



**P.O. Box 114
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Hampton, Iowa 50441**

**Newsletter
Volume 24 #2
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2008 Franklin County Fair

The 149th Franklin County Fair starts on Wednesday, July 16th and runs through Sunday, July 20th. The Franklin County Historical Museum and Pleasant Hill Village are open 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday.

There are many activities scheduled throughout the Fair Grounds and Grandpa's Farm all during the Fair. To find more information go to: www.franklincountyfair.com.

Mark Your Calendars

Cleaning Day for Pleasant Hill Village will be on Saturday, July 12th at 9:00 a.m. Bring shop vacs, dust rags, window cleaner, and other supplies. Let's have Pleasant Hill Village ready for the large crowd of visitors during the 2008 Fair.

New Displays At The Historical Museum

The Military Room has been moved to the south end of the Museum. It is a completely new room, with new displays and much more space. The room where the Military Exhibits were previously displayed will be used to store the 100 years of letters from the Nielsen House and also some of the clothing from the House.

There is a large case with all of Emil Ubben's farm miniatures displayed. Two other new displays are a collection of Mary Marqard's Handkerchiefs and Jo Coonley's Purses. Don't miss the "Victorian Secrets" display as you are going through the Museum. Some of the displays in Machinery Hall have also been moved to accommodate the existing space.

Memorials

Since our last update, we have received gifts from the family and friends, in memory of:

Phyllis Brown

Leah Hamilton

Larry Windelow

Haney Jewelry Desk

The FCHS Board approved the purchase of the Haney Jewelry Desk. Charles H. Haney and his son, C. Glenn Haney operated Hampton's oldest retail business from 1895 to 1977. The Desk has the original tools for repairing watches and jewelry in it's many drawers. It is on display at the Historical Museum.



The Telephone And Party Lines

Alexander Graham Bell, born in Scotland, was from a family who were interested in speech therapy. Due to health reasons, the family moved to Canada. In 1875, Bell, age 27, and his electrician friend were the first to transmit a message, via wires, (World Book Encyclopedia).

In the late 1800's the telephone came to Franklin County. In 1902, there were lines from Chapin to Hampton and Hampton to Belmond. There was not a phone line to Chapin from Sheffield, as Archie Wartnaby, a mortician, was summoned to Chapin, via telegraph, at that time. Years ago, Blanche Bird Paine (Birdell Butson's mother) told me of the phone they had in the Bird home, when she was young. She said it hung high on the wall and one had to stand on a stool to talk into it. It was a large wooden box, with hinges on one side. Connecting wires were in side it. Outside it near the top, were 2 round bells. Below in the middle was the mouthpiece in which one talked. On one side was a crank to turn and ring others on the line, or to call "Central". On the other side was the receiver, used to listen through. When not in use, it hung on 2 levers, or hooks. (As a child, I remember thinking those bells looked like owls eyes, and the mouth piece resembled a beak!)

The farmers owned country telephone lines. It was up to them to keep the lines, phones and poles in repair. Officers in charge met monthly in the homes, even up and in the 1950's, according to records from Wanda Spainhower. They bought shares in their line. In 1957, the Bell Telephone Co, wanted to buy their line for \$523.18 and after much discussion and several months later they voted to do so. There were refunds for telephones, poles and wires. Records she has told of an Iowa Telephone Co. in 1913. Poles cost 50 cents each. For a mile of wires it was \$6.00 and telephones cost \$8.00 each.

Farmhouses, with phones, were assigned different combinations of rings, such as 2 shorts and 1 long, 3 shorts, 2 longs, etc. One long ring meant someone calling "Central", (Operator), so she could connect you to another telephone line. On a party line there could be as many as 10 to 20 farmhouses with phones. It was very important to the farmer, as he could call for market reports or order and find repairs. For the farmer's wife, it was mostly "communication" with others to get the latest news, one neighbor to another. Few people had autos or radios and even if they did have a car, the women did not drive, until much later. So, when they heard the telephone ring, and knew who was getting the call, they listened in. This was called "Rubbering". The person who did it was called a Rubber Neck.

Wayne Schmitt told how when one needed to call, a couple of ladies were on it visiting. They could tell by the click that someone was either listening or wanted to use the phone. A number of clicks in succession, meant it was urgent and if they did not cease talking, they may be asked too!

But "rubbering" had its advantage. Micky Ferris told how when a tragedy occurred in their family, her father called for her to come home. She lived 28 miles away, but when she got home all kinds of food was brought in and someone to assist her mother. This shows how thoughtful and caring neighbors were.

To call your neighbor on your line, you used that crank on the side of the phone. One cranked out the combination of rings for whomever they wanted. IF you wanted to call to another local line, one long ring was needed to contact "Central" in the local telephone office. One of the girls working would take your call and connect your line to another.

Central had several jobs: To a child, she could help get the right party, to get long distance, she performed the operation to do so and she could also give one long ring to a telephone line meant for all to hear a special message. For Long Distance, usually one operator performed that service, whether it was to a town nearby, or across the states. It was interesting to hear one operator, call another-like, Des Moines, Omaha, Denver, till it got to its destination

The telephone office in Hampton was located east of the curt house, where NAPA is now. One of the operators was Anna Mae Jackson Meyer, Darwin's mother. She said there were 4 or 5 operators working at a time.



Above is an earlier picture. Some said of girls, of that period "They either became teachers, nurses or telephone operators, or married."

Dick Brown, of Sheffield said the old telephone office, was on N 3rd. St. across from the present E.M.T. building. He told me a term for a switchboard was "Cord Board", which meant pulling out a plug and plugging into a different line. He said that Dial phones were fairly new in the 1980s and that there were still party lines in 1989. At that time they became private lines.

What a contrast of calling someone years ago, from that of today. With electronics, progress has made things almost unbelievable. We can call anywhere without assistance. Today people run around with cell phones and in all kinds of places. One can call all over the world in a matter of seconds!

Franklin County Historical Society
P.O. Box 114
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Non-Profit Organization
Bulk Rate -- U.S. Postage
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Shaving Mugs

Gar Van Kleek has constructed a set of unique shelves for holding Shaving Mugs. It has been placed in the Pleasant Hill Barber Shop on top of a cabinet that was stripped of many coats of paint by Shirley Pitsor.



If anyone has a mug (or mugs) they would like to donate to the Franklin County Historical Museum for display purposes in the Barber Shop during the Franklin County Fair, please contact the Museum at 641-456-5777. These mugs will be stored permanently at the Museum after the Fair.

Refurbished Antique Desk

Gar has also reconstructed a late 1800's roll top desk, donated by Burnie Greimann. It was purchased at the John Ross Family auction at Chapin many years ago by Burnie's Father-In-Law. The desk is on display in the Pleasant Hill Bank.



Annual Membership Dues Overdue

A "big thanks" to all the members who sent in your membership renewals. This is greatly appreciated.

To the rest of you, this will be the last newsletter you will receive until the dues are paid. You still have time; the next newsletter will be mailed in August.

Our mailing address is: Franklin County Historical Society, P.O. Box 1114, Hampton, Iowa 50441.
