

JOHNSTON SOCIETY

SOCIETY

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Pres Bob Otto
Secy-Trea Ray Schliebs

NEWSLETTER

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TIME & PLACE 4:00 P.M. November 29, 1995
Crown Point Conference room off Pioneer Parkway. Ways and Means Committee will put on a program on ideas for fund raising.

Annual Meeting

The articles provide for an annual meeting on the last Tuesday in April, 1996 at the City Library or at any place designated and noticed by the Board of Directors.

Fortunately there was no annual meeting held in April, 1995 and all officers and one director are holdovers because of the lack of any successors to be elected and qualified.

The last Tuesday in April falls on the 30th of April, 1996. It is anticipated that the Board will designate some other place than the City Library. The Articles state that the time is 4:00 P.M.

MEETINGS IN THE FUTURE

The board has determined that in the best interest of the Society, meetings should be held only once every other month commencing in 1996. The meetings tentatively will be held in the months of January, March, April, May, July, September and November. We solicit all comments to achieve greater attendance at the meetings.

CALANDARS

You are reminded that in order to raise money for the society we are selling the Iowa Sesquicentennial Calendar for the year 1996. It features Iowa Historic Scenes and sells for \$10 a piece.

BEAVER DR (The Stagecoach Road)

Early after we organized, President Bob Otto showed me (i.e. Chuck Roberts) a Picture with the caption under the picture "Stage Coach Station Operator". The picture was Mary Ann's Great-grandfather Jacob B. Rittgers, who moved from OH to IA in 1853 and purchased the property of Wm. P. Kogar. Before the grim reaper claimed him he had sired 22 children, Mary Ann's grandfather Andrew Johnson Rittgers being the 19th child and the youngest boy.

Needless to say, that caption and picture piqued my interest. I continue to research Stagecoach era in this area, but for reference purposes I have excerpted the County records as they relate to Beaver Dr., referred to in the instruments as "State Road leading from Fort Des Moines to Fort Dodge". The italics are my own and are my interpretations of what I believe the difficult records may have read or on the other hand, just explanatory.

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COUNTY COURT

December 13th 1856

Now comes on to be heard the matters and things contained in the Report of John McClain, the commissioner appointed to view and Report upon the propriety of making a change in the State road leading from Fort Des Moines to Fort Dodge. beginning $8\frac{1}{2}$ (In the handwritten original $\frac{1}{2}$ was expressed as 50/100 throughout) chains East of the North West corner of the North East quarter of the North East quarter of Section 15 in Township 80 North Range 25 West. Variation $9^{\circ} 8\frac{1}{2}$ chains to the corner above described.

And the Court after inspecting all things in said Report and Petition. Ordered that said change be made in said Road in accordance with the field notes and Plat. and that the same be Recorded and Platted.

Beginning $8\frac{1}{2}$ chains East of the North West corner of the North East quarter of the North East quarter of Section 15 in Township 80 North, Range 25 West of the 5th P.M. | W. Oak 22 M $41\frac{1}{2}$ W 2.25 | Thence running West variation $9^{\circ} 8\frac{1}{2}$ chains to the corner above described | White Oak 11 S. $51\frac{3}{4}$ 6.18 thence N. $63\frac{1}{4}$ W va. 10°

76.74 Set angle Post

Thence North

80.00 Set Mile Post No. 1

4.43 Set angle Post

Thence West variation $10^{\circ}30'$

16.39 Set angle Post

Thence North

19.00 Set angle Post

Thence West

- 47.10 Set angle Post at the centre of Section 9 Township aforesaid
Thence N.47W. variation 10°
- 73.50 Set angle Post. | thence N.48% W
- 80.00 Set Mile Post No. 2
- 18.00 Set angle Post | Section corner to Sec's 4,5,8 & 9
Bears N.W.
Thence, North 43°² West
- 25.00 A Branch, low Banks, Muddy Bottom
- 57.50 Set angle Post
Thence North 31½ West
- 80.00 Set angle Post No. 3
- 7.00' Intersected former Survey
Thence North 51½ W. For reference see Sec corner last described

April 16th 1852

Now comes J.H. Dollison, Commissioner appointed to inquire into the expediency of altering the State Road leading from Fort Des Moines to Fort Dodge via Hickmans' Mill, and files the following report (here insert) recommending said alteration; it is therefore ordered, that the 16th of July, 1852, be fixed for the final hearing of said petition.

B.(Byron) Rice
County Judge

County Court, May term, 1852

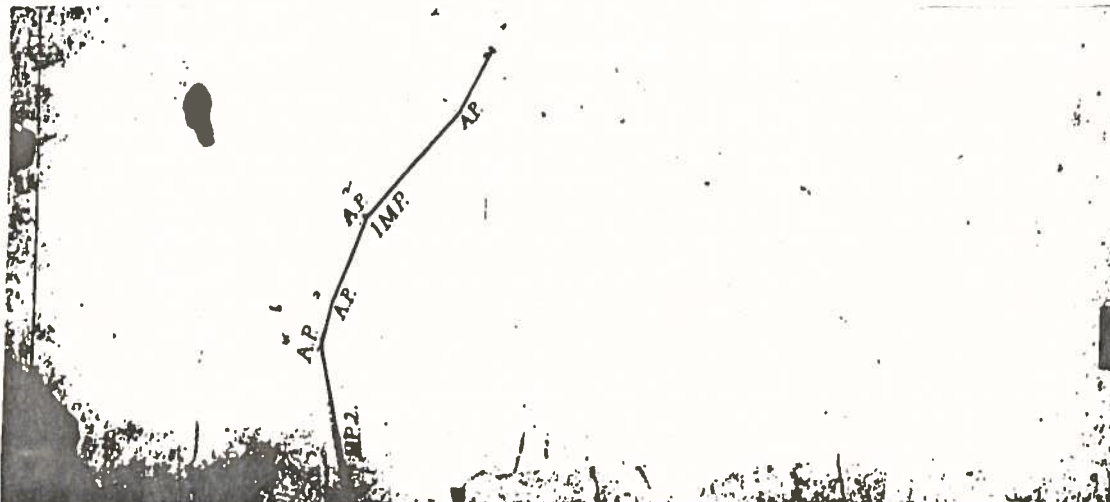
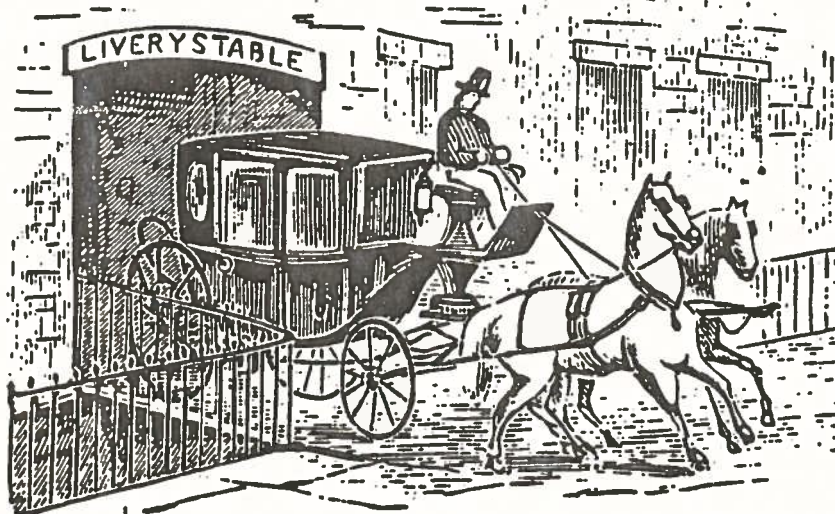
Now comes W.H. McHenry and others and file the following petition (here insert) praying for alteration of the State Road leading from Fort Des Moines to Fort Dodge on the south side of the Des Moines River, said alteration beginning at a point where said road crosses the line between Section eighteen in Township seventy nine. Range twenty four W 5th P.M; thence on the most practicable route to the residence of W.P. Kogar, thence on the most practicable route to intersect the Range line between Range 24 & 25; thence on the most practicable route to the corner of Sections 23, 24, 25, 26 in Township 80 N Range 25 W; thence North 20 chains, thence to the former residence of Widow Fouts; thence to intersect the said State Road near the residence of E. Spikemore. And the court being satisfied that that(*mistake in original record*) the provisions of the law have in the premises, it is ordered that Mr. John McClain be appointed Commissioner to proceed on Monday the 10th of May, inst. to inquire into the propriety of making said alteration.

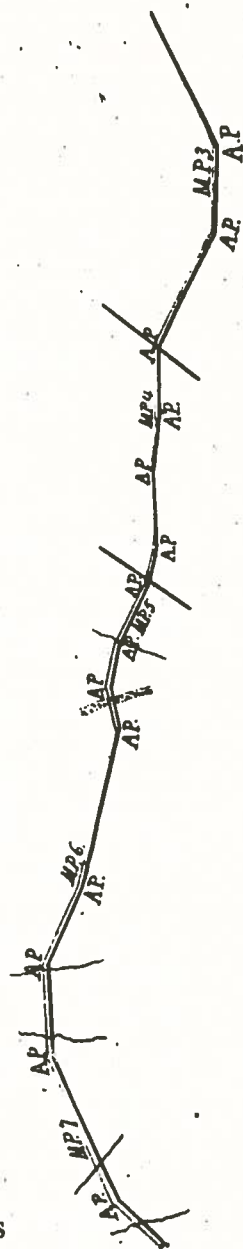
B.(Byron) Rice
County Judge

County Court July 12th 1852

This day comes on to be heard the matters and things contained in the petition of W.H. McHenry and others for the alteration of the State Road leading from Fort Des Moines to Fort Dodge (late Fort Clark) via Hickman's Mill, Bout's Mill, and the old residence of Reubin Clark in Boon county, said proposed alteration commencing at a point when said road crosses line between sections seven and eighteen (*this point is where the proposed new industrial road intersects with Beaver Ave about an eighth of a mile south of NW 55th Ave {Brennan Dr}*) in Township seventy nine North of Range twenty four W 5th P.M. Iowa, thence on the most practicable route to the residence of W.P. (K)Cogar: thence to intersect Range line between Ranges twenty three, four, five and six., thence North twenty chains (*the intersection of Merle Hay Road and Beaver Dr. 20 chains North of the 70th Ave overpass i.e. Nov 25, 1995*). thence on the most practicable route to the former residence of widow Fouts, thence to intersect the former survey at or near the residence of E. Spikemires; and the said petition and things touching the same having been fully heard and considered it is ordered and adjudged that the said petition be granted and the said alteration established on the following conditions: That the said petitioners and their securities pay all costs and expenses growing out of said petition and alteration, with the exception of that of the Commissioners and Surveyor.

The following is a plat of said alteration, together with the field notes of the same: (*Northwest appears to be in a down direction on the drawings*)





Beginning at a point 6? ??
 said road crosses the section line
 between sections No 7 & 8 T 79 N
 R, 24 W. 5P.M. 29 1/4 chains N(?) of
 the corner of 7, 8, 18 & 19
 T. 79 R. 24 W. thence N 4? ??
 (*italics furnished, not readable*)

Bearings	Distances	Remarks.
N 17 3/4 E	20.29	As above. set angle post.
" 20 1/2 "	41.20	Set angle post.
	80.00	Set Mile post No 1.
North	1.00	Set angle post
N 9 1/2 W	30.00	Set angle post
N 50 1/2 W	47.00	Set angle post
N 46 W	80.00	Set Mile post. No 2, which is angle post Bearing (?)
		20 N 54 1/2 E 56
N 57 3/4 W	33.50	Set angle post Hickory 16 N 67 E 71
N 59 3/4 W	56.00	Set angle W. Oak 36 S 72 1/2 E 13
	80.00	Set Mile post No 3

The stage era in Iowa was from the first July 1, 1847
 to the last to run July 1, 1870. At one time the Western

Stage Company had 3000 horses, 600 coaches and 1500 employees. The first stage of the Western Stage Co "rolled away from before the City Hotel" in Des Moines on July 1, 1854. By that time Western Stage Co had succeeded to the franchise of Frink & Walkers stage line.

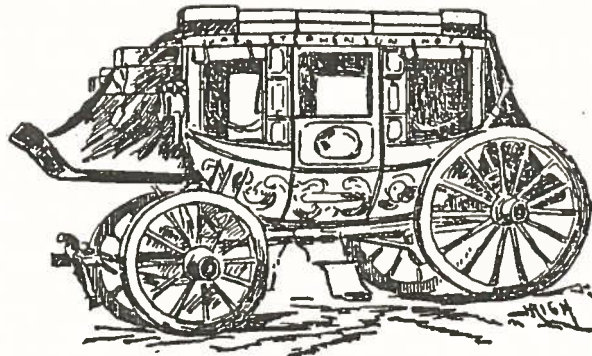
J.S. Clarkson, then editor of the Iowa State Register wrote in 1872 that the vehicles were "wagons without springs and with white muslin tops drawn by two horses, arriving with great regularity semi-occasionally"

On the first day of July, 1870, the last of the Des Moines line of stages left the Capital city. Meantime, it had developed from the two horse jerkeys of 1854 to the Concord Stage, and "till the rushing railroad caused the banishment of the stage . . . the four-horse coach was an important item in Des Moines Life".

The Book of Des Moines, published by the Des Moines School system in 1946 states that in one year the receipts on the line between Des Moines and Boone reached \$100,000.

Fares varied between the writers, I have read, some say the fare to Keokuk or Davenport from DM was \$10.00. Others have said 10 cents per mile and more, if the passenger was heavy. Also included was the requirement that the passenger was to carry a fence rail in case the stage became bogged down. Ankeny claims a stage route at some time on the other side of the river.

Andreas' Historical Atlas of Iowa, 1875 shows the back driveway of Mary Ann Roberts' home to be a road. That fact coupled with the old well immediately next to the front driveway leads me to believe that the stages pulled up to the residence of Jacob B. Rittgers in the 1850's and 1860's, but my research shall continue. Several of the sons of Jacob B. Rittgers born in the 1860's and before settled above Fort Dodge in Pocahontas, Rolfe, Humboldt, Emmetsburg and on into Minnesota.



COL. HOOKER'S STAGE COACH