Colo Historical Association

Oct/Nov/Dec 2026

Vol 3, No. 4

Our town has a story worth remembering -



and we have an opportunity to give that story a permanent home!

- *A new historical museum will preserve the photographs, artifacts, stories, and memories that tell us where we came from and remind future generations of the people who built our community*
- *A new historical museum on Main Street, attached to the library and community center, would help bring renewed energy and visitors to our downtown, creating a place where history, community, and local pride could come together*
- *A new historical museum would give our children a fun and meaningful place to learn about the people, stories and events that shaped the community they call home - and inspire them to become the caretakers of its history for generations to come*

We are excited to let you know, we will definitely be breaking ground this fall! The contract has been signed. Due to the funds we have raised to date, we have decided to build the museum in phases. ***Phase One*** will focus on constructing a weather-tight building shell with the concrete floor, giving us a secure and protected space for our future museum. Interior work will follow as additional funds become available.

Phase One is estimated to cost approximately $120,000, with our final goal of raising $200,000. If you have been thinking about making a donation to the Colo Historical Museum, now is a great time to help make it happen! And if you have previously donated and would like to make an additional gift, we would be incredibly grateful for your continued support. If you are unable to make the donation you'd like, go ahead and pledge your gift and make monthly donations towards your pledge.

Every donation, **large or small**, brings us one step closer to having a permanent home to preserve and share Colo's history for generations to come.

Thank you to all of our CHA members, donors, volunteers, and supporters who have helped bring us this far.

Together, we can turn this dream into reality!



We have a pledge to MATCH donations from individuals dollar for dollar up to $5,000 through October 31st. Lets take advantage!

All of us have visited cemeteries and have seen the old, worn white marble tombstones that are leaning, sometimes broken, or have completely fallen over. There are some sinking into the ground; those that have been piled on top of each other; and a few that have been placed against a tree. The Colo community cemetery has all of these. The once-crisp lettering on the stones has been worn away by more than a century of Iowa's wind, rain, sun and snow. Most have weathered to the point that their names and dates are almost impossible to read, as though time itself is slowly erasing the lives they were placed there to remember. Yet even when all information on the stones has disappeared, they still bear witness to those who were loved, mourned, and remembered by their families long ago.

William Allen's "History of Story County", written in 1887, lists the names of those buried in the Colo cemetery. Allen wrote that there was a total of 120 graves in the cemetery at that time, and of those 120, he noted that 42 were unknown! 1887 was just twenty-five years after the original plat of Colo was filed and it seems unbelievable that in that short span, 42 graves could be unknown! Of the 78 graves whose names were known, over half of them … 44 … were children aged 12 years and younger. Those children are who we are writing about here. *(note: Colo's St. James Catholic Cemetery hadn't been established yet in 1887. Colo's Catholics many times buried their loved ones in St. Patrick's Cemetery in Nevada.)*

Diphtheria, measles and scarlet fever were just three illnesses that swept through Colo and the surrounding farms of New Albany township in the late 1800s. Parents felt helpless as they watched their children become sick and weakened from these diseases and many times, sadly, they watched them die. In those days families endured these quiet tragedies, often not understanding why such a terrible loss had come their way. The small white leaning and broken tombstones stand as a reminder of these children whose lives ended too soon. The tombstones can seem almost abandoned – cold, white, and still. Yet their loneliness also gives them a quiet dignity, as if they are patiently holding on to the stories of those who came before us.

In the April 2, 1880 issue of the Story County Watchman, it says *"Scarlet fever is raging among the young people of Colo and the New Albany township. Quite a number are down with the disease. Mr. Boomer has lost two children, and Mr. Brouhard has one that can hardly recover."* The Boomer family mentioned here had lost their son, Charley, on March 22nd – just 6 days before his 4th birthday – and their daughter, Laura, on March 29th – three weeks after she had turned 2 years old. On April 1st, the Brouhard family lost their son, Charley – one month after he turned 8 years old.

The 1881 diphtheria outbreak in Colo was a bad one. The Story County Watchman from November 4th, 1881, says *"Diphtheria is raging so badly in Colo that our schools have been closed and almost every family in town is more or less effected with it."* The outbreak that winter claimed several of Colo's children. Most of them had a white tombstone placed to mark their grave, but sometimes a child never received a marker at all. Thomas Cheville, 3 year old son of John Henry and Mary Cheville, New Albany farmers, died on November 9th that winter. He was buried in the Colo cemetery with no marker ever placed there. Soon after his death, his parents and siblings left Colo. Other children buried here, who died in 1881, are: Myrtle Rush, 11 mons; George Morgan, 3 mons; Verna Allard, 1½; Cora Bishop, 7; James Mead, 4; Charles Lantz, 11; Charles Shaffer, 4; Nellie Thornton, 1; and Laura Gressly, 12, who was buried by her sisters Rosa, 11, and Viola, 1.






Four months later the February 24, 1882 issue of the Story County Watchman says *"Diphtheria has again made its appearance in Colo to an alarming extent and several deaths."* On the same page, it says, *"Mr. David P. Wood's family of Colo lost two children last week of diphtheria, and some other members of the family are quite ill and not expected to live."* Those children were: Henry Wood, 3 years old, and his little sister, Nellie Wood, 1 year old, both of whom died on the very same day of February 15th. A third child, Grace Wood, died later that week … ten days after her 10th birthday. Their names are all included on one leaning white tombstone in the Colo cemetery. The words have faded so badly they are almost too hard to make out today. Others lost in 1882, who are buried here, are: Maudie Soesbe, 2; Nellie Hall, 11; Jenny Rogers, 11 and Susie Troutner, 6.

The town of Colo put quarantines into place to try to stop the spread of these diseases. On March 17, 1899, the Colo Chronicles said *"There were no services in any of the churches last Sunday on account of the quarantine."* and *"There are at present thirty-two cases of measles reported in town, and the schools will not open for at least a week."* That same day the Colo Watchman said *"School is still closed on account of measles. Fifty cases reported at this writing."* Whether it was thirty-two cases or fifty, Colo was hit hard that year with measles.

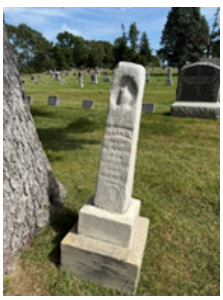
Families of clergy who came to preach in a Colo church were not immune from these diseases. Rev. David Ellenberger of the EUB church lost two children: his daughter, Ida, in 1890, and his son, George, 2, in 1892. Both children are buried in the Colo cemetery. The family left Colo a few years later for Oklahoma. The pastor of the Methodist church, Rev. Alfred Elliott, lost his son, Otis, 6, from scarlet fever in 1893. Otis is also buried here. His family left Colo two years after his death and moved on to California.

Although illness was responsible for many of these children's deaths, it wasn't the only reason. Accidents also claimed young lives. Four of those in the Colo cemetery are: Eva Gearhart, 2, who died from burns when hot coffee fell on her; Mellie Brouhard, 1½, who fell in their farm well and drowned (the same family had lost their son, Charley, from scarlet fever); Sadie Wiggins, 2, drowned in their water tank; and Ida Weir, 7, died when she was accidentally stabbed with a pitchfork while her brother was doing chores (she was buried next to her sister, Opal, who had died before her at the age of 5). Some of the other Colo families who lost one or more children in the 1870s and 1880s were: the Adams, Baker, Bowden, Boyd, Buffington, Carver, Cook, Dailey, Danskin, Earl, French, Graves, Kaiser, King, Learned, McQuillen, Mullen, Smith, Templeman, Tipton, and Vail families. Their children are all buried in the Colo cemetery. The Niland, Carmody, Hamm and McGrath families were just four Colo families who buried their children in St. Patrick's in Nevada. This is not a complete list but it shows that many, many Colo families at that time were touched by tragedy. The small white tombstones standing together tell a story that few people today would know – of a community that long ago, lost not just one child, but many, to accidents or diseases that arrived silently and then left, leaving families, and that community, with an emptiness that could never be filled.

So the next time you're in the Colo cemetery, or any cemetery, stop at one of the faded white marble tombstones for a moment and remember them. Those weathered stones were once placed there with love. Someone mourned, someone remembered, and someone believed that the name carved into the marble would endure. But years passed, families moved away, generations came and went, and memories faded as surely as the letters on the stones. But every so often, a person visiting the cemetery can stop and wonder who they were – the young mother, the farmer, the old man … and, yes, the child whose story had barely begun. For that brief moment they are no longer forgotten. We find their name, imagine their life, give them the simple gift of being remembered once again, and suddenly a life that seemed lost to time is brought back into our thoughts. Even if only for a moment.





Welcome

CHA Member:
Denny Presnall

The Colo Historical Association would like to extend its heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of our member, ***Ellen Riese,*** who passed away in July. Ellen supported preserving the history and heritage of our community. She was an active member, often volunteering. We honor her memory.



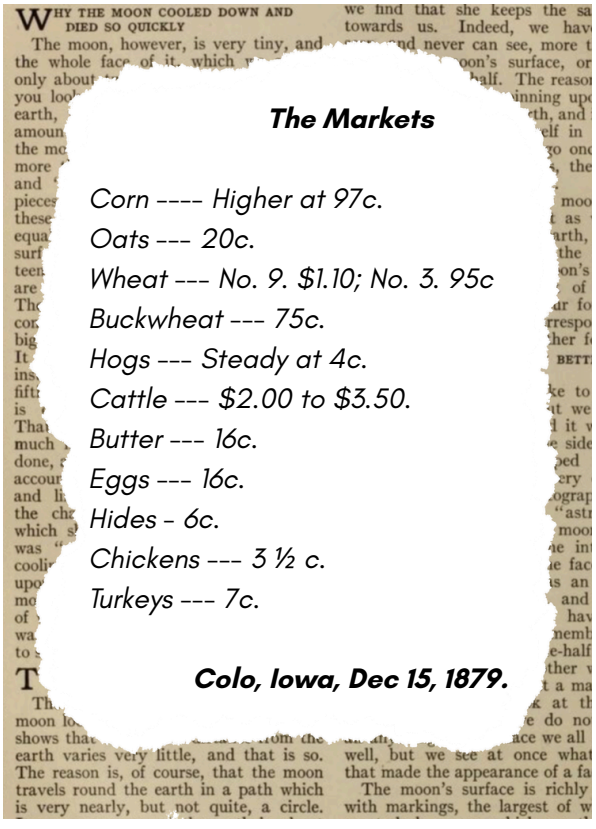
CONTEST ALERT

(2) $50 cash prize Winners!

Colo Christmas Lighting/Decorating Contest

No Registration required. All you need to do is be sure your holiday lights and decorations are lit the night of judging. All decorated homes within the city limits are automatically judged. Rural residents are included, but you will need to email cha@netins.net and give us your address so our judges can drive by your home and see your decorations. Judging will be the weekend of December 12th and 13th (weather permitting).

Unfortunately, you are not eligible to win 2 years in a row.



WHY THE MOON COOLED DOWN AND DIED SO QUICKLY

The moon, however, is very tiny, and ... the whole face of it, which ... only about ... you look ... earth, ... amount ... the moon ... more ... and ... pieces ... these ... equal ... surface ... teen ... are ... The ... cor... big ... It ... ins... fift... is ... That ... much ... done, ... accour... and li... the chi... which ... was ... cooli... upo... mo... of ... wa... to ... T... Th... moon lo... shows tha... earth varies very little, and that is so. The reason is, of course, that the moon travels round the earth in a path which is very nearly, but not quite, a circle. ... we find that she keeps the sa... towards us. Indeed, we hav... ...nd never can see, more t... ...oon's surface, or... ...half. The reason... ...inning up... ...th, and ... ...elf in ... ...o one... ..., the ... ...moo... ...i as ... ...arth, ...the ... ...on's ... ...of ... ...ur fo... ...respo... ...her f... BETT... ...ke to ... ...t we ... ...l it w... ...e side ... ...ped ... ...ery ... ...ograp... ..."astr... ...moo... ...e in... ...e fac... ...is an ... ...and ... ...hav... ...nemb... ...e-half ... ...ther w... ...t a ma... ...k at th... ...e do no... ...ace we all ... well, but we see at once what that made the appearance of a fa... The moon's surface is richly with markings, the largest of w...

The Markets

Corn ---- Higher at 97c.
Oats --- 20c.
Wheat --- No. 9. $1.10; No. 3. 95c
Buckwheat --- 75c.
Hogs --- Steady at 4c.
Cattle --- $2.00 to $3.50.
Butter --- 16c.
Eggs --- 16c.
Hides - 6c.
Chickens --- 3 ½ c.
Turkeys --- 7c.

Colo, Iowa, Dec 15, 1879.



In October 2016, the Colo Historical Association (CHA) was formed with a mission to preserve, protect, and share the history of Colo, Iowa. Ten years later, CHA is celebrating a decade of dedicated service to our community. Over the past 10 years the Association has collected and preserved local artifacts, shared Colo's stories and heritage, honored our veterans, and participated in community events that help keep our history alive. As we look toward the future, CHA remains committed to preserving the rich history of Colo for generations to come including our goal of building a new Colo Historical Museum where these treasured pieces of our past can be displayed and enjoyed by the community.

1872 RULES FOR TEACHERS

1. teachers each day will fill lamps and clean chimneys.
2. each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual tastes of the pupils.
4. men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
9. the teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.
10. you may ride in a buggy with a man, if the man is your father or your brother.



RULES FOR TEACHERS 1886

Duties: (before and after school sessions).

1. Wash windows and clean classrooms with soap and water at least once a week.
2. Check outhouses daily (plenty of old catalogues are available at the school board office).

Apparel: (forbidden to wear in public at all times).

Women:

~ bathing costume.

~ bloomers for cycling.

~ skirts slit to expose ankles.

~ bustle extended over ten inches.

Men:

~ detachable collar and necktie removed from shirt. shirt sleeves unlinked and rolled.

~ hair loosely cropped (unless bald or have disease of the scalp).

Conduct: (cause for immediate dismissal).

~ Smoking of cigarettes, use of spirits, frequenting pool parlors and public dance halls.

~ Marriage or other unseemly behaviour by women teachers.

~ Joining of feminist movement such as the suffragettes.



1910 RULES FOR TEACHERS

You will not marry during the term of your contract.

You are not to keep company with men.

You must be home between the hours of 8pm and 6am unless attending a school function.

You may not loiter downtown in ice cream stores.

You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have the permission of the chairman of the board.

You may not ride in a carriage with any man unless he is your father or brother.

You may not smoke cigarettes.

You may not dress in bright colors.

You may under no circumstances dye your hair.

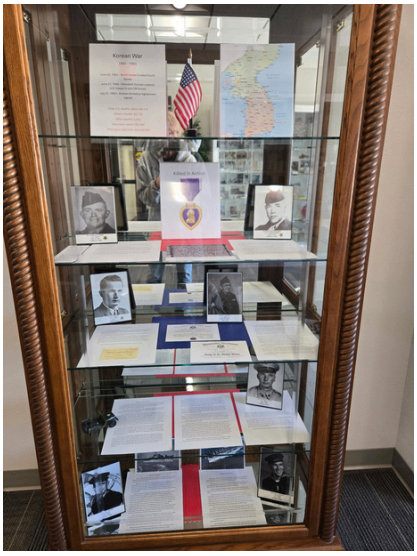
You must wear at least two petticoats.

Your dresses must not be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.



To keep the school room neat and clean, you must: sweep the floor at least once daily, scrub the floor at least once a week with hot, soapy water; clean the blackboards at least once a day, and start the fire at 7am so the ROOM WILL BE WARM BY 8AM.

Colo Community Center Display Cases



The Colo Community Center military display cases will be changing in time for Veterans Day. If you haven't checked out our stories and pictures from the Korean War Era, you may want to do it soon. Our Colo veterans featured are: Donad Kaufman, William Spaid (KIA), Harold G. "Bud" Davis, Harold Stanley Roadenizer (KIA), Earl Nichols, Galen Weuve (who died from disease contracted in Korea), Dick Thornton, Marcel Gaedke, David Sowers, Raymond Bellegante, Bill Barrett, Jay Jackson, Donald Andrew, Donald "Bud" Wilson, and Wayne Handsaker. Their stories will be kept in binders for future reference. The next group will be veterans of the World War II Era Army Air Force.

So far, we are putting stories together for Frederic Perry Benfer (KIA), Galen Andrew, LaVern Horner, Kenneth Nuttall, Martin McCoy Jr., Glenn Wengert Sr., Ray Granger, Charles Yeager Jr., and Ceabern Squires, Raymond Squires & Glenn Squires – all three brothers. The stories are all fascinating. If you know any more details for any of these men, or any others from that time period, be sure to contact us via our e-mail. (cha@netins.net)

We would also like to do a display for our Vietnam Era veterans in 2027. If you are a vet and willing to share, or have a family member with a Colo connection you would like to honor, please reach out to us. We have lots of our Vietnam War Era veterans' photos on our wall, and we would love to get their stories!

AND we are still taking photos of any veteran with Colo connections to add to our Veterans Wall located in the Community Center.



Photo recently added to our Veterans Wall:

Dean Hartwig - NAVY Vietnam



CHA had a BUSY Summer:

The primary goal of the Colo Historical Association is to preserve and share the history of Colo for generations to come. At the same time, we believe it is important to remain an active part of our community and support the activities that bring people together. Throughout the year, we enjoy participating in events such as Colo Crossroads, Annual Memorial Day Beefburger Dinner, Colo Truck & Car Show, RAGBRAI, Touch-a-Truck, Christmas in Colo, and many others.

By staying involved in our community, we not only help preserve Colo's past, but also help build and celebrate its future.















Be sure to stop by and see us at

CHRISTMAS IN COLO

Sunday, December 13th



NEW ITEM!! Arriving late October
In time for the Holidays!

Order Form on next page.

NEW DESIGN
Colo Depot





Shirt Color: GREY

LONG sleeve t-shirt
$ 22
CREW neck sweatshirt
$ 30
HOODED sweatshirt
$ 32

XXL - add $2

FLAT $10 Shipping or Local Pick Up Available

Proceeds from our shirt sales will go towards the Museum Fund

We have a few of our short sleeve t-shirts left.
If interested in purchasing, email us to see if we still have the design & size you are wanting.

Adult size t-shirts: 4 designs
$20 (S, M, LG, XLG) $22 (XXL)



Shirt color: WHITE
School Song lyrics on back



Shirt color: ASH



Shirt color: Graphite Heather



Shirt color: ASH

KIDS t-shirts:
Youth Sizes XS-XL
2 designs -grey shirt
$10



Design A



Design B

Colo Historical Museum Building Fund Donation Form

CHA is a 501c3 non-profit



Name _____

Address _____

Contact #_____ Email_____

_____ Donation Amount _____ Please keep my donation Anonymous

_____ I'd like to make my donation in recurring payments $_____ every_____

I'd like my donation to be: _____ In Memory of: _____ In Honor of:

NAME OF PERSON(S):_____

Make Checks Payable to: COLO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION Mail to: P.O. Box 176; Colo IA 50056

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Shirt Order Form:

NEW "DEPOT" Design - color of shirts GREY

_____ Long Sleeve t-shirt **$22** _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large _____ XX-Large Add $2.00

_____ CREW neck sweatshirt **$30** _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large _____ XX-Large Add $2.00

_____ HOODED sweatshirt **$32** _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large _____ XX-Large Add $2.00

Short Sleeve t-shirts

_____ Colo Blue Devils t-shirt **$20** _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large _____ XX-Large Add $2.00

_____ Colo Corn Cob t-shirt **$20** N/A-Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large _____ XX-Large Add $2.00

_____ Colo 50056 t-shirt **$20** _____ Sm N/A-Med _____Large _____ X-Large N/A-XXL

_____ Where My Story Begins **$20** _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large N/A-XXL

Kids t-shirts

_____ Design A - **$10** Youth Sizes: _____ X-Sm _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large

_____ Design B - **$10** Youth Sizes: _____ X-Sm _____ Sm _____ Med _____Large _____ X-Large

Shirts Ordered $_____

Shipping $_____ *Add $10 FLAT shipping (OR) _____ local pick up in Colo is available*

TOTAL DUE **$_____**

Make Checks Payable to: COLO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
Mail with order to: P.O. Box 176; Colo IA 50056

FOLLOW US ON
Facebook
for upcoming events



email: cha@netins.net
Facebook: Colo Historical Association - Iowa
Website: https://cha-iowa.godaddysites.com

If you would prefer to receive your quarterly newsletter in a PDF form via email rather than by mail, let us know at cha@netins.net

Colo Historical Association
PO Box 176
Colo, Iowa 50056

