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May 1999

# Historical Society Of Pottawattamie County

May, 1999

## Next Meeting Spotlights Pioneer Photographer

William Henry Jackson was born in Keesville, New York, but achieved his fame here in the Midwest. Mr. Jackson won renown for his pioneering photographs of the Indians and of the terrain of the American Frontier. In the 1860's he photographed the route of the Union Pacific railroad.

Cathy White presents a program on Mr. Jackson at the next meeting of the Historical Society of Pottawattamie County, Sunday, May 16, 2 p.m., at the Community Hall, 205 South Main Street.

## Pottawattamie County Trivia

The Society's historic Rock Island Depot is celebrating it's 100th "birthday" this year. When did the Rock Island Railroad first reach Council Bluffs?

(Answer page 7)



## 130 Years Ago this Spring- The Race Was On

Once Congress designated a meeting point for the transcontinental railroad the efforts of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific became a contest. Both faced hardships; mountains, snow, and deep gorges for the Central Pacific, and Indians, need for ballast, and lack of wood for ties faced the Union Pacific. They met the challenges in stride, and in the Spring of 1869 boastful Charlie Crocker, one of the entrepreneurs behind the Central Pacific, bet Thomas Durant, vice president of the Union Pacific, \$10,000 that his crew could lay track faster than Durant's.

At dawn, April 28, 1869, near Promontory, a whistle blew sending 850 precision trained workers into action. One witness reported that in one minute and twenty seconds alone, 240 feet of rail were laid. With representatives of both railroads present, at dusk the final whistle blew. The tally: "Charlie's Boys" had laid 3,500 rails weighing over 1,000 tons, for a distance of TEN MILES AND FIFTY-SIX FEET of track. To test the work, Crocker sent a locomotive tearing down the new section at 40 mph. Charlie Crocker won his bet, and the record has never been beaten.

(California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento; Contributed by editor)

## THE UNION PACIFIC R. R.



Is now completed and running Daily Passenger Trains, forming in connection with the Central Pacific Railroad, an

**ALL RAIL ROUTE**

TO

**California and the Pacific Coast,**

making the unexampled time of 1800 miles in

**FOUR DAYS FROM OMAHA TO SACRAMENTO.**

Direct connections made

**At Omaha** with Chicago & North-Western, Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and Saint Joseph & Council Bluffs Railroads and Missouri River line of Packets, to and from all Principal Eastern and Southern Cities.

**At Cheyenne** with Stages for Denver, Central City, Santa Fe, and all points in Colorado and New Mexico.

**At Ryan** with stages for the Great Sweetwater Mining District.

**At Deseret** stages leave on arrival of Union Pacific trains for Salt Lake City and Southern Utah.

**At Corinne** for Helena, Virginia City and all points in Montana.

**At Promontory** with Central Pacific Railroad for White Pine Silver Mines, Sacramento, San Francisco and all principal cities in California, Nevada and Idaho. First class Hotels and Eating Houses at convenient points on the line.

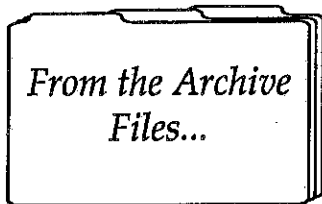
*Pullman's Palace and Sleeping Cars* accompany all trains.

For Through Rates on Freight to MONTANA, SWEET-WATER MINES and other points, apply to **H. BROWNSON**, General Freight Agent, Omaha.

Purchase Tickets via Omaha and Platte Valley Route.

T. BUDD, GEN. TICKET AGENT.

W. SNYDER, GEN. SUPT.



The items on this page were found in the newspaper archives and provide a little glimpse at daily life in our city in the past.

## Chicken Thieves Caught

By a mere scratch the police department effected the capture early yesterday morning of three clever chicken thieves who have for months been raiding the poultry houses throughout the county. When he got up yesterday morning E. M Lorenz, a farmer living seven miles southeast of this city, discovered that his hen house had been robbed of every chicken. He got on a horse at once and rode to Council Bluffs, rightfully expecting that the thieves had headed this way. He notified the police on his arrival and they telephoned to the Omaha police. Several officers were at once sent to the-bridge, and just as they arrived there the three men their booty were driving onto Douglas Street. The men were arrested and 130 chickens and-four turkeys were found in their wagon, all of which were later identified by the farmer. The men refused to come to Council Bluffs without a requisition; the grand jury now in session, began work upon their-case yesterday afternoon, however, and they will likely be indicted at once. The three men gave their names as J. Lawrence, John Wyatt, and R D. Tracy; They are suspected of complicity in the numerous creamery burglaries in this part of the state during the past few months, their outfit consisting of a light wagon and a small gray and bay team of horses corresponds with the description of the team and wagon used in the creamery burglaries.

*(Nonpareil, February 2, 1899;  
Contributed by Dennis Danielson.)*

## Enterprising Burglar Robs Two Residences

### Loss of Mr. McDonald's Socks Inspires the Poet of Implement Row

The residences of O. P. Wickham, 616 South Seventh street, and C. W. McDonald, 619 South Seventh street, were burglarized Thursday night. From the manner in which the robbery was committed and the traces that the thief left behind in both cases, it is evident that the same burglar visited both houses.

Nether Mr. Wickham or Mr. McDonald were aware that they had been robbed until yesterday morning. The operations at both houses were precisely similar, the thief effecting an entrance by raising a rear window in the kitchen. At the Wickham residence the thief, although he had every opportunity to carry off a large amount of plunder, contented himself with borrowing a couple of dollars from the pockets of Mr. Wickham's trousers.

The thief obtained an entrance through the kitchen window. From

*(continued page 6)*

## COUNCIL BLUFFS OWNS BIG LAKE

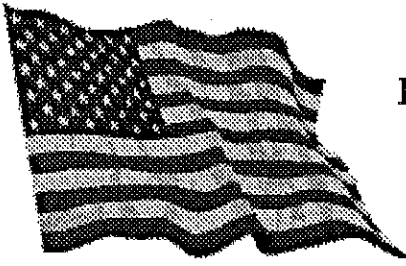
### SUPREME COURT UP- HOLDS FINDING AGAINST ATTORNEYS WRIGHT AND MAYNE

Title to the bed of Big Lake and the park which borders it, has been declared by the supreme court to be vested in the city of Council Bluffs. In deciding the appealed case of George B. Wright and George H. Mayne against the city, the court upholds the finding of the trial judge, which was that the city owns the property. The suit dates back to 1902.

The plaintiffs claimed thirty-five acres of land on the west side of the lake, basing their title on the law of accretions, the water having gradually receded on that side so that most of the area is now dry ground except in time of high water. Messrs. Wright and Mayne at first laid claim to the tract as far as the center of the lake, but did not press that point.

A special act of congress in 1881 gave the city its' title. The city contended in the suit that none of the land was accretions because the lake overspread the whole tract after every heavy rainfall. The secondary argument was made that the city had been in adverse possession since 1881, which barred other claimants after so long a time.

*(Nonpareil, July 15, 1905; Contributed  
by Cathy Danielson)*



## DECORATION DAY

### Points Of Observance—Those Whose Graves Are To Be Decorated

The committee who has charge of the arrangements for Decoration Day services report good progress in their work although there is little disposition to throw the burden of the work upon the surviving veterans.

The ranks of the "old soldier" are growing less each year, and the burden of a remembrance day comes heavier and heavier each year. It will only be a few years until the smaller number of these men are left, and the greater number will be gone. They begin even now -to a ear- like a little band in the midst of the great stream of humanity, striving each year to pay some tribute to the memory of those who have fallen by the way.

If what those men did, was worth the doing, and the country is better for it all, then the young people growing up to assume the duties of active life, and to enjoy the benefits of a saved country, ought to take an interest in the one day out of three hundred and sixty-five, which is set apart to honor the dead soldiers. Yet in place of citizens doing this, lots of them refuse to give anything to help in the good work, or give a dollar very grudgingly. It really does not seem as though this is as it should be.

Decoration Day was set apart in which to do honor to the memory of men whose lives were sacrificed to preserve the union, and it ought to be observed by every one.

Captain Wall McFadden, who has had charge of the work of locating and marking the graves which are to be decorated, reports the following list:

In Fairview Cemetery—Chris Weirich, Alex. Shoemaker, Dr. W. H. Osborn, Joseph Wheeler, A. B. McKune, J. W. Phillips, Valentine Fleak, Wm. Knox, Prof. Massie, Louis Benn , Wm. Springer, D. A. Cunningham, E. M. C. Mansfield, A. Steinmetz, Jason Hubbard, Wm. Fuller, Wm. J. Fuller, J. J. Jacklen, Thos. Seymour, Jas. Allison, H. Fisher, Rust, F. B. Daniger, Orrin Hershey, S. H. Casady, Herman Bosche, Homer C. Ball, Martin Huffman, W. H. Tyler, H. Smith, Jacob Betz, Dr. Cole, John Watts, John J. Dutcher, Fred Lord Prof. Geo. Houser, Allen Forbes (colored), Chas. Blaxley, Osborn, Osborn, \_ Tyler, \_Tyler, Lieut. A. A. Overton, Wm. Stevenson O. H. B. Arnd, Homer Caughey, E. P. Gilman Samuel Weirich, Geo. Bowers, John Scherfield, John Slagg, H. C. Packard and E. P. Geiger.

Catholic Cemetery—Perry Smith John Dailey, \_Lon, \_Lon, and Walter Burke. At Walnut Hill—Geo. Zimmerman. At D. B. Clark's Cemetery—Ed J. Clark and Mudge. Moses Nixon at Hazel Dell Cemetery. C. Marshall and Jerry Wells at Garner Cemetery.

Any who may know of soldiers' graves not named in this list, please report the same in person or by postal card to Wall McFadden or N. S. Russell.

*(Nonpareil, May 17, 1885; Contributed by: Cathy Danielson)*

*Lets all take time this "Memorial Day" to honor our "soldiers", visit our old cemeteries, and say thanks!*

First bridge into Iowa born amid controversy and ill-will:

## Rock Island Faced Stiff Opposition to Build Bridge Into Iowa

It was eulogized and sabotaged, praised and held in contempt. This first bridge spanned the Mississippi between Rock Island, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa. It carried the first Rock Island Lines trains across the water barrier which separated east from west.

The lengthy wooden bridge also served to heighten the tense feeling between steamboat interests and the railroads. It became the center of a successful test case settling for all time the rights of the railroads and others to bridge navigable streams.



Other railroads to the north and the south waited for the outcome of the dispute before pushing their own bridges across the stream. So the builders of the Rock Island became pioneers in another field.

### Bridge Completed in 1856

Construction of the bridge, which was completed and in operation on April 21, 1856, required three years. The engine, the FORT DES MOINES, was first to make the crossing. This equipment was destined for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, then building west from Davenport. The Mississippi and Missouri, though an independent company, was closely affiliated with the Rock Island and is now part of the system.

The Rock Island pushed its rails into the City of Rock Island more than two years before the bridge was completed—on February 22, 1854.

Only a few months after the Railroad Bridge company was incorporated, its interests were sold to the Rock Island, whose corporate name at the time was the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad.

The bridge was 1,582 feet long. It was built of timber and iron, resting on granite piers. These went down to bedrock. The lower deck of the bridge was 35 feet above mean water level. It was used for wagon traffic; the railroad used the upper deck.

*(continued page 5)*

*(Reprinted from the Council Bluffs Nonpareil April 15, 1899)*

## NEW ROCK ISLAND STATION

Work Is Now In Progress on the Foundation

Work on the excavations for the foundation for the new Rock Island passenger station at the south end of Main Street has been commenced by contractor R B. Hill of Atlantic with as large a force of men as can be handled to advantage.

When completed this will be one of the prettiest passenger stations in this part of the state, and it will also be of ample proportions. The outside dimension of the building will be 142 x 33 feet. The building will be in two parts, included under one solid roof, and between will be an open passageway. The main part of the structure, comprising the waiting rooms and ticket offices, will be seventy-four feet long, and the other portion, to be used as a baggage room, will be thirty-six feet in length. Between will occur the open space of thirty three feet. The foundation will be of stone and the walls of chipped brick around the base and pressed brick above. The building will face the south and over the center of the main portion will be a handsome tower. The floors and roof will be of tile and the building will be finished and trimmed with that attention to detail that cannot fail to make it neat and attractive.

Ample driveways about the new station will be paved with brick and the grounds will be parked off to give the surroundings a most attractive appearance.

*("First Bridge", continued from page 4)*

Troubles almost immediately beset the bridge. Only 15 days after the first engine crossed to the Iowa side, part of the bridge was wrecked and burned. This incident set the stage for a drawn-out court fight which helped to settle the issue of whether railroads or others could bridge navigable streams.

The action also was instrumental in bringing before the public eye an Illinois attorney who was to go places in the political life of the youthful nation. He was Abraham Lincoln.

### Steamer Rams Bridge

Darkness closed in on the river towns of Rock Island and Davenport the night of May 6. But there was no sign of impending disaster as the new steamer, the Effie Afton moved slowly up river. There was only the soft sound of the vessel's side wheels. A few people sat late along the banks of the great, quietly flowing river.

The steamer, approached closer now to the web of iron and wood which was the bridge, dimly outlined against the night sky. Her low-muffled whistle, sounded a signal that she would proceed through the draw. The bridge slowly opened.

The eyes of those along the banks searched the blackness for a look at the approaching steamer. They didn't recognize her whistle nor her silhouette. The Effie Afton was on her first trip above St. Louis. Had it been in the light of day, the loiterers on the shore would have seen her

newly painted white superstructure, the coal black funnels pouring out a lazy cloud of dark smoke. The Effie Afton was moving slowly.

None knew the steamboat's mission. Her destination hadn't been announced publicly. It never was. Her appearance was a surprise; her mission a closely guarded secret.

The steamboat now moved carefully through the draw. The bridge tender could see her, but her appearance didn't arouse his curiosity. During the building of the bridge and its brief service, he had become accustomed to the passage of river traffic.

Some 200 feet after the Effie Afton cleared the draw, she heeled hard to the right. Her starboard engine stopped, the port power seemingly speeded. She struck the span next to the opened draw. The impact caused a great deal of damage to the bridge and the boat. Then a stove in one of the cabins was knocked over, its fire spread rapidly to the deck and then to the bridge timbers. One span was completely destroyed and there was some pier damage as well as minor damage to the rest of the bridge. To make matters worse, the following month a heavy wind swept down on the crippled structure. It lifted the draw span from its support and blew it onto its side. The bridge wasn't reopened until the following September 8.

And that wasn't the end of the bridge troubles. From time to time in the following years there were other acts which were believed to be sabotage

### Railroad Sued

After the wrecking and burning of the bridge, the owners of the Effie Afton filed suit against the railroad. The boat firm contended that the fault lay with the railroad because, it said, the bridge was a menace to navigation. Navigation had prior rights, the boatmen contended.

Into the picture in behalf of the railroad stepped Abraham Lincoln. As always, he sought out the simple facts on which to base his case. He journeyed to Rock Island. He talked to a little boy who had frequently fished in the vicinity of the bridge. The boy knew the vagaries of the currents. From these conversations, Mr. Lincoln concluded that had both the Effie Afton's engines failed, as contended by the boating company, the vessel would have drifted back harmlessly through the draw.

While Mr. Lincoln failed to win the jury to his thinking, his arguments were well circulated and had a profound effect on the thinking of the courts, Congress and the nation.

### Lincoln Wins Case

The jury disagreed and was dismissed. Later, another case was brought against the railroad in district court at Davenport. The judge held in favor of the steamboat group, ordered the Iowa portion of the crossing removed. The Supreme Court reversed this ruling, however. Mr. Lincoln's arguments in the original case had made themselves felt.

*(Contributed by Marcia Hastings)*

*("Burglar", Continued from page 2)*

The thief obtained an entrance through the kitchen window. From here the burglar went to Mr. Wickham's room on the same floor, took his clothes out into the reception hall, and searched them. The clothes were found in the hall in the morning. The rooms of Mr. Wickham's daughters on the upper floor were also visited. The cases containing the jewelry and trinkets of the young ladies were discovered in the reception hall. The contents were scattered about the floor, but nothing was missing. The doors leading from the kitchen into the pantry and the one from the pantry to the dining room are hung with double hinges. Under these the burglar had placed a number of napkins that he had secured in the pantry, so as to keep them open and allow him an opportunity to escape if discovered.

#### Had A Regular system

At the McDonald residence the thief entered the house by the same route, the rear kitchen window. On the inside of this window there was a wire screen and to keep this open, the burglar cut a stick from one of the trees in the yard and propped it up with it. The same performance was carried out in regard to the door leading from the kitchen to the dining room, only instead of using napkins, as at the Wickham residence, he utilized a lot of stockings that were in the wash tub in the kitchen. Here all the bedrooms are on the second floor. The thief entered Mr. MacDonald's room in the front part of the house and took his gold watch that was lying on the bu-

reau. A gold watch belonging to Mrs. McDonald was overlooked by the thief, although it was only a few inches away from the one he took. The enterprising robber then gathered up all Mr. McDonald's wearing apparel that was on a chair near the bed. The garments were found in the morning strewn along the floor of the parlor down stairs.

In addition to the watch the only articles missing were Mr. McDonald's socks.

Mr. McDonald has a couple of travellers for his firm living in his house and both these gentlemen have valuable gold watches and one of them had over \$200 in his coat pocket, but the thief did not disturb them.

#### Bursts Into Verse

Mr. McDonald is the local manager of the Sandwich Manufacturing company on Main Street and when it became known that his socks had been stolen the implement men made considerable fun out of it. Miss Cella Mulqueen, who has earned quite a reputation as the "Poetress of Implement Row," dashed off the following lines about the stolen socks:

#### HOW MCDONALD LOST HIS SOCKS

Now stranger if you'll listen  
A story I will tell,  
You surely are a stranger  
Or else you'd know it well,  
'Tis the story of a burglar,  
Of one who laughs at locks,  
And the title of this tale is  
"How MacDonald lost his socks."

'Twas a cold and rainy evening,  
A night for good sound sleep,  
Tho' the farmer's time for sowing,  
'Twas the burglar's time to reap.  
An open kitchen window,  
No policeman within blocks,  
Thus tells the whole sad story  
"How MacDonald lost his socks."

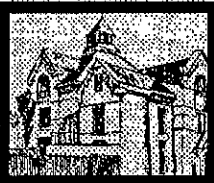
Now why this Mr. Burglar  
Should so far discriminate,  
And take this pair of stockings,  
In a house where there were eight,  
Is the mystery of the story,  
At which solution mocks,  
And yet the startling fact remains  
That MacDonald lost his socks.

He also lost his time-piece,  
He'd carried it for years,  
And fond associations  
Than value more endears;  
And tho' he mourns with grief  
untold  
Its loss, his body rocks  
With anguish when he tells you  
"How MacDonald lost his socks."

Now sockless Jerry Simpson  
is a man of world-wide fame,  
And of course you're all familiar  
With the way he won his name,  
And 'tis said that each man's door  
But once in life Fame knocks,  
So Jerry lost his title  
Since MacDonald lost his socks.

There's a virtue in the relics  
Of the Saints, so we are told,  
And for enormous prices  
Schlatter's handkerchiefs were  
sold;  
But here I'd like to prophesy,  
Though they put me in the stocks,  
That the world will come to  
know in years

*(continued next page)*



# Tales From The Jail

## Jail Tour Guides Wanted!

If you know anyone who would like a part time summer job we have tour guide positions open. The hours are Wednesday through Friday - 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Additional hours may be available. For more information call me at the jail 323-2509 or at home 325-1027.

-- Dennis Danielson, Jailer

## Summer Hours Begin at the Jail

Summer hours begin on May 19 at the Jail; The hours are: Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Sundays 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Come see us soon!

("Burglar", continued from page 6)

'Twill be talked of in the lobbies,  
'Twill be published by the press,  
'And, I doubt not, revolutionize  
The Coming Woman's dress;  
For since she's only happy  
In doing that which shocks,  
She'll be wearing good fac-similies  
Of MacDonald's stolen socks.

Moral: Wear your socks to bed.

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## Trivia Answer

The Rock Island railroad made it to Council Bluffs May 12, 1869.

- May 1879 First phone company in Council Bluffs (4 years after invention)
- 1 May 1881 Oakland Acorn began, only paper in Belknap Township
- 1 May 1848 Thomas Jefferson Ring, first settler in Macedonia
- 1 May 1872 First postcard was issued
- 2 May 1907 John Wayne was born in Winterset IA
- 5 May 1865 The first train robbery in the U.S. occurs near North Bend, OH
- 8 May 1794 United States Post Office was established
- 8 May 1858 John Brown had anti-slavery convention
- 10 May 1869 The golden spike was driven to unite the Central Pacific and Union Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah
- 12 May 1869 Rock Island Railroad completed to Council Bluffs
- 25 May 1877 Council Bluffs Broom Factory sold carload of brooms to New Orleans
- 14 May 1866 Cornerstone laid for Broadway Methodist Church
- 17 May 1863 Col. William Kinsman wounded at Battle of Black River Bridge
- 17 May 1882 One mile of waterworks mains laid on this day.
- 18 May 1863 Col. William Kinsman dies of wounds
- 20 May 1818 William George Fargo was born. Co-founded Wells-Fargo & Co.
- 22 May 1749 First ferry license to cross the Missouri River issued to George A. Smith
- 24 May 1844 Samuel Morse transmitted the world's first telegraph message to his associate 40 miles away. "What Hath God Wrought"
- 27 May 1818 Amelia Jenks Bloomer born in Homer, New York
- 29 May 1849 Abraham Lincoln made a historic speech in which he said, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."
- 30 May 1854 Council Bluffs named as capital of the new Nebraska territory
- 31 May 1838 Father Pierre Jean DeSmet, Father Verreydt and Brother Mazelli (Jesuit Missionaries) arrived in Council Bluffs

-- Contributed by Darlene Vergamini

**Historical Society of Pottawattamie  
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Depot- Marcia Hastings  
Genealogical Committee- Alice Bontz

Newsletter Editor- Dr. Richard Warner

*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.*

# Historical Society

Of Pottawattamie County

Post Office Box 2  
Council Bluffs, IA 51502

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Expiration Honorary  
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