

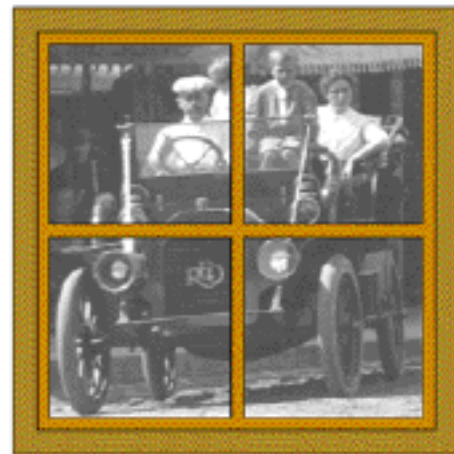
The Iola Historical Society's Window

Quarterly Member and Activities Newsletter

Volume One

Number Two

Spring 2008



The First “Iola Old Car Show”

Iola held its first old car show in 1972, or did it? The two photographs featured with this story show that the residents of Iola were extremely proud of their automobiles back in 1910. Some of the automobiles can be identified as Reo, Ford and Buick. In identifying the photographs in this story the number appearing in the lower right corner is the identification that the Iola Historical Society has assigned

to each image in our data base file.

Photograph STR000016 is looking north on Main Street. The first building on the left was the “Grey Stone Building” which was occupied by the J. C. Lang Drug Store at the time these photographs were taken. The “Grey Stone Building” was originally built as a medical building housing the drug store along with doctors offices and dentist offices. The next buildings were home to the

A. R. Lea Clothing Store, Farmers State Bank, and N. O. Bidney Furniture, in that order.

The building with the large awning was a grocery store. Behind the second pole from the left was the First State Bank of Iola which is the current location of Jake’s barber shop. (All the buildings to the left of Jake’s barber shop were lost during the 1999 Father’s Day Fire.)

(Continued on page 2)



Image STR000016

President's Corner

This is the second edition of our revised newsletter the *Window*, we received a lot of positive comments regarding the layout and stories in the first edition. Thanks to Doug Watson, Cliff Mishler, and Chet Krause we have a first class publication.

We have a busy summer ahead of us and I would like everyone to help in some way. The Society's museum is going to be open on each Saturday from May 3 through September 27 which will take a lot of commitment from our members.

The 7 Lag Stevne is having its national meeting in Stevens Point in July and will be coming here for a tour of our facilities on Wednesday, the 17th. There could be up to 70 of their members in attendance.

Enclosed is literature about this meeting and their presentations regarding Norwegian genealogy, immigration, and history. Vendors will be set up at their meeting offering Scandinavian books, maps, jewelry and clothing.

On July 26 the Hill Toppers will have its joint class reunion and will be touring our site. We will already be open on that Saturday but should have extra members at the museum in case there's a large turn-out.

Our June meeting will be held at the Rising Star Mill in Nelsonville and our program will be a tour and history of the facility.

(Continued on page 4)



Old Car Show

Continued from page one

On the right of the photograph is a sign "Gasoline" on the front of one of the buildings, this was before gas stations in Iola and you bought your gas in a can. The building on the extreme right was the Wainie Millinery Shop and was owned by Nora Wainie. This millinery shop building stood where the Iola Old Car Show office is located today. The next building is 120 N. Main Street where the Iola Hardware Store was located and owned by Ed Chapin and later became the Iola Clinic. Note that the buildings where Sherman Cleaves had his Sports Shop, and where Crystal's Cafe is today, were not built yet.

Photograph STR000018 was taken looking east on State Street during the same time period. Notice on the left there is a garage but no gas pumps. This garage was located to the east of the old Iola Fire Department, which is currently home to A & E Products Inc. Both of these photographs were taken by W. R. Parks of Iola. Parks

Photography Studio can be seen partially hidden behind the trees in the center of the photograph.

At this date both Main Street and State Street are dirt roads, but there are sidewalks in front of the stores on Main Street.

Photographs donated to IHS by the following individuals: Robert Strand, Arlie Knutson, and Alfred Gill.

Thanks

... to the following individuals for their cash donations: **Memorial Fund:** Dolly Hoffman, Estate of Grace Bergan. **Iola Mill Street Sign:** Richard Wipf, Barbara Cullum, Bob and Stella Strand. **Computer Equipment Fund:** Clifford Mishler, Chris Ross. **Fire Station Fund:** Sweet Medicine Prescriptions, Plus Inc.

Events Schedule

Monday, April 28

General meeting at IHS firehouse.
7 PM

Monday, April 26

Memorial Day parade. 1912 waterous pumper. Main Street Iola

Saturday, May 3, 10, 17, 24

Open house at IHS museum.
10 AM to 4 PM

Tuesday, May 27

Board meeting at IHS firehouse.
7 PM

Saturday, May 30

Open house at IHS museum.
10 AM to 4 PM

Saturday, June 7, 14, 21, 28

Open house at IHS museum.
10 AM to 4 PM

Sunday, June 22

Strawberry Fest at IHS museum
11 AM to 4 PM

Monday, June 30

General meeting at IHS firehouse.
7 PM

The Iola Historical Society

210 Depot Street • P.O. Box 412 • Iola, WI 54945

Officers:

Lyle Mork, President (715) 445-5795
Stella Strand, Vice-President (715) 445-3184
Betty Finch, Secretary (715) 445-2401
Chris Ross, Treasurer (715) 281-1032

Board of Directors

Cliff Mishler, Robert Stamsted, Doug Watson
e-mail address: iolahistoricalsociety@tds.net
Phone: (715) 445-IOLA (4652)

History of Olson Hardware

by Evelyn (Olson) Danielson

Peter Olson, son of Ole Hullet was so named because he was born son of Ole, therefore his last name became Olson, as was the custom in Norway. Peter Olson immigrated to the United States from Gulbrandsdalen, Norway in 1841, bringing along his wife, the former Karen Knappen and baby Ole Johan. This infant died at sea during the last day of their voyage. Karen mourned so deeply that officials permitted her to bury the baby in the United States instead of at sea, when they landed in New York.

The interpreter who met these immigrants traveled with them by train to Muskego, Wisconsin. Here the Olsons left the group to go to Waupaca County to be near relatives in Iola. They lived in the village of Iola for a short time, later moving to a farm in Helvetia. They had six sons Ole, John, Adolph, Otto, Matt and Edwin, and three daughters; Malene, Ida and Clara.

Ole Johan (July 22, 1855 – Feb. 4, 1933) married Sophia Jacobson (May 19, 1860 – Nov. 11, 1947) and farmed until 1892. They had two sons; Fred and John (Oct. 29, 1886 – Feb. 23, 1953) and two daughters; Clara (Mrs. Simon Walrath) and Myrtle (Mrs. George Varney).

In 1892, the family moved to Iola where Ole and Edwin Chapin in partnership purchased a hardware store from Isaac Hunn at the site of the present Iola Clinic at 120 North Main Street. The family lived upstairs over the business establishment, and Mr. Chapin boarded with them. The partnership was dis-



Inset images are those of the individuals involved in the evolution of Olson Hardware. From left to right are: Isaac Hunn, Ole J. Olson, Ed Chapin, John Olson, and Joel Olson. Interior view of store is circa 1900.

solved shortly after its establishment.

About a year later Ole purchased the Gilbert and Olaf Gullixon Brothers Hardware Store at the site that remained the Olson Hardware until 1972. The store at 180 North Main Street remained in the Olson family for three generations. Ole's pride was selling new wagons, buggies and farm machines. He was also a used car dealer, bringing used cars from Milwaukee to Iola for resale. Ole's sons, Fred and John bought the hardware business from their father and were in partnership for three years.

In 1904 John graduated from Iola High School in a class of four graduates. In 1907 he took over the hardware store ownership. On September 9, 1908, John married Alvide Anderson who had emigrated from Porsgrunn, Norway, on August 8, 1907. They spent most of their married life at 445 South Main Street in Iola. They had three sons, Milo (Nov. 26, 1910), James (Feb. 17, 1915), and Joel (Nov. 19, 1920).

Some years after their graduation from high school, in January, 1935, Milo and James formed a partnership in the hardware business with their father remaining as bookkeep-

er. In addition to hardware, they served the community with plumbing and heating supplies and services. When the Rural Electrification Lines were built Milo installed electric wiring facilities into farm homes. At that time Olson Hardware began to sell electric appliances and radios. Upon Joel's return from military services in World War II, he was a third partner for three years.

Milo married Evelyn Twetan of Scandinavia on August 24, 1933. They had three sons, Carter, Gordon and Wayne. James married Iola Thompson of Cando, North Dakota on May 15, 1938. They had five children, Jay, Jeanne, Carol, Wendy and David. Joel married Isabel Cockburn in Edinburgh, Scotland during his stay there while in military service in World War II. They had two children; John and Janet.

In March of 1952, Milo and James dissolved their hardware partnership. James took over the plumbing department while Milo remained in the hardware store where he also sold and repaired electric appliances, radios, and televisions. Milo and Evelyn continued in the hardware store with part-time assistance from their sons until Olson Hardware was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Seuhring from Milwaukee when Milo retired on January 1, 1973.



Milo Olson

President's Message

Continued from page two

We are giving consideration to entering the Society's 1912 Waterous fire engine, drawn by a team of horses, in the Memorial Day parade in Iola on May 26, the Scandinavia Corn Roast parade in August, and possibly the parades in Waupaca, and at Manawa Rodeo. This would give us some great exposure.

About 1000 pieces of our new full-

color brochure were taken to the Milwaukee Sports Show and made available at the Waupaca County booth. This should help give us some state wide exposure. Thanks to Doug Watson, Joel Edler, and Chris Ross for helping get the brochure ready for the show.

Thanks to everyone who has been donating, and loaning, artifacts, and images. We are acquiring some very interesting photos. If you have time, come down and look at the photos we currently have on file.

Constitution Revisions February 2008

At the January board meeting the board members revised the Iola Historical Society Constitution. It was amended and voted on at the February general meeting and passed. Enclosed is a copy of the new constitution and to make it easier to see the changes it has been condensed with the old wording highlighted in yellow and the new wording in red.

ARTICLE III-MEMBERSHIP

Level 1. Adult member. Dues shall be **\$5.00 \$10.00** Annually.

Adult membership shall consist of any person 18 years of age or over, at the time of initially joining or at the time annual dues are to be paid at the **March January** meeting.

Level 2. Junior member. Dues shall be \$1.00 annually. Junior membership shall consist of any person under the age of 18, at the time of initially joining or at the time annual dues are to be paid at the **March January** meeting.

ARTICLE IV-OFFICERS

Duties of the Officers

Section 4. Treasurer.

The duties of the Treasurer shall be to conduct the financial transactions of the Society and to record all financial matters and report such at the regularly scheduled meeting.

The Treasurer shall collect annual dues and keep membership records.

The Treasurer shall compile an annual written report of financial transactions or the year and submit copies to the membership at the **last**

first meeting of the **calendar new** year.

The Treasurer shall be elected for a two year term in the odd numbered calendar year.

ARTICLES V-ELECTIONS

The President shall appoint a nominating committee of no more than two persons, in the month of August, to obtain a slate of officers to be presented at the regularly scheduled meeting in September for election. **Elections shall be held at the regularly scheduled meeting in October.** The new officers shall assume their duties as the last order of business at the final meeting of the year **in October**

ARTICLE VII-FINANCES

Section 1. Dues.

Annual dues shall be paid at the **first regular meeting of the calendar year in January.** The Board of Directors shall recommend to the membership and the affirmative approval of the membership present at a regularly scheduled business meeting shall determine the amount of the dues.

Section 3. Limitations.

The Board of Directors must approve any expense **spent from the General Fund** exceeding **\$200.00 \$500.00**. The Board of Directors and the membership must approve expenditures or transactions that will exceed **\$300.00 \$1,000.00**. **Money donated to Special Project Funds, (Preservation Fund, Building fund, Etc) need no approval for disbursement.**

Society Definitions

Each month this column will assist readers in learning the "language" spoken by historical societies.

sic (*sik*):

Used within brackets (*sic*) to indicate that what precedes it is written intentionally or is copied verbatim from an original source, even if it appears to be a mistake.

circa (*sürk*):

Used before a date to indicate that it is approximate or estimated.

Other forms: c. cir.

2008 Strawberry Fest

The date for the 2008 Strawberry Fest is Sunday, June 22nd, from 11 AM to 4 PM. Previously the event was held in September. This new date will better coincide with the harvest thus providing us with fresh, delicious strawberries.

Additional features will be added this year to help increase interest in this long time fund raiser. We will be selling other food consisting of hot dogs and/or barbeques along with drinks. Another new feature that should help increase interest is "Whatz It" where there will be collectible experts offering appraisals on items brought in by the general public and members for a nominal donation of \$2.00 per item or three items for \$5.00. We are also hoping to have several people demonstrating Basket Weaving, Quilting, Rosemaling and other lost arts.

This should be a fun day and we should see a much better turnout because of the new date and features we have added this year.

Thanks

...to the following individuals for their contributions, and donations, to the Society: Betty Finch, Harry Zawacki, Stella Strand, Harold Bucholz, Steve Voie, Kathleen Bestul, Tony Hawke, Eugen Voie, Gordy Peterson, Lyle Mork, Ivor Dahlan, Jim Cady, Tom Fucik, Dave Forsythe, Rising Star Mill (Nelsonville).