

Newsletter

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President: Mary Jane Paez

Treasurer Donald Zarley

Vice-Pres. & Program: Patty Wallerstedt

Newsletter: Selma Duvick

Secretary: Beulah Darling

November Meeting

Date: Sunday, November 28

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Program: *The Simpsons*

Laverne will tell us about their Johnston years, and the history of their Johnston home.

We will have a potluck meal
Bring your place settings and a dish to share.

Guests are Welcome!

- Plans for Homecoming are in place.
- Mary Jane Paez needs to get an update on burials in the Rittgers Cemetery for the Tombstone Transcription Project on the internet.
- Ferne Michael would like to cooperate on another project with Mrs. Sharon Mahoney's class. She has been exploring possibilities for finding funds to clean gravestones in our cemeteries.

Growing up in Johnston: The Zarley Family

Don Zarley presented a lively and engaging memoir of his family and his growing-up years in Johnston. His great-grandparents, Robert and Eliza Zarley, came to Iowa in 1855, from Ohio. They settled in Warren County, near Liberty Center. Their son was John Zarley, Don's grandfather, who farmed, and lived in Indianola. John's brother Charley was a photographer in Indianola.

His great-grandparents Cyrus and Mary Ann Gates, also came from Ohio in 1852,

September Meeting:

Our opening began with each person present telling how far back they go in their ancestry to find a farmer.

- We are happy to report that Don Zarley will be our treasurer, replacing Don Denman.
- Ways and Means Margaret Pennington reports plans progressing for the garage sale.

¹ The Johnston (Station) Historical Society is an IRS 501 (c) (3) organization

and settled in Norwalk on 160 acres. Cyrus Gates came to Iowa at the same time as Hoyt Sherman; they became acquainted, and remained friends. Cyrus named his son, born in 1869, Hoyt Gates.

Mamie Gates, daughter of Hoyt Gates, and Don's mother, attended school in Indianola, and graduated in 1916.

Ray Zarley, his father, and son of John, farmed, then returned to school in Indianola to take teacher training. He taught school, and met Mamie there. They married in 1918. In 1917 he went into the Navy, lived in Cambridge MA briefly, and returned to Iowa to enter the Des Moines Tire and Vulcanizing business. He worked at the Ford Plant from 1925 to 1955

In 1926 Ray and Mamie moved their family of 3 children, Margaret, Guy and Rilla, to 2 acres in Johnston, where they built a home on Harlan Drive (now N.W. 54th Court). There, over the years Bob, Don, and Jerry were born into the family. And the house too was enlarged gradually over the years, Don recalled. On Mamie's 40th birthday she was gifted with a propane range, which replaced the old one which burned kerosene!

Neighbors were the Coxes, the Tarletons, and the Vignoviches, Frank Knapp, the Rohenfields, Frank Hankins, and the Wilcoxes.

Don attended the Johnston Schools, and played touch football with best friend Dick Tarleton. He collected bottle caps, made cheese box airplanes, and followed baseball closely. He remembers, as do most Johnston old-timers, the dust storms, and the big blizzard of 1936, the family was

snowbound, and some roads were not opened until spring.

He remembers grasshopper invasions in the '30's, and working in the garden. By his figuring, he mowed, over the years, nearly every lawn in Johnston to earn money. He caddied at Hyperion, worked at a kennel, milked cows, and was employed at Pioneer during summers, working for Karl Jarvis

Don was a Boy Scout, and went to the Boy's State at Camp Dodge. And he found time for athletics, especially baseball, where Chester Hartman was the coach. And at one time or another the Zarley children took responsibility for meeting the inter-urban trains from Des Moines, and unloading freight and parcels for Johnston at the "Johnston Station".

In 1945 Don entered Iowa State College, (now ISU), graduated with a B.S. in engineering in 1952, and then went on to Drake, where he took a law degree in 1954. After a time with Army Counter-Intelligence, he began a career in patent law. He and his wife Marilyn were married in 1953.

As he took us through the years in Johnston, Don related many stories of events, boyhood adventures, and family stories as well as his own. His brother Guy worked for Pioneer, served in the Navy, and went into the brick and tile business. His sister Margaret married Grant Voorhees, local architect, and was active in the community. Brother Bob went into the Navy, worked at Hanford in Washington State, and finally, at The Principal. Rilla was a basketball player; she went to Iowa State, and married veterinarian Verne Dvorak. Jerry was a

school administrator. All of Don's siblings are deceased.

The Zarley family was a vital, contributing part of the Johnston Community in those early days, and we owe them, and others, thanks for their contributions both then and now



October Meeting

Twenty-five members and guests met at the STARC Armory of the Iowa National Guard for a tour of the facility. The armory, built between 1991 and 1994, at a cost of \$16 million, is located just over the ridge from Camp Dodge, and overlooking Saylorville Lake. STARC stands for "State Area Command"

Our tour guide was Col. Robert King, Public Information Officer of the Iowa National Guard. We were welcomed into the large three-story atrium, which is used for ceremonial and social occasions; the Johnston School has held its prom in this space!

Col. King took us far beneath the atrium area to the State Emergency Center, where facilities are in place to deal with any emergency, which might affect the state. Every agency in the state (such as DNR, Red Cross, DOT, Public Health, 25 in all) which might be involved in emergencies (tornadoes, floods, etc.) has a computer and phone equipped station here, so that efforts may be coordinated. Images, such as GPS maps, can be displayed on a large screen. Col. King spent some time describing

efforts to make sure that all is Y2K prepared.

We visited the Iowa Communications Network—the fiber-optic network that connects schools, colleges and government offices throughout the state. This is the only state-wide buried cable optic network in the country. Communications from one station to another are routed through this facility, where, as we watched, a number of the staff were busy monitoring various programs.

The armory is also the site of the communications headquarters for the south central Iowa Highway Safety Patrol, and messages and information from patrolmen is routed through this station.

We saw an auditorium, often used by the Dept. of Corrections for parole hearings, and classrooms, where guard training can take place. The upper levels of the two wings of the armory are dedicated to offices and other support services of the Iowa National Guard.

We found this an impressive facility, which performs a number of important functions for the state of Iowa. Many thanks to Col. King, and to Bob Thomas for arranging our tour.

\$

Our End-Of -The Millenium Garage Sale

We netted \$460 on our Garage Sale, from rental of spaces, and sales at our tables. Thanks to all those who gave time and sale items, and especially to Mary Helen and Marvin Straker for donation of the Santa

collection, and the numerous jig-saw puzzles.

And Many Thanks to Dennis Elwell for permission to move the sale from the parking lot to the mall interior, when bad weather threatened



New Members

Welcome to the following new members:

Rolland & Wilma Graham
Waukee, IA

Helen Hughes
Des Moines, IA

Henry Phillips
Clive, IA

Connie Maxwell
Johnston, IA

Evelyn (Bice) Frondle
Cedar Rapids, IA

Ron Scherer
Johnston, IA

Kayla Davis
Grimes, IA

Lois Waggoner
Urbandale, IA

Catherine (Hunt) Brandon
Montrose, CO

Nancy A. Carroll
Ankeny, IA

Bruce K. Gaddis
Johnston, IA

FROM THE PRESIDENT.....

In October, the Society had its first big effort at fundraising. Our "garage sale" was a success. The successful part of it was not so much that we made some money, but that

we had so many people involved in the project. I couldn't begin to name all the people who volunteered to help, who brought their goodies to sell, and who donated money in lieu of participating. We were most fortunate that Denny Elwell agreed to let us go inside at Village Square, since the day was cold and threatening. And we are fortunate that Ferne and Lloyd Michael brought and sold Santas and jigsaw puzzles donated by the Strakers. Gay Friestad made the sign for the road and Margaret Pennington did an excellent job of coordinating the additional vendors. We took in some money for memberships also. Now is the time to renew for a number of years before the membership fee increases in January. I was also delighted with the people who donated toward the cause. As a 501 (C) (3) designated Society, all donations are tax-deductible. I hope you will consider the Society before the end of the year for your contributions.

Mary Jane Paez



Thanks for the Renewals!!

Many of you have taken advantage of the offer to renew early and get your membership for \$5 single and \$6 family. This has not only been to your advantage, but has helped us to update records gradually, instead of all at once in January. You may still renew (as far ahead as you like) at this rate until January 1, 2000. **And it's still a great deal!**

After January 1, 2000, membership dues per year are:

Single, \$10, and Family \$12

If the number after your name on the address label is '99' you need to renew!! Please send your renewal

Check to:

The Johnston Station Historical Society, Post office Box 109
Johnston, IA 50131

We are also interested in recording the maiden names of members, especially those who grew up in Johnston. Thanks!!!



Contributions

We have received contributions from:

Catherine (Hunt) Brandon
Montrose, CO

Margaret Beck
Panora, IA

In memory of Herbert Kuefner
and Lowell Temple
from Ferne Michael
Windsor Heights, IA

THANK YOU!

The JSHS is an IRS 501 © (3) organization,
and contributions are tax-deductible



Our Cemeteries

Over the past few years, our cemeteries, Valley View, Ridgedale, Kinsey/Lawson, have been the concern of the JSHS. We have done census counts, clean-ups, with help of

the school. A number of the headstones are in need of repair and/or cleaning.

Through the efforts of Ferne Micheal, and with the help of Supervisor Angela Connolly, the Polk County Board of Supervisors has approved a \$2500 Community Betterment grant to the JSHS, for the purpose of cleaning the headstones

Arrangements have been made with a local firm to do this cleaning in the spring of 2000. We want to express our appreciation to Supervisor Connolly, to Bruce Bernard of the County Manager's office, and last but not least, to Ferne, for her efforts!



The Johnston Post Office

There is a history behind every institution, and the Johnston Post Office is no exception. As the community has grown so has the need for postal services. And since more changes are coming to the post office in the near future, it seems a good time to look back at its history.

The first government post office in this area was located on Beaver Road (N.W. Beaver Drive) across from what is now Hyperion Field Club, and served the area from 1888 to 1903. The postmaster there was **Jake Randolph**, who also had a grocery store at that location.

This post-office was closed in 1903, and mail service continued with rural delivery (RFD) by horse and buggy, from Grimes.

In 1909, **John C. Hayes** became postmaster, with the post office re-

established, in the Hayes Grocery store, which was on the south-west corner of what is now Merle Hay Road and N.W. 62nd Ave.

Again, this post office was decommissioned in 1912, and Johnston residents and businesses had a Grimes address.

The U.S. Government re-commissioned a post office, in 1923, in what was at that time the Carter Store, at the same location (and probably the same building) as the Hayes Grocery on Merle Hay Road. The first postmaster there was **Bruce C. Carter**, and **Mrs. Amelia Carter** also served there.

In July of 1943 the U.S. Post Office was moved to 59th and Merle Hay Road, in what was then Otto's Store, next to the Otto's Service Station. The postmaster there was Arlene Otto, who a few months later became **Mrs. Arlene Otto Murray**.

Mail came out to Johnston on the Inter-urban railway, and was dropped off at a location just across from the post office, where the VanDee Ice Cream shop is located

Arlie V. Otto was named postmaster in 1949, and served until early 1965. **Helen Dunn** was acting postmaster through that year.

In 1966, the post office location was moved to a suite in the strip mall at 5965 Merle Hay Road, in front of Murray Circle.

Robert Crees, was named postmaster in December 1965, and served there until **Wayne Stall** came as postmaster in March of 1967 Wayne was postmaster until about 1973, when he moved to the Norwalk Post Office

Betty Otto took over duties in Johnston, and was named postmaster in 1975. Betty was our postmaster until she resigned in 1982. During the following 2 years, a number of post office employees worked there as clerks, or officers in charge. And during this period there was some question as to whether this post office would become a Des Moines sub station instead of an independent office. Fortunately for Johnston, this did not occur.

In 1984 **David Osborn** came to Johnston as postmaster The current post office building was constructed north of the Village Square Mall in 1986, and operations moved there, with much larger post box and work area. Osborn served here until spring of 1999.

Greg Chamberlin was name as postmaster in August of 1999.

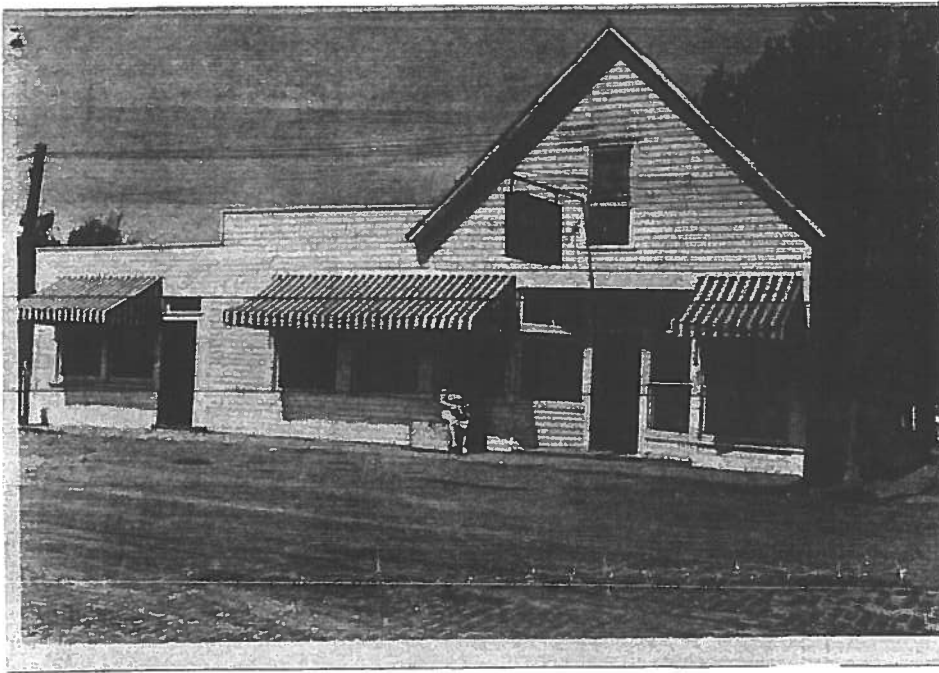
The need for more space for mail and equipment at the current post office has led to plans to enlarge the facility. Greg Chamberlin says that the new addition will be located to the east of the present building, and will nearly double it in size.

He hopes that construction can begin this fall, with interior work done over the winter. Currently, there are 7 delivery routes, and 6 substitute carriers, plus 3 clerks to serve in office and at the counter.

Chamberlin expects that new routes will be added in the near future. The Johnston Post Office is a first class post office, which means that it can carry out all post office functions.



Thanks to Betty Otto, Wayne Stall, Karla Hansen, Greg Chamberlin, David Osborn.



Carter's Grocery Store and Post Office. (after 1936)
 Worthy Surber's Barber Shop on the left

**Please note: There will be no meeting in December; Next meeting on
 Sunday, January 23, 2000.**



**Johnston (Station) Historical Society
 Membership Application**

Date _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Maiden Name _____
 (if applicable)

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mark appropriate boxes

Type of membership:

() Single membership \$10.00 (\$5.00 before Jan.1,2000)

() Family Membership \$12.00 (\$6.00 before Jan.1, 2000)

() Former Student

() Spouse of Alumnus

() Membership Renewal

() New membership

() Last year at Johnston _____

Make checks payable to: Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Mail to: P.O. Box 109
 Johnston, IA 50131

Donations over and above membership dues are tax-deductible under IRS Code 501(c) (3)