



October 2021

# WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 256 Indianola, IA 50125

Phone-515-961-8085

(Highway 92 West, 1300 West 2nd, turn north into fair grounds, then turn east)

E-mail- contact@warrencountyhistory.org

## Inside This Issue

Page 2 James Amsberry

Page 3 1882 Jail

Page 7 Proctor Lynching

### **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION SOUP SUPPER and LANE SISTERS MOVIE NIGHT**

**Tuesday, October 26th  
6:00 pm**

**2021**

**Joint**

### **WCHS & WCGS**

Research Retreat

Sat. Nov. 13th

Noon - 8:00pm

**amazon**smile

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 amazon smile rather than amazon. Choose Warren County Historical Society, then select Iowa as your charity to support.

**HyVee** 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.



## WCHS HONORS VOLUNTEERS

Join us Tuesday, October 26th at 6:00 pm for a Soup Supper, showing our appreciation for the many hours our volunteers donate to make this organization a success. **THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!** Dinner will be followed by a movie featuring 1940s film stars, the Indianola Lane Sisters.



Lola, Rosemary and Priscilla Lane

## RESEARCH



WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## RETREAT

Saturday, November 13, 2021  
1300 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave,  
Indianola  
Warren Co. Historical

Museum - East Side of County Fairgrounds

\$5 donation suggested

**12 NOON UNTIL 8:00**

**WIFI available** - Bring your computer and other records

Volunteers will be available to help assist with your research.

It's not required but you are welcome to bring snacks to share. Soup or something will be provided for a light evening meal.

Three short presentations will be available throughout the afternoon for those interested:

**1:00 - Copyright Laws and Issues**

**3:00 - Treasures from the National Archives (and how to find them)**

**5:00 - Navigating the Warren County Online Newspapers**

**Examples of information available at the Research Library:**

**Probates - Obituaries - Wills - Criminal Records - Published and Unpublished Family Histories - School Records - Maps and Plat Books**

**Military Records - Church Records - Organization records**

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER OCTOBER 2021

Greetings,

Thank you for making our 2021 Log Cabin Festival a wonderful family event. If you were in our parade or watched it, came out to WCHS or volunteered, donated or worked at our garage sale you made this year's Log Cabin Festival a successful event.

If you have volunteered at WCHS at any time in 2021, we appreciate your help and want to invite you to our Volunteer Appreciation Soup Supper on Tuesday, October 26th at 6:00 pm.

Our Log Cabin Renovation Committee continues to meet. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, November 9th at 10:00 am. Please join us. We have emptied, cleaned and restored the contents of the cabin in the museum for the winter. Also join us for our November 13th Research Retreat Noon to 8:00 pm. See invitation on page 1.



**YOU ARE STARS**



### JAMES MAYES AMSBERRY

James Mayes Amsberry was born December 25, 1904 in Milo, Iowa to Rolla D. and Mary L. Amsberry. He attended Social Plains country school and graduated from Milo High School.

He loved sports and played semi-professional baseball. He was with Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig while they were on a barnstorming tour.

In May 1928 the first Milo Fire Department was organized after a bad January fire was fought on Main Street by a bucket brigade. James Amsberry was member of this original group.

On June 18, 1938 he married Helen Loretta Lawyer from Liberty Center. They had one daughter, Priscilla.

Mr. Amsberry served in the Iowa State Highway Patrol for five years. He was the first Warren County resident to be a patrolman. During the presidential campaign of 1944, he was assigned as special guard to Governor Thomas Dewey on his speaking tour through Iowa.

In 1945 James opened a paint and wallpaper store on the northside of the square in Indianola. He was President of the Indianola Chamber of Commerce in 1952.

He retired from Amsberry's and died in July 1973.

**In 1935 the Iowa State Highway Patrol was created. James M. Amsberry was 1st Warren County person to serve as a patrolman.**



1923 Milo Yearbook

**LCF Parade Winners**

**Merchant's Choice-  
Indianola Library**

**Best of Theme- Iowa  
Women's Suffragette  
Wagon, Marilyn Lawson**

**Historical Best-Team  
America, Marylee  
Vanderpool**



**Kay Middleswart was winner of LCF 2021 quilt. Photo, Kay and Deb Larrison**



**Dickerson daughters, Chisty, Shelley, and Dee Ann at LCF Dickerson Memorial. The family has donated a lovely bench that is located in front of Mt. Hope School. Three pies were auctioned in memory of their father.**



**Playing games.**



**Making Scarecrows.**

## THE NEW JAIL, Advocate Tribune, September 5th, 1882

At last the much discussed, much voted at, much needed has been accomplished. It is a veritable fact, and a convenient and creditable fact. There will be no more sending prisoners at enormous expense to the penitentiary for safe keeping, or at almost equal expense, to a neighboring county. There will be no more guarding by the week and month in the court house; no more riding down on a window or sliding down a clothes line, by prisoners. Prisoners will be securely caged in an innocent looking box, the sheriff will sleep well in his comfortable dwelling adjoining; the guards will be out of a job, and the county fund will fatten up perceptibly.

The building of the first jail, sad the only one the county had for thirty years, was authorized by the commissioners at their January meeting, 1851. The following is the record of that action: "And the board have agreed to let out the building of a jail in the town of Indianola, of the following dimensions: eighteen feet square, two stories, seven foot stories to be built hewn timbers. The lower story is to be built with two walls of eight inches thick, the building to be lined with two inch plank, well spiked with double ten nails, all the floors to be laid with hewn timber ten inches thick. And rest of the work to correspond with rest of building. And will have the same sold to the lowest bidder on the second Monday in March next."

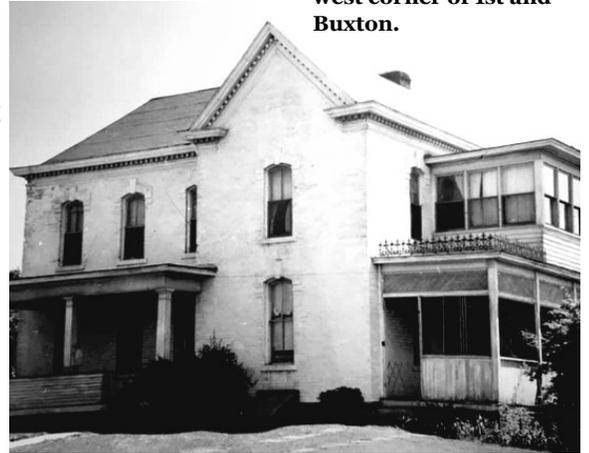
The contract for building the jail was "sold" to William J. Morman, for \$707.56 and he was to have the building completed in one year. This log jail stood on the ground now occupied by the new jail one block south of the southwest corner of the square, answering its purpose very well at first, indifferently later, and not at all at the last, till the summer of 1881, when it was torn down, and most of the logs, still sound, used for bridge piling. The old jail had an eventful history. It enclosed all grades of criminals, and perhaps some innocent parties. It was cut and slashed in every conceivable way by escaping prisoners. It was severely scorched on several occasions by incipient fires. Every one remembers how its door was battered by the vigilantes who afterward hung Proctor; and how it was double guarded while it contained the Dillard and Westfalls. Perhaps the most disgraceful thing in the history was that men and women were often imprisoned in its two compartments, and sometimes in the same room. And this is remembered now in striking contrast to the new jail in which the women's cells are in a part of the building entirely removed from the men's. The old jail was condemned by the grand jury repeatedly and long before it was abandoned by the county. It came to be one of the regular duties to go down and condemn the old jail.

When the court house was built, it came to be generally believed that there was to be a jail somewhere about it, either in the basement or one of the tower rooms. We believe some of the plans showed cells in the cellar: but by some circumstance, perhaps the interposition of Providence, or more likely, the lack of funds, the board were delivered from the folly of putting them there.

As soon after this as it was thought at all likely to succeed the project of building a suitable jail began to be discussed. The question was submitted in 1875, and defeated by a vote of 1042 for and 1320 against building a jail. In 1878 it again voted upon with substantially the result, the votes standing 1172 for, and 1407 against. There was no disposition, however, to give up the ship, and the question was again put before the people at the next regular election, 1879. This time the vote stood, 1294 for, and 1396 against. The trouble up to his time had been the county's experience with the court-house, which was started on an appropriation of forty thousand dollars and finally cost over a hundred thousand. People were afraid of a similar program regarding the jail, and they did not desire any more experience in that line. The last submission of the question had limited the power of the board to appropriate to the amount voted, but it was misunderstood by many, while others seemed to vote against it by force of habit. But the discussion acquainted voters generally with the fact that the limit of the appropriation would actually limit, and the next year 1880, they were ready to vote the tax. The proposition was carried by 2118 to 1078. The tax voted was 2 1/8 mills, producing \$18,682.55. Of this amount \$7,933.12 had been collected up to August 1st, including the interest collected. The interest will raise the amount to more than the ten thousand, which can legally be expended for that purpose. The balance will be transferred to the county fund.

The cost of the jail has been very successfully adjusted to the amount of funds. After worrying through several meetings with numerous agents, and endeavoring in vain to secure three cells of a satisfactory make for the money they could devote to that purpose, Mr. Cool and Miller, of the board went to St. Louis, to see what they could do by dealing

1950s photo by Dick White of this jail that was located at the southwest corner of 1st and Buxton.



directly with the manufacturers of the Pauly patent cell, intending if unsuccessful there to visit another firm in Cincinnati. Their trip proved a splendid investment. On January 28, 1882, they contracted with J.P. Pawly & Bro. To furnish and put in the three cells, everything complete and perfect for \$4000. This was \$1000 less than the best offer they had been able to get from an agent. The difference was the commission, which they saved by buying direct, and by the closest kind of bargaining. February 21st, a contract was entered into with F. W. Fortney to erect the building for \$9700.

The building is not being plastered and will be entirely finished ready for Sheriff Trimble to move in by the first of October. It is a handsome, substantial structure, two stories high, of dark red brick with iron cornice and tin roof. Under the residence part is a basement, on the first floor are three large rooms, two halls, and a woman's cell, and on the second floor the same. The stories are high, and the inside finish will be suitable for a dwelling of the best kind. The cell room is south of the residence part, and is reached by the main hall from the north and by a side hall from the east of the building. It is entered through a heavy iron door, in which there is a latticed port, affording a view of the entire room at any time. The room is 25 by 35 feet, 17 feet high. It will be finished like any other room, except that the floor will be of cement and that the windows have iron grating outside the sash. In the center of this room, three or four feet from the outside walls on all sides, is the iron box which is to be the safe receptacle for prisoners. It is of course very heavy, and rests on six railroad irons, which are laid on stone pillars sunk deep into the ground. There is ample room for another box of the same size to be set on top of it, and everything has been arranged with a view to thus doubling the cell room when necessary.

Each cell is 6 feet 6 inches wide, 11 feet deep from front to rear, and 7 feet high. The corridor is 5 feet wide, 19 feet and 6 inches long, and 7 feet high. The floors and ceilings of cells and corridor, and the outside and partition walls of cells and the rear end of the corridor, and 8 inches of front end of corridor, where the lever box is situated are made of 3-sixteenth inch thick jail plate. All the joints butt close together, and are strapped on the outside with a 4 by 1/2 inch steel strap, firmly riveted. The inside corners are put together by the same kind of a strip beat to fit the corner, and riveted on both sides. The outside corners have a similar protection. In all three plates the rivets are 3 or 3 1/2 inches apart, and are 1/3 inch in diameter. One would think this sufficient to hold anything human, but the special security claimed for the Pauly patent is yet to be described. It consists of lathing all exterior plate iron of the cells and corridor with hardened steel bars, hardened on the edge and annealed in the center. These bars are 2 by 3/8 inches and are placed 5 inches apart. They are riveted, like every thing else, almost as thickly as a steam boiler. There lath extend up and down, and are crossed by three bars of the same material inside. At the rear of each section there is a lathed window, two feet wide and extending from floor to ceiling. These are made of the steel lath, described above, crossing at right angles and 2 1/2 inches apart. The doors are the same size and style, and are hung with large double hinges. They shut into close rabbets and have all the protection of corner irons that are found elsewhere. At the bottom of each door is a feed hole about 5 by 7 inches. The entire front and nearly all the entrance end of the corridor are made of the hardened steel lath, put together in the shape of lattice work. The bars are two inches wide and the meshes three inches square. It is provided with the same corner fastenings as the cells. The door of the corridor is like the other doors, only heavier, 6 inches wider, and fastened with two heavy sliding bars, which are locked with large pad locks, one of them inside the lever box. The locking arrangement is excellent, and is another of the special features of Mr. P.J. Pauly's patent. At the side of the corridor door is a large and strong iron box, whose door is secured by a five tumbler combination lock. Inside this box is a lever, which is attached by a succession of bars and levers to the locks of all the cell doors. Every cell door can be fastened or unfastened by the jailor without his entering the corridor stall. He can set the prisoner's breakfast in the corridor; go out and lock the outside door securely, then by a motion of the lever unlock the cell doors and invite his guests out to enjoy their repast. If one prisoner is to be put in or taken out, it can be done without danger of any interference from others. Each cell is provided with six bunks, made of heavy canvass and arranged so as to be tightly stretched across the cell at night. In one corner of the cell is a foul air duct, designed to carry off all bad odors. In the rear end of the corridor is a sink for washing purposes, and a large pipe leading to the cesspool 20 feet outside the building. On the top of the cage, directly above the wash sink is a tank for water, from which a pipe extends downward, so that an abundant supply of water can be had at any time by turning a faucet. Water comes to the tank through pipes which attach to a force pump in the cellar under the main building.

Thus all arrangements are made for the comfort and convenience of prisoners consistent with their safety. The cells are undoubtedly perfectly secure. They are the latest result of the best knowledge on the subject. The building is first class in every particular, and if Mr. Fortney has made any money on it he has done so by hard work, close figuring, and careful management. The work was all done by home men that could be done, except the tin roofing. This was first contracted for an iron roof which no one in the county could furnish, and, of course had to be given to the same man, when the material changed. We see no reason why the people of Warren County should not be well satisfied with them and with the manner of its building. And now that we have so fine and substantial a jail, it is sincerely to be hoped that we shall — have very little use for it.



This 1882 Warren County Jail served as our jail and sheriff's residence until 1939 when the new courthouse and jail replaced it.

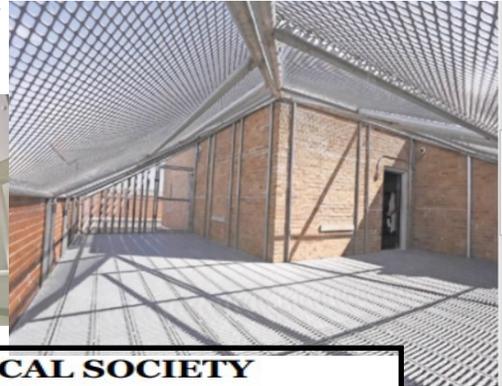
When it was no longer our jail it became a residence and apartments.

In March 1959 it was burned down to clear the land for our current Indianola Post Office.

Firefighters from six communities were on hand at this planned burning. The interior of the building was burned and gutted. The exterior was bulldozed down and removed. Photos are by Dick White, who for a period of time lived in this house with his family.



Below, are photos by Mike Roland in 2016 of our recently demolished jail located in the 1939 Warren County Courthouse. Only exercise space available to prisoners was on rooftop. 2nd photo jail cell.



What will be written of the new Warren County Jail, when it is completed? Not two newspaper columns like the 1882 Advocate Tribune!

**WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Annual Membership**

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

**Time to  
Renew or Join  
WCHS for  
2022**

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

**Return to WCHS  
Box 256  
Indianola, Iowa 50125**

## Halloween Murder--Kading Killed, Proctor Hanged by Vigilantes

Augusta Kading was born around 1859 to Charles Kading, an immigrant from Prussia, and his wife, Herrietta. She grew up on a farm in Belmont Township, near Milo. She died at age 18, the victim of an armed robbery that went awry. On Halloween night, Wednesday, October 31, 1877, Augusta Kading was shot and fatally wounded when two masked robbers forced their way into her family's home looking for money. Her father had recently sold his farm and it was thought the money was hidden in the home. Augusta's invalid mother, two younger sisters and a brother were also home. Her father and older brother had driven hogs to market in Indianola that day and had not returned. Instead of raising her arms as ordered by the gunmen, Augusta jumped up, charged the assailant, and ripped off his blackened cloth mask before being shot in the breast. She died a couple weeks later but not before identifying a neighbor Reuben B. Proctor, 26, as the one who shot her. [Reuben B. was the last of 14 children born to Reuben and Sarah Proctor.]

Reuben Proctor was arrested in Polk County and placed in the Warren County jail. An angry mob of 100 men gathered at the jail and attempted to break it open but Sheriff Joe Meek pleaded with the men to disperse and they finally did. The next day, November 14, 1877, the Sheriff and his deputies took Proctor to Schoenberg, near Milo, for a preliminary hearing. Soon after the hearing began, word arrived that Miss Kading was failing fast, prompting the court to adjourn to the Kading home to take her last testimony identifying her assailant, Reuben Proctor. The hearing was resumed later in the afternoon at Schoenberg then recessed at 6 p.m. for supper at a café across the street. At 7 p.m., on the way back to the courtroom, Sheriff Meek, his officers, and prosecuting attorney George W. Seevers were surrounded and threatened by an armed and masked group of 100 men—half on horses and half on foot. About 20 men grabbed Proctor, put a noose around his neck, dragged him across the street, and hanged him from the beam of a cattle scales across from the hotel. The vigilantes were thanked by their leader for their good deed and vanished into the dark. **The Warren Record** decried the mob lynch law: "The day was a rainy, dreary one and a dark one in the history of Belmont township."

Augusta Kading died two days later on Friday, November 16, 1877, without knowing the fate of her assailant, Reuben Proctor. It was thought best not to burden her with this information. The press praised Miss Kading for her bravery in fighting her armed assailants in defense of her family and property. As the **Warren Record** put it: "She showed courage possessed by few men, and met her death like a Spartan of old."

Reuben Proctor's killers were never identified; he died at the hands of unknown vigilantes. Less than a year later, on August 22, 1878, Augusta's father, Charles, became a U.S. citizen. Reuben's wife, Sarah, remarried and moved to Adair County, Iowa in 1882. [Source: Warren County Women "Her Story" by Jerry and Linda Beatty, WCHS, 2020]

Did You Know that Warren County Historical Society has an Endowment Fund! It was established many years ago for the purpose of providing members and friends the opportunity to make a wide variety of gifts to the Museum with the knowledge that these gifts will be used as designated by the donor in harmony with the current goals of the Society. The Fund is administered by the Endowment Fund Committee, an independent committee appointed by the WCHS Board of Directors.

Money from an individual retirement account can be donated to charity. What's more, if you've reached the age where you need to take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from your traditional IRAs, you can avoid paying taxes on them by donating that money to a non profit like Warren County Historical Society.

