



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

**Newsletter
Volume 24 #3
September 2008**

Annual Franklin County Historical Society Meeting

The Franklin County Historical Society will meet Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. on September 9th, for their annual meeting. It will be at the Farm Bureau office meeting room, just south of the fairgrounds in Hampton.

The agenda is as follows: Speaker for the evening is Martha Pope, of Mason City. She has served in the Peace Corps in Kazakhstan, a region of Russia. They were taught modern farming methods, as they are still using machinery of long ago. She will have a slide presentation.

Thank You Volunteers

Thank you to all the volunteers who cleaned Pleasant Hill Village and Machinery Hall before the Fair and also to those who staffed the buildings during the Fair. Also thanks for the weekend work from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Thank you to Joyce Peters and Lorna Meyer for making arrangements and serving cake and lemonade during the Historical Society's 40th Anniversary Celebration on July 19th.

Grants

On August 12th, Fay Hill, State President of Questers presented the Beeds Mill #639 Questers of Franklin County with an International Quester Preservation and Restoration Grant check for \$1,450 to help with repairs at the Harriman-Nielsen Home. Thanks to Jan Rodemeyer who wrote this grant and all the other successful grants she has written in the past to raise funds for the preservation and restoration of the Harriman-Nielsen Home.

\$2,000 Grant was received from the Center 1 Foundation. This Grant was applied for to provide funds for shelving and archival storage for Historical Museum Items, including Museum collection, 4-H - FFA items and items from the Harriman-Nielsen House that are already stored at the Museum. This money can also be used for other projects as needed in the Museum Building.

Memorials

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

**Dick Fredericks
Lyla Van Horn**

Harriman-Nielsen Fall Festival

The Annual Harriman-Nielsen Fall Festival will be held on Sunday, October 5th from 2 to 5:00 p.m. This family entertainment will include games for children with prizes awarded, pumpkin carving, a pie contest, homemade bean soup prepared with beans from the Farm Garden, brats, hot dogs and beverages. Tours will also be given and items from the Farm Garden will be available to purchase.

FCHS Tours

The Beed Family held their reunion in Hampton the second weekend of June. Their activities included a tour of the Museum given by Shirley Pitsor. She showed them the items she had included in a Beed Exhibit a few years ago. She also made numerous copies of family information for them. Mary Marquard and Doreen Peterson gave the Beed Family a tour of the Harriman-Nielsen House. Another Beed Family member, Ruth Beed Titus, toured the Museum on August 21st and saw items from the Beed Exhibit. Ruth is the granddaughter of Charles Beed who came to Hampton in 1857.

Two busloads of people from Minnesota and a group of retired Corn Belt Power personnel were given tours of the REA Plant Museum by Marvin Rodemeyer. The second group also toured the Historical Museum later in the afternoon.

Shirley Pitsor gave a Museum tour to the Civil War Flag preservation experts from the State Historical Society after they looked at the Memorial Hall on July 28th. On August 21st, Shirley showed Sharon Powell Cooper from Arizona the items that belonged to Martha Carter, her great-grandmother, whose parents bought the Old Stone House from Leander Reeve in 1857. Sharon and her guests also toured the Old Stone House.

Historical Society Celebrates 40 Years

At a board meeting earlier this year, it was discovered that our Society was 40 years old. We became official on Feb. 29, 1968.

To celebrate we decided to have an Open House at the fair and Saturday afternoon, July 19, in Machinery Hall, 10 cakes or 350 pieces of chocolate and white cakes were served, along with lemonade. We also gave out pencils. It was quite a tribute to all who have contributed items, worked there and supported us through the years. Thanks to everyone.

How It All Began

Some energetic Hampton people had a great dream of a Franklin County Historical Society, as they realized many of the mementos of long ago were disappearing and needed to be saved. A committee was formed, consisting of one member from each township and one from each town, and they would form the board. They would represent the whole county. It became official in 1968.

During the Hampton Centennial in 1970, store windows in Hampton were decorated with each township having a window designated as their own. This was a good sign of interest for a society, but we had no building. The courthouse was remodeled and we were given items of furniture and legal records, which had been microfilmed. Dr. D. Benge, of Hampton gave us a building he owned uptown along Highway 3, which was a godsend. Much work had to be done, display cases and shelves had to be purchased and arranged.

We opened on Oct. 5, 1976. Many things were received and soon it was bulging at the seams. A committee approached the fair board to build on the fairgrounds. In May 1981 a permit was issued to construct a building on the east side of the fairgrounds. A bid for \$70,596 from the Henning Co. was accepted. A grant of \$50,000 was received and our "new home" was erected. The land on which it stood was leased for 99 years.



The Open House took place on May 29, 1982. We had a large display room, an office, a library and reference room, a kitchen, storage area, and rest rooms, all heated and air conditioned. The rear of the building was reserved for machinery.

The following is a listing of other holdings managed by the FCHS:

Old Stone House



Leander Reeve, an early settler, originally owned the Old Stone House, west of Geneva. Other ownerships, though the years were tossed back and forth, then given us, and accepted in 1979. An enormous amount of volunteer labor and expense was involved, so that today it is on the National Register of Historic Places. It opened in 1985 and many tour groups have visited it.

Rock Island Depot and Caboose



In 1984 the Rock Island Depot in Hampton was to be demolished. We could have it if we moved it within one or two months. Fortunately, Nelsine Neilsen, who owned property north of the fairgrounds, offered to keep it on her property until a suitable place could be arranged. Years later, it was moved across Highway 3 into the fairgrounds and located south of the Historical building.

To look at it then, and now, it is utterly amazing what volunteer work and other interested parties, could do. It was the first building in the "Pleasant Hill" village on the fairgrounds.

A caboose was located in Waterloo. The owner, Dean Martin gave it to us, but we had to move it. That too was a big project. Rails had to be laid to sit on, it needed a new roof, and refurbishing inside, plus painting it Rock Island colors. Various signals were set up, etc.

Gate House



The fair board allowed us the possession of the "Gate House". This was the former driveway and walkway entrance to the fair. (I remember going through it.) Today we are able to use it to store small tools and wrenches.

More the next issue

Spreading The Gospel For Over 150 Years

Circuit riders of the Methodist faith came through Franklin County in 1855, when the county was several years old. They were the “men of the cloth” who rode on horseback, to homes and communities, every so often. They brought the Gospel, started Sunday Schools, perform marriages, some times several at a time, since they came once every few weeks. It was called a circuit because their routes were some sort of a circle, starting and ending in the same place.

The United Methodist Church in Geneva, tells that the Methodist Conference organized the Eldora Mission in 1855, which included all of Franklin County and most of Butler. (The Geneva church body was 150 years old in 2005.

In the Franklin County History – 1883 tells of Job Garner, an early settler in Reeve Township, as preaching the first sermon there. The year was not given, nor the faith. Was he Methodist? Information given was that there were 2 Methodist organizations. The Protestant Methodist (Maybe Wesleyan) and the Methodist Episcopal.

The Wesleyan Methodist was in the Beaver Circuit: New Hartford to Alden. It followed the Beaver Creek into Grant Township. Rev. John Connell was a rider on that circuit, according to my family history, as he was my great, great grandfather. His name is mentioned in Osceola and Reeve Township. The Franklin County Recorder dated March 27, 1889 says concerning his death “It is supposed that he preached the first sermon, ever preached in Franklin County.”

The Hampton United Methodist Church

Hampton, which started in about 1855, had concern for a Methodist minister to serve its people. Four men went to Eldora and asked the Methodist Mission there if they could have their own church body. In 1869, at the Upper Iowa Conference in Independence, Hampton was made a separate charge with 35 members, which included “Old” Chapin and Shobe’s Grove, west of Sheffield.



The Iowa Central railroad was completed through Hampton in 1870. In 14 years the population of the county had grown from 780 to 4,738, and the Methodist congregation grew.

Rev. F. M. Robertson had charge of the congregation that was meeting in homes, schools and various places. In 1870 they began building their first church, and when completed cost \$6000. It was an imposing frame of Gothic structure, 30 x 60 ft. in size, not including the 2 towers. The dedication day was New Years Day, 1871 and the church stood there for 21 years, where the present one stands. There were 62 members and 10 probationers. Three thousand dollars was raised by subscription and in 13 years, the entire debt was paid.

In 1892 a Hampton newspaper reported the church was newly carpeted and the church and parsonage had been painted. Later that same year with “the spirit of expansion and improvement”, plans were being made to erect a new, brick church. The frame building was sold, and moved across the street, to the west and became the Olympic Theatre. It was torn down in 1911.



The red, Victorian Gothic edifice was constructed in 1893. It was described as a “handsome new house of worship, which stands out majestically as the most attractive building in Franklin County.” At that time there were 362 members on the official church register, but it was noted that the church could accommodate 1000 persons. It had cost \$26,500 to build.

The new church was designed to accommodate a pipe organ, but for 10 years the reed organ from the frame church was used. On April 12, 1904, “the first boxes of parts” for the new organ was unloaded. One newspaper reporter couldn’t imagine how it could all come together. A recital was held on April 29, with a prominent young man from Chicago, as organist.

Music has always been an important part of the church, and there have been a number of fine organists. In 1925 the Chancel Choir met in homes during the winter months, to save on operating costs in the church. They offered to pay \$1.00 per rehearsal in people’s homes. The extreme cold temperatures in the church were hard on the organ, and in 1934 urgent repairs were needed. In 1936 it had been silent for 6 weeks. Then the repairman found there were pine needles from Christmas decorations that caused the trouble.

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Return Service
Requested

**Spreading The Gospel
For Over 150 Years**
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In 1956 a complete rebuilding was proposed, including the electrification of the sanctuary. The alter was placed where the console had been centered directly beneath the visible pipes. Electric power replaced the water powered bellows and all stops that were operated manually.

On Oct. 20, 1957, a rededication took place, after the rebuilding. The insurance soared to \$40,000, a far cry from the \$5000 purchase price.

Through out the years, 4 conventions were held in Hampton. In 1949 the Upper Iowa Conference merged with the Northwest Iowa, forming the North Iowa Conference There was a merger with the United Brethren churches.

The parsonage had been built in 1882. By 1940 there was talk of a new one, but it was not until 1950 when it was constructed. The first Pastor to live in it was Rev. Ralph E. Baker.

There has been so many different areas of the church that have needed repairs and additions – too numerous to mention, but the last one occurred when in 2004, a study was made for an addition and new elevator. The project was completed in 2007. It included a new entrance at the back from the parking lot. Church offices are located in the new part. An Open House was held on March 18, 2007. It is a nice addition to the church.

Thirty-six pastors have served this church, which includes the present Pastor, Edward R. Peterson.

The Popejoy United Methodist Church

I set out to write the history of the Hampton United Methodist church, which is celebrating 150 years on September 28th, 2008. Then I found out that the Popejoy United Methodist church was also celebrating 150 years. It was my privilege to attend a service there on Saturday, Aug. 9. I learned from the history, the first sermon preached in Oakland Township, was in the home of John I Popejoy, northwest of Alden, in 1858.

The Methodist Episcopal Church body was organized in Oakland Valley, across the Iowa River and west of the present Popejoy. Rev. Jones was the pastor and services were held in a school in 1861.

In 1880 the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Falls and Northwestern railroad was laid out on the north side of the river, and a town was laid out, called Carleton. Because there was another town called Carroll Town, and the mail was mixed up, the name of this town was changed to Popejoy, in honor of the “Cattle King”, John I. Popejoy.

As Popejoy grew, it had a Congregational church and a Methodist church body, the latter having services in the school. In 1902, the Methodists built their own church, and in 1918, the west portion and basement were added. It was remodeled in 1953 and moved to its present location. Sixty ministers have served there, including the present Rev. Martha Bennett, who also serves Alden and Williams.



The church is so pretty and the chancel is gorgeous. At the service, former ministers and parishioners told of memories they had: the friendliness of the people, the ice cream socials, the lady who wore a different hat, every Sunday, etc.

Due to the declining membership, it is likely the church will close at the end of the year. What a shame!