

# HUXLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 2

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## In Person

“**The Hub**” museum is located at 515 N. Main in the 3C’s building or make an appointment to visit the Nord-Kalsem Shelter House.

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

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## Gathering Oral Histories

This spring, the **State Library** launched a new oral history project titled:

### “Earth’s Bounty in Iowa: Then and Now.”

This project enables Iowans to tell their own stories about growing up on an Iowa farm. Their recorded narratives will focus on the firsthand experiences of Iowa farm families. The interviews will be posted on ***The Iowa Heritage Digital Collection website***, along with verbatim transcripts of some of the interviews. Some stories may be included in future HHS Newsletter too!

The **Huxley Public Library** will be setting appointments on Thursday evenings and Friday afternoons to collect citizen’s stories from Huxley and the surrounding Ballard community. Please call 515-597-2552, or stop by the library to make your appointment. A library interviewer will spend approximately 45 minutes with you asking questions and recording your answers. If you grew up on an Iowa farm, we want to hear from you.

**This is an amazing opportunity to capture our local history!**

*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.*

# Big Jim's Go Go

James Wright, nicknamed Big Jim, because of his six-foot, one inch, 265-pound frame, started Big Jim's Go-Go dancing around 1965 after buying the tavern from John and Betty Slamka.

Big Jim's was located where the original Casey's stands at East 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Highway 69.

Big Jim's was known all over the state. People would ask where you were from and when you said, "Huxley", they would comment that they know where that is, since they had been to Big Jim's, (mainly in their college days at I.S.U.) But even today you get that same answer, "Oh, I have been to Big Jim's!"

In 1973, my brother, Mark Nord (town marshal) and I (deputy marshal), approached the Mayor, David Tesdall, and the Huxley City Council members: T.B. Steensland, Ralph Throp, Terry Legvold, Ron Fjelland, and Gary Wirtz, regarding what could be done about the problems that arose from people that were patronizing Big Jim's. Patrons were drawn by the nude dancing that was promoted at the establishment for several years. There were over 50 fights a year that took place at the tavern, numerous public intoxication events, car accidents after patrons left the establishment and harassment complaints, domestic disputes plus many other complaints. The incident that led us to this point in 1973 was when a patron left the tavern (intoxicated) drove at high speed southbound on Highway 69, reached the viaduct over the Milwaukee Railroad and hit a car head-on. The young lady northbound on 69 was critically injured and trapped inside the car. It was a horrible scene. The intoxicated male driver was arrested for O.W.I.

Another incident occurred when four men from Pulaski, Iowa, attending a fireman's training session at I.S.U., left the tavern and the driver was so intoxicated he thought he was pulling into his own garage. He ran into a garage on Maple Drive causing several thousand dollars damage to the house.

One of the biggest attractions at Big Jim's was when he hired a male go-go dancer named "Filthy Phil" to dance at the tavern. I recall two busloads of Drake University female students and the line to get into the tavern was unbelievably backed up to the Texaco gas station. The congestion was a real problem and I had to direct traffic. Big Jim later conceded that hiring the male dancer was a big mistake.

In November of 1973, Huxley had a population of 1,377. A signed petition by

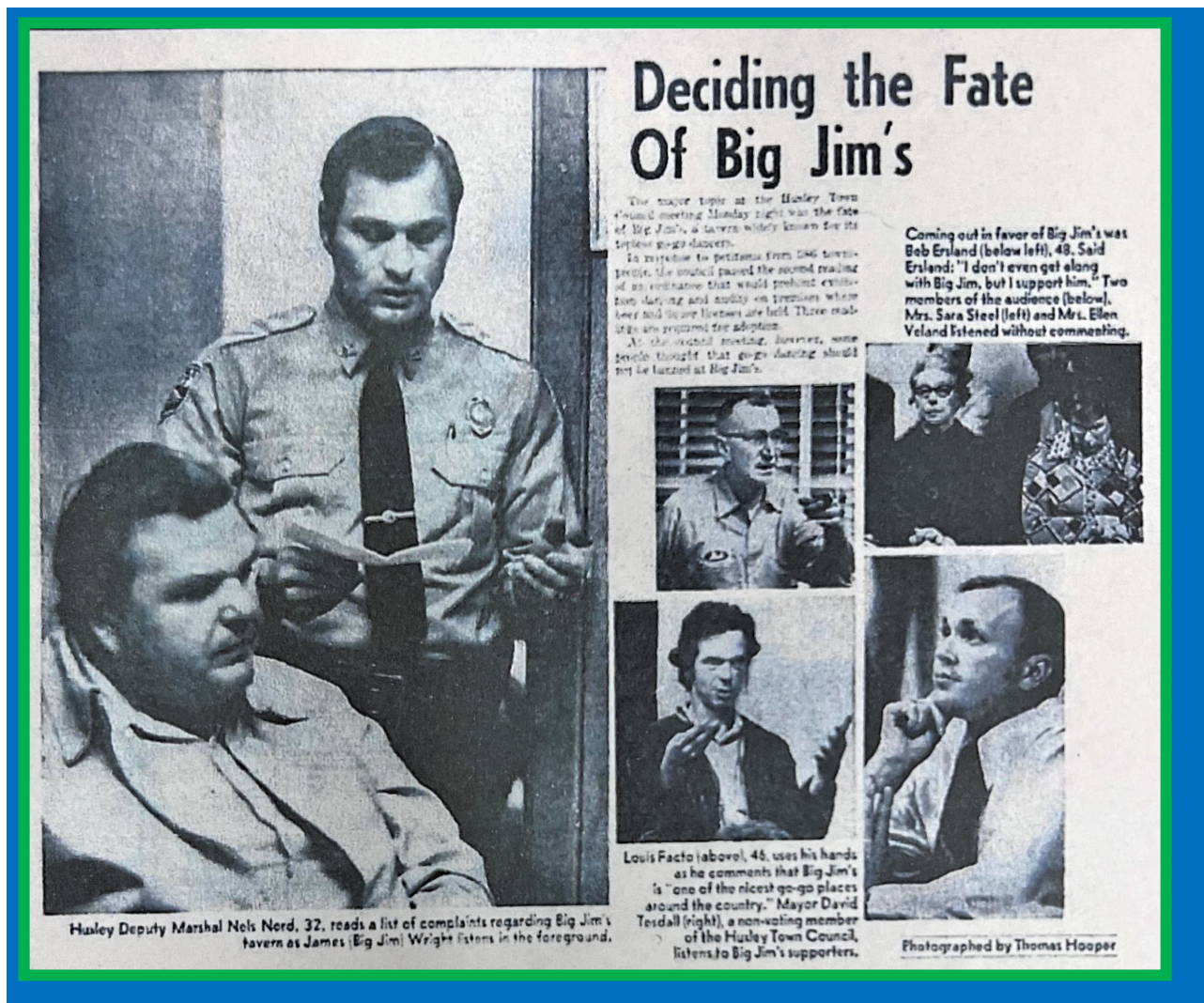
*Written by  
Nels A. Nord  
Historian*



386 persons was presented favoring a proposed ordinance to eliminate what it termed as "exhibition dancing and nudity in establishments where beer and liquor are sold". Any violation of the ordinance would give cause for suspension of the establishment's license for one year or a lesser time as prescribed by the Iowa State Liquor Control Commission.

The first reading of the ordinance was on November 12, 1973, and passed unanimously even though Big Jim's attorney presented a petition at the council meeting signed by 357 people who opposed the ordinance. On November 19, 1973, the second reading of the proposed ordinance was voted on and the vote was 4 to 1 in favor of the ordinance. Ron Fjelland was the only no vote. On November 26, 1973, the final reading of the ordinance took place. Fifty people crammed into Huxley City Hall on Main Avenue to express their support for or against the ordinance. The crowd was equally divided. There was no division among the five City Council members, who unanimously passed what was the toughest anti-dancing and anti-nudity ordinance in the State of Iowa.

After the Council meeting, I went home and no more than sat down and the police phone rang. The call from Big Jim's reported a fight was in progress and that two men had attacked Big Jim. I arrested two brothers from Council Bluffs, Iowa, for assault and disorderly conduct and transported them to Story County jail.



# Babe and Colt

*Stories of Yesteryear as Told by Diane (Peterson) Cronk – Part One*

Babe and Colt were the names of my dad's two farm work horses. I don't know for certain what breed of draft horses they were, but my guess is that they were beautiful Percherons because of their dark color. The team of horses were used around the farm for various duties. To a very little girl, they seemed gigantic. Their hooves were huge and as children we were warned not to get too close for fear we would get stepped on. I would watch my dad harness the horses in front of the barn's big sliding side door. It was in this area where the horses' harnesses and collars were kept hanging from nails on the wall. It seemed to take a long time to harness both of them. The straps and harnesses were as heavy as my dad and he would heave them up onto the horses' backs. I remember the sounds of the rattling of the clasps, chains, and leather straps and the thumping noise as they were placed onto the backs of the horses.

When I was probably around five or six years old, I remember being lifted by my dad high onto the narrow board seat of the old wooden wheeled wagon which was pulled by Babe and Colt. I was handed the reins to hold while my parents and sister and brother were on the ground handpicking corn and throwing the ears into the wagon. I could hear the ears of corn first hitting the bank board on the side of the wagon and then of them falling into the wagon. My Dad would holler his oral commands of "Giddy up" to the horses when he wanted them to move forward and then "Whoa" when he wanted them to stop. The team would not always stop at my dad's first oral command of "Whoa" and I would use my small muscles to pull back on the reins as tight as I could. My Dad would become agitated with the horses if they would not stop. There were times that he had to jump up on the wagon and grab the reins from me to get them to stop. He would then have to back the team up to the unpicked stalks of corn. I was so frightened that the big horses would run away with me while sitting on the wagon. The whole family was working out in the corn field because it was getting late in the season and there was still a crop which needed to be harvested. It was probably late November as I remember there was light snow on the ground. Clothing was not insulated in those days. I wore a wool headscarf tied around my head, a too small winter coat (left over from the year before), cotton holey boy's brown gloves, a dress with a pair of thin slacks under the dress to keep my little legs warm, and my shoes inside four buckle overshoe rubber boots which were supposed to help keep my feet toasty, but to no avail. I recall how bitter cold it was sitting atop that wagon for what seemed like hours with the nasty bone chilling wind blowing, burning and chapping my little cheeks and numbing my tiny fingers and toes.

The team of horses was used also to mow our front yard. We didn't have power lawn mowers or even a hand pushed reel mower. Maybe once or twice during the summer, when the grass would get 2-3 feet tall, Dad would hook the team up to a sickle mower and mow the yard. The mowed grass would be gathered up and fed to the horses or cows. We loved it after the yard had been mowed. It gave us a place to run and play games, do cartwheels and somersaults, and play baseball without losing the ball in the knee-deep grass.



Babe and Colt



Babe and Colt played a very important role in the yearly harvesting of the oats and corn. Even after we had a tractor that pulled a corn picker which harvested the corn, the horses were still used to run the elevator that carried the oats and corn up into the oat bin and corn crib. The horses were hitched to the turn stile. By the horses walking in circles, it created the power to turn the tumble rod which would operate the elevator. Sometimes my job was to see to it that the horses did not stop walking around in the circle. If they did, then I was to slap their hind quarters so they would again begin walking. The horses seemed to know what their job was and very seldom needed prodding to continue going around and around. A wagon hoist would be used to lift the wagon into the air so that the corn or oats would then cascade into the elevator. The tall hoist had a crank on the side of it that Dad would turn. A large steel cable had two chains which were hooked around the front wagon wheel axles. As one cranked the hoist, it would wind up the cable and lift the front of the wagon into the air. My Dad would then lift the end gate of the wagon and the ears of corn would begin to tumble into the elevator. We children helped by climbing into the wagon and kicking the ears out the end gate to keep the corn flowing. The elevator would carry the ears of corn to a hole in the roof of the corncrib and then let them drop below into the sides of the corncrib where the corn was stored for the year. The corn would be fed to the livestock during the upcoming winter.

Once in a while our dad would let us ride one of the gigantic horses. I don't remember whether it was Babe or Colt but one of them was more cantankerous than the other so it was always the gentle one that we would ride. I remember my dad lifting me up onto the large horse's bare back, my little legs straddling its big shoulders, and holding onto the horse's mane as tight as I possibly could. There was no saddle. Dad would then proceed to lead the horse around the yard. This was such a thrilling experience for a young child. I was sitting so very high on this huge gentle animal and when I looked down it appeared to be a very long way to the ground. I could feel the horse's strong muscle movements beneath me as he moved around the yard.



Clifford Peterson with Babe and Colt

Eventually the day came when the horses were no longer used for farm work. They had been replaced with tractors and because of the expense of feeding them, it was decided that the team should be sold. There was a kinship that developed between a farmer and his horses as they worked in the fields together. The horses were like partners to the farmer. It was a sad day for my dad. I only saw my dad cry twice in his life. Once when he sold Babe and Colt, his two gentle giants, and the other time when his mother died. I'm sure he shed tears because of his deep love for his beautiful horses but also knowing that they would soon most likely be slaughtered.

After I was married, I took one of the old horse collars that remained hanging in the barn and had a mirror put into the center of it. It now hangs on my back porch in our farmhouse near Elkhart.

The photos with this article include one with my dad and his faithful and reliable team of horses on the day he sold them. The other picture taken the same day is of his matched beautiful hardworking giants. This very day we witnessed the final passage of a time when horses played such an important role in our family's farm life.

**END**

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# Veterans

## Buried at Palestine Cemetery

### Civil War

J.O Johnson  
Sam Olson  
J.O. Severeid  
Iver Twedt  
Randy Weeks  
W.W. Weeks

### WWI

Johnny Apland  
Reuben Apland  
Nels Bauge  
Knut Bjelland  
Joe Dobbe  
Sanford Dobbe  
James Floden  
Alfred Johnson  
Albert Larson  
Joe Larson  
John Ness  
Lloyd Porter  
Clarence Tweedt  
Chris Wee  
Eli Wee  
R.B. Wee  
Seward Westvold

### WWII

Harold Aldrich  
Albert Bauge  
Marion Bauge  
John Beard  
John Brendeland  
Charles Christensen  
John 'Bob' Christensen  
Kenneth Christensen  
Lyle Claude  
Orville Dobbe  
Alex Egeland  
Alma Egeland  
LaVerne Fitch  
George Floden  
Joseph Floden  
Adrian Halverson  
Ole Halverson  
Paul 'Bud' Hennick  
Francis 'Frank' Hopson  
J. Leonard Johnson  
Merlyn Johnson  
Chet Nerness  
Jake Nerness  
Merle Nerness  
Lawrence Ness  
Joe Overland  
Obert Overland  
Omar Overland  
Joe Peterson  
Gerhard Rayness  
Joye Saveraid  
Kenneth Saveraid  
Herbert 'Herb' Tesdall  
Pastor Ernest T. Thompson  
Alfred 'Emil' Westvold

### Korea

Luciano 'Archie' Archuleta  
LaVerne Fausch  
Paul Jacobson  
Dwayne Johnson  
Ralph Kalsem  
Elwin Peary  
Fay Reitz  
Donald Rutter  
Paul Saveraid  
Richard Sharp

### Vietnam

Mike Antill  
Eugene Coles  
Mike Johnson  
Alvin Larson

### Auxiliary

Tomena Apland  
Inger Mason  
Susie Porter  
Maude Wee

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# We THANK YOU!

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***Cont. from Big Jim's***

On December 5, 1973, a temporary injunction was issued barring the City of Huxley from enforcing the ordinance banning "exhibition dancing". The injunction signed by District Court Judge C. H. Wilde barred the enforcement of the ordinance until it could be heard at a later date.

Judge R.K. Richardson ruled on April 1, 1974, that the ordinance prohibiting exhibition dancing was vague, overboard and beyond the power or authority of the City of Huxley. However, he ruled the City has the right to prohibit nudity in taverns, stating those ordinances are very specific and leave no question as to their meaning. Big Jim filed an appeal with the Iowa Supreme Court.

In January of 1977, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in Huxley's favor that the city ordinance was constitutional in not allowing nude dancing in an establishment selling liquor.

In 1976, the State of Iowa paid the City of Huxley \$6,393 as the town's share of income from State liquor sales. Huxley was one of only a few cities that suspended the liquor license of a drinking establishment. The Huxley Police Department cited two taverns for liquor violations and their liquor licenses were suspended for 30 days.

**END**

## Huxley High Alumni That Have Gone Before Us

**Lois Jean Hove (Oakland), May 11, 2023, Class 1950**

**Janette Tjdmeland (Hildreth), May 11, 2023, Class 1946**

**Dean Hanks, May 22, 2023, Class 1947**

**JoLene Wilhelm (Evans), June 1, 2023, Class 1952**

**Huxley****Membership Form—Clip or copy and mail**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership \$ 20.00

Lifetime Membership \$500.00

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Fjord Recipe Booklet \$ 5.00

2nd Ed. DVD / 1939-1955 \$ 20.00

Shipping and Handling for Book/DVD \$ 5.00

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

Ck # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: HHS  
515 N. Main Ave  
Huxley, Ia. 50124

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

Effective immediately membership fees will be due in January of each year.

Please share stories and photos with Huxley Historical Society by emailing them to **4huxleyhistory@gmail.com** or mail to HHS, 515 N. Main, St. Huxley, Ia. 50124

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