



# WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 256 Indianola, IA 50125

Phone-515-961-8085

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

May 2013

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## WCHS EXECUTIVE

### BOARD

Sat. May 11th at 9:30

Sat. June 8th at 10:00

## LCF COMMITTEE

Sat. May 11th at 10:00 am

Sat. June 8th at 10:00 am

## WCHS MEETINGS

**May 28 at 7:00 pm**

**Valerie Diehl**

**RN, MS, MSCN**

**Neuroscience Center Case**

**Manager, Mercy Medical  
Center**

***Is it me or***

***Alzheimer's?***

**June 25 at 7:00 pm**

**Ethel Barker**

***Iowa Orphan Trains***

**July no meeting due to  
Warren County Fair**

**Wed. May 15th,**

**4:30 to 8:30**

**Please eat dinner  
at Pizza Ranch to raise  
money for WCHS**



**Don & Deloris  
VanRyswyk and  
Barbara & Bill  
Sayre**

At our April Meeting the  
Sayre Family presented us  
with this Raymond Sayre  
sheep sign

## PLEASE EAT AT PIZZA RANCH MAY 15th

Come to Pizza Ranch northern edge of  
Indianola (across highway from Circle B)  
Wednesday, May 15

WCHS volunteers will help serve, bus and  
clean tables for tips and 10% of the sales  
from 4:30 to 9:00 pm.

We need you to help us by bringing yourself  
and other diners to Pizza Ranch on the 15th.

If you would like to volunteer to be a server,  
call Ruth Hall at 961-3201.

## Baby foxes make home under our log cabin



Still looking for rural Warren  
County school information-  
moved or remodeled schools,  
parochial, or nicknames. Please  
bring your photo and stories of  
any Warren County rural school  
to the museum so that we can  
make copies for Log Cabin  
Festival.

Thanks!



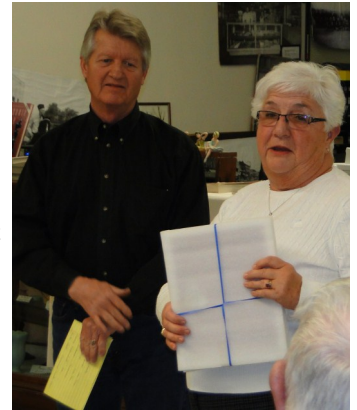
**Locust School painting by Freda Caviness**



Wonder Horse from Vicki Olson

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

Nicki Crouse Brown presents  
Pres. Dan Porter the history  
of the Crouse Family Restaurant



Coloma Ladies Aid Quilt (west edge of Marion County  
and Southeast Warren) from Rod and Janet Cambron



Two books written by Marie-  
ta Grissom about her Mother  
Thelma Pehrson were pre-  
sented to our library.



We received composite pupil photos from 1950-1980 of Hawthorne and Emerson, 4 paintings of schools, photo of Freda, Emerson pennant and teacher's bell.

Child's slip from Earlene Ginter.

Book, *Centerville: A Mid-American Saga* by Enfy's McMurray.

Two oil lamps and cast iron cobbler shoe repair item with camel base from Karen Ohnemus' estate.

Hampshire sheep sign from the Sayre family.

Child's 1921 glasses from Alene Woodyard.

School memorabilia from Dorothy Blackford Johnson & Ruth

Barnett, donated by Toni Rath.

## RURAL SCHOOLS QUILT PROJECT UPDATE

The quilting group met at Carol Mahr's house Monday, May 7th, to sew finished blocks together. We may have images not used in the quilt but if the quilters have time may be sewn in to other projects such as wall hangings. WCHS is grateful for all the pictures and school information that members have submitted. If your image does not make the quilt, look for it on the photo page of our website. We continue to add them to the website. We're excited to see the end result! The quilt will be displayed in July at the Stitching Place and the Warren County Fair. We're looking for a volunteer(s) to help identify display sites and sell raffle tickets as we show the quilt around the county before LCF. It would mean setting up our quilt rack and small folding table where you could sell raffle tickets. Please call Kristi Porter @961-6149 if you know of a good display location and would like to help.

Nancy Delay



Rosie Hulet



Carol Mahr



Linn Smith







## FROM THE FRONT LINES



Norwalk Civil War Soldier John Kern, Ben Kern's great, great-grandfather, provided detailed accounts of the Civil War. He was a major in Company H of the 34<sup>th</sup> Iowa Voluntary Regiment. He kept a diary from June 1863 through November 1864. This diary contains troop movements, weather conditions, and soldiers' pay.

June 19, 1863 – ***We are on picket guard (Co. H) Were on all night. Had no loss. We could see the Enemy making preparations for our attack.***

June 21, 1863 – ***Had a busy day – brisk firing all day. Some narrow escapes but none hurt. Were fired on during the night***

Kern writes that in late June many of the men were getting sick, and the company was allowed a few days to rest. On June 29, he was recommended for the rank of major.

July 3 - 5 1863- ***Deserters came in frequently. In the evening, a truce was hoisted and terms of capitulation are being negotiated. We anticipate a glorious 4th.... Glorious day. Vicksburg surrendered. Praise God & take courage.***

In early August, Kern himself writes that he was suffering from "ague" (malaria). Those with it suffered from fever and shakes. By Aug. 10, he writes that he received his commission as major.

Sept. 3, 1864, while stationed in Fort Morgan, Ala - ***There seems to be no very cheering war news. How long O'God will this murderous war continue?***

In November he writes about election day and not voting, figuring that Lincoln will be overwhelmingly re-elected anyway. By mid-month, his belief had turned negative: "I do not feel hopeful & buoyant. I am sorry that my confidence in Grant is so little & Lincoln seems to be a failure. He has managed to divide the North & has worked more for political success than for restoration of the Union. God save us!"



John Kern served in the Civil War from August 1862 until he was discharged on Nov. 25, 1864. He returned to Norwalk to farm the site where Ben Kern lives with his family today. John Kern's sword survived a Christmas Eve fire in 1927 that burned down the house on the Kern farm. The case and part of the handle were burned in the fire, but the sword was recovered from the ashes.

*Ben Kern lives on the site where John Kern farmed*

### WARREN COUNTY TIDBITS

From *The Record Herald and Indianola Tribune* July 7, 1949, Amanda Conklin

When Grandmother's supply of soda gave out, she scraped corn cobs and baked them, using the ashes as leavening for her corn bread.

From *The Record Herald and Indianola Tribune* July 12, 1949, P. K. McKee

Indianola at one time had seven hotels, as follows: Madison House was located where Glenn Hess now lives on the Northeast corner of North First Street and Boston Avenue; Central House, consisting of two stories above four business rooms on the northeast corner of the Square; Willoughby House was located on the southwest corner of Green Bay Lumber Company lot.; Robinson House was located on southeast corner of Jefferson Way and Clinton Avenue; National Hotel was located on the southwest corner of Jefferson Way and East First Avenue where the M.B. Keelers now live; The Wells Hotel was across the street east of the city light plant where Mrs. Weldin now lives; and an old frame hotel stood where the Warren Hotel now stands.

I also remember when the post office was located where the Western Auto Store is, also where the Beymer Jewelry Store and the Bruce Rowe Barber shop are now.

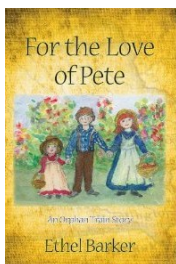
The Rock Island Depot was located down the track, a block or more east of the Jefferson Highway. All the ground north of the track and east of the highway was vacant and that is where the circus was always held when it came to town.

From *The Record Herald and Indianola Tribune* July 21, 1949 by Jesse D. Clevenger

Grandpa and Grandma were going to be gone all day and Mamma, 19 and Aunt Ella Sargent, 18 took a notion to clean their parents' bed room. They refilled the straw tick and piled the old straw the road to burn; but the wind came up and they did not burn it. When the folks came home they wondered how the pile of straw had come to be there. When they found out what the girls had done, without a word Grandpa went down to the pile of old straw and picked up something. It was a bag of money. He was treasurer of the White Breast schools and only a few days before he had been to a bank in Indianola. Next time, he wanted to be home when they cleaned.

## ORPHAN TRAIN PROGRAM

On Tuesday, June 25 at 7:00 pm Ethel Barker, Jack Barker's sister-in-law, will present Orphan Train Riders. She has written a novel, *For the Love of Pete, an Orphan Train Story*.



From 1853 to 1929 orphan trains carried about 300,000 children, teenagers, and some adults (mostly women) out of eastern cities to the Midwest. They were removed from poverty and want, incarceration and institutionalization to live and work with rural families.

## WARREN COUNTY RURAL SCHOOLS LCF 2013 Theme

Jerry Beatty and Susan Graeser are working on a booklet about our Warren County Rural Schools. We are looking for clear photos of schools, students or teachers. Needed are teacher anecdotes or pupil reminiscences. To share, E-mail us at [contact@warrencountyhistory.org](mailto:contact@warrencountyhistory.org) or let us copy your items at the museum Thursdays 9-4 or Saturdays 9 to noon.

## ROSA FERRARA, Orphan Train Rider

By Carolyn Reif

Rosa Ferrara was born in New York City on April 15, 1887 and brought to the New York Foundling Hospital three weeks later by an Italian woman. This woman also brought a letter from a doctor explaining that Rosa's mother died in childbirth and her father was killed some months earlier in a railroad accident in Canada. After her mother's death, there were no other family members to care for her.

The New York Foundling Hospital was a Catholic orphanage operated by nuns, and every attempt was made to find Catholic homes for the children placed in their care. Notices were sent to Catholic priests in the Midwest enlisting their aid in finding families for these children. So, Father Schumacher, the priest at St. Marys, Iowa, made a call from the pulpit suggesting that his parishioners consider taking an orphaned child into their home.



Rosa at 16

Joseph and Rosa Gehringer responded to this call and made an application to the orphanage through Father Schumacher, and he recommended them as parents for a child. They were able to specify the age and sex of the child they desired. The next step involved waiting for a child to be assigned to them. Finally, the day arrived when they were notified that four year-old Rosa Ferrara was scheduled to travel to Iowa on the Mercy Train and join their family.

Rosa left the hospital on May 5, 1891 in the company of a chaperone. Also aboard the train were three older boys who met their new parents at St. Marys too. Peter Bell and Ed Van Grino were taken in by the Buschelmann family, and the Felix Storz family took a boy named Ralph. There were other orphans on the train as well, all bound for new homes at other destinations in the Midwest. Rosa's name, date of birth, and the name of her new parents were sewn onto the hem of her dress. She also carried a wooden cigar box containing her few meager possessions.

Since Rosa's new mother and sister were also named Rosa, Rosa Ferrara became known as Little Rosie Gehringer. With her arrival, her adoptive father, at the age of sixty-two, and her mother, at forty-eight, became parents for the eighth time.

Little Rosie attended school and grew up at St. Marys. She was married to Eugene Howard in 1910, and they moved to Los Angeles after their marriage. Eugene worked for the railroad and this is where the couple raised their family.

## ***The Early Days at Hartford by Mary Jane (Pendry) Cochrane***

I hope I can interest you by relating some of my early recollections of Hartford and vicinity, 64 years ago as I was only 10 years of age at that time. They may be somewhat hazy, but in the main I think you will find them correct.

I well remember the day in the fall of 1850 when we, with seven or eight other families, started from the State of Ohio for the then far west-Iowa in a caravan of covered wagons, that being the mode of travel in those days. The first railroad and cars I ever saw was in the Miami River Valley. We saw the hoop-pole roads over the swamps of Indiana, the great rolling prairies of Illinois with a cabin dotted here and there, and the immense Mississippi with the big steamboat that made two trips in getting us across. How frightened I was for fear it would sink with such a load, as I never had seen one before. We landed in Burlington, where we laid in our flour and other commodities, enough to last many months. Then we traveled over the boundless, vacant prairies of Iowa with a scant settlement here and there. The last day of our journey was over a trail from Knoxville to Ackworth, where we landed at the home of my uncle Alexander Ginder. As houses were at a premium at that time, each family began to look for winter quarters.



William Ginder, brother of my uncle, had settled at Hartford on what is now known as the Joshua Rhine farm. His wife having died the previous spring, he offered to share his home with us for the winter. We separated from the others and with our two teams started north to Hartford. Crossing Short Creek we traveled up the hill past the home of Evan George, now the John Perry farm. That was the last house until we reached the Hayworth Grove, where Mahlin Hayworth occupied a little cabin. The next place was the Father David Taylor farm. I think there was a cabin there and then no more until we came in sight of Palmyra. A long way off we sighted a two story, unpainted building, which filled my childish mind, that to this day I cannot remember whether there were other buildings or not. This building looked so big after having passed cabins for hundreds of miles. The next place was the William Myrick place, now owned by G. W. Parsons. The road there ran across to the Samuel Black farm, now the Coon place. He was not married at that time, living alone in his little cabin. From there we drove straight to Hartford to Uncle Billy Reynolds' farm. He was an old bachelor and lived with his sister Mrs. Thornton and her family. Then we arrived at Hartford.

My memory is just a little vague as to the number of inhabitants. I remember John D. Hartman, the founder of the town, was in the mercantile business, and his store was the center of activity as settlers were pouring in from every direction. I think there was a blacksmith shop but do not think the houses were very numerous.

From Hartford we drove straight through the woods to the Sherman place. In a small cabin down in the hollow near the spring lived an eccentric character by the name of Benjamin Phillips. He was a powerfully built man; had long black hair and was as straight as an Indian. He hailed us, came out and bade us welcome. He was always so cheery and wanted to have a chat with each passerby. Later he got into an altercation with a neighbor, was threatened with arrest, disappeared and was never heard of again.

From the Phillips' place we drove through the woods to the Ginder home. At the time of his wife's death he was building a large, hewed log house, which had never been completed. His little cabin stood across from the other on low ground near the branch. It was completely hidden from view by a luxuriant growth of wild sunflowers. After slashing them down we moved in. It was built just high enough to stand up straight. No ceilings, one little window, the chimney built of clay and sticks, but luckily a floor. Everyone could not boast of that. I know of one instance where the family lived all winter without a floor and a quilt hung up for a door. I cried myself to sleep the first night out of pure homesickness. However, the new home was soon completed and we moved in and were more comfortable.

When the cold, freezing nights came on those new logs, they would freeze and crack like a gun, and we would gather around mother's knee trembling in fear of Indians, but there were none there at that time, but plenty of wolves, howling down in the bottom. Our nearest neighbors were Uncle Johnny Roe, Jerome Davis, Uncle George Leslie and Levi Osborne.

That winter we attended school taught by "Azzy" Ward, as everyone called him. The school house was down in a hollow on the Guinn farm then known as the Winpighler place. It was heated by a great big fireplace and on a cold morning it was filled with great crackling logs around which we pushed and scrambled for the hottest place. Attending this school were the Taylors, Driscolls, Shetterleys, Winpighlers, Plummers, Wards, Friels and perhaps others I can't remember.



## 2013 PIONEER SCHOOL



This is a week we will remember, **85 degrees Tuesday** and inches of snow Thursday and Friday! It was mighty cold in our Heritage Village for 5th graders and adults.



Thanks to all those who helped make it a success.



### GARDEN SPACE FOR RENT

There is still time to plant a garden in the Champlin-city property east of our museum. You must become a member of WCHS (\$15) and it is \$2 per frontage foot on J Street with a 150 foot depth. Call Dan Porter at 961-6149 for more information.



### 2013 PIONEER SCHOOL SPELLING BEE

Tuesday evening, May 7th, eighteen 5th graders competed in our Spelling Bee. First place was Liam Christensen, Irving; second place was Olivia Appel, Irving; and third place was Cailin Barker, Wilder.

### Log Cabin Festival 2013

September 28 & 29

RURAL SCHOOLS  
**WARREN  
COUNTY**



WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
LOG CABIN DAYS FESTIVAL 2013

Looking for ways to volunteer your time and energy to help LCF, now is a good time. From set-up to clean-up, parade to pioneer demonstrations, classic car show to pie and cake auction, entertainment to scarecrow making, Heritage Village helpers to quilt display, advertising to signage... there is some task for which you would be perfect. We'll be contacting helpers, you could come to our 2nd Saturday