

HUXLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 7 Issue 3

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2014

2014 Officers

President

Nels Nord

Vice President

Chris Jennelle

Secretary

Janet Stoll

Treasurer

Scott Petersen

2014 Calendar:

Meetings are generally the
4th Monday of the month
at 6:30 Pm in Council
Chambers.

Our home is located at
515 N. Main in the
3C's building call
515-231-9174 to visit.

Winter Hours:

October – April
Tuesday & Thursday
8:30-10:30am.

REFLECTIONS

Our first memory of school buses is – they were less than half as long as buses today and much narrower. No individual seats – a bench on each side the length of the bus. No seat belts. You boarded the bus, behaved yourself, sat down and hung on.

Our clothes were mostly made by our mothers plus we also wore hand-me-downs or make-overs.



Photo by J. Stoll

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MISSION STATEMENT :To engage the Community of Huxley, Iowa in the preservation, education, and celebration of our heritage and ancestry. To preserve for research and education, the artifacts, information, and verbal histories about the lives of the people of Huxley from its pioneer origins to the present day and into our future.

Reflections Cont.

Our clothes were changed as soon as we came home, to keep them clean for another day. We did not have a different outfit for each day of the week, but they had to be clean. Of course, no slacks or shorts!

If you went to Country School and finished 8th grade, shortly after school was out County Exams—taken in Nevada—were required in the various subjects. Passing these tests was the only way to be eligible for High School. JaVerna Birkestrand Twit was our teacher. She would invite us to her home to review and study for the exams – she was a teacher to the “Nth degree!”

At the end of our Freshman year our class sponsor planned an early evening picnic in the Berhow Woods, which we looked forward to. There was one draw-back – this was not cleared by the Superintendent or school staff. Consequently as punishment, in May (YEAR??) the Freshman Class stayed in school for classes and studying, while the remainder of the High School students could go to Veishea. One good thing we had going for us – the Freshman Class caused no disturbances at Veishea that year.

For basketball practice we would run laps around the gym; perhaps that was the forerunner of what is now track. We only travelled locally for competitions with nearby teams in Alleman, Cambridge, Kelley, Sheldahl, and Slater.



Photo by J. Stoll. From left to right (top row) are... On bottom row are ...

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Reflections Cont.

But when we went to Alleman – we felt very far from home, as we were miles outside of Story County. Athletics was important. We cherished victory, and celebrated our hard won success. We also learned humility in defeat, and despite the outcome of a game we learned good sportsmanship and developed self-discipline. The variety of sports opportunities nowadays is wonderful – Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Volleyball, Track, Tennis, Soccer, Wrestling, and Golf (to name a few). For families with children participating in sports – the parents, and yes, even the grandparents are needed to act as Travel Agents – to know where the children are to be and at what time. It is so important to support the children and grandchildren.

Carl R. Reng was our Superintendent all through High School in the '30's. During one of those years, Mrs. Reng asked me to help her a couple of days after school. She would have to tell me or show me what to do – and she did. I did something I had never done before or since. Mr. Reng used white shirts for his work. Mrs. Reng handed me several shirts and asked me to remove the collar, stitch by stitch, reverse it, and sew it back on by machine. This was a learning experience during hard times – making use of what you had. Doing what needs to be done to get more mileage from it – Resourcefulness.

We did graduate in the hard times --- no class rings. We were short of cash and many things --- in comparison to what we all have now. Perhaps because of this we kept our Class Motto short and to the point --- only four words, all starting with the letter "T"!

Through Trials to Triumph

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SERVICE MEMBERS—WE WANT YOUR PICTURES

PAST PRESENT AND CURRENT!
IN OR NOT IN UNIFORM.

**Pictures can be emailed, mailed, or
dropped off to Nels or the Huxley Histori-
cal Society room at 3 C's.**



Reflections Cont.

Photo by J. Stoll

We did get to graduate. Sometimes in life, hard things have to be experienced, in order to appreciate the better that is to come.

Through the years, we need to be grateful to our parents, the community, the school staff --- and we think of the Janitor, Ben Anfinson. He kept us comfortable; no air conditioning, you simply opened or closed the windows. He also fixed and repaired band instruments and if it was needed – played the drums or bass horn. We doubt if all this was in his job description, but he did whatever he could to keep things going.

We think of those who have served on School Boards – a six figure salaried position! Most likely, after an evening Board Meeting, it could be a sleepless night. There were always hard decisions to be made, endless budget problems, and then always thinking and planning ahead to make the future brighter – Volunteer.

Most of all we pay tribute to those who have given their time, and yes, some have given their all for freedom, which is not free – our veterans, our military personnel, and also their families. We have much for which to be thankful. When time and years have rolled by, some trials may diminish, but when trials cease completely, then comes the greatest triumph of all – the triumph in the hereafter!

Thank you for listening.

*By Alvina Brendeland Larson &
Leona Brendeland Larson
*** Class of 1939 ****

Elizabeth Mayland

Elizabeth Mayland: Perspectives on the Past

Darlene Kalsem, Donna Millang, and I had the good fortune in July to have a nice conversation with Elizabeth Marie Valena Mayland born in Huxley, IA on February 16, 1913 – she has Norwegian heritage through and through. Darlene was kind enough to facilitate our meeting with this very special Huxley native, and let me say that even after 101 years, Elizabeth is sharp as a tack with a quick wit. She grew up with her sister Javerna and her parents at a time when the Huxley population was around 300 people. At one point in our conversation she recites the table prayer in Norwegian, roughly translated as “Come Lord Jesus be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. God is great and God is good, and we thank him for our food”. It reminds me of all of the cultural heritage brought over from the old world that hopefully we can retain and remember. It underscores the importance of younger generations remembering to be inquisitive and ask their elders about the “ole days”.

Elizabeth remembers when Huxley didn’t have buses for school children, and besides your own two feet, transportation to the school house was by horse and buggy up until around her 3rd or 4th grade year. She remembers in Fall when children would get one or two weeks “corn vacation” from school to help their families with corn husking. And while her sister Javerna loved to join the boys out in the fields, Elizabeth could think of nothing worse. When asked if she liked working in the fields too, she replied “Heavens no, I thought that was crazy...I got too cold”. Having a small frame and petite size, we can’t hold that against her.

She fondly remembers her high school basketball team, noting that her sister played ball and Darlene Kalsem’s mother was the “best basketball shooter there was”. Her father ran a dairy business with a work force of four cows, selling milk to local folks at five cents per quart. Darlene asked if she ever helped out, and Elizabeth replied, “no thank you, I’m scared to death of a cow”.

She recalls the Great Depression and remarked how hard that period of time was. Her family was better off than most, and they never went hungry thankfully. Christmas and holidays were a very big deal, and while most folks didn’t have much money, everybody was in the same boat and cherished what they received as gifts. Her mother would sew new clothes for the sisters and their dolls, while her father made wooden doll cribs for them one year. Her mom even made winter coats for her until she was 14 years old, and even now she remembers it had “some green thing” and was the ugliest thing you ever saw. Folks back in those days were very resourceful and masters of repurposing materials. The new clothes her mother would make were oftentimes fashioned from pieces of older clothing.

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Elizabeth Mayland Cont.

She was only around 5 years old when World War I ended, but she remembers town-wide shindigs for the boys returning home from the war. She also recalls during World War II, whether by law or local mandate, folks were not allowed to speak to others in a foreign language. Whether out of fear of spies or simply perceived as rude, it was not clear. There was food (sugar and coffee among other things) and material rationing during those war years, and Elizabeth remembers a scarcity of automobile tires and even a sign that read “Is this trip really necessary?” Gas was in short supply and the buses were doing really good business at the time. And if a woman was fortunate enough to have a pair of stockings, that was very special.

She breezed through all 12 grades and particularly loved Algebra and music, ultimately graduating from high school when she was 17 years old. She aspired to be a teacher for young children, but the timing couldn’t be worse. She was planning on going to college, but all of the money that she saved and held in a bank disappeared – she never saw a penny of it. Like so many other people of that time, she learned a bitter lesson through no fault of her own, and from that time on was always very frugal and careful with her money. She draws a parallel with recent times, noting how people get caught-up in endless spirals of debt. When asked if she thought history repeats itself, she replied, “absolutely, absolutely”. Sage wisdom we should all remember from a centenarian with plenty of experience.

Saturday nights in Huxley, everybody went to town, and there was always a band playing music. The local druggist, O.J. Severaid always served the band ice cream cones, and soft ball games were a standard feature. On special occasions there also might be a play or show with live actors; the closest movie theater was in Ames. She also remembers the big fire in Huxley that wiped out a whole row of businesses.

Her first job out of high school was as a telephone operator making 15 cents per hour; a good wage for the time. Folks didn’t use their telephone after 10pm except for emergencies. She also worked for a wealthy family (name??) in Ames for 18 years, practically raising their children, washing clothes, cooking, and doing whatever household chores needed to be done. She spent so much time with the children because the parents were so busy with their social life, that the kids would ask her to tell them about their parents. The parents provided the physical needs of the children, but Elizabeth provided the love, guidance, support, and role-modeling. She also worked as a secretary for Fitz Electric. Darlene shared that a Fitz family member recently told her that Elizabeth was the best worker they ever had. Elizabeth was quick to chime in, “well maybe they just had me”, and we all burst out laughing.

Besides the amazing changes in technology over her lifetime, she notes that the weather has changed, in her words “it’s crazy”. She doesn’t remember flooding being as much of a problem growing up as it is in recent time.

Continued next page

Elizabeth Mayland Cont.

Jokingly, she says her secret to long life is “hard work and poor pay”, but in all seriousness she advises folks to continue to socialize and never give up. It was a pleasure to speak with Elizabeth and I am honored to know her. While this is just a taste of the life she has lived, and the experiences she has had, it’s a short walk back into the past. It reminds me that we need to be inquisitive and ask our elders questions about the past, so we don’t lose our heritage, memories, lessons, and perspectives.

If you or someone you know are interested in sharing your recollections and stories of the past, please let us know. Among other things, we would love to hear about any cultural traditions and prayers that you might remember or practice that were passed down in your family (regardless of your cultural heritage). Also, if you are a veteran and wouldn’t mind sharing some of your experiences in the military (whether in an operational theater or not), we would love to hear from you. These are just suggestions, and if you have other topics or ideas to share, please let us know. We are interested in what was because it shapes what is and what may be.

By Chris Jennelle



From left to right (top row) are Darlene Kalsem and Donna Millang. Elizabeth Mayland is seated.

Thank you for being a member. We appreciate it very much.

Please consider joining as a LIFETIME member and never have to worry about renewing again.

A LIFETIME membership is easy (\$500 one time) and it means so much to HHS as we need a safe space to store the heritage we have acquired AND your input about how best to preserve it. The HHS needs a building and archival quality storage to protect our fabulous treasures much of which are delicate photo's, fabrics, and papers.

Feel free to use the membership form on the back of this newsletter.

Please come to a meeting when you can, as you are what make HHS what it is. We value your help making good plans for our future.

NOT to mention the great stories we share!

The following are Lifetime members committed to HHS.

Boyd Antill & Mary Tomlinson

John Berhow

Omar & Valerie Brendeland

Duane & Barbara Finch

Laverne & Elaine Helland

Darlene & Robert Herman

David & Cheryl Kalsem

Homer & Kay Kalsem

John & Ann Kalsem

Dean & Diane Lande

Elizabeth & Javerna Maland

Nels & Rowena Nord

Dr. Kirk & Liz Peterson

Paul & Florence Sandve

Harriet Sheldahl

Avis Steensland

David & Verda Tesdall

Gary & Janet Thompson

Marilyn Whetstone

Dr. Kirk & Liz Peterson

Orville & Delores Hauge

2014 Membership Form—Clip or Copy and Mail

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Circle those that apply please.

Annual Membership \$20

Lifetime Membership \$500

Gift Amount \$_____

2nd ed. DVD Purchase \$20

S&H for DVD \$2.50

Total \$_____

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