



# WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 256 Indianola, IA 50125

Phone-515-961-8085

(Highway 92 West, 1400 West 2nd, turn north into fair grounds, then turn east)

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## WCHS Museum Re-Opens June 1st Only By Appointment

Call 961-8085  
for appointment  
Thursdays 9 to 4  
or Saturdays 9  
to noon No  
group  
meetings or  
rentals



Amazon will donate .5% of your total purchase to Warren County Historical Society if you sign in at Amazon Smile. All you need to do is sign in at smile.amazon rather than amazon. Choose Warren County Historical Society, then select Iowa as your charity to support.

General Joseph Warren Questers were awarded a \$5,000 grant to help preserve Mt. Hope School. They have been restoring and replacing its windows. Thanks!

## June 1st WCHS Opens by Appointment Only!

Warren County Historical Society announces the re-opening of the museum complex on June 1<sup>st</sup> with some modifications and changes. Please call the museum before visiting and be prepared to follow these rules:

1. Please make a reservation for your visit on either a Thursday or Saturday morning. No more than 6 people to a group. A short series of questions may be asked to assure you do not have COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Please wear a mask while on the premises and sanitize your hands upon entrance and exiting. Social distancing from other groups or volunteers of at least 6 feet is necessary.
3. Please do not touch any of the exhibits, artifacts, or reference material without prior approval.
4. Please call ahead should you wish to donate or contribute to the museum collection.

We look forward to having you visit and want the experience to be safe for you and the volunteers. Thank you in advance for your understanding and patience in the process of meeting guidelines for re-opening.



We recently received \$350 from HyVee from your saved receipts.

## THANK YOU!



Please continue to collect Indianola HYVEE receipts and bring them in to the museum. We have a large glass container near the kitchen where you can place them. We can use gas, pharmacy, grocery or any other HYVEE receipt. It is an easy way to raise funds for WCHS. When Hy Vee asks if you want to have your receipt, say **YES** and bring it to us.



## REFLECTIONS FROM DEB



Hello everyone,

I write this from my little corner of the world as it is today. Who would have ever imagined that life could be so quickly and drastically changed in the mere word “pandemic”? Never before has a virus disrupted the world’s economy, travel, relationships, communication, business and faith. We are each pioneers as we struggle through everyday life. I don’t know about you, but there are other things I would have rather done. As the saying goes, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. As a fellow pioneer, historian, and genealogist I would like to encourage you to use these remaining days of house confinement and distancing to write your story. Each of us is having a different experience in our pioneer journey. Take time to write a few things down. The toddlers and children to come will have no idea of the trials you have faced over the last few weeks. In fact, they may never know what life was like prior to this pandemic. Jot down your daily routine before all this started. Then tell about your thoughts when the News told of the outbreak in China, then the United States. What is your daily routine now? What are your challenges, inconveniences and blessings? How have you coped with missed doctor appointments, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, hair appointments, funerals, buying groceries, seeing grandchildren, going to church? Do you follow the news daily and how are you coping with that anxiety? What have you learned, what are your thoughts on the future? When you finish, tuck your story into family history pages or memorabilia. Your family will appreciate the effort someday, when life has reached its new normal. After all, how many times have we wished our pioneer ancestors would have written some of their story for us to discover.

The museum has been closed for over 6 weeks now. There really isn’t much to report, except that all is well here. Judy McClymond has led the way into reworking the toy and doll display in the lower level of the museum. She has made use of four display cases that were donated by the Balloon Museum. The cases now hold fragile dolls, doll houses and other toys. Of course, the hands on displays are still there for kids to explore. Two other display cases from the balloon museum are in the main part of the museum. One holds a very rare flag from 1856, when Kansas was not yet a state. We also received two display cases from Dorothy Hall, of which one now displays Civil War memorabilia. We so appreciate these generous gifts as they go a long way in preserving the more delicate artifacts.

Matt Clarke has been busy cleaning and organizing the machine shed. A major project that was way over due for attention. Thank you so much Matt. Butch McClintic and Don Sandy have been a huge help with all those miscellaneous projects and repairs. Kathi has been painting, Susan Graeser has been keeping flower beds in order, Juanita, Toni, Deb L., Ruth, Judy, Jerry and Linda have answered inquiries and kept things moving forward as best as possible under the circumstances. A big THANK YOU to each of these people.

A question on many minds, “Will there be a Log Cabin Days this year?” At this time, we just can’t answer that. It is the major fund raiser of the year and what keeps the doors of the museum open, mows the yard, pays the bills and helps with minor repairs and upkeep. It is also one of the major family friendly events in Indianola. To cancel this event will bring financial hardship on the WCHS and the community as a whole. We realize, however, that the health and protection of our members and community far trump the dollar worries. Although the WCHS Board continues to plan for the event as usual, a final decision will be made in June. At that time we will hopefully have feedback from various sources as to the safety of major community gatherings. Other events, such as the County Fair, Balloons (cancelled for 2020), and Iowa State Fair will have made decisions on the safety issues by this time also. I would like to wake in the morning and the whole pandemic been just a bad dream. The reality is: it is here, and not going away very quickly. We will keep you posted as to if, and in what form, Log Cabin Days will occur. Thank you so much for understanding

# STAY IN TOUCH WITH WCHS

1. **FACEBOOK:** Join [www.facebook.com/wchs.iowa](http://www.facebook.com/wchs.iowa)



<https://www.facebook.com/wchs.iowa>

Here you can find information about us, communicate or ask questions.

2. **WEBSITE:** [www.warrencountyhistory.org](http://www.warrencountyhistory.org)

warrencountyhistory.org



Here you will find ways to donate, the Warren County digital newspapers and other research possibilities, WCHS newsletters, and other information.

3. **E-mail:** [contact@warrencountyhistory.org](mailto:contact@warrencountyhistory.org)

4. **PHONE:** (515)961-8085

## Indianola History

Public group · 1.9K members

[www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=indianola history](http://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=indianola+history)

Kathy Porter McClintic has created a Facebook site where people share photos and memories of Indianola and surrounding farm areas. She has been sharing some photos from WCHS Record Herald negatives. With the help of viewers some of these are being identified.

Visit the site by going to Facebook.com

## NEW WCHS LIBRARY ADDITIONS

We have received a 2020, 387 page hardback book, **Diary of John W. Silcott, January 1, 1900-October 1, 1932**. The book is written by Roland G. Wood, great-grandson of John and Martha. Roland's father Elmer was the son of Clara Silcott Wood.

This book is more than John Silcott's diary. Mr. Wood has presented the life of a Civil War Soldier who settles in Warren County, Iowa in 1874. He and Martha purchased a 120 acre farm in Otter Township for \$1,800.

In 1900 John began keeping a diary. His health deteriorated and they left the farm moving to Indianola.

This book details farm life in Iowa with its joys, sorrows, and changing agricultural climate.

Author Roland Wood received his BA, U of Iowa and MA and PhD, UCLA. All degrees were in geography. He is retired from the World Bank where he was chief of the cartography division. He lives in Silver Spring, Maryland. We were delighted to have him visit WCHS when he was doing research on his book.



John & Martha Silcott family portrait. Back left to right: Thalburg, Ella, Clara; Front: John W., Fred, and Martha. Photo about 1885

John and Martha on porch.

On page 282 Roland G. Wood had this written under a 1870 photo of the Warren County Courthouse:

**A line produced from a certain monument in the IOOF Cemetery and the top of the weathervane on the courthouse to the North Star established true north/south direction by the Iowa Geodetic Survey. Courtesy courthousehistory.com** Anyone know which monument in IOOF Cemetery?



**Marianne Fons, quilter, author, teacher (IPTV) and creator of Iowa Quilt Museum in Winterset.**

Marianne Fons, daughter of Dorothy and James Graham donated six notebooks she had created for her mother of her mother's columns and father's clever illustrations. She said that Dorothy loved perusing these memories.

Dorothy Graham (1908-2001) began the North Warren County Town/Country News from her home in Lakewood in May 1968. Dorothy gathered news and James sold ads. The paper was printed in Urbandale and was mailed from the Norwalk Post Office. Later in the year Sally Huntoon, who had worked for the daily newspaper in Marshalltown began to work for them. Dorothy put an extra phone line in Sally's home so Sally could answer the phone while Dorothy was out.

When James' health deteriorated, they sold their home and purchased the "old" bank building on North Avenue. They added an addition to the back of the building and made an apartment so she could work at the office and have James close.

Dorothy sold the paper in 1978. However, in 1983 she took the paper over, after the current editor said Norwalk did not deserve a paper. She continued through 1996. Dorothy also founded the original Norwalk Business and Professional Association and taught adult business education classes in Norwalk. Dorothy was named Business Leader of the Year by the Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce in 1992.

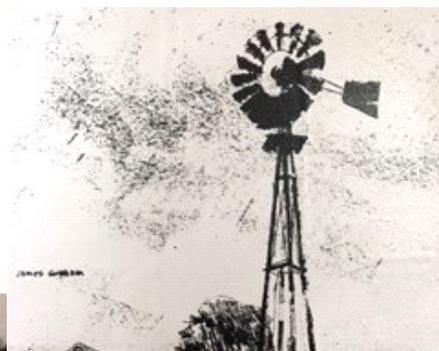


**Dorothy Graham**



**James Graham**

North River Bridge by James Graham



# DOROTHY & JAMES GRAHAM



OF THIS  
and  
THAT-

10-23-1975

By Dorothy Graham

The Norwalk Rescue Unit participated in a simulated disaster situation in Des Moines last week, and a report by a local nursing school senior who lives in the Norwalk area indicates that they did themselves and the town "proud."



The reporter, Nancy Clarke, stated that she had never required the services of the group, but she had always heard good reports of their work, and she was glad to see them in action when no one was really hurt.



*N* / **Warren  
Town and County  
News**

# WARREN COUNTY'S ARMY RIFLE RANGE

In 1901 640 acres of land were purchased to create the third Fort Des Moines. It was the Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Officer Training School on the south side of Des Moines. It was founded as a base for calvary. The horse stables were located south of County Line Road in Warren County.

In 1908 the U.S. Army purchased 240 more acres from farmers for a rifle range located in Greenfield Township, Warren County.

Ft. DM Stables, Photo  
Midwestern Vol. 2



1940 Warren County Platbook, Greenfield Township

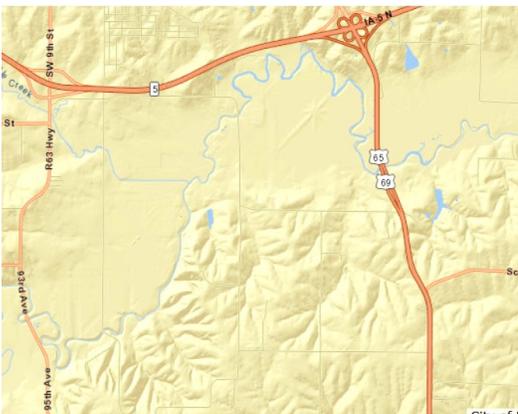
In 1947 Ruth and James Wilson acquired 400 acres known as the Fort Des Moines Rifle Range and located in Warren County. James' mother, Gertrude Wilson had alerted James that after WW II the US War Department was liquidating unneeded assets by auction or lottery. This property in Greenfield Township was one of them. James entered and won the bid, paying \$8,000 for the land.

The family lived here from 1947 to 1953. James worked clearing the land to farm, attended Simpson College and had a full time job. They raised fresh vegetables and cucumbers to sell in Des Moines.

The Rifle Range had a house, several other buildings, and an old wooden water tower, but no barracks.

FCA 1182 SPD BUREAU	OFFICIAL RECEIPT	No. 7423
SPB PROJ. No. <i>W.A. 2-23</i>	<i>FCA B-15</i>	DATE <i>Mar. 10, 1947</i>
TRACT No. <i>A-1</i>		
RECEIVED FROM <i>James W. Wilson</i>		
ADDRESS <i>R.F.D. No. 1, Ackworth, Ia.</i>		
THE AMOUNT OF <i>Eight Thousand and No/100ths</i>	DOLLARS \$ <i>8,000</i> <sup>00</sup>	
IN PAYMENT OF <i>Remainder of Priority Purchase Price</i> <i>Tract A-1, Ft. Des Moines Rifle Range</i>		
<small>REMITTANCES OTHER THAN CASH ARE ACCEPTED FOR COLLECTION ONLY. IF FOR ANY REASON COLLECTION IS NOT EFFECTED ON THE ITEM TENDERED, IT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE PAYMENT TO THE UNITED STATES, AND ALL RECEIPTS ISSUED THEREFOR ARE VOID.</small>		
RECEIPT COPY		FEDERAL FARM MORTGAGE CORPORATION AS SURPLUS PROPERTY DISPOSAL AGENCY <i>State Bank Dist. Super</i>

## Topographical map of area



Jim became a geologist and his work took the family to live in many states throughout the west including: WY, AZ, WA, KS, CO, ID, and CA. They lived in Alaska before it became a state. Jim and Ruth had nine children.

On Saturday, May 2, 1964, James 39, and sons: Larry 17, Jerry 13, and Wayne 11, died in a tragic boat accident off the coast of Santa Barbara, CA, leaving Ruth as a single parent to raise four daughters and one son- Janet 15, Juanita 9, Ann 7, Lisa 2, and Shawn. An older daughter Linda had recently married and lived in Kansas.

Ruth Edna Baughman Wilson was born August 12, 1922 near Russell, Iowa and died May 6, 2015. Ruth's life centered around her family and the Ackworth Friends Meeting. In 2008 the family established the James W. Wilson Family Memorial Scholarship at Simpson College.



Linda, Top  
Left, Larry  
and Ruth  
Wilson



### MURAL IN WOODEN WATER TOWER ON RIFLE RANGE

In the **Des Moines Tribune**, December 17, 1969 reporter Ron Speer released the story about two young men who were residing in an abandoned wooden water tower in Warren County that had provided water to the Army Fort Des Moines Rifle Range. Bruce Kemp and “Farno” (refused to give name), whose parents lived in Des Moines, squatted here and lived the life of Huck Finn, Thoreau and hippies inside the tower for several months.

No water or electricity was available. The tower was badly weathered but almost airtight-except for a few cracks and partly collapsed roof. They added a piece of canvas, as a ceiling for the roof. They heated with a small kerosene stove and had light from a kerosene lamp. Kemp painted the walls with murals. See **Des Moines Tribune photos**.

The Wilson family did not know that the two young men had been living in the water

tower until they read about it in the **Des Moines Tribune**. Soon, Ruth Wilson had the water tower torn down because she feared for the safety of these young men and others. A large “No Trespassing” sign was posted. The water tower had been the last standing structure from the days of the Ft. Des Moines Rifle Range.

In 1986 Ruth Wilson donated some of this property along North River to the Warren County Conservation Board. She wanted to share the beauty and peacefulness of this natural wilderness which meant so much to her, Wilson Woods. The property is landlocked so you can only access it from North River by canoe or kayak.



### 1856 WARREN COUNTY REPUBLICAN FLAG DISPLAYED

The first convention of the Republican Party (preceded by the Whig Party) in Warren County was held February 9, 1856 in Indianola to appoint delegates to the



Republican Iowa State Convention on February 22. Several Indianola wives, including Catherine R. (Turner) Wells, Emily (McDonald) Lacy and Sarah (Elliott) McKee and other, made this flag which was at the county and Iowa convention.

At the first Warren County Republican Convention Judge J. Green was elected chairman and H. W. Maxwell was chosen secretary. A committee on resolutions consisting of J.T. Lacy, E.B. Boydson, Dr. Beck, Isaac Posegate and H.W. McKee was appointed.

**WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Annual Membership**

- Individual \$20.00
- Family \$25.00
- Gift \$20.00

**HAVE  
YOU  
RENEWED  
YOUR  
2020 DUES?**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Possibilities. Mark any volunteer opportunities you might consider.**

- Adopt an Exhibit (Set-up, clean or inventory}
- Short term project here or at home
- Building and Grounds Maintenance
- Museum Hosting
- May Pioneer School
- September Log Cabin Festival



Judy McClymond arranged cases to house our toys and doll houses.



New paint for trellis, flag pole and pump. Kathi Stanfield painting trellis.

