



Newly Established Pioneer Farmstead

Who settled this pioneer farmstead and where was it located? It had obviously been newly established, after the land had been cleared of native timber to establish a farmable prairie, when this picture was taken. Note the recently planted saplings in the foreground of this home and barn setting. Is it possible that either of these structures still stand, shaded by the now more than century old mature trees that grew from those saplings?

This picture, likely dating from the late 1900s, was drawn from our historical archive. If there is anyone out there who can share with members a story caption – family background and/or location – to historically record this picture. Any responses should be directed by phone to 715-445-IOLA (4652), by e-mail to IolaHistoricalSociety@gmail.com, or by postal to IHS, P. O. Box 412, Iola, WI 54945. The results will be published in the Summer 2021 *Window*.

The Iola Historical Society's **Window** Quarterly Member and Activities Newsletter



Volume Fourteen Number Two Spring 2021

A Glimpse Back

Iola's Publishing Beginnings

Way back when . . . 140 years ago . . . long before Chet Krause and Krause Publications (1952-2002) arrived on the scene . . . the *Iola Herald* had sprouted to life (1891-2008). Long cherished locally, a short-lived weekly, the *Iola Messenger* (1881-1883), had actually preceded the birth of the *Herald*.

The *Messenger* had been launched by J. M. Hatch in 1881, but ceased publication barely a year later, in 1883. Subsequently, the fledgling Iola community would continue its' early growth and budding prosperity, without the support of a published voice for the next eight years.

That all changed when Franklin Herbert Johnston arrived in the village in 1891, establishing a successor weekly, the *Iola Herald* that November. Johnston was a suave young man (born 1869), largely self-educated beyond the fourth grade, who at the age of ten had set out to help support his family. Having gained some experience as a printer's devil, at the age of 16 he ventured forth and established his first newspaper – *The Racine Review* – thereafter moving to Fond du Lac with his parents,

where he took in a partner to pursue a career in the printing, engraving and lithography business.

Venturing out on his own, at the age of 22, the Iola community had apparently drawn young Franklin's interest as a publishing opportunity. His youthful interest was also drawn to 27-year-old Lenora Taylor, a milliner and former schoolteacher from Maine, who was living there with her widowed mother and brothers. The prominent and prosperous family operated a local meat market and livery stable, and also owned several nearby farms.

Although mother Taylor and her offspring did not much cotton to the idea of their sibling marrying a newspaperman, the tall, dark-haired Franklin, sporting a handlebar mustache, joined Lenora in marriage on July 4, 1892. The Johnston's



Franklin Herbert Johnston and his wife Lenora

apparently were soon motivated to search out greater opportunities elsewhere, moving first to Milwaukee, then on to Chicago in 1893, where their only child, Wendella Valeria was born. With the Johnston's leaving Iola, ownership of the *Herald* had passed to Charles E. McCullough.

In 1905 the Johnston's and their then 8-year-old daughter moved to Southern California were, after serving as a banker and stockbroker for several years, Franklin returned to the publishing business, acquiring *The Hermosa Beach Review* and *The Manhattan Beach*

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Unsolved Parks Studio Mystery Portrait

We're still seeking identities for the two couples captured in the Parks Photo Studio portrait featured in the last issue of the *Window*, the Winter 2021 edition "mystery" installment, that is being repeated here in the hope that the second time around will prove to be charmed. You're encouraged to invite your friends and neighbors to take a look . . . you never know . . . one of them may be able to solve the "mystery," if you reach out to share and inquire.



Norske School Students and Their Teacher

Mysteries are often not so mysterious if you do a bit of digging. Such was the case with the Norske School picture presented with the feature in the Summer 2020 issue as of the *Window*. The picture featuring an early 20th century student body of eleven and their teacher, taken during the winter, captured six of the seven boys proudly displaying their skis.

This picture was reproduced in *From The Indian Land*, authored by Malcolm Rosholt in 1985, with Iola Historical Society sponsorship; it was presented on page 248 of that historic chronicle. The contents were largely translated from a book – *Fra Indianernes Lande* – authored in Norwegian in 1915 by Thor Helgeson, an itinerant parochial school teacher and raconteur, who had started serving area settlers in the early 1850s.

Member Joan Niemiec from Minneapolis called to our attention this prior publication, along with the names of the students and their teacher. The 1913/14 school year pupils (left to right) were; Alma Larson, Obert Dahlen, Gertie Leer, Agnes Johnson, Marvin Erickson, Milton Matson, Otis Leer, Carl Langdok, Elmer Langdok, Elmer Dahler, Jens Larson, and Gilman Langdok. The teacher was Emily Jevne (extreme right).

"The teacher, Emily Jevne," Joan noted, "married Martin Hanson, my grandmother's brother." She added; "My mother, Marie Gunther, and her parents, Mynert and Tillie Hanson Colrud and siblings, lived in Rosholt. Mynert and Uncle Ralph owned the Rosholt Feed Mill."

President's Message

As we study and reflect on history, we realize how dramatically times have changed with the passage of time. My thoughts were recently quite pointedly drawn to that reality . . . a few mornings ago as I crossed Main Street heading to my office.

Casting my vision up North Main Street, I spied only one car in sight. What a contrast the scene was to the reality and expectations represented by the vintage Iola real photo postcard that had come into my possession just a few days earlier. Created 100-odd years ago, the underlying scene of North Main Street was strewn with buggies.

Generation by generation the years have wrought change upon the street's scene. Horse and buggies have given way to horseless carriages; automobiles, pickups, SUV's and crossovers. Business have come, served and disappeared. The focus of the community has evolved from that of a retail community serving the area's populace, to the

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localized activities of health and well-being services, restaurants and taverns.

Still, the street has consistently remained recognizable through the generations, as the building structures have evolved slowly, although the occupancies and purposes thereof have constantly evolved, as societal change has dictated. Individually, if most of us were to step into a "Time Machine" and transition back in time to the days of yore, represented by the

Gone, but Fondly Recalled

Lest we forget, the valued friends recalled below who passed in the last year, having graced the Iola Historical Society with their memberships and support. Remember them with appreciation as you reflect on their contributions to our organization and this community.

Howard H. Bestul, age 86, Village of Iola, passed away on January 10, 2021. He was born in the Town of Helvetia, April 10, 1934, and was a 1952 graduate of Iola High School. He plied the realty trade in Iola for more than 50 years (1961-2014).

Robert O. Ellingson, age 91, Town of New Hope, Wis., passed away on February 16, 2020. He was born in Iola, May 18, 1928, and was a 1946 graduate of Iola High School. In 2007 he co-founded "Drive Your Tractor to Church Sunday."

Donald "Smokey" Helgerson, age 92, of Chili, Wis., passed away on October 7, 2020, at his home in Chili. He was born in Redwing, Minn., October 8, 1927, and was a 1945 graduate of Iola High School.

Iola's Publishing Beginnings *Continued from page 1*

News. The Johnston's became prominently successful members of the community, Franklin becoming part owner of the local bank, acquiring many acres of beachfront properties along the way.

In later years Lenora enjoyed a triumphant return visit to Iola, "sparkling with diamonds and crowned with willow plumes." This evidence of Franklin's success proved sufficient for the family to finally accept him as a being worthy of association with the Taylor family.

scene on that postcard – sans the streetcar illusion – we would feel at home.

The near portion of the first building on the right was built by Tom Hagna who did business as the "Corner Bar." Today it serves at JD's Corner Bar, having been a tavern or restaurant operation under at least seven interim ownerships. The awning reads "Hardware" in this photograph, as does that projecting from the building on the near left, a building hosting the United States

Donald G. Halverson, age 86, Tomahawk, Wis., passed away on January 4, 2021. He was born in Iola on March 20, 1934, and was a graduate of Iola High School. A career meat cutter, he retired on July 8, 1996, after 26 years at the Lincoln Hills juvenile facility.

Carol Louise (Erickson) Lashua, age 90, of Iola, passed away on January 15, 2021. She was born on December 30, 1930, in the Town of Harrison, attended Harrison Center Elementary and graduated from Rosholt High School.
Ruth G. Gilbertson Strand, age 94, of Black River Falls, Wis., passed away on June 5, 2020, at Dove Healthcare in Osseo. She was born in Iola, April 13, 1926, and was a 1944 graduate of Iola High School.

Franklin's daughter "Val" became a reporter, columnist and editor of her father's California papers. In the 1920, he sent her off to the boomtown of Oatman, Ariz., to edit a newspaper he had acquired in conjunction with a gold mining stock transaction. After Lenora's 1935 death, Franklin married Bess Dale Freeman, a widow and well-known women's magazine writer whom he had known back in Waupaca County. Val later married Bess's son, and never tired of telling people she'd married her own stepbrother.

[With acknowledgments to Trey Foerster and Tina Freeman-Toole.]

Post Office since 1968. That building originally served blacksmith and wagon maker Adolph Hanson, subsequently hosting blacksmiths Ed Fryk and Gus Olson, hardwareman Gilbert Gullixon, then by the Frogner Auto Company starting in 1910, and subsequently by the Ford dealerships of Teeman Austin, Julius Johnson, Fred Mickeljohn, Corrin Mortenson and Lenwick Hoyord.

That streetcar line never did arrive, by the way; it was to never advance beyond the illusion state!

Downtown Iola was a lively place at the turn of the 20th century . . . (check out the photo above right) . . . buggies dominated North Main Street traffic, as is aptly evident in this scene . . . but did you know it then also boasted a streetcar line? This vintage postcard preserves the evidence . . . except the electrified streetcar depicted was photo imposed upon a street scene that was captured around 1905. A related postcard exaggeration of similar vintage features a biplane in flight over a similar street scene.

2021 Events Schedule

Monday, March 29, 2021

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

First Business Meetings for 2021

Monday, April 26, 2021

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

Monday, May 24, 2021

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

Monday, May 31, 2021

Noon – 2:00 pm 2021 Annual Memorial Day Pork Roast Salute to Military Veterans (Community Event Since 2014)

Saturdays, June 5 to August 28, 2021

Noon – 3:00 pm Iola Historical Village and Museums Open for Docent Accompanied Visitations

Sunday, June 27, 2021

11:00 am – 2:00 pm 2021 Annual Iola Strawberry Fest Fundraiser (Community Event Since 1984)

Monday, June 28, 2021

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

Monday, July 26, 2021

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

Saturday, August 28, 2021

Noon – 3:00 pm Iola Historical Village & Museums; Last Day



Donors & Loaners January • February • March

The Iola Historical Society would like to express its appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for the donations they have made to our archive of historical relics, and/or cash donations or in-kind services contributed in support of its operations during the past quarter:

Archival Donations of Historic Relics:

Thomas & Sharie Anderson (vintage teacher's chair, Blake Brook School), Ruth Johnson (Iola Hospital & Community Building planning papers archive), Clifford Mishler (seven vintage real photo postcards), James Neidert (book "How To Make the Greatest Pizza, by author), Tom Ricchio (Sig Malvik's authentic Norwegian ski gloves).

Donations of Cash and In-Kind Services:

Sarah Abramson (cash, undesignated), Mary J. Bennett (cash, museum storage development), John W. Bertelson, Jr. (cash, central museum area development), Bestul Construction (cash, undesignated), Howard & Kathy Bestul (cash, renovate caboose interior), Donald C. Duneen (cash, undesignated), Don & Anita Faldet (cash, undesignated), Kathy Bestul (cash, memorials, IMO Howard Bestul) Trey & Mary Foerster (cash, endowment), Linda George (cash, undesignated), Chuck & Mary Gipp (cash, undesignated), Carolyn Halverson (cash, memorials, IMO Donald Halverson), Lee & Sue Halverson (cash, storage to exhibit area conversion), (cash, memorials, IMO Donald Helgerson) Edward K. Heyes (cash, Krause Memorial exhibit area development), Iola Family Dental (cash, undesignated), Ruth Johnson (cash, endowment), The Kriewaldt Family (cash, undesignated), Greg Loescher (cash, landscaping projects), Chris Mortenson (cash, undesignated), Charles Nordness (cash, central museum area development), Joanna Reingans (cash, storage to exhibit area conversion), Linda E. Seaman (cash, museum storage redevelopment), James W. Taylor (cash, endowment), Wayne Towne (cash, undesignated), Voie Funeral Home (cash, landscaping projects)..

2021 Supporting Memberships

The Iola Historical Society wishes to express special thanks and recognition to the following individuals and organizations for their dedicated Supporting Member status as financial contributors to the Society's ongoing operational activities: Louis & Louise Adams, Scott & Karri Bestul, LeRoy & Carolyn Borth, Mary & Charles Gipp, Yvonne Gurholt, Donna Hooker, Iola & Rural Fire Service, Ruth Johnson, Lana & Don Langdok, Dan & Sharon Loken,