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www.historyinfranklincounty.org
www.fchsmuseum.org

Franklin County Historical Society
PO Box 114, Highway 3 West
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641-456-5777

Please Help Us Host a Party

Dear FCHS members:

My name is Darwin Meyer. I am president of the Franklin County Historical Society and chairman of our REA 75 Year Celebration. This is a "first in the nation" story that took place in our own backyard. A Major Celebration is being planned for Saturday August 31 and Sunday September 1, 2013. WE NEED YOUR HELP.

In 1989 the REA Power Plant Committee under the auspices of the Franklin County Historical Society was formed to renovate the Power Plant. They worked to get it on the National Register of Historic Places, extensively cleaned the structure, and installed new windows, a new roof, and painted the interior. Over 1800 hours of work was donated by individuals from the community. Since that time the committee has done much work to display what life was like before and after the advent of electricity to rural areas.

Volunteers conduct all Franklin County Historical Society programs and events. The REA 75 Year Celebration Committee is looking for volunteers to help us plan, promote, and hold a newsworthy celebration of this piece of history.

Saturday, March 23, 2013, marked the 75th anniversary year that electricity was generated at the Electric Power Plant located about 2 miles south of Hampton on Olive Avenue and then west 1/2 mile on 110th street. Electricity was distributed to farm families in six North Central Iowa counties on farmer owned lines that were constructed by monies from a loan from the Rural Electrification Act of 1935 that was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This is an amazing story that needs to be told to as many people as we can reach.

On March 23, 1938, electricity was first generated from the REA Plant and distributed to farm families in six North Central Iowa counties. Those counties were Franklin, Butler, Hardin, Wright, Grundy, and Hancock. Prior to this time farm families could not access the use of electricity for their farms from the major power companies because the power companies thought it was too expensive for them to build lines and maintain them in the rural areas.

On Saturday March 23, 2013, an open house at the REA Museum, located in the original power plant building took place. Over fifty people attended. A short program describing the history of the REA plant and how it came to be was presented at about 12:30 pm.

The Rural Electrification Act of 1935 provided monies for Rural America to obtain loans to build lines to provide electricity to farm families if they could talk the power companies into sending electricity through the lines. It also provided monies for loans for power generating plants to be built. Six distribution rural electric associations (REAs) or Co-ops (RECs) joined together to form what became known as plant 47G Franklin. Along with Central REA of Pocahontas secured a loan to build a power generating plant. The site in Reeve Township in Franklin County was chosen because it already had a rail siding line that was in place and not being used, and the site would work for the construction of a generating facility.

Volunteer by calling 641-580-4067, or email me at dlmeyer@frontiernet.net. This is a short-term commitment, but one that should be rewarding for all those involved.

Thank You from the REA 75 Year Celebration Committee, Darwin Meyer, Chairman

Help Shape the Future of Your Society

The board met in November to discuss the future and organization of the Franklin County Historical Society. One outcome of that meeting is a proposal to decrease the size of the board. A summary of the meeting notes is posted on our website at the following location. The action is scheduled for a vote at the April 29th meeting. All society members are encouraged to attend and participate.

<http://historyinfranklincounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/FCHS-Planning-Meeting-2012.pdf>

Recent Gifts to our Society

MEMORIALS

Esther Burkley, 2, Old Stone House
Harold Burmester
Jim Alexander
Grif Troester

REA MUSEUM ROOF REPAIRS

Center One
Franklin REC
Winnebago Foundation

HARRIMAN-NIELSEN DONATION

Jeff Lange
Amgen Foundation

OTHER DONATIONS

Dorothy Abbas
Pearl Als
Delores Bender
Dorothy Brinkley
Harold Gallagher
Greimann Trains
Lutheran Community Foundation
(Earl & Anna Hansen Fund)
Jack Osborne
James Rankin
Jerry Staley
Virginia Stockdale
Charles Sukup

ALL LEAHY DONATIONS

ABCM Corporation
Ackley State Bank
American Legion Auxiliary 658
Dale & Janean Butson
Steve Deike
First Citizens National Bank
First National Bank
First Security Bank & Trust
Franklin County Foundation
Hampton Kiwanis Club
Hampton Lions Club
Hampton Rotary Club
Hampton State Bank
Hansen Have Legion Post 658
Scott Hoegh
Kirk Mathews
Allan & Becky Menning
Kay Sargent
Nancy Showalter
United Bank & Trust
Bob Whitson

Berghoefer family tours REA museum, Sept. 21, 2012: *Pictured below (l to r): Cliff Berghoefer, Hampton; Ruth Berghoefer, Hampton; Linda Berghoefer, Hampton; Jan Sernett, Cazenovia, NY; Milly Hendrickson, Hampton; Carolyn Berghoefer, Hampton; Milt Sernett, Cazenovia, NY.*



News from Harriman-Nielsen Historic Farm

 Find Us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/HarrimanNielsenHistoricFarm

Fall Festival Update



Above: Saturday Harvest Crew. The Harriman-Nielsen Board wants to extend a special thank you to everyone who helped with the Fall Festival. The efforts of many volunteers made the day a great success. The lively music, good food, and a variety of activities were enjoyed by a record crowd.



The winner of the Tall Corn Contest was Richard Dohrman, Hampton, 14ft 9 1/2 in. The Giant Pumpkin Contest was won by Thomas Johnson, Ogden – 66 lbs. The Cribbage Tournament results were 1 st place - Dean Fahrman, Hampton, 2nd place - Paul Steward, Hampton and 3rd place – Frank Buss, Sheffield.

Below: Enjoying Fall Festival.



If you have any suggestions for next year and/or want to help in any way please let us know. We are always looking for volunteers and welcome new ideas.

A New Fence

A beautiful new fence has been installed around the farm site. This was made possible by a generous donation from Michael Jorgensen.



Reflections of our Past by Mickey Ferris

Latimer

Marion Township was originally part of Washington township, but was developed as a separate subdivision in the spring of 1874. The village of Latimer was laid out in 1882 by C. L. Clock in Section 19 of the then Marion Township, the tract of land being owned by J. F. Latimer a banker of Hampton. The land was purchased by H.A. and Charles Clock with Harriman's First and Second Additions, North's Addition and 1 st and 2nd Clocks Additions, and Miller Addition later added to the tract of Latimer.

Latimer was originally settled by people of Danish ancestry with German Lutherans moving to the area shortly thereafter.

In the early days there was an elevator, lumber yard and the Clock and Clock General Store all run by Charles Clock. There was a wooden sidewalk, a row of maple trees and an apple orchard belonging to P. M. Damm. Mr. Damm was the first blacksmith and did a flourishing business in horse shoeing and wagon-making. His son, John S. Damm, opened a second blacksmith shop which had several owners over the years and was in operation until 1950.

The first post office was established in 1887 located in a small building north of the depot which was both post office and residence with Egbert B. Hill as postmaster. Later the building was remodeled, enlarged and made into a hotel. When delivering the rural mail in early days the mailman had to deal with roads which, when it rained or snowed, turned into a sea of mud. Edward Sawtelle, Sr., the mailman, at times was unable to continue down the road due to the mud and would leave the horses to graze and finish his route on foot. He would strap the mail on his back the next morning and reverse walk the route to where he left the horses and vehicle and drive them back home.

Latimer was incorporated in 1901 with E.B. Hill as first mayor, T.P. Johnson as clerk and F.D. Smith as treasurer. Councilmen were Ole Hansen, Peter Guldberg, George Kaus, P.M. Damm and Fred Rodemeyer, Sr. Some of the businesses were a bank, blacksmith shop, creamery, doctor's office, drugstore, elevator, furniture store, hotel, harness shop, livery barn, millinery-dress shop, newspaper, photography studio, pump house, post office, restaurant, stockyards, telephone office, plus a school.

In 1902 the Chicago Great Western Railroad was extended west to Omaha and some Latimer residents were afraid Latimer was doomed and eight or 10 families had their house moved and placed on new foundations in Coulter.

On April 04, 1905 twelve women met at the home of Emma Roemer to organize a society which would raise funds for a park. Charter members were Mrs. A. Hanson, Mrs. J. H. Van Vorhis, Mrs. F. H. Dohrman, Mrs. F. D. Smith, Mrs H. J. Roed, Mrs. J. H. Hansen, Mrs. H. H. Roemer, Mrs. G. G. Krause, Mrs. Arthur Andrews, Mrs. T. P. Johnson and Mrs. H. H. Reynolds, note that in 1905 "ladies" always went by their husband's name. This Park Society was a big deal and membership grew from 12 to 44 in the first year. Five days after the first meeting the society met with the first president, Mrs. D. M. North, presiding. Mrs. North wanted the society to purchase a plot of land next to her house, feeling the park would up the value of her home. When she did not get her way, she resigned immediately and left in a huff. Mr. A. Hanson, editor of the Latimer Star and husband of one of the society members, mentioned the incident in the paper. The next day Mr. Hanson met up with Mrs. North at the post office where she accused him of printing bad things about her and proceeded to rap him on the shoulders with a cane. He ignored her and she continued to scold him shouting that "They call themselves the Park Society, but they are buzzards!!" Eventually Mrs. North got tired of hitting him and left and Mr. Hanson went back to his newspaper office and wrote up the affair to the delight of Latimer residents.

Reflections of Our Past – Franklin County Historical Museum – Latimer, Part II

Charles Clock owned the land which was the site of Latimer's first school in 1883. Mr. Clock donated the land with the stipulation that it was to be used for a school. The building was very small and was so crowded, housing sixty students, that two or three pupils sat at each desk. All classes were in one room with no division of the classes. There was one teacher for all students. No student ever graduated and each student left school when he or she felt educated or when they were needed at home. A new school was built in 1897 by E. B. Hill at the cost of \$2,500.00 and an independent school district was established in 1898. The first teachers in the new building were John Hazleton and Mattie Reierson.

In 1903 Latimer was left in the dark every evening after 8 p.m. when stores closed except on Wednesday and Saturday evening when store hours were extended. In July of 1916 electricity came to Latimer and was celebrated with a band concert, speeches, parade and fireworks.

In early days every family had a well and pump on their property. Each family had a horse and buggy and a barn for the horse and the family cow. The barn later became a garage.

Two passenger trains and 2 freight trains came into Latimer each day. Mail was hauled from the depot to the post office in a wheel barrow. The depot agent in 1889, Frank P. Ross, later went to Chicago to go into a tea wagon business with his brother-in-law. They formed a company called the Jewel Tea Company and became very wealthy.

The first radio in Latimer was owned by Dr. J. F. Martin. When Dr. Martin would try to tune his radio in, nearly the whole town would gather in his waiting room. The old set had eight knobs on it and all had to be turned to tune it and Dr. Martin would make it squeak causing everyone to jump. The best station to be heard was a Kansas City station. The first phonograph was brought to Latimer by a salesman who charged customers in the Clock Store twenty-five cents to listen to music.

On one McCormick Implement Day festival the city marshall received a telegram (there being no telephones) that he should arrest a negro who was coming down the M and St L. Railroad from the west. The man was suspected of having killed someone in Sioux City. The news spread like wild fire and when the suspect was sighted close to the stockyards townspeople jammed into the empty coal bins to watch the excitement. The Marshall became frozen and Ike Harms said "Give me your gun and I'll arrest him!" Ike jumped out and yelled "Stick'm up!" The crowd came out of the coal bins and the poor man thought he was going to be lynched. He was then taken to the depot and the sheriff at Hampton came and got him. Later it was found he had an alibi and he was turned loose.

H. H. Reynolds came to Franklin County in 1882 and Latimer shortly thereafter where, among other things, he raised an acre of corn which he felt was always far ahead of any in the county. When it matured he would cut a tall stalk and display it in front of some business place. Once Nis Sorensen went into the Reynolds field and found a taller stalk that beat out the Reynolds stalk by several inches and displayed it by the other corn. Squire Reynolds went back to his field and found a taller stalk to beat out the taller one and then the prankster told him what he had done. Squire quipped "You had to use my patch in order to beat me."

Squire ran for Justice of the Peace at each election and pranksters would put up other candidates against him, but vote for Squire so he would win by a huge majority. He was considered an expert on legal matters and prided himself on justice being given in his court. Squire Reynolds lived to be 96 years old and is buried in the Lutheran Cemetery of Latimer.

Note: this is just a portion of information on the history of Latimer.

Old Stone House Windows for “Sale”



As part of ongoing restoration and maintenance of the Leander Reeve home, the Old Stone House Committee plans to purchase and install old-fashioned storm windows on each window of the house. As part of the project, the existing windows will be repaired, and the woodwork will be repainted. The new windows will be custom-made wooden storms to preserve the historical flavor of the Leander Reeve home. The storms will protect the inside windows from future damage, as well as save energy costs associated with heating and cooling the house.

You can help! We estimate the project cost to be \$250 per window, including the paint and materials necessary to repair the existing windows. Committee members and friends will donate their labor to complete the project. Donate \$250 to the Old Stone House storm window project. We will use your money to purchase one storm window and the materials needed to paint and repair the corresponding interior window. When the project is completed, we will hold a reception, inviting each “buyer” out to the property for pie and ice cream. We welcome individual and group contributions.

The work will begin as soon as funding is secured. We anticipate several workdays this spring and summer, and hope we can complete the project before September 27, in time for the Geneva Betterment Committee’s Town-wide Flea Market weekend. We have applied for a grant, but will not receive enough money from it to complete the entire project.

Send your check to FCHS – Old Stone House Committee at PO Box 114, Hampton IA 50441. Contact Joe Pitsor for more information or to make a pledge: 641-456-3994 or jspitsor@rconnectcom.

Just for Fun

A young man walks through New York Chinatown and notices a shop with the name Ole Olaffsen’s Laundry. He thought it seemed out of place but curiosity got the best of him and he walked into the shop. He sees an old Chinese man sitting in the corner.

He asked the old man, How in the world did this place get a name like Ole Olaffsen’s Laundry?

Old Man - That’s the name of the owner.

Young Man - Who’s the owner?

Old Man - I am.

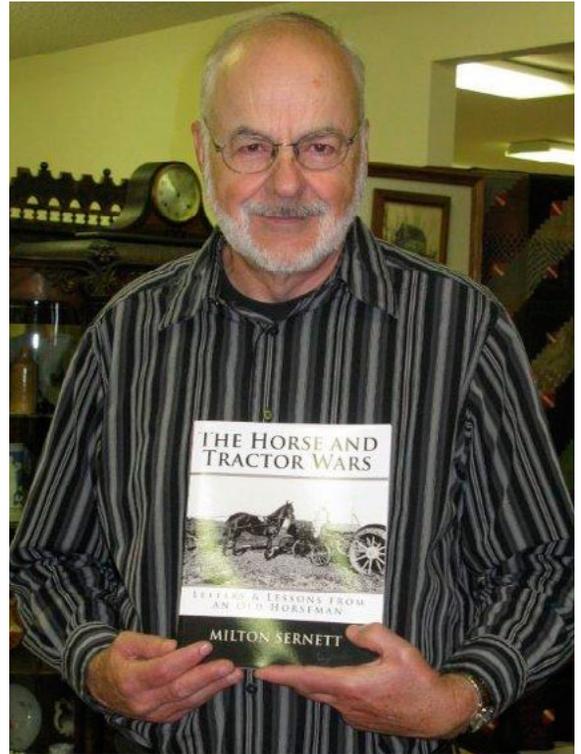
Young Man - How did you get a name like Ole Olaffsen?

Old Man - Many years ago when I came to this country from Hong Kong, I was standing in line at Immigration. A man in front of me was a big blonde Dane. The lady from Immigration asked him, What is your name? He say “Ole Olaffsen”. Lady ask me, What is your name? I say Sam Ting.

Museum Visitors

Picture, right: This summer Dr. Milton C. Sernett (H.S. Class of 1960) stopped by the museum to donate a copy of the book he has written, "The Horse and Tractor Wars". If you are interested in learning more about his book visit the museum or contact Dr. Sernett at: mcsernett@windstream.net .

Below: For four afternoons this past fall museum volunteer, Dorothy Jingst, welcomed the third grade classes to the museum. The third grade teachers, Abbie Nielsen, Kandice Ainley, Ruth Nelson, Wendy Buseman, and Terri McWilliams encouraged the students to invite a grandparent, parent, or special friend to come along. Each child and guest used treasure hunt questions to learn more about the museum exhibits. Many of the children and adults said this was their first trip to the museum and planned to return for a longer visit. Some of their favorite exhibits were the military room displays, the "IT" toy – over the years display, and the 4-H and FFA Room displays.



Donations Needed

The Harriman-Nielsen Historic Farm needs the following items:

1. light-weight vacuum cleaner for rugs
2. pint jars
3. jelly jars

Contact Doreen Petersen – 641-456-3825

Invite your family and friends to Join the Society. Better yet, pay their first year's membership. What a great gift!

A country without a memory is a country of madmen.

-- George Santayana

Yes, I want to be involved. Here's how:

- My membership check for \$15 (single) or \$30 (couple)
- My tax deductible contribution to _____
- My tax deductible contribution to the Historical Society

Clip this form and send with your check to:

Name _____

Franklin County Historical Society

Address _____

PO Box 114

Hampton IA 50441

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Remember, if you get your newsletter via e-mail, you will get it sooner, the pictures will be in color, and it may include links to additional content. You can also view all the articles, and color pictures, at

www.historyinfranklincounty.org

You may find other items of interest there from time to time. Send us information that you'd like to share with other members of our society. E-mail keri50441@gmail.com. Pictures encouraged.

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