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Historical Society Of Pottawattamie County

Newsletter

October 2000

Quick Takes

President announces committee appointments

Society president Gale Foutch has appointed Alice Bontz as Genealogy Committee Chairman, Darlene Vergamini as Program Chairman, Dennis Danielson as Jail Committee Chairman, and Dick Warner as Bulletin Editor. All appointments were approved by the board of directors.

Society to sponsor writing contest

The board has approved continued sponsorship of the IWCC Scholastic Narrative Writing contest. The event will be held next spring.

Jail to get display racks, consideration of other needs

Two display racks for memorabilia items were approved by the board for the jail. Bids will be sought for tuckpointing the jail; the board is also reviewing gutters, roof inspection, and heating/air conditioning status.

Herbert Hoover Topic of Next Meeting

The president born in the state of Iowa, Herbert Hoover, is the subject of the next meeting of the Historical Society of Pottawattamie County. Abraham Lincoln High School teacher Rod Cameron presents the look at the nation's 31st president Sunday, October 15 at 2 p.m. Mr. Hoover was the first president born west of the Mississippi River and served from 1929-1933, during the trying period when the Great Depression swept through the country. The meeting will be held at the auditorium of the Western Historic Trails Center, 3434 Richard Downing Avenue in Council Bluffs.

The Missouri River and its history are the subject November 19 with a presentation by Brett Ford, Park Ranger at Narrows River Park.

Blacksmiths Among Area's Earliest Businesses

The first blacksmith of the area likely dates back to 1846 and shod oxen in what was then known as Kaneshville. He was S.M. Hough and much of his trade was made up of emigrants, which streamed through this area on their way west in the 1850's. He relocated his blacksmith shop to Denison in 1859 and finally to Crescent in 1865 where he operated until retirement in 1867. Mr. Hough was a great-grandfather of Society founding member, Arthur Rogers.

The other early blacksmith of the area was "Uncle Henry" Dickenson, the first village blacksmith of Macedonia, the second oldest town of Pottawattamie County. He reminisced about the early days of Pottawattamie county on the occasion of his 91st birthday in 1923.

He first came to the region in 1850 on a visit to relatives but so much liked the area he decided to stay. He settled in Macedonia and hauled lumber for his shop from Council Bluffs, thirty miles away, and built the second "business structure" of the town. A store was already doing business, with a few residences clustered about it. This was at what is now known as "old town," a mile to the west of the present

(Continued page 3)

Historical Trivia



Herbert Hoover is the only president to have been born in Iowa, but two other presidents resided in the state for a time. Can you name them?

Answer is on page 3

In view of the clean city campaign inaugurated by the Rotary club a bulletin issued by the agricultural department urging a crusade against the house fly and giving some practical hints on how to banish the pest will be of interest. The instructions are designated partly for the destruction of the pest in the country as well as in the city and will be of interest to country people as well as residents of the city.

By the expenditure of sufficient pains, any one individual may prevent flies from breeding on his premises, but this will not ride himself the danger from flies if his neighbors are careless.

No Excuse for Flies.

There is no excuse at the present time for permitting flies to breed in anything like the number in which they have done in the past. The vast majority of flies develop from eggs which are laid in horse manure, and there are two simple ways of destroying the larvae, as the young insects or maggots, which hatch from the eggs are called. Sprinkling the manure with a solution prepared by adding one-half pound of powdered hellebore to ten gallons of water will destroy, according to recent experiments, from 88 to 99 percent of the larvae in the manure. If this is not done, the use of a simple maggot trap will prove equally effective. By experiments carried on by the bureau of entomology of the United States department of agriculture at the Maryland Agricultural college, it was found that the trap used there destroyed fully 99 percent of all the maggots of larvae breeding in a given lot of manure.

The Trap Method.

Such a trap is simplicity itself, consisting merely of a slatted platform standing about one foot high upon a concrete floor which is surrounded by a rim or wall of concrete four inches high. The floor slopes a little toward one corner in order to allow liquid from the manure to be drained off into a small cistern. Ordinarily, however, this drain is plugged with a stopper and the concrete floor filled with water to a depth of one inch in the shallowest

part. Each morning the manure is removed from the stable and heaped upon the platform. The flies lay their eggs on it as usual and the larvae hatch as usual. The larvae, however, when about to enter the pupal or resting stage, preliminary to emerging as adult flies, invariably endeavor to migrate, crawling about in search of a suitably dry spot in which to enter into pupation. In the maggot trap, therefore, as soon as the larvae attempt to leave the manure on which they have been feeding, they fall through the openings in the slatted platform into the water below and are drowned. Each week the drain should be opened and the dead maggots washed from the floor of the trap into the cistern nearby. A platform 10 x 12 feet in size will hold the manure from four horses during a period of four months, or from twenty-five horses for about twenty days. The slats should be one inch strips with one-half to one inch spaces between them.

Experience with maggot traps has brought out the fact that these are most effective when the manure is kept compactly heaped and well moistened. This is due to the larvae's desire to find a comparatively dry place in which to pupate and, consequently, they crawl away from the manure. It is advantageous to preserve all the liquid manure both in order to moisten the pile and because of its fertilizing value.

The Hellebore Method.

In cities and towns it is probable that the treatment of manure with hellebore will usually be found more advantageous. Ten gallons of the solution already described, composed of one-half pound of powdered hellebore to ten gallons of water and allowed to stand twenty-four hours, will be sufficient for the treatment of eight bushels or ten cubic feet of manure. A weaker solution than this is not so effective. This does not change the composition of the manure or render it less effective for fertilizing.

Borax Method.

Borax is perhaps even more effective in the killing of

(Continued next page)

"Crusade Against Flies", continued...

larvae than hellebore, but the borax has the disadvantage of exerting in large quantities an injurious effect upon plants. It is possible that manure treated with sufficient borax to destroy the larvae and then applied to plants at a greater rate than fifteen tons per acre may work harm to certain crops.

Screening Windows.

While the use of maggot traps and the treatment of manure with hellebore or borax are most effective in reducing the number of flies, it is not likely that they will actually exterminate the pests in any neighborhood. The precaution of screening windows and doors and in particular the protecting of all articles of food with fly-proof screens is, therefore, urgently recommended by the department of agriculture.

(Contributed by Darlene Vergamini)

Trivia Question Answer from Page 1

Besides Herbert Hoover, two other presidents resided in Iowa: Richard Nixon was stationed at the Naval Air Station in Ottumwa (1942-1943) and Ronald Reagan lived in the state when he worked as a sportscaster for radio stations WHO and WOC in Des Moines (1933-1937).

In addition to presidents Iowa can claim one vice president, Henry Wallace, born October 7, 1888 in Adair County. Mr. Wallace served as vice president to Franklin Roosevelt from 1941 to 1945.

Two first ladies hail from Iowa; Lou Henry Hoover, born March 29, 1874 in Waterloo, and Mamie Doud Eisenhower, born November 14, 1896 in Boone.

"Blacksmiths", continued from page 1...

town, on the Nishnabotna River. Uncle Henry saw Old Macedonia grow, then move to the new Burlington railroad a mile east, and there grow again.

The aged village blacksmith lived through three wars, the civil in which he was wounded, the Spanish-American and World War I. He was a staunch backer of Macedonia, and routed it at any opportunity. He died in 1925 at the age of 93.

(Contributed by Darlene Vergamini)



Railway mail service workers coined their own phrases for many situations. Here's a sample of some slang terms from the RPO's...

- A-C- Actual count of mail worked
- Angel- Extra label found in a bag of mail
- Balloon- Huge sack or pouch of mail, expanding vastly when dumped
- Beno- Prohibitory order ("There shall be no")
- Butterfly- Wingnut used to set up pedestals in car
- Buttons- Snap-on mail locks
- Catch- Local exchange; the mail caught
- Club- Correspondence file on mishandled mail
- Cripple or bum- Damaged pouch or mail sack
- D's, sinkers, mopies, minus points- Demerits
- Dress a rack- Hang pouches therein
- English- New England (States)
- Fly-paper, wind-mail- Air mail
- Hash or house mail- Miscellaneous bag mails
- Hards- Letters whose route is unknown
- High wheeler, hypo- Highway post office
- Hitting mail, virgin, one for the knocker- Letter to be postmarked
- Jumbo- To put mail in a jumbo pouch for reworking down the road
- Jack-pot, swamp- A jumbo pouch
- Mud- Mail matter
- Nixie- An unsortable, misaddressed letter
- Pilot- mail piler (i.e., "pile-it")
- Pull a rack- To remove and lock all pouches
- Red- A registered piece
- Red man- Register clerk
- Rob a box- Collect from station letter box
- Sleeper- Unobserved letter left in car
- Stringer- Pouch (sack) hung on rail
- Swindle sheet- Trip report; balance sheet on registers
- Trunk, log- An exceeding heavy parcel
- Wart- An extra trip
- Way clerk- Local clerk (who makes catches)

(From "Mail by Rail", Byrant Long and William Dennis)

A Century of Innovation...

The 20th Century saw many changes to life that we now take for granted. Take a moment and look back at some of the past century of food-oriented innovations. Contributed by Society member Fern Brown.

1900's - - -

- * In 1901 a frankfurter is served in a bun at the New York Polo Grounds. The vendor, according to legend, ran out of the white gloves with which people usually held his hot product, and in desperation, turned to rolls to serve the frank
- * The Hershey bar is introduced (1900)
- * The St. Louis World's Fair introduces hamburgers on buns, ice cream cones, puffed wheat and rice cereals, and peanut butter (1904)
- * The first pizzeria opens (1905)
- * Kellogg's corn flakes (1906)
- * Jell-O (first produced in the 19th century) goes mainstream

1910's - - -

- * Proctor & Gamble creates "a new and heretofore unknown food," according to its ad in the Ladies Home Journal. It is called Crisco (1911)
- * Oreo cookies (1912)
- * Morton salt (1912)
- * Life Savers (1913)
- * Pyrex cookware (1915)
- * Piggly Wiggly- the first modern grocery store- opens (1916)

1920's - - -

- * The Reuben sandwich makes its debut at Omaha's Blackstone Hotel. Blackstone owner Charles Schimmel names the sandwich after Reuben Kulakofsky, who created it after a late-night poker game at the Blackstone.
- * Hastings, Nebraska, inventor Edward Perkins creates a soft drink powder that dissolves quickly in water and Kool-Aid soon becomes the drink of choice across America
- * American's first hamburger chain, White Castle, opens in Wichita, Kansas (1921)
- * Popsicles (1924)
- * The decade sparked an explosion of new candy bars: Baby Ruth, Oh Henry!, Charleston Chew, Mounds Bar, Milky Way, Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, Bit-O-Honey, Mr. Goodbar, and Butterfinger

1930's - - -

- * General Foods releases Birds Eye "Frosted Foods" (1930). Despite the Great Depression, and the fact that this was before home freezers, frozen foods caught on
- * Toll House cookie (1930)
- * Wonder Bread sliced bread (1930)
- * Twinkies (1930)

"A Century of Innovation", continued...

- * Snickers (1930)
- * Bisquick (1931)
- * Ritz crackers (1934)
- * Girl Scouts in Philadelphia bake and sell cookies (1934). Two years later Girl Scout Cookies are produced commercially and sold nationally
- * Kraft macaroni and cheese (1937)
- * Spam (1937)

1940's - - -

- * The Radarange- forerunner of today's microwave oven- is manufactured (1947). It was for commercial use only.
- * M&Ms (1941)
- * Tupperware (1946)
- * Aluminum foil (1947)
- * Pillsbury sponsors first bakeoff in 1949
- * The first Runza opens (1949)

1950's - - -

- * C.A. Swanson and Sons markets its first TV dinner (1954). Contrary to popular belief the meals were not necessarily designed to be eaten in front of the TV. "TV dinner" referred to the tray's similarity in appearance to a TV screen
- * Ray Kroc opens his first McDonald's (1955) in the thick of a fast food explosion: Dunkin Donuts (1950), Church's Fried Chicken (1952), Kentucky Fried Chicken (1952), Burger King (1954), Pizza Hut (1958).

1960's - - -

- * Julia Child's "The French Chef" debuts on public television (1962)
- * The "Chinese gooseberry" is renamed the "kiwi" and is introduced to the United States
- * Weight Watchers starts (1963)
- * Nachos marketed in the United States (1964)
- * Tang takes off, courtesy of the space program (1965)

1970's - - -

- * Cuisinart food processor is shown at the Chicago Housewares Show (1973)
- * Starbucks opens in Seattle (1971)
- * Automatic drip coffeemaker (1972)
- * Yogurt goes mainstream
- * Ben & Jerry's premium ice cream takes off (1978)

1980's - - -

- * FDA approves aspartame, marketed as Nutra Sweet
- * Fruit Roll-Ups (1980)
- * Wolfgang Puck opens restaurant in Los Angeles
- * Tofu hits American markets
- * The food network debuts

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The Historical Society of Pottawattamie County is dedicated to the preservation of books, letters, sites, records, artifacts and buildings of historical significance in the county. The Society operates and is restoring the Historic Squirrel Cage Jail, Rock Island Depot, involved in the efforts to create a local museum, and is active in promoting historical and genealogical research.

Requests for information about Society projects, membership, and volunteer work are welcomed. Write the Historical Society of Pottawattamie County, Post Office Box 2, Council Bluffs, IA, 51502.

The Historical Society of Pottawattamie County Member Newsletter is printed eleven times a year and mailed to all members. The membership mailing list is maintained by the Society Secretary, Robert Hastings. Please direct any address corrections to Mr. Hastings at 322-0612 or to the Society post office box listed above.

Members are always welcome to attend a Board Meeting. Anyone desiring to speak at the meeting should send a letter or call either the Secretary or President to be placed on the agenda.

Historical Society of Pottawattamie County web address: [Http://www.geocities.com/heartland/plains/5660](http://www.geocities.com/heartland/plains/5660)

**Historical
Society**
Of Pottawattamie County

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