

# The Iola Historical Society's

# Window

Quarterly Member and Activities Newsletter



Volume Six

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Spring 2013

## When "White Way" Lighting Came To Iola's Main Street

The business people of Iola banded together in 1927 to prevail upon the village board to install new and improved lighting on Main Street. Their petition noted that the existing lighting did not provide

sides of the street.

The initial published reference discovered for this initiative appeared in the March 3, 1927, edition of the *Iola Herald*, where it was reported; "A petition for a

White Way lighting system on Main Street was presented to the Iola Village Board this week. The petition, signed by a majority of the business men of Iola, asks for a white way lighting system on Main Street from Iola Street to Depot Street. No action was

Great White Way" due to the illumination provided by the massive number of electric lights incorporated into the theater marquees lining the street. The terminology caught on with the public elsewhere in the country and in many cities the streets upon which new and improved lighting was installed were referred to as having "White Way Lighting."

by Lyle Mork  
IHS Historian

A report published in the June 23, 1927, edition of the *Herald* detailed action taken by the village board at its most recent meeting; "WHITE WAY FOR IOLA'S MAIN STREET. At a special meeting of the Village Board on Saturday evening it was definitely decided that Iola will have a White Way. The Main Street will have 17 posts, eight on the east side and nine on the west side. The lamps will be 250 candle power and after midnight half the lamps will be



One of the "White Way Lighting" system's 17 fixtures was located on the west side of South Main Street, just north of today's location of the Iola Village Hall. At the time this photograph was taken the building in the background served as headquarters for the REA cooperative and was subsequently occupied as the Waupaca County shops building.

adequate illumination and was not very eye appealing. The existing lighting was provided by street centered, single bulb, shaded fixtures suspended from wires strung between poles placed on opposing

taken by the Board at its meeting on Tuesday."

During the early 20th century, part of New York City's Broadway thoroughfare was nicknamed "The

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*The attractive light fixture and support post of the "White Way Lighting" system were of sturdy cast iron structure.*

## President's Corner

The Society's calendar has two seasons; one typified by activity, the other by dormancy. Presently we are on the cusp of the active season, which stretches from mid-April through early October. With the dormant season in our rear view mirror, it's time for members to heed the call for all hands on board!

Looking ahead, we are now annually producing three major public exposure and fundraising events. The first up is our second annual Spaghetti Luncheon Depot Restoration Fundraiser, set for 11:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturday, April 13. Next up will be our most venerable event, the 29th annual Iola Strawberry Fest, set for 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sunday, June 23. Duty posts will be available for every able bodied member at these events.

Commencing in mid-April, when the temperature is above 45-degrees, and continuing through the fall season, Wednesday mornings from nine to noon will be work days for any members who can volunteer time for grounds-keeping, house-keeping, light maintenance and archival undertakings.

This summer our Iola Historic Village & Museum complex is scheduled to be open from noon to 3:00 pm every Saturday from June 1

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### Iola Historical Society

210 Depot Street

P. O. Box 412 . Iola, WI 54945

#### Officers

Clifford Mishler, President

Robert Stamstad, Vice-President

John Bertelson, Jr., Secretary

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#### Board of Directors

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*This photograph shows one of the old shaded single bulb lighting fixtures (top center) that illuminated Main Street prior installation of the "White Way Lighting" system in 1927.*

### WHITE WAY LIGHTING

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turned off."

The report further detailed; "This new lighting system has been contracted for a cost of \$2,600 per year. The present cost of the street lighting per year is \$1,900. In constructing this White Way, all posts now on Main Street from Strands corner to (the) H. Halverson residence will be removed to alleys. The new lighting system will greatly improve Main Street and will be a fine evidence of the industry and civic pride of our village."

The next news report on the "White Way Lighting" installation to appear in the *Herald* was one that was presented in the Sept. 15, 1927, edition, which included an incidental reference; "TO INSTALL WATER MAIN. For the purpose of fire protection and to better flush Iola's Main Street, three fire hydrants are to be placed on the main thoroughfare of our village soon if present plans are realized. The fire hydrants will be connected to a 2-1/2 inch pipe of water main conducting water from the fire station.

"One fire hydrant will be placed at the upper end of the street another at the north end and a third on

the main business block. The placing of three hydrants is calculated to give added fire protection to the main business section of the village and also to make water flushing the concrete street more readily available."

Then came the reference to the lighting installation; "Posts are being erected today for the ornamental lighting system of Main Street and it is expected that the lights will be ready sometime next week. The water main for the fire hydrants will be placed in the opening between the sidewalk and the gutter, where the light conduits are now laid."

Just three months after reporting the village board's commitment to the installation of "White Way Lighting," in the Sept. 22, 1927, edition of the *Herald* it was reported; "LIGHTS UP! Saturday evening Iola's ornamental white way lighting system burst forth with all its splendor. Seventeen light post on Main Street were lighted up that evening, the first time the new system was put into service here. The new lights give a very pleasing appearance to the village street; adding that certain bit of dignity which makes the thoroughfare look

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*This South Main Street view shows the flagpole (arrow) with the sturdy staff also pictured in a close-up shot (inset) with an East Iola Street backdrop.*

## "Liberty Pole" Dominated South Main for 50 Years

For nearly fifty years, from 1859 to 1908, a tall and sturdy flagpole flying a "Star Spangled Banner" stood on the northwest corner of the intersection of South Main Street and Iola Street. Two references to this "Liberty Pole" were recently encountered in reading through the Iola Herald's back files.

A mention in the March 11, 1915,

edition establishes the pole's installation date. Published therein was a lengthy and detailed letter written on January 28, 1915, by an E.A.S., who had arrived as a child with a pioneer family and some years later moved on from Iola to Newburg, Oregon. The youngster had gained a first glimpse of Iola around 9:00 p.m. on December 4, 1856, according

to the letter which sets the backdrop; "When we rounded up over the south hill, and looked down the long road (there were) only a few twinkling lights from the tallow dips in the few shacks scattered around, I felt as tho we were going down into a swamp lighted by fire-flies. The impression never left me."

The body of the letter relates that E.A.S. was one of six young children who accompanied Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Hatch on a journey from Waukegan, Illinois, with three oxen drawn wagons loaded with the family's household goods and provisions. It recounts going to school that first long winter "in a little rough board house". . . of first glimpsing a real "live" Indian . . . of "pitch pine gum" . . . of the first wedding . . . of the first hotel proprietor and merchants . . . of the "only doctor for several years" . . . and of the first musicians.

"In the early summer of 1859 the patriotic mothers and daughters made by hand Iola's first 'Star Spangled Banner,' 24 feet by 12 (feet) in size, and the good fathers and sons erected a fine liberty pole in the commons east of the M. E. Church," E.A.S. recalled. "On the

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## Name 222 Building and Win Twenty Bucks!

At their February 25 meeting the officers and board members of the Iola Historical Society crafted plans to conduct a naming contest for the 222 Building structure on Depot Street that originated as a garage and storage facility for Hawke Excavating. The Society was able to acquire this building in early 2008 as the consequence of a generous financial gift received from Chet Krause.

In a subsequent transaction, Krause donated the adjoining former Lashua Excavating building (210 Depot St.) to the Society, in return for which the Society granted him a life lease on the 222 Building for the storage and display of his military vehicle collection. With his disposition of that collection a couple of years later, occupancy of the structure was returned for application to the Society's purposes.

During the course of the past three years the building has been given over to the display of large agricultural machinery and tools, and manufacturing equipment belonging to the Society which had been in storage or has been subsequently received as donations to our archive.



Present plans are to continue building displays in the building along those lines.

With that direction in mind, we would like to come up with a name to designate the 222 Building which invokes our local history and/or embraces the theme of the items displayed . . . one that is easy to identify with and remember.

Special signage conveying the winning name as determined by entries in the naming contest will be created and affixed to the exterior of the building.

The submission of any and all names are welcomed and encouraged, with the contest open to all Iola Historical Society members.

The winner of the naming contest will receive \$20 in Chamber bucks, good at any local business member of the Iola-Scandinavia Chamber of Commerce. The contest deadline is April 15, 2013, with the membership to vote and the winner to be determined at our April 29, 2013, meeting.

All entries should be directed via e-mail or regular mail on or before April 15, 2013, to Greg Loescher, onthe-lake2@tds.net, or N7306 Keatings Lake Drive, Iola, WI 54945.

## WHITE WAY LIGHTING

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quite citified. Nine of the lights remain on during the course of the night the others being turned off at midnight."

This report identified that the lighting installation and associated changes created the need for some upgrading of the sidewalks in the downtown area; "This week a crew under the direction of Morton Lovdahl is at work removing the sidewalk in front of the Graystone Hotel, the A.R. Lea Clothing Company Store, Ihlenfeld's Jewelry Store, and the N. O. Bidney Furniture store. New concrete will be laid in front of these places of business to conform in height to the curb line established by the placement of new concrete pavement here."

A call for additional "White Way Lighting" appeared in the October 6, 1927, edition of the *Herald*; "PETITION MADE FOR LIGHTS ON STATE STREET. At the village board meeting of this week a petition was presented to the members by R. I. Anderson requesting the placing of four additional light posts on East State Street. The petition is now under consideration by the board. It is possible that the board may agree to this proposition as this part of the village is also in the business section of the town and the addition of lighting post(s) here

would make a more attractive entrance to the town on Highway 161."

The additional street lights requested were never installed.

A report appearing in the August 15, 1935, edition of the *Herald* indicated the practice of providing full early night lighting had at some time previously been abandoned but, had now been restored; "WHITE WAY BLAZES HERE ONCE MORE. Following action by the village board last week all the lights on Iola's white way were turned on again last Saturday evening. For some time past eight of the lights on (the east side of) Main Street have not been lighted. The extra eight lights will be extinguished at midnight as heretofore, however. The street puts on a greatly improved appearance as a result of the change in lighting policy."

This lighting system served Main Street until the nearly 35 year old fixtures were replaced in June, 1962, an installation that again stepped up the quality of nighttime illumination and remains in use 50 years later.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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through August 31. The presence of three or four docent volunteers is minimally preferred for hosting visitors on those 14 consecutive Saturdays.

## LIBERTY POLE

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morning of the 4th of July the flag was run up and unfurled to the breeze o'er the heads of a proud, loyal, happy people.

"There were many splendid singers gathered there (whose wealth of tone, power and sweetness had not been 'cultivated' out of their voices)," E.A.S. continued, "who rolled the strains of 'The Star Spangled Banner' to the skies, and is echoing yet o'er the hills of time.

"The privations and hardships of those times I must leave for others to relate who took that view of those experiences," E.A.S. concluded, "for I was busy getting acquainted with the new order of things, and every thing was immens(e)ly novel and funny to me then, and comes trooping back to me now."

There appeared in the July 9, 1908, edition of the Iola Herald the following short news item; "The old flag staff that for many years has been a landmark at the corner of Main and Iola streets was taken down last Thursday and a staff erected on the engine house to carry the large flag. The old staff had got to be a source of danger and was well removed, but the substitute is not very satisfactory as the flag can be seen such a little distance from the building that few can know that a flag is flying."

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## Events Schedule

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### Saturday, April 13

11:00 am - 2:00 pm Spaghetti Luncheon Depot Restoration Fundraiser

### Monday, April 29

5:45 pm IHS Board Meeting  
6:30 pm IHS General Meeting

### Tuesday, May 28

5:45 pm IHS Board Meeting  
6:30 pm IHS General Meeting

### Saturday, June 1

Noon - 3:00 pm Season Opens for Historical Village and Museum

### Sunday, June 23

11:00 am - 4:00 pm 29th Annual Strawberry Fest Fundraiser

### Monday, June 24

6:45 pm IHS Board Meeting  
6:30 pm IHS General Meeting

## Donors & Loaners

January • February • March

**ARCHIVAL DONATIONS:** Colin Bruce, Evelyn Danielson, Chester Krause, Doug Strand, Stella Strand, Oliver Wrolstad Family.

**DONATIONS FOR CASH AND IN-KIND:** Howard & Kathy Bestul, Helen Furst, James & Rebeca Maus, Robert E. Stamstad and Martha L. Cook.

## 2013 Supporting Members

The Iola Historical Society wishes to extend special recognition and thanks to the following individuals and organizations for the extra financial support provided to our activities through their status as 2013 Supporting Members: Supporting Members: Mary Bennet, Scott & Karri Bestul, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (Mark Forseth), Donald & Carol Dineen, Bob & Bev Ellingson, DeRonda & Patricia Engebretson, Leonard & Irene Haroldson, Iola & Rural Fire Department, Lee & Ruth Johnson, Duane & Darlene Louison, Thomas & Linda Martin, Phyllis Morris, Joan Niemiec, Susan Shambeau, David & Ruth Strand, Forrest & Virginia Torgerson, William & Jacqueline Wilker.