



October 2025

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

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MEETINGS

WCHS Board 2nd Thursday of month 9:30 am

LCF Meeting 2nd Thursday at 11:00 am

WCHS DEDICATION of KITTY PICKEN MEMORIAL RESEARCH LIBRARY

**Sunday, October 19th
1:30 - 3:00 pm**

**GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday, October 28th
7:00 pm**

**Denise Core & DeVerne Dixon
Remembering
Father/Daughter
1960s Civil Rights Trip**

**WCHS Volunteer Appreciation
Baked Potato Bar Dinner
Saturday, November 8
5:30 pm Museum**

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 HyVee asks if you want to have your receipt, say **YES!**



Here is a tax-smart way for traditional IRA owners, age 73 or older to give to WCHS. Make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) and pay no tax on the gift. For 2025 you can transfer your QCD gift directly to WCHS.

WCHS

**Invites you to attend
the dedication of the
Kitty Picken Memorial Library
Sunday, October 19
from 1:30 to 3:00 pm
WCHS Museum**



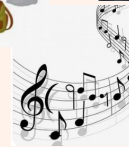
In heartfelt recognition of Kathleen "Kitty" Picken whose dedication and profound love for history and family genealogy have left an indelible mark on the Warren County Historical Society, we will dedicate the Kitty Picken Memorial Research Library on Saturday, October 19th at 1:30 pm.

Through hours of service, her passion for preserving our heritage and her commitment to educating future generations, Kitty has enriched the cultural fabric of Warren County in ways that will echo for years to come.

This tribute stands as a testament to her legacy and it is with deepest appreciation, we honor her contributions and celebrate the history she helped preserve.



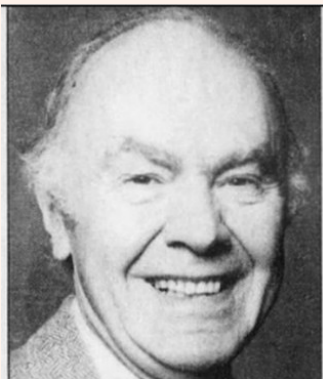
Kitty was Peerless Board President, when it closed in 2007.



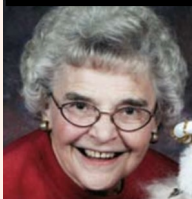
Peerless Confection Co. In Northside Chicago for 93 years-1924 to closing in 2007
Hard candies such as cut rock, butterscotch buttons, peppermints. They were a wholesaler to many candy stores.



WORLD TRAVELER & TOUR PLANNER
Kitty Picken on Travel, "More Americans should do road trips," Picken said, to help them understand the ideas and values that shape social and political stances. It's important to focus on the journey, not on arriving at the destination quickly. "If you fly from Chicago to Atlanta, you don't discover the mountains, you don't understand the steep ravines of Kentucky with houses and trailers that cling to the edge...and if you don't experience those things, you won't connect with the experience of those people."



Doris Engelking 1905-1975. Robert & Doris married. Her father George founded Peerless



Robert Picken, always had candy in his pocket or bags to share sweet treats.

Rita Tallent Picken, Kitty's stepmother & Friend

Managed Peerless Candy

Jacob Frederick Piffer was born Oct. 26, 1843, Wurttemberg, Germany and died Aug. 30, 1904. His father died and Jacob and his brother John came to the U.S. with their mother in 1853. They spent 3 years in Baltimore and in 1856 came west to Warren County, Iowa where they had purchased land. In 1879 he married Jennett Pilmer, who was born near Scotch Ridge.

Jacob was a stock raiser and farmer. He purchased land that bordered the north side of Indianola including some from Alexander Swan's North Farm. They had ten children, 6 boys and 4 girls.

Daughter Emma Piffer 1880-1952 married Rev. Robert Johnston Picken. Robert was from Madison County. He became a Presbyterian minister. They had three children. Robert drowned in a lake in Boise, ID while the family was attending a church camp. Emma and the children left their home in Colorado and returned to Warren County where she raised her children and provided for the family by teaching. Her youngest son Joseph died at age 15.

Son Robert Frederick attended Simpson in education and got his MA at the University of Chicago. Cont. above in PARENTS.

P A R E N T S I O W A R O O T S

Kitty's

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MIND



WCHS & WCGS



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CULTURES
West Asia & North Africa

The Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery



**WCHS invites our Volunteers to
Volunteer Appreciation
Baked Potato Bar Event
Saturday, November 8, 5:30 pm**

FUN!

FOOD!

FELLOWSHIP!



Thank You Log Cabin Festival
VOLUNTEERS



*Beautiful Day, Wonderful Family Fun, Delicious
Food. Volunteers pat yourselves on your shoulder!
WCHS Volunteers are the best!*



HEREFORDS In WARREN COUNTY, IOWA (Part 1)

Alexander Hamilton Swan (1831-1905) a recent widower and single parent came to Iowa to farm in 1853. In 1855 he went back east and married Elizabeth Richey in 1858 in Pennsylvania. In 1862 they came to Indianola, IA and son, William R. and daughter, Louise were born.

Swan was a mover and shaker. In 1865 Alex was appointed to the Des Moines Conference Seminary (Simpson College); in 1871 he was Warren County Agricultural Society Secretary; 1869-70 served as Republican state representative representing Warren County, helped acquire the Indianola-Des Moines Rock Island spur; and was Indianola Trustee (council). His business ventures included: Warren County Bank, a grain elevator, **Warren County Leader** and a canning company. In the early 1880s Swan founded the Iowa Hereford Cattle Company, an English exporting company, headquartered in

Indianola, and purchased 1,240 acres of Warren County land ("North Farm" in West Lincoln Township, "South Farm" in White Oak and 400 acres in Otter Township south of Ackworth. In 1874 Alex moved to Cheyenne, WY but continued to have financial interests in Indianola.

A.H. Swan was a "wheeler dealer" by all accounts. He was a land and Hereford cattle speculator. He and his investors owned large tracts of land and cattle herds in Warren County and a laaaaaarge western ranch at Chugwater, WY, north of Cheyenne. Beginning in 1872, A.H. and his brother, Thomas, bought land and cattle for their Wyoming ranch adding 3,000 cattle in 1874 and 8,000 in 1878. Until 1880, Swan's Warren County land was used to feed out western cattle and send them east by rail to Chicago.

In 1880 the Swan Brothers (brother Thomas had half interest) purchased several Warren County farms, including Daniel H. Van Pelt's, which served as a nucleus of 3,000 acres and 600 head of cattle. Three train cars full of purebred Herefords came to Indianola for the first time. John Gosling was the first manager of the North Farm, replaced by David Kaufman in 1881, Captain Evan D. Bryant managed the South Farm. E.W. Harman, Indianola real estate broker, was bookkeeper and financial manager.

Kaufman began breeding Herefords here. In 1884 Kaufman was gored by a bull and retired. Swan sold North Farm (about 2,000 acres to Swan & Bosler Land & Cattle Company (Swan, John Gosling and John Herman Bosler) for \$80,000. In 1885 Swan sold 1,000 acres to Swan & Bosler for \$10,000. In February 1887 Swan & Bosler Land & Cattle Co sold assets to John H. and George M. Bosler for \$90,000 (Swan received 1/3). The remaining land was sold in December 1890.

Excerpt from **The Indianola Record** June 5, 1940, story of taking Swan to Des Moines when Swan was trying to save his fortunes, according to Al Kaufman, son of David Kaufman, who was manager of Swan's North Farm:

"David Kaufman had a famous chestnut driving team. Alexander Swan thought if he could get to Des Moines before a certain sight draft arrived he might make some arrangements to save himself. To Al was entrusted the spanking driving team and the responsibility of landing Swan in Des Moines. Al put the team through on time, but it did no good. Swan was broke. Kaufman before his death gave us a description of this nationally famous cattle man, before whom thousands had bowed, out on a country road urging a boy to greater speed and pouring out his heart to this unsophisticated lad in desperation for a sympathetic soul.

The Boslers, however, had sufficient financial backing to weather the storm and retained the farm until it was sold to Jacob Piffer shortly after the turn of the century. Boslers were scrupulously honest. Al's father, David, was agent in charge of their farms here for 15 to 20 years, during that time considerable sums in remittances and many important papers passed between them. David said that in all that time neither party ever registered a letter nor had a word of disagreement. Each trusted the other for due credit for all remittances."

Swan filed for bankruptcy and was sued by his own company. He left Wyoming and moved to Ogden, Utah and died a pauper the same week as his wife in August 1905.

Resource: Agriculture in Warren County, Iowa by Jerry Beatty



A. T. Andreas' Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 1875, p.175



Warren Gammon

POLLED HEREFORDS In WARREN COUNTY, IOWA (Part 2)

The Hereford beef breed started in Herefordshire or the county of Hereford, England in the late 1700s. In 1817 Henry Clay, noted Kentucky statesman and farm leader, is credited with importing to America the first Herefords—one cow, one heifer and one bull. The breed soon lost its purebred status when the Herefords were crossed with Shorthorns. In 1840 William H. Sotham and Erastus Corning imported 22 head of Herefords that became the foundation for the Hereford purebred in the United States. At the 1844 New York State Fair the white-faced reds won high praise. Herefords were popular in the east but did not take root west of the Mississippi, where the Shorthorns and Longhorns reined supreme, until they proved their hardiness by surviving the killing winter of 1889-90.

Des Moines lawyer Warren Gammon and his son, B.O. “Bert” Gammon, of St. Marys, Iowa, developed the first polled (hornless) Hereford in 1902. After attending a livestock exposition in Omaha, Nebraska in 1898 and observing “Polled Kansans”, a cross between a Polled Hereford bull and Shorthorn/Hereford cows, Warren Gammon returned home wanting to initiate a similar program using Red Polls and Polled Shorthorn bulls on horned Hereford cows. He succeeded in removing the horns, but the result was not a purebred Hereford.

Gammon pursued the challenge to develop a purebred Polled Hereford. In 1900 he wrote to all 2,500 members of the American Hereford Association asking if they had any hornless, registered Herefords. He located 14 purebreds—4 bulls and 10 cows—born without horns and bought all but one cow. Two cows proved barren, reducing the number of foundation cows to 7. Gammon selected 1,650 pound “Giant”, a hornless bull he bought for \$200 as the sire for the first Polled Hereford herd in the world. Three polled calves were born the first year and six the second. (Ironically, Giant’s Kansas owner was pleased to sell the hornless bull considered a mutation.) Giant later sired Polled Columbus, 1,900 pounds; Columbus fathered Gabriel at 2,300 pounds and a Gabriel son weighed 2,700 pounds. Of the first registered Polled Herefords, 42 were sired by Giant.

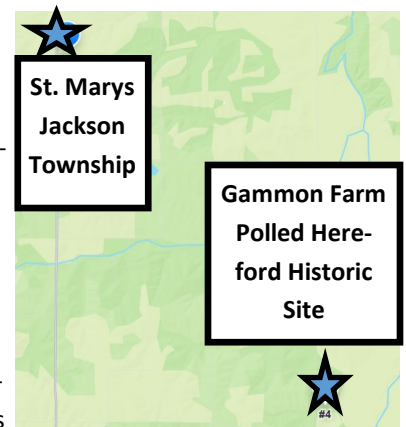
Due in large part to the efforts of the Gammons, the Polled Hereford breed expanded from the original 11 animals entered into the American Polled Hereford Record to several million registered animals by 1995, when the American Polled Hereford Association merged with the American Hereford Association and their registries were combined. The Polled Hereford continues to be a well-established and popular breed of beef cattle today, with herds existing in countries all over the world.

Don Berry, Indianola Tribune, suggested that a monument should be erected to commemorate the development of the Polled Hereford Breed in Warren County. In July 1969 a crowd gathered at the Sewright Ranch owned by Fred Knosby in Jackson Township to dedicate a temporary monument marking the birthplace of the Polled Hereford breed. They moved the “big rock” from the Big Rock Rural School area nearby and placed a brass plaque on the rock. The monument is located on a high spot that provides a view of the rolling farmland. On June 24, 1983 the monument was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1991 the Gammon Warren County barn was moved to the Iowa State Fair Grounds and houses a Polled Hereford display.

For years Warren County Hereford farmers have maintained this fenced public space monument. Three years ago it was discovered that the area is now totally fenced off from the county road and has an added locked gate. The farm had been sold and the Iowa Polled Hereford Association and the public no longer have access to the monument. Originally, \$1.00 was paid to the Knosbys for a 100 year lease. At this time the monument access is still disputed.



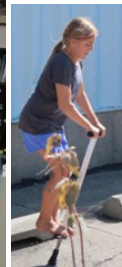
Gammon Farm



**St. Marys
Jackson
Township**

**Gammon Farm
Polled Here-
ford Historic
Site**

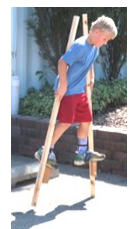




LCF Family FUN!
Jump-rope
Chicken/Noodles
Waterloo Boy
Quilt Show
Skittles
Pogo Sticks
Auction
Cow Milking
Cribbage



Double Jump-rope



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING LOG CABIN FESTIVAL DONORS

Elodie Opstad	Vanderpool Construction	<u>Team that Keeps Us Open</u>
Indianola Independent Advocate	Harlan Evans	John Averill
Highway 65 Harley-Davidson	Kathleen "Kitty" Picken Estate	Carla Anders
Warren County Supervisors	Body Kanvas Tattoo	Linda & Jerry Beatty
Mike & Marylee Vanderpool	James Cochran	Matt Clarke
Tru Bank	Bob & Ardene Downing	Susan Graeser
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DeYarman Ford	Karl Hayes	Dan Porter
Caroline Gannon	Hy Vee	Don Sandy
Edwin Henty	McCoy True Value Hardware	Judy McClymond
Larry Champlin	Van Wall Power Sports	

Personally Thank Them When You See Them



Deb and Juanita display the \$5,000 check from the Warren County Philanthropic Partnership to update our technical area. We thank the Partnership for making this improvement possible.

Just like you have surprise maintenance problems at home, WCHS often has multiple problems to address and sometimes we have to prioritize what we need to do first. We bought a mower and snow blower and Mary and Dwight McCormick gave us a mower. Now we mow our own land and maintain our sidewalks in winter. Deb Larrison enjoys the riding lawnmower.

We will be working on the Pioneer Church ramp, doors and outside area. We thank all who solve and donate to our various maintenance issues. It takes many hands to keep our museum and village open.

NEW HAPPENINGS AT WCHS

We have received a \$5,000 grant from the Warren County Philanthropic Partnership to purchase new computers and update our electrical wiring in our computer area. Watch for these improvement to happen this fall.

The WCHS direct access road off Highway 92 near the Model Railroad entrance has become rutted after every heavy rain from runoff from the northwest. Many times we have tried to solve this ongoing problem. Thanks to Mike Vanderpool for bringing in big rock and smaller rock plus grading the road to make our road usable. What a wonderful improvement.

We have had a groundhog make its home under the log cabin. Perhaps, you have seen him sunning himself or wondering around. Currently we are in the process of live trapping him/her before hibernation time. When the groundhog is moved away, we will install Dig Defence metal frames under ground to keep future animals out.

Mt. Hope and the gazebo need to be painted and that will take place soon.