

Newsletter

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President: Mary Jane Paez

Treasurer: Donald Zarley

Vice-Pres. & Program: Patty Wallerstedt

Secretary: Beulah Darling

Membership: Ferne Michael

Newsletter: Selma Duvick

January Meeting

Sunday, January 23, 2000
Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Crown Point Meeting Room

Program:

R. Wayne Skidmore, "Skid"
Will reminisce about his years with Pioneer
Come and enjoy

! We will have a pot-luck meal
Bring your table service, and a
dish to share

wordiness went beyond those six or seven lines and rather than breech the next year's space, I would use a scrap of paper to continue my train of thought. I remember writing about President Truman and hoping that Rock Hudson would "wait for me". Sometimes my entries were serious, other times nothing but prattle.

My older brother loved to tease me. One day he and his friend found my diary and couldn't unlock it. Instead they squeezed the book until the many slips of paper fell out. They regaled themselves with my entries. Later that evening at the dinner table he announced that Tom Casey had kissed me while we were cleaning erasers. I was so mad that the next morning, when the garbage truck went through the alley, I threw the diary onto the top of the heap. It would have been fun to fill the book and keep it for posterity.

From the President.....

As members of an historical society, we are all interested in recording and preserving history. This history can be about an event, a person, or what-ever.

When I was in 6th grade I was given a diary. The unfortunate part of the diary was that it was a 5-year diary with only six or seven lines for each day. It was a nightly ritual for me to write about my life and those around me. Sometimes my

We just passed a milestone in history. My granddaughters, 4 and 6, were allowed to stay up past midnight to welcome the new year and new century. They and their cousins were asked by their aunt to write about who they were, what they were like, and some of the events of the times. The stories will be put away and brought out again in ten years. I wish I'd thought of that.

When it comes to reporting and preserving history, you've got to start them young.

Good health and happiness to you all in the coming year

Mary Jane Paez



LOOKING AHEAD.....

Get out your Calendars and Daily Diaries, and note the following dates for JSBS meetings during the coming year: Note that the annual meeting in April is on a Tuesday. Unless otherwise announced, all meetings are at the Crown Point Center on Pioneer Parkway in Johnston.

- February 24 (Wednesday),
- March 26 (Sunday)
- April 25 (TUESDAY, annual meeting)
- May 28 (Sunday)
- June 28 (Wednesday)
- July 30 (Sunday)
- August 23 (Wednesday)
- September 24 (Sunday)
- October 25 (Wednesday)
- November 26 (Sunday)
- No meeting in December.



Wishing a speedy recovery to.....

Don Denman, our former Treasurer. Don is now home from Texas, and recovering from serious illness.

Ferne Michael, our Membership Chair, who is at home recovering from shingles.

Membership Renewals:

Check the date on your mailing label. If it says "99" you need to renew.

Memberships are now \$10 for a single, and \$12 for a family membership. Send your check to:

JSBS P.O. Box 109, Johnston, IA 50131
If you have renewed recently, and find that is not reflected in the date on your label, it may be that the information has not yet reached your editor. It will, so be patient!! We are having an end-of-the-year crunch.



November Meeting

At our November meeting, Laverne Simpson reminisced about growing up in Des Moines, where he graduated from Roosevelt High school in 1935.

As a young man he worked at service stations (for \$1 per day), and as a trucker for his father. He and Shirley Sheridan were married in 1941, and in 1942 he, like so many others, found himself in the Army, serving with the Air Force..

He was CO of a motor pool and his squadron was responsible for ferrying supplies and troops as well as wounded from port to port throughout the Pacific war theater, mostly in New Guinea, and later on in the Philippines. He served overseas from July 1942 to November of 1945. On his return he went into the trucking business, and began his own company, Western Transport.

He and Shirley have two sons, Jeff and Joe. In 1955, Laverne moved his family to the Johnston area when he purchased the Garlock Fruit Farm, 200 acres on what is

now 86th Street. It was a good place to raise a family. And for a while the fruit business was a good one. They sold apples from a stand near the house. Later he bought additional acreage on the east side of 86th street.

When the price of apples went down and stayed there, the family abandoned the orchard business, but continued to enjoy living in the Garlock home.

This house had been built, probably in about 1902 or 1904, by the Bauman family, and was, and still is, remarkable for the fine workmanship and sturdy construction. It has 6 bedrooms on the second floor, one on the first, along with living room, dining room, kitchen, etc. and a roomy and comfortable third floor. And it has a fine porch, not to mention a tile barn to the rear.

In recent years the house has been rented, and the Simpsons live in a new home across the street. The apples are long gone.

Laverne brought to mind some of the businesses and landmarks which no longer exist in a rapidly changing Johnston: Robinette's Chevrolet garage, Elwell's store, the Iltis Lumber Company, Opal's Diner (Opal Turpin), Otto's service station, the Feed Store, Aulich's Texaco Station, and Sellner Oil company.

Laverne continues active in his business, the Mid Seven Transportation Co.

New Members

Welcome to the following new members!

John Miller, Des Moines
Charles Flesher, Des Moines
Jon Duvick, Des Moines

James Reichsen, Johnston
Clarence & Esther Schlenker, Des Moines
Don and Jean (Wigton) Heldenbrand,
Montezuma, IA & Tucson, AZ

Thanks to the efforts of Ferne Michael, our Membership Chair, many of our members renewed before the membership dues rise. Welcome to all for the year 2000!!



Thank You!

A very special thank you to all of those who have sent contributions to the JSHS:

Audrey (Herrold) Archer, Broomfield, CO
Ruth Dougherty Santa Maria, CA'
Richard & Linda Hyde, Johnston, IA
Patricia & David Goss jr Johnston, IA
Faye Hanson, West Des Moines, IA.
Wesley Jordan, Johnston, IA
Eva Mott, Milo, IA
Wayne & Ruth Sellner, Panora, IA
Martha (Weatherspoon) Stevenson,
Edgartown, MA
Philip Murray, Johnston, IA
Mary Jane and Alix Paez, Johnston, IA
Margaret Sharp, Johnston, IA
Russell & Wanda Slauson, Grimes, IA
Radomir & Deloris Vignovich,
Ahwahnee, CA
Mary Barnard Petterson, Seattle, WA
Mavis Kingsbury, Ames, IA

Memorial Gifts

Gifts in Memory of H. Albert Aulich have been received from:

Mary Ojendyk
Evelyn Bachman
Ida Trier
Merton & Jeanne Hansen

Emma Jean Stillwell
 Mary Kennedy
 Robert & Elizabeth Otto
 Mervin & Marion Kuefner
 Maxine Loose
 Charles & Shirley Burkett
 Ray & Ruth Deloris Jones
 Raymond Schlenker
 Lloyd and Ferne Michael
 Carroll & Lilly Broadie
 Selma & Don Duvick

Gifts in Memory of Leota Myers have been received from:
 Ferne & Lloyd Michael

In Memoriam

H. Albert Aulich

The city of Johnston lost a part of its earliest history with the death of Al Aulich. He died on December 11, 1999, at Northfield, MN, where he and Irene had moved two months earlier.

Al was born in Grimes, and lived in this area all his life. He was best known in earlier days for his Texaco Station just east of the old school, and where the Four Corners Feed is now located. Later this building housed his upholstery business, and after the city was incorporated in 1969 it became City Hall for a time, as Al took on the job of city administrator for the newly-incorporated city of Johnston..

He and Irene were members of the JSHS, and were intensely interested in the history of this community. They were always willing to help in uncovering facts and stories of the history of Johnston.

The Society extends its deep sympathy to his wife, Irene, to his daughter, Alene Fink, and to the rest of his family.

(It is expected that a Walgreen Store will be built on the property on N.W. 62nd Ave. where Irene and Al lived for so many years).



Leota Myers

The JSHS is saddened to hear of the death of Leota (Otto) Myers on December 24, 1999. Born in Valley Junction, she had lived mostly in the State Center area, and recently in Marshalltown .

Leota had been a member of the Society for about a year and a half. We send our sympathy to her friends and family.



Wayne Stall

The Johnston community lost another long-time resident in the death of Wayne Stall on December 28, 1999. Born in Dallas Center, he lived in the Johnston area all his life. Wayne was postmaster in Johnston from 1967 to 1973, and retired from the Norwalk post office

He also served with many civic and local volunteer organizations: the Johnston Fire Department, of which he was a trustee; the city planning and zoning commission, the Johnston Lions Club. He served in the Air Force in World War II, and was a member of the American Legion.

The JSHS sends its sympathy to his wife Pat, and to his nine children and the many great-grandchildren; and to his brother Dwight and his sister, Maxine Fjare of Council Bluffs, who is a member of the JSHS.



**HISTORICAL SOCIETY DISPLAY
FEATURES
BERT MCGRANE**

Local Society members may want to stop by City Hall to see the display in the case along the hallway. It features the life and career of Bert (Louis Bertram) McGrane

Old-timers, (and those not so old) will remember Bert McGrane as one of a trio of exceptional writers (including Sec Taylor and Jack North) who covered sports for the Des Moines Register and the Des Moines Tribune from 1923 until January of 1964, and made "The Big Peach" tops in sports coverage. :

Bert McGrane graduated from North High in Des Moines, and attended the University of Iowa and Drake University. He and his wife Veronica had two daughters and two sons.

Bert McGrane and his family were residents of Johnston from the 1930's until sometime in the 1970's. The McGrane home was a farm house, with barn, located on the NW. corner of Beaver Road and Fruitland Drive (now N.W. 57th Ave.)

The house stood derelict for many years after the family left it, and the property was sold; eventually it was burned by the Fire Department as a practice exercise. But the grove of trees which surrounded the house is still to be seen on the corner.

Bert McGrane was given many honors by his professional peers, winning prizes for his writings. He founded the Football Writers Association, in 1941, and served it for many years in various offices. He died in 1987.

(Display by Ferne Michael)

**The Genesis and Fate of the
Panora Speedway**

The roadway we know as N.W. 62nd Ave has been called at various times Johnston Road, State Highway 44, U.S. Highway 64, and the Panora Speedway. The section of road west of what is now called Merle Hay Road had its beginning in a decree by the Circuit Court in Polk County, in 1882. At this time it was just a section line on a map of Webster township, the line which separated section one on the north from section 12 to the south.

Much of this land, some 1100 acres, had been owned by the Robinsons, whose Robinson Ranch, established in about 1871, had gone bankrupt. In 1878 the land was acquired by J.B. Edmonds, and C.T. Ransom, In 1882 a Circuit Court case resulted in a decree that a "highway extending 66 feet wide", be established, along the section line "dividing and between section 1 and 12", that it be free for public use, and that the road supervisor for the county make sure it be kept free of obstructions, etc. At that time the road supervisor was J.H. McDivitt. who also owned much of section 13, just south of section 12, extending south to what is now Meredith Drive.

The "highway" was undoubtedly a dirt or gravel road, and eventually extended west to the Dallas county line. We have all heard of the efforts to "get Iowa out of the mud"; but it was not to happen just yet. In 1925 the Primary Road District No. 5 in Polk County projected a road from Des Moines to Panora, and beyond to be known as the Panora Speedway. It was plotted over the old road along the section

lines, and routed to curve north at the present 86th Street, and then west again toward Grimes, at what was known as "Garlock Corners". This was to be financed by assessing local property owners.

Among those property owners along the route are the familiar names of those who were early land-owners in the district: F.R. Otto, Catherine Schlenker, W.A.H. Seibert, Jacob Bauman, W. F. Peitzman, Wm. F. Friar, Fred J. Wilson, Dietrick & Julius Kuefner, Henry C. Wallace, Henry Wallace (no initial given), Iola B. Wallace, A.E. Aulick; , P.M Betz, and N.J. Otto, among numerous others.

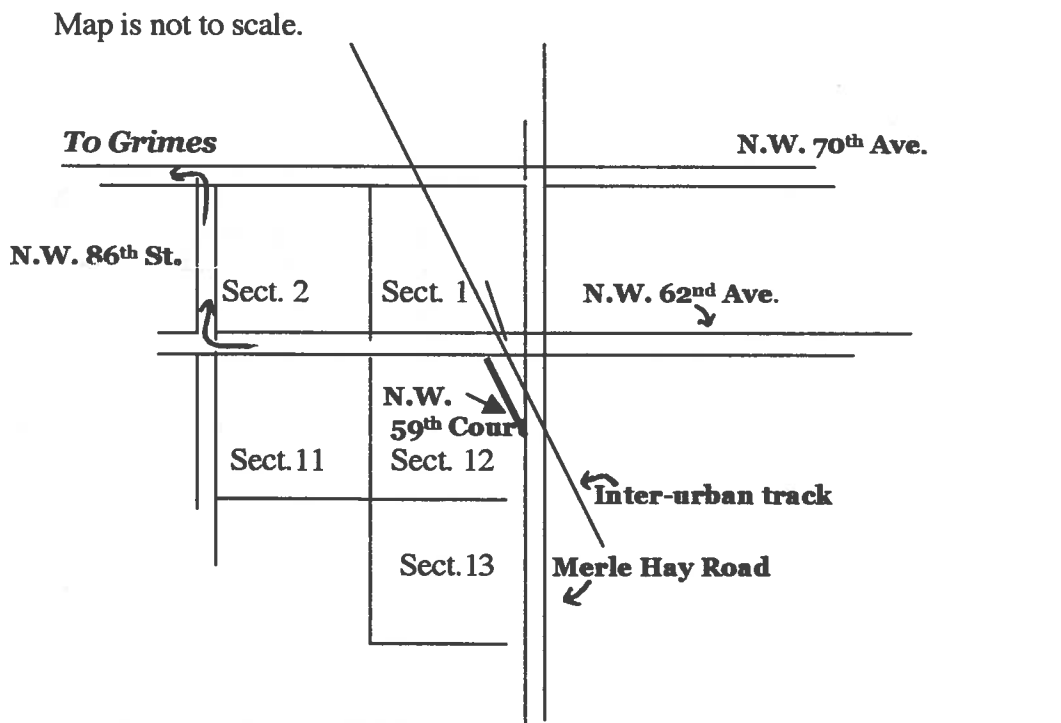
In the late '20s and early 1930's, the effort to get Iowans on hard-surfaced roads began, and the route was paved, with the much-maligned gutter curbs, and made a federal highway, U.S. Highway 64, which

ran from Omaha through Des Moines (on Douglas and Euclid Avenues) to Chicago.

When the projected route came to Merle Hay Road, where the road was to turn south into Des Moines, it was decided to cut off that intersection, by curving the road in a long curve south, just parallel and west of the tracks, so as to avoid making two railroad crossings. The road joined Merle Hay just below the crossing... This is N.W. 59th Court, which now dead-ends just below the Casey's store. (see map below)

After the advent of the Interstate System, U.S. Highway 64 was downgraded to a state route, Route 44. Current plans are to widen N.W. 62nd Avenue to four lanes, from Merle Hay Road as far west as N.W. 86th Street.

(Thanks to Ray Schleih for information)



The Johnston Station Historical Society is a n IRS 501 (c) (3) organization