

Newsletter

Volume VIII Number 1

January 2001

President: Mary Jane Paez
Vice-Pres. & Program: Judy Bogaard
Secretary: Madilyn Allender

Treasurer: Donald Zarley
Membership: Ferne Michael
Newsletter: Selma Duvick

JANUARY PROGRAM

Scheduled program postponed
See "Looking Ahead"

YES, WE ALL KNOW IT IS SUPER-BOWL SUNDAY.

But plan to spend some time at
Crown Point at **4:00 p.m. on
Sunday, January 28th**
discussing an important project:
A proposal to accept the
Garlock/Bauman House & Barn
from Laverne & Shirley
Simpson

Come to become fully
informed on this project
Your input is important.

If the JSHS ACCEPTS this offer, it is probably the biggest thing we will ever do, and can be the most exciting! It will require support and effort from all of our membership, not only those who locally have been active in carrying out the ongoing tasks of running the Society.

From the President.....

Yes, I know it is Super-Bowl Sunday, and yes, I know it will be cold.

January 28th will be our most important meeting—ever. We need all of you. We have a legal agreement to discuss.

The agreement is between the Simpsons and the Society, making a gift of the Simpson house, barn and windmill. One of the "Whereas's" is that the buildings be moved to "a location west of the highway in the 6700 block of Merle Hay Road".

As of this writing the City of Johnston City Council has approved that the buildings can be moved to this public land, called Johnston Commons.

Other parts of the agreement lay out that the Society will pay for the preparations, moving and clean-up

after moving. The removal should be completed by November 1, 2002. We are getting final estimates for these costs that will be presented at the meeting. We are also responsible for liability insurance during the time of the move. The society is to start fundraising immediately upon signing the agreement.

A full copy of the one-page agreement will be available at the meeting.

We have been looking forward to this time for quite a while. Please come to the meeting, ask questions, discuss and vote. I promise I'll get you home before the kickoff.

Mary Jane Paez



E-Mail- it's Great!

Should any members who have access to e-mail want to send information or messages to the JSHS, we provide, below, personal e-mail addresses of some of our local folk.

We are especially interested in receiving any comments on our agreement with the Simpsons to acquire their house for the JSHS.

Mary Jane Paez, President
paezgei@worldnet.att.net

Bob Thomas:
RLT50310@aol.com

Selma Duvick,
SND227@aol.com

Looking Ahead

- February 28, Wednesday 4:00 at Crown Point.

Jerry Miller, Restoration Painter

Jerry was involved in the restoration of the Iowa State Capitol Building, as well as Terrace Hill. He has a program of slides showing restoration work.

Put this date on your calendar!!!

- March 25th, Sunday at 4:00 p.m. at Crown Point.

- Jerry Gorden will speak on the early history of Camp Dodge. Jerry is Director of the Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge



November Meeting Report.....:

Members met at Crown Point, arms loaded with books of genealogy, photographs and memorabilia of local history.

We shared and traded pictures and information, and left energized to continue our research into the history of Johnston and especially, its early pioneers.

New Members

W elcome to the following new members:

Chris & Kathy Gourley
Johnston, IA

Laura Ross Chesnut
Merion Station, PA

Randa J. Duvick
Valparaiso, IN

AND it is time for many of our members to RENEW. PLEASE check the address label on your envelope. If you see the "00" or "99" after your name, you need to renew your membership. Forms for renewal are enclosed.



Contributions

The JSHS thanks the following for gifts and contributions:

Ferne Michael, Windsor Heights, IA
in Memory of:

Ernest Beck
Ted Miller
Don Gerdom
Bunny Swanson

David Jr. & Patricia Goss
Johnston, IA
Robert & Margaret Thomas
Des Moines, IA

The Johnston (Station) Historical Society is an IRS code 501 (c) (3) organization, and any contributions over and above the membership dues are tax-deductible.

In Memoriam

Richard Hunt
Former JSHS member Richard Hunt of Boulder, CO, died on October 3, 2000.



Ernest Beck
Ernest Beck of Johnston, died on November 19, 2000, at the age of 88. Ernie was born in Des Moines, and lived in Johnston most of his life.

He was an Army Air Corps veteran of WWII, and a retired warrant officer with the Iowa National Guard.

Ernest was a charter member of the JSHS. We send our sympathy to his wife Josephine, also one of our charter members, and to the rest of his family.



Donald Gerdom

Don Gerdom age 77, died on December 15, 2000 He had lived in Johnston for many years, and had been active in many public service positions. His recent activities were involved with the Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America, of which he was executive director.

Don was severely wounded in battle during WWII, resulting in his being paraplegic; he spoke to the JSHS in May, 2000 about his life, his injuries and how he dealt with his disability in his work and career.

He had been a member of the JSHS for 3 years. The JSHS sends sympathy to his wife Patsy, also a member of the JSHS, and to the rest of his family.

Bunny Swanson

We note the death of Bunny (Benola) Swanson of Johnston who, though not a member of the JSHS, was active in the improvement and preservation of local cemeteries, especially the Valley View Cemetery. She died on November 19, 2000



Ceramic Tile Designs

Several JSHS members had the opportunity to view the designs proposed for the clay tiles which will be

inserted in the limestone walls already constructed at the corners of the intersection of NW. 86th Street and NW 62nd Avenue. (For old-timers—the intersection of Clive Road and Johnston Road.)

We visited the studio of David Dahlquist, a clay artist, where he showed us full-size (2' x 4') drawings of the following designs, to be executed in high relief in clay, based on suggestions given to him by the JSHS:

Vertical Panels:

- Camp Dodge: a uniformed soldier next to the stone wall at the gate.
- Head of Meskwaki Indian, in profile with head-dress.
- Educator Mrs. Bernice Scott :head profile in a medallion.
- Wallace-Pioneer: a schoolboy of the '30s with a scooter, holding a Pioneer seed-corn bag.

Horizontal Panels:

- The Robinson Ranch, showing house, out-buildings and fenced corrals.
- The Inter-Urban: a passenger car.
- The Garlock orchard: a box of apples and apple in a medallion.
- Johnston High School: the original 1915 school building , and the symbol used at the time, the "Beacon".

If these designs meet final approval, the panels will be installed sometime this coming spring.



Recent burials at Ridgedale and Valley View Cemeteries:

Mary Bishop – Age 74, Ridgedale Cemetery, Plat 2. Block 5 Lot 17
Died 15 Jan, Burial 19 Jan 2000

Ruth Marvella Wheeler – Age 62 Ridgedale Cemetery Plat 1 Block 1,
Lot 57. Died 9 May, burial 13 May 2000

Parker Allen Miller- Age 0; Ridgedale Cemetery Plat 1, Block 1, Lot 1.
Birth, 8 July, Death 8 July,
Burial 14 July 2000

Benola Swanson- Age 79 Valley View Cemetery. Plat 1, Block 2, Lot 16S2
Death 19 Nov. Burial 22 Nov. 2000

Following is another in a series of stories written by the late Eunice Heard for the Northern Polk County News. As the wife of a Nurseryman, the late Clyde Heard, she looks at what we now call Kinsey/Lawson Cemetery with a different eye.

From the Northern Polk County News
December 17, 1970
Editor, Jeanne Hansen.



The Pine Tree Cemetery
By Eunice Heard

Driving north on Beaver Road, after crossing the Interstate and Beaver Creek, you soon reach a level stretch of land which has no streets cut through on the west side of the road.

If you are very observing you will see it is a field and on the west side there is a small fenced-in area.

In the background is a row of stately evergreen trees. They are another Johnston landmark, for they have been planted in the little burying ground of pioneer days – probably the earliest in the Johnston area.

Turn west on Johnston Road (now NW 62nd Avenue) and on the left you will shortly reach a sign which says NW 51st Street. To the south is a narrow country land. No street has been laid out, but it carries you quickly to the pine trees and the burying ground.

The small and neatly laid out plot has been cared for over the years. The pine trees — five of them—are planted in a row, and graves are in place in a row under their sheltering branches.

(Ed. Note: Responsibility for the cemetery has been assumed by the city of Johnston, and recently the Historical Society has done clean-up work there. A fence and flagpole have been installed. Funds toward erecting a gate have been allocated, and descendants of those buried there are being contacted to see if they have interest in contributing to this effort.)

The cemetery has never had a sign over the entrance nor a designated name in the records. It has been called locally by the name of families buried there. One Old Timer said it was called the Snodgrass cemetery a long time ago; and surely enough, we found under the pines a line of Snodgrass markers for this family, dating back as far as 1851, 1856, and 1862.

Many of the markers were limestone slabs or slates, used for children's markers. This stone is soft, and erodes, but we were able to read some of them. We also remember that when pioneer families came to this area there were no doctors, no hospitals — measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever and cholera were rampant and unchecked.

Sheltering the Snodgrass members were the row of pine trees. They are old and large and of three different varieties. We wondered where they came from since pine

trees are not native in (*this part of*) Iowa, and they were older than any nurseries where they could have been purchased more than 75 years ago. (Now nearly 150 years!!)

Could it be that one of the eastern nurserymen about whom we read in their histories, had stopped by the farm nearby, had seen the cemetery and had given the family a row of tiny pine seedlings in three different varieties, in the hope that one kind would survive?

Pine trees in the period after the Civil War were very much cherished by the pioneers as a reminder of their old homes "back east". Family status was impeccable if you had a single pine tree growing in your front yard, and a lilac bush by the front door. Surely this might be true also for a cemetery. Looking around, we found a fine old lilac bush growing against the fence.

As time went on another name was associated with the plot, and it was called the Lawson Cemetery, and we found these markers. Later on and even now it was known as the Kinsey Cemetery, but not designated by any of these names in official records.

For this story I would like to call it "The Pine Tree Cemetery". So far we have observed no other cemetery which has pines. Instead the pioneers have used the native red cedar.

All burying grounds are cared for by an elected township trustee, and in that office he is responsible for their care. Craig Findley, local trustee for many years, relates this story:

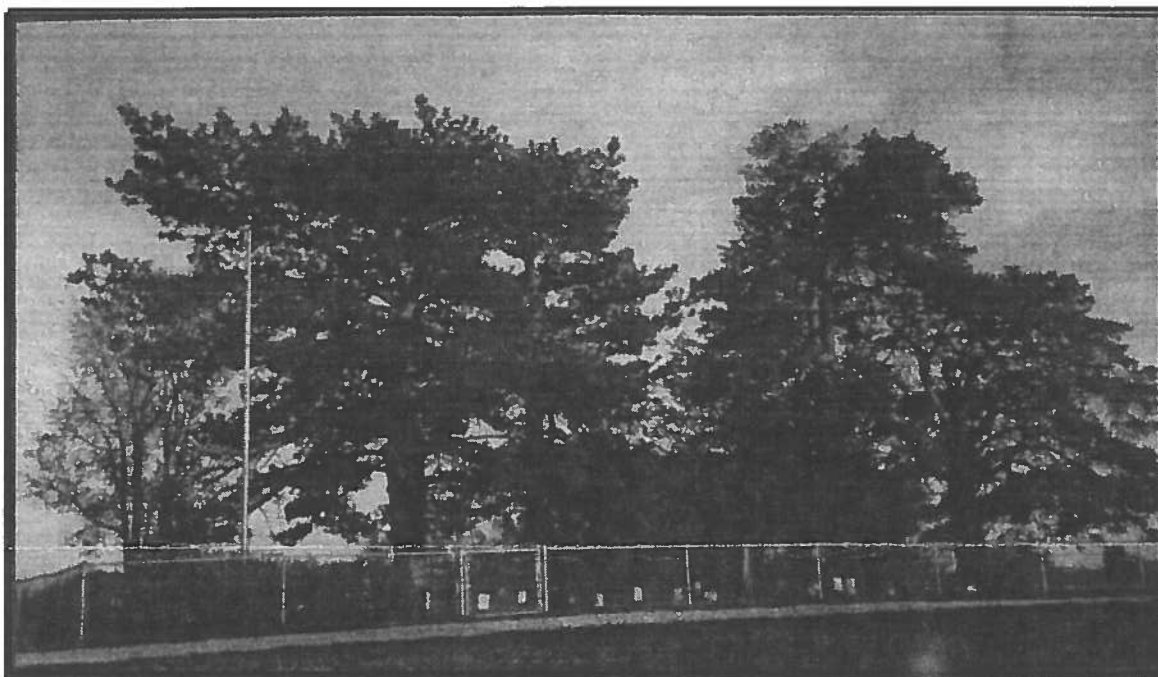
Some years ago he was notified one day that a trespasser was in the cemetery with a small truck. He was digging up the small limestone markers and piling them in his truck. Mr.

Findley hurried to the scene and found the truck had just departed. He quickly followed the man on the road to town and located him.

The trespasser was a Drake student who had many of the slabs piled in his room at a rooming house. Together they put the slabs in the truck again and returned to the cemetery where they replaced the slabs as well as they could. It sounds like a football season prank that did not turn out right, in it is the only case of vandalism on record. *(In more recent years there has been some vandalism in this cemetery Ed.)*

There are several other cemeteries in the area. The McDivitt Cemetery is the only one with a church built by it- a common practice in early days. *(At one time there was a church near the Ridgedale Cemetery. Ed)*

Others are Rittgers Cemetery a family burying ground cared for close by the old homestead; Valley View Cemetery, the McClain family cemetery, Ridgedale, Lincoln, and of course the newest, "Chapel Hill Gardens, which is built over a coal mine on Merle Hay Road.



THE PINE TREE CEMETERY — KINSEY-LAWSON CEMETERY, 2000