



The Big Creek Historical Society

# The Pony Express

Volume 1 Issue 14 Winter 2008-2009

## 'Stairway to Yesteryear' By Tom Cox



This will be the last restoration update for the 'Stairway to Yesteryear' project. The restoration project for all intents and purposes has been completed. All that remains are a couple clean up items and the external stair case. We are shopping for furniture for the second floor: chairs and tables. We have been made aware of the

'Preservation at its Best' award program sponsored by the State Historic Preservation Alliance. We will submit our nomination for that award. I think we would have a fairly good chance. To make the 'Stairway to Yesteryear' campaign a complete success we need to ensure that the 'Miller Hall' and the 'Cox Stage' are fully utilized. We now have a wonderful facility with a tremendous amount of potential. We need to draw visitors from all of northern Polk County by providing interesting programs. Grant money from the Endowment for the Humanities is available for these type of programs. The Big Creek Players will be reenergized with a new play and a vaudeville production. We will encourage the local civic organizations to use the facility for their activities. We have already hosted some of the Polk City Community Foundations meetings. We truly do have a jewel and should be quite proud of what we have accomplished.

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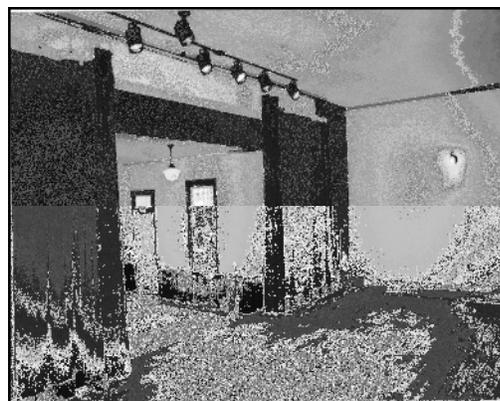
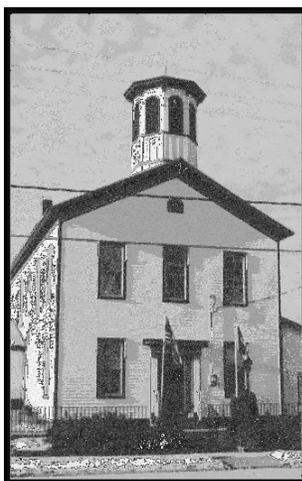
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**You Do Not Stop Laughing  
Because You Grow Old,  
You Grow Old Because You  
Stop Laughing**

**Have A Great Day!**

## Restoration Pictures (continued on page 4)





*Wagner sketch of historic city hall of Polk City.*

*If you like what we are doing, ask a friend to join us. Adding members who believe in what we are doing will make doing it much easier.*



*Wagner sketch of the bandstand in the Polk City town square*

## From The President.....

As daunting as the project of the restoration of historic city hall seemed, I must admit that I feel our next challenge will be every bit as tough . It is imperative that we are successful in recruiting new members to support the utilization of the museum and Miller Hall. It would be a disservice to everyone of those folks who generously supported our project with time and money to only have the facility open to the public two hours one day a month. Increasing an active membership base is the only way we will be able to properly utilize our facility. Your help in a membership drive this summer will be much appreciated. I would appreciate any ideas you may have for increasing our membership.

## Big Creek Historical Society Items

### Polk City Historical Structures Throws



Available for \$50  
Plus \$7.00 Shipping Fee

**A Great Gift!**

### Books

#### Early Days of Polk City

#### Brave Men Shouldered Their Muskets

By R. Currie—\$8 each

#### American Patriotism

By Leonard Brown.  
Reprinted by R. Currie

\$37.95

#### Murder!

By R. Currie - \$14

\$3 shipping for all books

#### Big Creek Historical

#### Cardigans

\$20

## Calendar of Events

### February 2009

Care Center Bingo— 9th

Meeting—16th 1:30 PM

Museum By Appointment

### March 2009

Care Center Bingo - 9th

Meeting—16th 1:30 PM

Museum By Appointment

### April 2009

Care Center Bingo 13th

Meeting—20th 6:30 PM

Museum By Appointment

### May 2009

Care Center Bingo—11th

Meeting— 18th 6:30 PM

Museum By Appointment

### June 2009

Care Center Bingo 8th

Meeting — 22nd 6:30 PM

Museum By Appointment

### July 2009

Care Center Bingo 13th

Meeting—20th

Museum By Appointment

# Polk City History

Polk City's railroad history is relatively short. In the 1860's when the railroads started west it was the aspiration of every town to be a stop on a main rail line. The railroad was touted as bringing economic prosperity to the community. Initially Polk City was not fortunate to have a rail line. Boone to the north and Des Moines to the south were chosen as main stops in central Iowa. Polk City with a population of approximately 600 was very disappointed. In 1874 the Des Moines & Minneapolis (narrow gauge) railroad was opened from Des Moines to Ames, passing through Polk City. Polk City citizens were pleased with the new line. The enthusiasm was short lived for in 1879 the narrow gauge line was removed after being purchased by the Chicago Northwestern Railroad. A new regular railroad was laid that bypassed Polk City by approximately two miles to the east of town. The town of Crocker sprung up overnight. Crocker became the closest access to the railroad from Polk City. A law suit was filed by a citizen of Polk City to gain a rail line through Polk City. As a result of the law action the railroad provided a 'spur' from Polk City Junction (about 3 miles north of Polk City) to the town of Polk City. This did provide some short term hopes that Polk City would continue to grow. The spur did not provide the economic boost that was hoped for. By 1902 the town's population had dropped to 450. The spur was not used shortly after the turn of the century and the tracks were removed in 1979. *Photo-right Fred Rogers, Station Agent Polk City depot*



**This Newsletter is produced by the Big Creek Historical Society, PO Box 201, Polk City, IA 50226. Contact: Tom Cox**

**515-965-3828**

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

**BCHS Officers:**

Pres. Tom Cox

Vice Pres. Lela Austin

Treas. Paul Grodt

Sec. Rosemary Hutton-Taylor

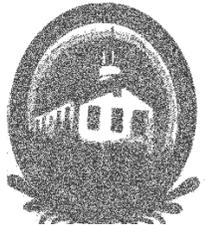
Photography— Paul Grodt

**Big Creek Historical**

**Society T-Shirts**

**\$10**

\$4 Shipping Fee



**‘Preserving  
the Past  
for  
the Future’**

**Goals for 2009**

- Increase membership base.
- Increase membership participation
- Complete documentation of museum items
- Develop museum programs

**December 2008 Events**

**Lighting of the Square -**

The event was held the evening of Dec. 7th. A nice crowd once again brought in the holiday season with the traditional lighting of the square in Polk City. We donated a one year membership and a BCBS cardigan to the drawing. Helen Hunt of Polk City was the lucky winner. We hope to see Helen at our upcoming meetings. We enjoyed approximately 100 visitors to our museum, which was not in

the best shape because of our restoration work but no one seemed to mind.

**Christmas Luncheon—**

Phyllis and Bob Wiseman again treated the BCBS members with a wonderful lunch. We had a good turnout as always for Phyllis's cooking. Good conversation was had, along with the traditional gift exchange. Thank you Phyllis and Bob for your hospitality.

**New Member**

**Helen Hunt**

**Polk City**

**Welcome!**

Big Creek Historical Society  
PO Box 201  
Polk City, IA 50226

## Address Service Requested

### Museum Activities

By Tom Cox

Things are buzzing at the museum and the Miller Hall. Rose Taylor and Lela Austin have been meeting every Wed. afternoon to get our facility in order and ready to open to the public. A few members have dropped in occasionally to give a helping hand. They are going through everything and placing the items in the proper place for either display or storage. Storage will be properly identified so items can be retrieved easily for future displays. It is the committee's intention to rotate displayed items at some frequency in hopes of enticing visitors for a return visit. As soon as the committee feels

comfortable with establishing a date for our grand opening, the date will be set and publicized. Lela has been working on some final restoration touches. Lela has applied tung oil to the wainscot in the office/storage area and to the 'seating' built in 1898. It looks great! The committee is doing a great job. I am sure they would appreciate any help they may be able to get.

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'The answer to a Maiden's Prayer

is not a chin of stubby hair '

**Bermua-Shave — 1933**

