

Colo Historical Association

Apr/May/Jun 2025

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Vol 2, No. 2



COLO was indeed born of the railroad. In the year 1863 the rails were rapidly laid from the eastern county line to Section 8 of New Albany Township, which was then a swampy area on the prairie. The engineers could see the need for a working terminal in preparation of extending the rails westward into Story County. A wye was laid as a turnaround for the trains, and extra tracks laid. A railroad yard was established west of the depot that had been built just east of 4th Street. The first passenger train arrived in Colo in early 1863. With transportation came speculators; settlers looking for homes and business locations; and men with that "Westward, Ho!" look in

their eyes. Shipping and receiving began almost immediately with the arrival of the first freight train. Before the arrival of the railroad, early settlers had to make 60 mile trips by wagon to get their supplies. In May 1864, the railroad established the Colo Post Office in the depot; and Colo became a large shipping center. Shipments grew to exceed the size of the town in a very short time. It remained the largest and only shipping point in the county for several years.



This activity brought to the minds of the Colo residents the necessity of self government. On March 9, 1876, a petition with 36 signatures was taken before the Circuit Court of the State of Iowa, asking for the incorporation of the town of Colo and the appointment of commissioners to carry forth the business of an election. The court appointed five local men as commissioners to hold the election; and after due process of the

law, an election was held on April 26, 1876. Forty-five votes were cast, with 41 "for" incorporation and 4 "against" it. (Wouldn't it be interesting to know what the reasoning was of those 4?) Thereby, Colo became a legally incorporated town that day. A mayor/council form of government was set up at the first town election on May 13, 1876 with S.L. Bailey as mayor; and R. French, P.W. Hopkins, C.W. Gross, R.M. Bailey and P.E. Granger as councilmen. At that time, court affidavit declared 276 residents living in the town of Colo.

Next year, Colo will celebrate her sesquicentennial!
We'll keep you up to date on celebration activities!



Because Colo will celebrate its Sesquicentennial in 2026, CHA is sharing stories about some of Colo's early citizens. The following is the story about an early Colo businessman ...



GEORGE VARTY "G.V." GRANGER was born on September 1, 1866, in Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois, to Thomas and Mary Ann (Varty) Granger. His father had immigrated to the United States from England in 1852 at the age of 20. The family name was spelled GRAINGER in England, but the "i" was dropped when he arrived in America. Thomas traveled from New York to Sycamore, Illinois where he stayed with family and purchased some land there to farm. George's mother had also immigrated from England with her family in 1855. The Vartys headed west and also settled in DeKalb County, Illinois. It was

there where Thomas and Mary Ann met and married in 1863. While living and farming in Illinois, they had five sons, two of whom died in infancy. The family moved to Iowa in 1878 when George was 12 years old. His father purchased 80 acres of land for \$960 southeast of Colo where George helped him farm. He also did carpentry work.

Anna Viola Thurston was also born in Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois on February 13, 1871 to James and Sarah (Perry) Thurston. The family had come to Colo in 1880 when Anna was 9 years old. They lived on a farm 2½ miles southwest of Colo where her father was a stock-breeder of thoroughbred horses. George met Anna after both had come to Colo with their families; and they were married on February 27, 1890. Later that year their first child, a son named Jay, was born but only lived eighteen days. Their second child, Gladys, was born in 1892, followed by Georgia in 1894, Lorene in 1898, and Mildred in 1900. Three of their daughters lived their married lives in Colo: Gladys married Robert McIntosh; Lorene married Lee Wilson; and Mildred married Ralph McIntosh. Georgia moved to Illinois after her marriage to Manning Hunt and resided there.



In 1910 George entered the retail business, opening the mercantile, "G.V. GRANGER GENERAL STORE", on Main Street in Colo. The store was located where the library and community center now stand. Each year they would give their customers a thank you gift for "trading" at their store. Many of these gifts were pottery pieces with advertising on them, such as: "EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY – IT PAYS TO TRADE WITH GRANGER", "MIX WITH US AND SAVE DOUGH", or "A GOOD PLACE TO TRADE". These pottery pieces are highly prized today, especially by George and Anna's McIntosh and Wilson

descendants. Colo children liked to come to the Granger store to buy candy because they knew when Anna was busy and not looking, George would give them extra. After working long hours at the store, George would go home and retire to the basement to relax and smoke his pipe as Anna didn't allow smoking in their house.

General stores were a vital part of small towns in the late 1800s/early 1900s, and would not only provide household staples and supplies for towns people, but was also a social hub in the community where people could meet to discuss news, politics and more. Often farmers would barter butter, cheese, eggs, vegetables or other produce which the merchant could then resell. Many times items were purchased on credit and then paid for later when crops or livestock was sold. George and Anna operated their general store for 21 years until the early 1930s. When the Great Depression hit, they were unable to keep the store open. It was lost, as were several other Colo businesses, when customers were unable to pay their credit charges. After closing the store, George returned to working as a carpenter and mason, while also working for Guy Smith at his store.

During his life in Colo, George was an active member of the board of trustees at the Colo Methodist Church, attending meetings up to a few weeks before his death. He was also a member of Colo's International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) lodge for over 45 years. In fact, I.O.O.F. meetings were held in the room above his general store. He was an active member of the Colo Community Club, that organized early Colo celebrations and carnivals; and served on the Colo school board and town council. George was even a town constable for several years.

George and Anna celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1940 with a large reception at their home. Their four daughters and their families helped them entertain over 170 guests who came to extend their best wishes to the couple. A few years later, on March 4, 1946, George passed away at the age of 79 from cancer, which he had told no one about having. Anna remained in their home on 6th Street after his passing. She was a member of the Colo Garden Club and spent many hours tending to her flowers. Among her favorites were her poppies and irises. She was a 73-year member of the Colo Methodist Church, and in 1957 the Women's Society of Christian Services (W.S.C.S. which later became the United Methodist Women) honored her with a membership pin "in recognition of her faithfulness in the work of the church". Anna passed away twelve years after George on May 25, 1958 at the age of 87. She and George are buried in the Colo cemetery with most of their children, several grandchildren and a few great grandchildren. They have great, great-great and great-great-great grandchildren continuing to live in the Colo community today.



We have t-shirts for sale at the museum for

\$15 (s-xl) \$17 (xxl)

Grey sweatshirts available too **\$20 - \$25**

You can contact us if interested in purchasing
cha@netins.net



Pin **\$3**



Misc Postcards
\$1

2025 Members and Donors Individual ~ Family ~ Business

Paul Armbrecht
Bob & Joyce Ausberger
Kevin and Diana Bell
Jerry Cable
Barbara Carlson
John Carlson
Fred & Dorothy Cerka
John & Donna Cerka
Colo Telephone
Steve & Jan Cummings
Tom Cummings
Bob Dunshee
Patty Dykstra
Mary Eley
Joyce Finch
Kyle Foley
Rita Foley
Gary & Joyce French
Janice Gammon
Dwayne & Geri Gerlach
Jan Halverson
Heartland Coop
Carol Hedges
Paul & Ginny Heintz
Larry & Marie Hostetler

Michael Keul
Avery King
John & Cheryl Kingland
Alan & Lynnae Langmann
Elizabeth 'Ann' Law
Bob & DeAnne Lee
Dale Lyon
Paul & Kathy Mens
Pete & Victoria Messina
Brenda McGuire
John & Joan Niland
Marcia Nilles
Shellie Ornsgard
Ron Phares
Joel & Christine Powers
Charlie & Chris Rasmusson
Bob & Jan Robinson
Mike & Rhonda Smith
Brad Snodgrass
Tammy Spencer
Stan Squires
Deb Stitt
Kevin & Linda Torgeson
Bill & Nancy Tucker

Jolene Van Waus
Randy & Diana Watts
Ben & Maggie Weir
Gene Welsh
Kay Wessman
Ruth Westpfahl
Westside Farms (Tony & Nancy Kash)
Jim Wheelock
Norman Wibholm
Greg & Denise Wilgenbusch
Dennis & Tonnee Wilkening
Bob & Sharon Wilson

Thank You
For Your Continued
Support



*We WELCOME members and donors to
attend any of our monthly meetings.
Share your stories and ideas.*



Salmon Loaf

2 - 1# cans Deming's pink salmon
2 tubes of crackers, crushed fine
Salt, pepper
a little garlic salt, to taste
1/4 cup diced onions (or instant)
milk to make soggy

Mix well. Bag of potato chips,
crushed finely for top.

Bake in a 9 x 13 pan for 1 hr at 350°

From

'Recipes Nilands Cafe' recipe book

published in 1993

by John and Joan Niland

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1899 FREIGHT WRECK IN COLO

On Monday, November 27, 1899, at about 5:15am, in the Colo C. & N. W. yard, there was a head end collision just to the west of the depot between two freights – one a double header. The west bound double header, No. 31, ran into an east bound freight train, No, 36, that was standing on the main line intending to side track. It seems that the No. 36, pulled by two small engines, was running at a high rate of speed. When they started down the long grade east of town, the brakes were applied and all possible precautions taken, but owing to the rails being covered with a heavy frost making the rails slippery, the whole train slid along at nearly the same rate of speed. When they came into the Colo yard the men saw they were not even slackening speed and they all jumped, and a lucky jump it was, as the second engine of the two pulling the freight from the east ran under the head one raising it in the air so that the cab was 20 feet from the ground, and smashing both engines so badly that they were deemed worthless. The large engine pulling the east bound train was badly damaged, but with repairs it will be ready for use again. Four of the freight cars were entirely demolished including three cars full of coal. All sixteen freight cars had some amount of damage done to them more or less; and the track was twisted out of shape. There were three engineers and three firemen who had jumped from the trains to save their lives. None of them were injured to amount to anything; although one did have a sprained ankle. While the wreck was a very expensive one for the rail company, at the same time it was a lucky one that no one had been seriously injured or killed. The wreck was viewed by hundreds of sightseers all day long, many coming from surrounding towns. Wrecking crews, with derricks, from Boone and Belle Plaine, were sent to pick up the wreck with the assistance of the section men. Work clearing away the debris was carried on all of Monday and Tuesday with everything being cleared up by Tuesday evening. Trains were not badly delayed during this time as the side track was used as the main line.



(Taken from several articles in area newspapers between November 28, 1899 through December 1, 1899)

Colo Historical Association
Memorial Day
BEEFBURGER
LUNCH

Monday, May 26th

*11:00 - 12:30

*immediately following the services at the cemeteries

at the Colo Community Center
FREE WILL DONATION

Come and enjoy lunch
and see the Colo Veterans Wall
and other military displays

Services:

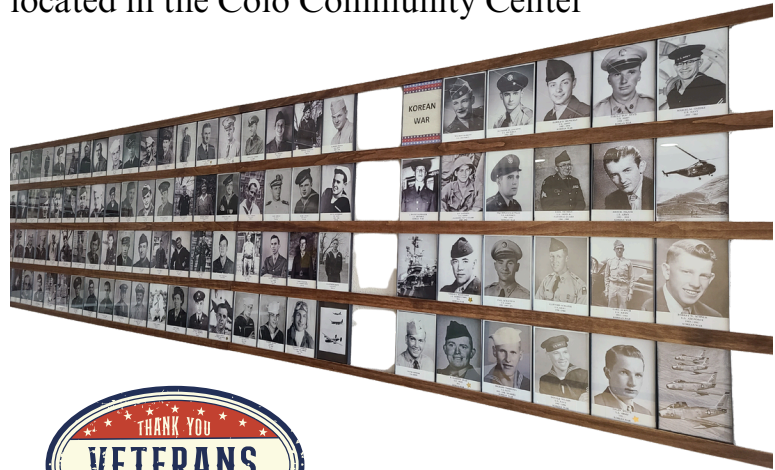
10:00 St James Cemetery

10:30 Colo Cemetery



Colo Veterans Wall

We've added the following veteran to the Colo Veterans Wall - **John Niland, Korean War, US Army** located in the Colo Community Center

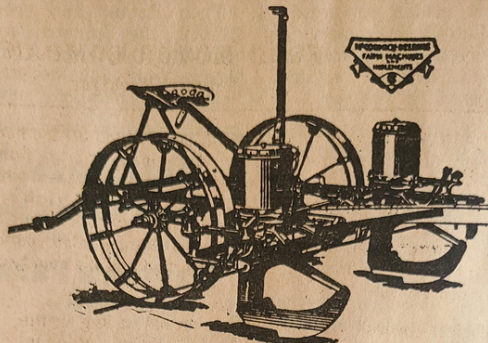


*If you or a family member are a current or former resident of Colo, graduate of Colo and a current or former military member/veteran, we would like to add your photo and information to our wall. Email cha@netins.net for more information.

COLO HISTORY WORD SEARCH



Bailey	Blair	BlueDevils	CarmodyPark
Cololowa	ColoTelephone	CornCobPile	Crossroads
Depot	DocBrinkman	DocGoodenow	Dog
FarrenImplement	JMCafe	JeffersonHwy	LincolnHwy
Nilands	OlsonTires	PWGrocery	PostOffice
Railroad	TwinAnchors	Voorhies	



Corn Planting Time

will soon be here again

HOW are you fixed this year? Better check up and see if you don't need a new planter or some repairs for the old one. We have McCORMICK-DEERING and HAYES CORN PLANTERS.

See us NOW for CULTIVATORS, PLOWS, SHOVELS and all kinds of MACHINERY REPAIRS.

We are headquarters for SARGENT'S CHICK FEED and Sargent's Stock and Poultry Feeds of all kinds.

Farren Implement Co.
Colo Colo

FORMERLY FARREN IMPLEMENT, the Used Equipment Center in Colo was advertising planters in the early 30's. The business started in 1921 under O.F. Farren and in 1923 his father S.C. joined in. S.C. handled farm machinery and feed until 1947 when Richard Farren joined the operation. In 1961 Dick bought out the entire business and 10 years later sold his interest to J.I. Case Company. Dick is now the manager of this used equipment equipment business. The business today employs 12 people.

APRIL 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Monthly Mtg 6:30pm	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
	Museum Open 10am-2pm				Museum Open 10am-2pm	



CALENDAR

MAY 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Monthly Mtg 6:30pm	1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Museum Open 10am-2pm						Museum Open 10am-2pm



Memorial Day Programs at cemeteries
Memorial Day Beefburger Lunch

JUNE 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Monthly Mtg 6:30pm	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
	Museum Open 10am-2pm				Museum Open 10am-2pm	

ADD THIS EVENT TO YOUR CALENDAR

You're Invited To

Colo Alumni Banquet

**Honored Guests
50 year - Class of 1975**

Come together, recall memories, and celebrate at our alumni banquet! Smokehouse 72 BBQ catered meal, Dan "Butch" Sowers, Master of Ceremonies, enjoy some School Trivia and more for a fun evening!

May 24, 2025	at Colo NESCO High School
Starting At 6:00 PM	Tickets \$16.00

Tickets can be purchased by emailing:
alumni@netins.net
dlshadow@netins.net - DeAnne (Cummings) Lee or text 641-377-6611
spencer8259@msn.com - Tammy (Andrew) Spencer

Checks made payable to: Colo Alumni Assn
 mail to: DeAnne Lee; 13625 Co Hwy D65; Radcliffe IA 50230
 Or **VENMO:** @DeAnne-Lee-Iowa





**Colo Historical Museum/Reed Station
OPEN**

**the last full weekend of the month
Saturday & Sunday from 10 am - 2 pm**

**Appointments available upon request
Email cha@netins.net**

**CHA monthly meetings are held the
1st Tuesday of the month at 6:30
@ the Colo United Methodist Church**



**Colo Historical Association
PO Box 176
Colo, Iowa 50056**

CHA is a member of:



Associations

