



# NEWSLETTER OF THE WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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[www.prairietrailsmuseum.org](http://www.prairietrailsmuseum.org)

## Annual Meeting & Banquet Thursday, March 25

Join others interested in Wayne County history on March 25 at the Prairie Trails Museum for a special evening as we learn some of the ways to locate sites along the Mormon Trail. This will be the topic of the 2010 Membership Meeting and Banquet, with guest speaker Michael Zahs.

**Time: 6:30 P.M.**

**Place: Prairie Trails Museum**

Many of you probably know of the historic 1846 Mormon Trail that cut a path through the southern tier of Iowa counties. But did you know this trail was an important element in the rapid settlement of Wayne County? The Mormon trail opened the way for other pioneers to follow and the 1850s saw rapid settling of the area. Iowa was admitted to the Union on December 28, 1846 and Wayne County was organized on Feb. 13, 1851. By 1860, in just under ten years, the population of Wayne County had grown from a mere 340 to 6,409.

Thousands of Mormon Pioneers bravely began the westward journey from Nauvoo, IL February 4, 1846. When the Mormon wagons rolled across what is now the Appanoose-Wayne County border in early April 1846, they were truly on the frontier – “the jumping-off place”, there were few settlers and no established villages.

The Mormon vanguard moved through southern Iowa cutting deep ruts in the countryside that can still be seen in certain spots. Temporary settlements, some lasting a few years, were established in several counties along the way. There were cabins, churches, schools and cemeteries. The cemeteries were a necessity as conditions were harsh so death due to illness or injury was a constant reality. These settlements provided a needed rest and a restocking outpost for the weary pioneers on their westward journey. Today little evidence remains of the Mormon settlements so historians have used various ways to piece together the story of pioneers who followed the Mormon Trail.

Michael Zahs guest speaker for the banquet will share some of the ways used to find remains of settlements, campsites, and burial grounds along the Mormon Trail. Mr. Zahs is a retired school teacher from Ainsworth, Iowa. He has followed the Mormon Trail in Iowa finding campsites, cabins and graves using a method called “witching.”

Witching involves holding two bent wires parallel to the ground and walking slowly; when the wires pass over a disturbed area they will cross thus signaling something below the surface. Though unscientific this method has been used for many, many years to find water, buried cables, graves, etc.

**The banquet will be catered by Patty Mason, followed by the Annual Business Meeting.**

**MEAL COST \$12**

**RESERVATIONS NEEDED BY MARCH 19**

(Reservation Form Enclosed)

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### Get Well Wishes

Cary DeVore, husband of Museum Manager Brenda DeVore, has been hospitalized in the University Hospital in Lexington, KY, as a result of a stroke. He has now been moved to Cardinal Hill Rehab Center in Lexington. Brenda will be out of the office for two or three weeks until they are able to return home.

We send our sincere get well wishes to Cary, and look forward to his good recovery!

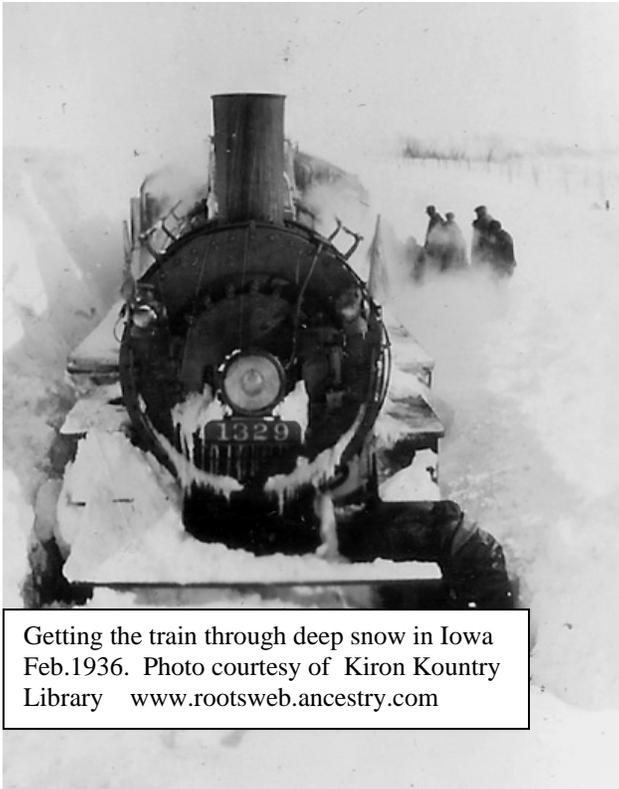
# The Great Snow of 1936

*With lowans growing especially weary of the cold and snow this year we thought it might be worthwhile to visit memories of another snowy winter for the record books. The winter of 1936 was brutal, the snowstorms were never ending and wind piled drifts so high the trains couldn't get through. Travel by auto wasn't possible and with roads blocked by snow, supplies of food and fuel grew short in rural communities. The story below comes to us from Dean Hughes, Aurora, CO who was born on a farm northwest of Cambria in 1914. In 1917 the Hughes family moved to a farm near Le Roy. Dean began his freshman year at Iowa State College in the fall of 1935 and graduated in 1940 with a degree in Civil Engineering. This is an excerpt from an autobiography written by Hughes.*

**Christmas 1935:** A lot of snow had fallen in Southern Iowa by the time I reached home. The fact is, I hitch-hiked into Humeston in the early evening and could find no way to reach Le Roy. I did find a way to the Carter's, who were then living three miles south of Humeston on Grandpa Fisher's eighty. I stayed the night and walked to Le Roy the next day. I followed the railroad from Humeston to Le Roy, because trains had been through and the snow was not so deep. 'Twas a good hike, even with a lighter suitcase.

Snow kept falling and the only activity I could find was to make one trip to Centerville with a local trucker to get a load of coal. That was during the first week of January. The next night we were called out to dig a freight train out of the snow. The train was about one mile west of our place and it was about midnight. Everyone put on all their available clothes and walked to the site in minus 30° weather and a north wind at 30 miles per hour.

When a steam engine is stuck in snow, the steam condenses and a film of ice forms on the rail. In addition to moving snow along the train, part of the crew must dig down and chip the ice from the rails. When those in charge feel the train can move, everyone is ordered to stand by the right-of-way fence. If the train is not able to gain headway, the process is started over. You can imagine the chill factor when you've been working adjacent to the steam chests and then stand clear.



Getting the train through deep snow in Iowa Feb.1936. Photo courtesy of Kiron Kountry Library [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

We arrived home just after 5:00 A.M. and were told to report for work at 8:00 A.M. to do more work at clearing the track. Most of us looked for possible ways to wrap up better. Wrapping shoes in newspaper before putting on overshoes was popular and definitely quite effective. That first morning, several of us--me included--took off our shoes to warm our feet. 'Twas nearly impossible to put our shoes on over swollen feet!

We worked over six weeks to get the first train through from Humeston to Clarinda, a distance of about 100 miles. You will be interested to know why it took so long. Bitter cold made work very slow. The first three weeks every man was assigned a buddy to watch for frostbite. Every once in a while you would see someone drop his shovel and grab a handful of snow to rub some portion of a buddy's face. No other part was exposed.

At the end of that period we were close to town on a warm day. Everyone had shed a layer or two of clothing. When we sat in the sun to gnaw our sandwiches, a thermometer mounted on the lumber yard door stood at exactly zero!

The tools used were a V-nosed snowplow mounted on the front of a flatcar full of rock, another car located behind was attached to the front of two steam locomotives. A couple of boxcars and a caboose were behind the engines. Men with number 10 or number 12 scoop shovels completed the normal

day's outfit. Later on, coal was substituted for the rock, and groceries were placed in the boxcars because we were beginning to reach isolated towns that needed assistance.

Before the train reached the deepest drifts, we cut down to the rails for a distance of 20 feet, left 50 feet untouched, cleared another 20 feet, and so on. Then the men went on to work on the next area or were loaded onto the caboose. The train was backed up, so speed could be gathered and driven into the cut. When it stopped, we dug it out to start over again.

Caboose were set on springs both longitudinally and laterally. When we hit the drifts that had been channeled, the engines gained and lost traction. That made for a wild ride. Drifts in cuts were often so deep that exhaust from the smokestack blew the top off of the drift.

*Continued on next page*

We had more trouble on more open areas of track. There the drift from one snow would freeze at one slope and the next drift at a different slope. Sometimes, when we hit that type of area, the plow would ride on top of one layer of snow and be torn from the front of the flat car. When that happened, steel cables had to be rigged from the engine to pull the plow back and load it on the flat car so it could be taken back to the shops for repair and reattachment. There were times when the train had to be dug out again on the way back. This type of failure happened several times and several days were lost to repairs.

The day finally came when crews ahead had prepared most of the drifts and the train was ready for a big push. Our crew was chosen to go with the train. Each time we reached a town, part of the crew would unload some of the coal and groceries. The rest of us would cleanup around the depot.

When we reached Beaconsfield on February 21, I met a fellow freshman at Iowa State and asked why he was there. He had gone home for Christmas and had not been out of town since. That town was in poorer condition than any other. Food was very scarce and almost every tree in town had been cut for fuel. There had been no mail for several weeks.

We reached Clarinda that night and were put up in a hotel. Our foreman, Charley Depew, was very unhappy that he was going to have to pay double-time for us to ride home on Washington's birthday, a holiday.

A decision had been made to deadhead another engine from Clarinda to Humeston. The train was going slow for the first few miles because snow had fallen against the rails and frozen after we went by the night before. The third engine was fired up and I was chosen to fire it for the trip. Took a few shovels of coal before I learned to step on the lever to open the fire door and swing the shovel at the right time to put coal on the fire. By the time we reached Le Roy on the homeward-bound trip, the sun was shining and it was quite warm. In fact, most of the snow between the rails had melted.

The weather continued to stay warm and we soon had mud everywhere. Pete Thurlow, who lived one mile south of Le Roy, had a considerable acreage of corn that had not been shucked before the winter storms hit. He told me I could start picking it as soon as we could get into the field. When we started, a team of Belgian horses could pull only 8 or 10 bushel loads in a high wheel wagon. A bigger load would have gotten stuck in the mud! At 5¢ /bushel, that was 40¢ to 50¢ and would add to my nest egg.

In March, 1936, I had \$50 and started spring quarter at Iowa State.

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## Lineville-Clio School



In the fall of 2010 when school resumes there will be no high school classes in the Lineville-Clio Community School District. The junior high and high school age students will attend Mormon Trail or Wayne Community School. For a number of years Lineville-Clio has had the distinction of being the smallest school district in the state and this year is no exception with an attendance of 60 kids in grade PK-12.

The first school, reportedly made of logs, was built in Lineville sometime between 1840 and 1850 in the west part of town at the foot of West Hill. It was used for both a school and a church. James Sullivan was listed as the teacher in 1850.

A brick school building was erected in 1873 on the lot where the Assembly of God Church now stands. All grades, primary through high school, were taught there. It is said

that it was elegantly furnished and had a beautiful campus with many shade trees and a wide lawn. This school burned one spring night in 1914.

For the next three years, school was held in various places in town, including upstairs above what became Joe May's Clothing Store, the Bank of Lineville, the Methodist Church, and in a brick building west of the Greenlee Furniture store.

In 1916, land was purchase from T.J. Lovett to build a new school. The location was about a block north of the northwest corner of the town square.

A group of local citizens went on a tour of Iowa schools to find a model for the new school. Included in this group were Mr. Ralph Cain, Mrs. Lem Belvel, Vera Belvel, Emery Duden and Mrs. Lillian Duden. Their choice was the school building at Diagonal, Iowa. The new Lineville School opened in the fall of 1917.

From 1962 through 1966, Allerton, Clio and Lineville were consolidated into one district. Called A.C.L. Community School, classes were held in both Lineville and Allerton. In 1967, the consolidation was dissolved when Allerton chose to merge with Wayne Community School. Since that time, the district has been The Lineville-Clio Community School.

In 2004 a new elementary building was built in Lineville and PK-6 will continue for the 2010-2011 school year. Whole grade sharing will begin for the 7-12 grade students in August 2010. The students may choose between Mormon Trail School in Humeston and Wayne Community School in Corydon but must make a decision by June 1, 2010.

**Memorials:** The Wayne County Historical Society deeply appreciates receiving gifts in memory for individuals who have been valued members of our families and our community. Since our last Newsletter, we have received contributions in memory of: Chris Coates, Bill Goodyear, Denise Selby, Maurice Kent, Ruby Rush, Jim Keho, Edna Banks, Clell Warren, J. C. Brown, David Clayton, Gladys Powell, Mary Louise Cawthorn, Carol Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kelly, Verda Reynolds, Everett Brinkley, Dorothy Conner, Paul McBroom, Lloyd and Blanche Nelson, Virginia Barnes Kenney, and Marilyn Gibbs. We sincerely thank all those who have chosen to remember these fine people through a gift to the Historical Society.

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**In Memory  
Carol Thomas**

Carol Thomas was a valuable, competent and faithful volunteer at the Prairie Trails Museum Library for many years. Carol's knowledge of genealogy and her ability to locate information helped countless people who were searching for family records in Wayne County.

Carol was always cheerfully willing to help wherever needed. She spent many volunteer hours working on the museum's artifact numbering project. An expert quilter, Carol demonstrated quilting skills at our annual fall Pioneer Festival.

Carol was honored with the Museum Volunteer of the Year Award for 2005.

**Genealogy Library News**

When the 1890 Wayne County courthouse was torn down in 1964 many court documents, still in the original tin canisters, were given to the Museum. While librarians had indexed some of these documents to make them more accessible for people doing genealogy research it was impossible to catalog all the information.

Prairie Trails Museum Genealogy Library was awarded an HRDP grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa in March 2009 to microfilm probate, wills and estate records of Wayne County dated 1890 – 1925. Jan Donaldson, head librarian and other volunteers began sorting and organizing the thousands of records when the museum opened last April. Each document was taken from the tin box, staples or paper clips removed, and the document laid flat inside an archival file folder. The folders were then organized by document number and date.

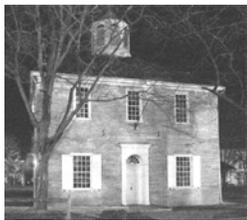


Jan Donaldson has been working closely with Delpha Musgrave of State Historical Society of Iowa special collections department. Delpha has worked with several other Iowa counties to microfilm government documents.

The project is well under way and microfilming of the records should begin in late summer. The museum will receive a copy of each reel of microfilm and SHSI will keep a copy. After microfilming is completed all original documents will be archived in acid free boxes.

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**The Battle of Corydon (Indiana)**



Many people know that our County Seat was named in 1851 by Judge Seth Anderson, who won that privilege in a poker game. Judge Anderson named the brand new county seat after his hometown, Corydon, Indiana.

Corydon, located close to the Ohio River on the southern edge of Indiana, was the 2nd territorial capital and became the first State Capital in 1816. The original capitol building (pictured) has been preserved. The capital was moved to Indianapolis in 1825.

During the Civil War Confederate General John Hunt Morgan led an infamous band of volunteer cavalymen, known as "Morgan Raiders." They raided public property, destroyed bridges, and caused severe losses among Union troops. In 1863, Morgan broke through Federal lines in Kentucky and crossed the Ohio River into Indiana. On July 9<sup>th</sup> his raiders attacked Corydon. Although defended bravely by the local Home Guard, the Raiders gained control and captured all 345 defenders. Killed in the battle were five Home Guards and 14 Confederates. The Raiders ransacked the town, robbed citizens and businesses of money and valuables, and confiscated horses and supplies.

While in Corydon, Morgan received word of the Confederate defeat in Gettysburg a few days earlier. Before leaving town, Morgan assembled all the captured townspeople in front of the courthouse and pardoned them.