocate Tribune*: Scotch Ridge News—While returning home from Indianola Saturday night, Austin Schooler went to sleep. It would have been alright if his horses knew the way home, but they took the wrong road and also turned into the wrong barn; the owner of the barn thought he had caught a lawbreaker of some kind, but after Austin explained that he was lost, he was allowed to go on his way. No more late hours for me, says Austin.

4/13/1911: Round Grove News—Harry Hopper sent some hounds out on his farm so that they may protect his sheep from wolves, as the wolves have killed four fine lambs.

10/17/61: Mr. & Mrs. Don Berry recently announced that they had deeded 42 acres of timber located 5 miles northwest of Indianola to the Nature Conservancy.

The tract will be known perpetually as Berry Woods in honor of Mr. Berry's father, Senator W.H. Berry.

The Nature Conservancy owns 36 tracts in 18 states, but this is the first one the organization has taken over in Iowa.

The objectives of the Conservancy is to "save samples of our forests, prairies, marshes and deserts; maintain a wide spread series of nature preserves and wildlife sanctuaries." The Conservancy also strives to: "Encourage our children to understand the natural development of plants and animals and their interrelations; direct the growth of our civilization so that we may live in harmony with nature and natural beauty, rather than destroy it; and develop a conservation conscience in using the living land." (Berry Woods would make a lovely place for a fall visit for you in 2011.)





**WHITEBREAST HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Whitebreast Historical Society was started for the purpose of preserving and promoting interest in and appreciation of the Lacona area’s history. The restored Willis Log Cabin has been the focal point of the organization’s activities. This cabin, which was originally built in 1846, was moved to Lacona, restored and serves as a place for people of the community to get in touch with their past. Our society hosts several events each year at the cabin. We are also involved with promoting interest in and upkeep of our local cemeteries. We have sponsored several clean-up days and beautification projects for our local cemeteries. Our next project is the restoration of the Willis pioneer cemetery.

Upcoming events at the cabin include kettle corn and prizes for the kids at Halloween, Santa’s visit in December and an Easter egg hunt next spring.

Our society meets the second Monday of every month at 5:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings or help at our events. If interested call Kevin Konrad at (641)534-4686.

(WCHS, as a countywide organization, is interested in learning and sharing information about any groups or historical activities held in our various townships. If you are aware of other groups or events contact us at 961-8085.)



**AVON COMMUNITY CHURCH SINCE 1866  
155 Years**

Avon Church began in the mid 1850s. As Allen township was being settled, the need for corporate worship was felt by a number of people. Some families were gathered in homes, then in the old Watts School House, until in 1856 a congregation was established. By 1862 a building was being constructed which was to serve as the gathering place for the Lord’s people for seventy-four years. In the early days there was no electricity and only two wood stoves for heat. The men sat on the north side of the room and the women on the south side, but in really cold weather, everyone wanted to be near the stoves. Without many conveniences people faithfully assembled, some traveling on horseback and some in horse drawn carriages. Not long after the building was built, a bell was purchased and a belfry was constructed so that people could

be called together for worship.

In the early years towns were established such as Circleville, Dudley, Levee, Avon and Carlisle. Those towns have come and some have disappeared.

On Saturday October 1st there will be a church reunion from 2 to 4. The church is located in Polk County at Avon.

<p><b>Moving Forward - A HISTORY OF BLINDNESS IN IOWA</b></p>	<p><b>Iowa History Center at Simpson Presents</b></p>
<p>Relying on oral histories, documents, and personal experience, Karen Keninger will discuss the history of blind Iowans from 1851 - 2000. Topics include: employment, education, domestic life, technology and the role of Iowans as leaders in a national civil rights movement for the blind.</p>	<p>September 27 at 7:00 pm Jordan Lecture Hall Carver Science Building Simpson College</p>



## DO YOU HAVE AN ELEANOR IN YOUR BACK GROUND?



### WPA "ELEANOR" outhouse at Hoosier Row School

A couple weeks ago Bob Davey stopped in at the WCHS and mentioned that he knew of an outhouse in the county that was built by the WPA of the Franklin Roosevelt administration. (WPA stood for Works Progress Administration, later Works Project Administration.) This was one of the programs created to provide work for the many unemployed during the Great Depression of the nineteen thirties. Bob said that he thought they were built for the country schools and small towns.

In a later conversation that day I asked Gerald Schimmelpfennig if he thought the outhouse at Hoosier Row School was built by the WPA. He said, "Yes, it's an Elnor." He also said he thought that some of them were built for homes.

A search of the internet with Gerald's help produced some interesting information on these important outbuildings that were called, unofficially, "Eleanors" after Roosevelt's wife Eleanor. In a story in the March 2009 issue of **Capper's** "Couple enjoy owning antique 'Eleanor' outhouse", Donna Edwards states that they took Eleanor's name because of her interest in improving sanitation on farms and in rural communities. At the time there was an epidemic of typhoid fever. According to Donna, the WPA outhouses had a 4-foot-square slab and a metal roof. They were seven foot tall in the front and had a one foot downward slant to the rear. There were four vents covered with metal screens.

In another article found on line that originated in the April 27, 2009, issue of **The News Herald** of Burke County, NC, "Eleanor's outhouses, Grandpa's privy and red paint" Debra Leigh Cloer gives a lot of more specific information. They were built by three-man teams who spread out across the country. It took about 20 hours to build one. The one-piece foundation and raised seat was of cast concrete and most had work numbers in the concrete. She says they could have either a slanting or an A-frame roof and a flue that went out through the roof. Homeowners were asked to pay the \$13 to \$17 it cost for the materials. By the end of the project in 1943 over 187,000 had been built.

A local historian tells a story about an Eleanor that traveled about in Indianola. In 1956 a group of young men from the high school decided to put an outhouse on the visitor's side of Neff field for homecoming. There weren't many outhouses in use in town at that time and they chose to take one located near the corner of Fourth Street and Euclid Avenue. They succeeded in getting the heavy structure into a pickup truck and took it to the field where they shoved it off close to the spot where they wanted it. Unfortunately, they hadn't taken into account the substantial weight of the structure and the drop from the truck damaged some of the boards. They were not discouraged though and they went ahead and painted "Valley Dressing Room" in whitewash on the outside.

The next morning the prank was discovered. In some way, principal Harry Grange learned the identities of the young men and ordered them to move it back immediately to its original site which they did-but the damaged boards remained. To make repairs they sought the help of a friend (who swore he was not involved in the original venture) to get them some boards from a barn that had recently been torn down on the friend's property. The boards were obtained and the repairs were made. The Eleanor survived the rough handling but the family that woke and went out the back door to find their outhouse missing was understandably upset.

Starting from never having heard of an Eleanor a few days ago, I have now heard of two in the county. Are there more?

*By Ruth Hall and Photos by Gerald Schimmelpfennig*

