

COLO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1959 SNOWSTORM



Looking back to March 1959 when a large snowstorm dumped 10-12" of snow throughout the state. The 60 mph winds that accompanied the snow created drifts up to 15'. In Des Moines, the storm disrupted the 6-on-6 high school girls basketball state tournament. Over 5,000 fans spent a memorable night in Veterans Memorial Auditorium to ride out the storm's first night. Local DJ Frosty Mitchell rode a snowplow to the auditorium to spin records for the greatest impromptu sock-hop. The crowd ate through 5,000 donuts, 6,600 sandwiches, 12,000 soft drinks and 3,000 cups of coffee. The following morning the crowds departed after a night of dancing, sleeping on bleachers, and with memories of one of Iowa's most remembered snowstorms.

Citizens of Des Moines weren't the only ones who opened their hearts, homes and businesses to those who were stranded by the storm. In Colo, Clare and Margaret Niland opened their cafe. They received a note from one gentleman expressing his



The arrow shows the location of the museum addition

Historical Museum Addition Moving Forward

In October, the Colo City Council officially approved the addition of the Colo Historical Museum onto the existing Colo Community Center/Public Library. We contacted several contractors and met with NuMark out of Pella. They have worked on numerous projects in Colo and for local residents receiving nothing but great reviews.

As we move forward with our fundraising, grant writing and continuing to preserve the history of Colo, we hope we will have your support. In the next few weeks you will receive a letter with more information on how you can help.

gratitude for the hospitality and kindness shown to him that snowy night. We've also learned that Barbara Barrett Carlson was one of the waitresses working at the cafe that stormy night. Meeting Clare and Margaret Niland and Charlie Reed that night, he mixed up their last names in his note. Charlie never married so there wasn't a "Mrs. Charles Reed". The note was corrected by someone back then but we're sure all of them, along with many others helped the stranded travelers.

*St. Michael's EPISCOPAL CHURCH CEDAR RAPIDS
The Reverend JAMES RICHARD GUNDURUM, B.D.
Rectory 4018 COUNCIL STREET, NORTHEAST
March 25, 1959 Telephone EMpire 2-0124*

*Clare Niland
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Reed,
Colo Motel,
Colo, Iowa.
My dear Friends:
I would like to take just a moment to thank you for the many kindnesses that you extended to me on that well remembered Saturday night when I spent some time sleeping in the booth of your Cafe. It was extremely kind of you to keep your place open for all the people who were stranded, and more charming hosts and hostesses I have not met in a long time. I will long remember my experience there and the kindness which you extended to me.*

Please give my very sincere regards to all the people who were there, especially the cook that night and the two waitresses. I can't help wonder if they ever caught up in their sleep.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed, thank you very much for allowing me to shower and clean up before starting back for western Iowa again. My wife and baby and I stopped again on Monday but no one was there that we had seen that Saturday evening before. I will stop whenever I go through hoping to see you again.

*Thank you again for all the nice things you did for me.
I am*

*Faithfully yours in Christ,
James R. Gundrum*

2025 Holiday Lighting Contest

Congratulations to the winners of the Colo Holiday Lighting Contest that was sponsored by the Colo Historical Association. We ask a couple of out of town residents to come to Colo and drive the streets of Colo (and rural if anyone emails us their address) and choose their top 2 favorite light displays. Of course they wish they could pick 3

or 4 and not have to narrow it down to just 2, that's how difficult it can be. We appreciate their help judging so we can keep the final decision impartial. A \$50 cash prize was awarded to Dennis and LuAnn Catt at 510 Voorhies Street and Melissa Larsen at 503 5th Street.



Colo Veterans Wall

The Colo Veterans Wall is located at the Colo Community Center. If you or a family member are associated in some way with Colo (**Graduate - Resident or Former Resident**) and are a past or current military member, please contact us so we can add your picture to our wall.

email: cha@netins.net

photos recently added:

M L Rankin

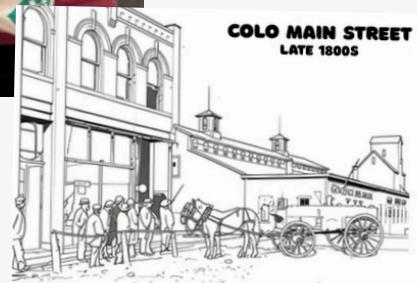
David Rankin

C Gale Oswalt



CHA PARTICIPATED IN CHRISTMAS IN COLO

The Colo Historical Association participated in the activities at Christmas In Colo. Because of the extremely cold temperature we moved our table inside to the Community Center. We handed out almost 100 S'more bags and goody bags containing Colo themed coloring books and colors, holiday eyeglasses, sticker sheets and an old-fashioned Christmas sucker.



COLO MAIN STREET
LATE 1800S

SMALL TOWN IOWA DRUGSTORES

Today, if you're sick you go to a doctor and the doctor may prescribe a medicine to make you feel better. You take the prescription to a pharmacy and give it to the pharmacist and they fill it. It wasn't always like this. Pioneer families used to make homemade remedies from roots, bark and herbs. Many local druggists made their own patent medicines (sold without prescription). They were also aided no doubt by the numerous snake oil remedies which were advertised as sure cures for all ailments. Before 1880 anyone in Iowa who sold drugs could register as a pharmacist. There was no state licensing or education required. A lot of quack medicines were sold.

The drugstores of the 1800s were usually owned and operated by doctors. They prepared the prescriptions in a separate room in the back of the store. Scales and weights, mortars and pestles, measuring glasses, a bottle capper and a pill rolling machine were the equipment used to make the medications from the raw materials they had, such as plants, herbs and mineral salts. They would then package the medicine in glass bottles or pillboxes with the druggist's name and directions on the label.

The pharmacy profession in Iowa changed after passage of the 1880 Pharmacy Law. The State Board of Pharmacy issued stricter educational and licensing requirements. Pharmacists had to pass state tests as well as earn a diploma from a college of pharmacy. With that, only registered pharmacists could retail, compound or dispense medicines or for medicinal use. Big changes occurred during the beginning of the 1900s. New ways of making drugs were introduced and federal laws were passed to stop the sale of useless quack medicines.

It was fortunate for the pioneers that a number of physicians had crossed the Mississippi. However, not all were graduates of medical schools. Many had obtained their education by spending a few months with older physicians and assisting them in their practice. When they felt they knew enough, the young "doctor" would then begin searching for openings, frequently choosing some new settlement or town on the frontier. Their stock of drugs and medicine was usually a supply of such things as calomel, jalap, aloes, castor oil, slippery elm bark, sulphur, tartaric acid, saltpeter, alum, hoarhound, bayberry, cayenne, hemlock bark, extract of logwood, pulverized rheumatism root, nervine, boneset, myrrh, quinine, goldthread, goldenseal, and peruvian bark. In case of fever a patient was generally bled, so every physician carried lancets for this purpose.

Some historians claim the first drug store in Iowa was built in Burlington in 1833. Not much is known about this, and Mason's Drugstore in Dubuque, built in 1837, claim they were the first drugstore in Iowa. Beginning in 1836 Iowa newspapers began advertising drugstores, and by 1838 a number of them had been established west of the Mississippi.

The variety drugstore was well established before 1846. By the late 1800s and early 1900s, almost every town in Iowa had a drugstore. Many were laid out the same. At the front of the store display cases contained a variety of articles — brushes, bottles of perfume, soap, razors, scissors and boxed candy. Often there was a cigar case with a tip cutter and a match dispenser. Purchases were wrapped in brown paper from a long roll and tied with twine. Many drugstores had ice-cream or soda fountains. The cherry sodas and hot fudge sundaes were maybe served at a long, varnished counter with tall stools. Early drugstores offered Iowans a variety of products from medicines to ice cream. They became popular gathering spots for families. Window displays often attracted attention and drew customers into the stores where adults and children were sure to find something they just had to have.

Through the years Colo has had several drug stores. Those who owned and ran those drug stores were: Edward J. Carver, Roy L. Cook, Richard "Bert" H. Hopkins, Lax (Fredrich) & Hefley, and John Brouhard.

The following are a few homemade remedies taken from an early book:

(IT SHOULD GO WITHOUT SAYING THAT WE'RE SHARING THESE AS ENTERTAINMENT ONLY – DO NOT TRY THEM YOURSELF!)

FOR DIARRHEA COMPLAINT:

"Slice some smoked fat bacon and fry it until you have half a pint of grease. While it is frying slice several large onions into the grease and when it is done, pur off the mixture. The dose is a teaspoonful once a day. This remedy has cured many of the very worst cases of chronic diarrhea and should be tried."

FOR SPASMODIC COUGH:

"Using Castor Oil & Onion Juice" – Grate a raw onion, squeeze out the juice and add half as much castor oil as you have of the juice. Keep in a bottle well corked, shake before using, and give a teaspoonful every two or three hours."

"Using Turpentine" – Wet a flannel with turpentine and place on the throat and chest and if the case is severe give from 2 to 5 drops on a piece of sugar."

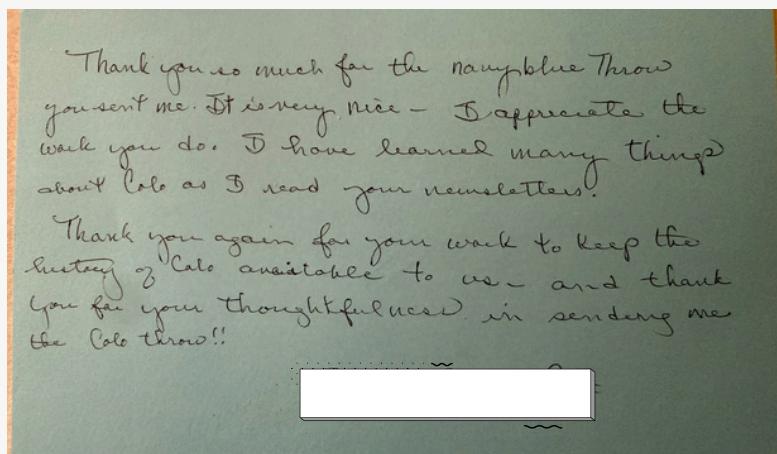
(Remember, these are only for entertainment – and hard to believe people used some of them 125 years ago – but please do not try them yourself.)

Have you renewed your CHA membership for 2026?

Membership renewals are due by March 1st to keep an active status. Now through March 1st we are running our special in honor of Colo's 150th Sesquicentennial Anniversary. Save up to 50% on your dues for 2026.

We have so much exciting things happening this year, we hope you'll continue your support.

It's always great to get feedback from our members. This was a letter we received last month from a member after renewing.

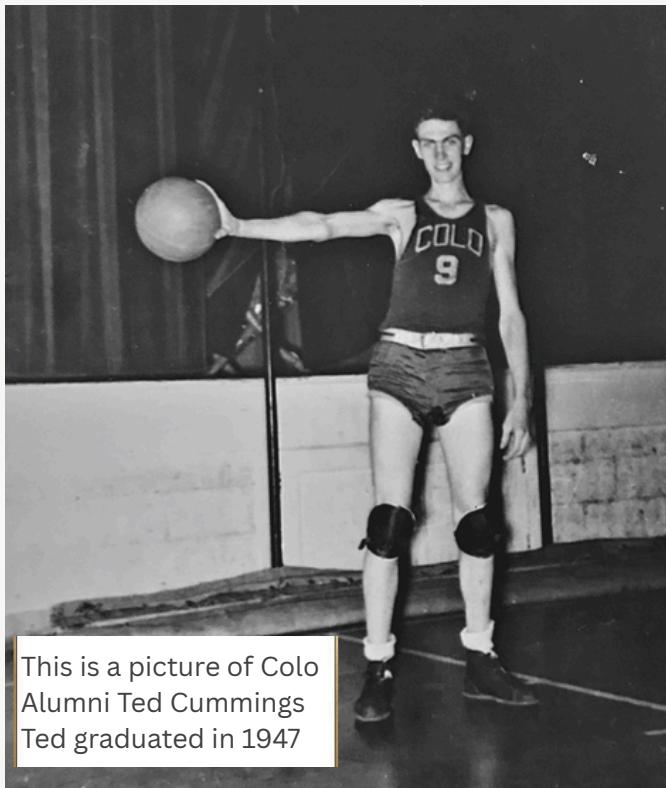


Colo Sesquicentennial Coins For Sale - \$20



This is the front and back of the numbered coins for sale.

There are still a few of the Colo Sesquicentennial coins left to purchase. Only 150 coins were made. If you are interested in purchasing a coin(s), you can email us as cha@netins.net or contact DeAnne Lee at 641-377-6611 (text or call). We can mail or make arrangements for local pick up.



Advertising from an old newspaper



We saw a great idea in the Huxley Historical Society's newsletter and we thought we'd give it a try ... or something similar!

(Thank you, Huxley!)

We want to hear your stories, with your memories, of growing up in Colo. Or maybe you have a story that you heard from your parents or grandparents about earlier days of our town. It can be about celebrations in town, about going to school here – maybe playing sports, attending church ... just anything about Colo! Write them up and email to cha@netins.net, or mail to PO Box 176, Colo, IA 50056. We hope to share the stories we receive in future newsletters.

- *If you would prefer to receive the quarterly newsletter by email as a pdf attachment rather than a paper copy in the mail, please email us and let us know.*

B C H U R C H E S S S C U L S A
U S C L U A O J A S O A I H O
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HISTORICAL
BUSINESSES
RAILROAD

MUSEUM
CHURCHES
LINCOLN

FUTURE
SCHOOLS
JEFFERSON

ARCHIVES
SETTLERS
CROSSROADS

2026 RENEWAL
COLO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Member Registration

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____

Dues are paid annually

Return form with your dues or donation to:
Colo Historical Association
PO Box 176
Colo, Iowa 50056

Thank you!

New Membership Renewing Membership Making a Donation

I am interested in:

Individual Membership
\$10 (Before March 1, 2026)
\$20 (After March 1, 2026)

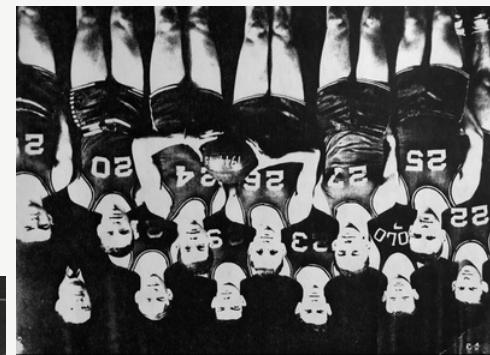
Family Membership
\$20 (Before March 1, 2026)
\$35 (After March 1, 2026)

Business Membership
\$50 (Before March 1, 2026)
\$100 (After March 1, 2026)

Donation \$ _____



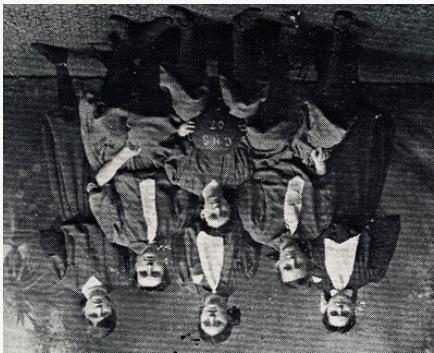
1928



1941-42



1975-76



1907



1067

Colo Basketball Teams

**Colo Historical Association
P.O. Box 176
Colo, Iowa 50056**

