

# HUXLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 4

Winter 2021

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

**Reach us** - 515-231-9174  
[4huxleyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:4huxleyhistory@gmail.com)

### In person

“The Hub” museum located at  
515 N. Main in the 3C’s building  
or make an appointment to visit  
the shelter house.

Hours: M-F - 8:30 -10:30 AM  
or call to make an appointment.



**Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year**

### This and That and Stuff...

The Huxley Historical Society encourages you to stay in touch with us as we continue to work on projects mentioned in newsletters, minutes and reports. The website continues to be a work in progress and this year the site includes the updated and revised bylaws. Historical Society board members worked closely with an attorney to assist in making revisions that match not-for-profit organizational rules and laws for the State of Iowa. One of the things discovered was that elections are not a part of any regulation or rule. You can visit the updated bylaws on the website at [www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org).

See more “Stuff” on page 7!

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *To engage and support 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.*

# EARLY HISTORY OF HUXLEY

BY Nels A. Nord, Historian & Treasurer

Some documents I found that were given to me by the Huxley library from interviews of two long-time residents of Huxley on the History of Huxley:

In 1848 first settlers of Story County were the Ballard's who lived Northeast of Huxley about a mile. The name Ballard is used by many businesses in the Huxley area. And Ballard Community School was named Ballard because the Ballard Creek ran through Slater, Kelley, Huxley and Cambridge districts.

On May 17, 1855, 105 Norwegian immigrants head west from Lisbon, Illinois, with 25 oxen and horses and other animals for Story County, Iowa, and arrived on June 7, 1855, where they met for Sunday services on the Osmond Sheldahl farm where there was a fresh-water spring.

Just north of the settlement lived native Indians who were friendly and the immigrants learned to make cornbread and eat tomatoes. In return the Norwegians gave them many knitted articles.

They found plenty of good land and hurried to Des Moines to get the papers from the land office where they paid twenty-five cents of the \$1.25 an acre for their land.

The Norwegian settlement spread out and grew after the Civil War to areas of Cambridge, west and north of Kelley and Slater, and to the Sheldahl area. At one time every child that came to the six school districts was of Norwegian descent.

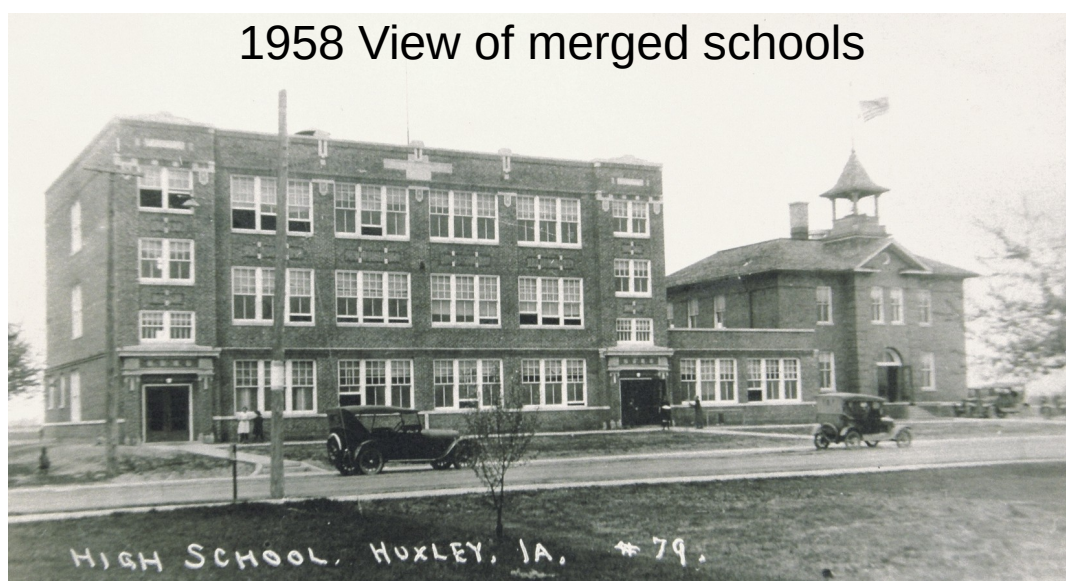
How did Huxley come to be? In 1882 the railroad was being built and S. S. Merrill, surveyor and President of the Milwaukee Land Company, purchased the land around Huxley and the village of Huxley was platted and named Huxley for Merrill's uncle, Thomas Henry Huxley, a nineteenth century author and biologist.



The old town of Huxley had hitching posts on both sides of the street. The town was incorporated in 1902 with a population of 199. In 1909 were businesses such as a drug store, meat market, two banks, grocery store, beauty parlor, the Commercial Café, livery stable, and a garage. There was also a town hall.

The steam powered creamery was started in 1902. The Huxley Creamery sent their products to Chicago via the Milwaukee Railroad

In 1900 the school system consisted of a one-room schoolhouse by the railroad tracks with 20 – 25 students of all ages attending. The typical school day consisted of starting the potbelly stove and carrying in water to use for the day. In 1908 a brick schoolhouse was built on North Main Avenue and 5th Street. There were eleven grades in this new schoolhouse with four rooms. Then in 1921 the Huxley Consolidated school was built next to the old school.



The depression in the 1930's broke many farmers and closed businesses. The average wage was around \$50 to \$60 a month. Most houses were built by local carpenters. Huxley streets were not paved and this led to horse-drawn sprinklers used to keep the dust down. Later gravel was used on the roads.

Among the first churches were two Lutheran churches; Palestine and Lincoln. Fjeldberg moved into Huxley in 1906. There was an opera house where traveling 'variety' people with songs and plays used to perform. Carnivals were also popular. Portable skating rinks were also used for entertainment.

Creamery Days was another social event in earlier times in the 1900's. Later it was replaced by the Huxley Horse Show from 1942 – 1956 with 3000 to 4000 people attending.

The first gas pumps held from 50 to 60 gallons of gas. If someone bought 3 gallons of gas, it was considered a good sale. A 1915 Ford cost around \$220. No driver's test was required.



One of the big events was when electricity was turned on in town. Most of the wiring was on the outside of the house. There was usually one light in the living room and one in the kitchen.

There was a brick and tile factory just east of the stockyards next to the railroad. In 1913 the bridge over the railroad tracks was put in. In the 1920's the old Jefferson highway (69) used to go down 5th Ave to 1st Street east. At the corner of 5th Avenue and 1st Street was a gas station.



From 1908 to around 1950 the Fort Dodge, Des Moines and Southern Railroad electric interurban street cars ran from Fort Dodge to Des Moines (pictured above) every two hours and would pick up passengers at the depot at East 1st Street and N 5th Avenue. You could ride from Ames to Kelley, Midvale, Huxley, Alleman, Ankeny, to Des Moines. (pictured below) The freight train ran until the late seventies and early 1980's. The Milwaukee railroad that ran from Los Angeles to New York City ran until the mid 1970's or early 1980's.

That's the story of early Huxley to now when Huxley has grown from 199 people in 1902 to (close to) 5000 in 2021 and still growing. *end*

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# Marty Robbins

by Nels A. Nord, Treas. and Historian

In the early 1970's the Huxley Jaycees sponsored a Marty Robbins show at CY Stephens Auditorium on the Iowa State University campus. It was one of the best bargains for entertainment you could buy at that time. It was the first time a major entertainer performed in Central Iowa. According to Larry Thompson, Leroy Peterson contacted two entertainers, Elvis Presley and Marty Robbins. The Jaycees chose Marty Robbins because he was \$4000 cheaper. The program was full of some really great music.

The show began with a Des Moines disc jockey and a group playing several songs in a professional style that prepared the audience for the headliner – the Marty Robbins Show.

After a short intermission, Leroy Petersen, president of the Huxley Jaycees, thanked everyone for attending the show.

Marty not only sang and played his guitar, but he could also play piano. He not only was a great entertainer, but wrote songs that became million-dollar hits.

Some of the songs he sang were; "A White Sports Coat", "Big Iron", "El Paso", "Red River Valley", "The Strawberry Roan", "Ain't I Right", "Feleena", "They're Hanging Me Tonight", and many more.

The Huxley Jaycees, headed by Leroy Petersen, worked hard at promoting this great event.\*\*\*

*Huxley Jaycees pictured with Marty Robbins*



Huxley Jaycees with Marty Robbins



# Huxley High School and Ballard Community High School Teachers and Administrators— Mrs. Garma Vera Markt

Part 4 of a series by Nels A. Nord, Treas. and Historian

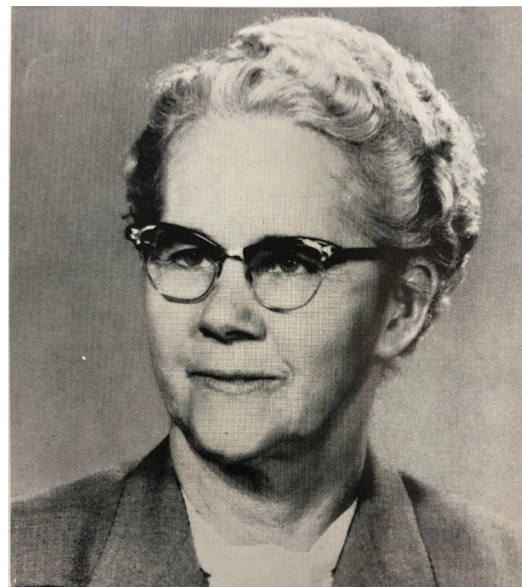
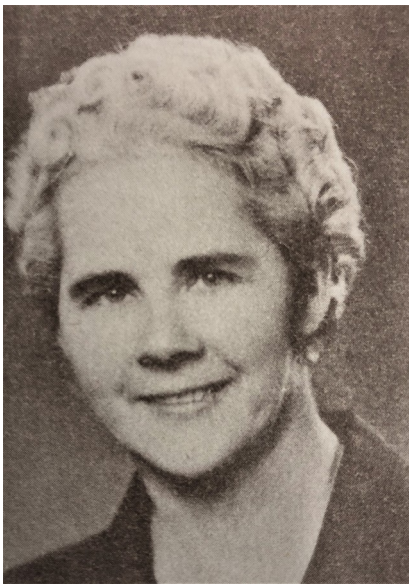
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Another teacher who was one of the best teachers at Huxley High and Ballard was Vera Markt from 1946 to 1968.

Garma Vera Markt was born February 26, 1900, at Garnett, Kansas, to parents David Hughes and Mary Clayton. Mrs. Markt graduated from Maryville High School in Maryville, Missouri. And then attended college at Northwest Missouri Teacher's College in Maryville.

After college she taught Latin and English at Maryville High School. She also taught in Oregon, MO, New Point, MO and Carson, MO and other rural schools.

Mrs. Markt was married to John Markt on January 24, 1923, in Nodaway, MO. They had two children; Rex, born January 12, 1924, in Pickering, MO and passed away in Blaine, Montana on April 2, 1971; and Doris Plath, who was born November 7, 1926, in Nodaway, MO and lived in Ames, Iowa.



Mrs. Markt's reputation reached outside the classroom as her students had no problem securing jobs in the workforce. Many of her students were long-term employees of Iowa State University offices and offices of the Department of Transportation. Her no-nonsense classroom ran like a well-oiled machine – and students learned to run them all. Her attention to detail (even down to the acceptable color of nail polish for office staff) kept students on their toes! *(This paragraph attested to by N Neilsen, HHS secretary).*

Mrs. Markt passed away on February 20, 1984, in Ames, Iowa. Her remains are located in Ames Municipal Cemetery.

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*End*

## Renew your subscription to HHS

HHS encourages you to renew your memberships as the January 31, 2022, due date arrives soon. This donation secures your subscription to all the HHS newsletters and events and is tax deductible.

### \* UPCOMING EVENTS \*

One of our upcoming events hosted by the Historical Society for its members will be a meal at the Nord-Kalsem Community Center on Monday, January 24, 2022. This event will include an interesting culmination of steps the Society is taking to identify the Ballard Cemetery with historical markers. Further details on this event will be forthcoming!

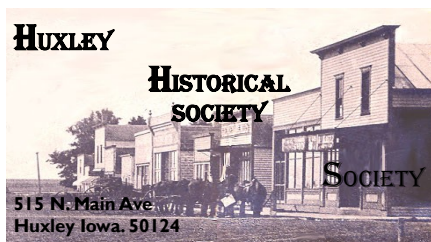


### Do you see what I see?

New Christmas lights all over town!! A beautiful addition to our community adding holiday cheer and traditions for community celebrations.

Merry Christmas to YOU!





2022 Membership Form—Clip or Copy and Mail  
Please Renew by Jan 30, 2022

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

2022 Annual Membership \$ 20.00

Lifetime Membership \$ 500.00

HHS donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The Fjord recipe booklet \$ 5.00

S&H for booklet \$ 2.00

2nd ed. DVD / 1939-1955 events \$ 20.00 S&H for

DVD \$ 2.50

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check# \_\_\_\_\_ Date of check# \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: **HHS-515 N. Main Ave-Huxley Iowa. 50124**

**Office use only:** email \_\_\_\_\_ member list \_\_\_\_\_ label \_\_\_\_\_

member card \_\_\_\_\_ tax letter \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*\*NOTICE\*\*\*\*\***

Effective immediately Membership fees will  
be due in January of each Year.

If you have stories and photos you would like  
to share, please send them to the Huxley  
Historical Society.

You can either send them by email to  
[4huxleyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:4huxleyhistory@gmail.com) or by mail to  
HHS, 515 N Main St, Huxley, IA 50124

**Website: [www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org)**