

Johnston (Station) Historical Society
Post Office Box 109
Johnston, Iowa 50131
www.johnstonhistoricalsociety.com

NEWSLETTER

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President: Mary Jane Paez

Vice-Pres. & Programs: Judy Bogaard

Secretaries: Marlys Seibert & Pat Wallerstedt

Treasurer: Robert Thomas

Membership: Garland Seibert

Newsletter: Selma Duvick

September Meeting

Sunday, September 28

4:00 p.m.

at the Simpson House,

Johnston Commons

On Merle Hay Road

Program: A Presentation of the

Pioneer Volunteer Day

Bring a folding chair, and if you wish, a snack
to share.

the fate of the Camp Dodge pool, which has been closed for the past two summers, is unresolved at this time. We will keep our out-of-town members informed. Those who read the local papers are no doubt aware of the controversy.

Looking Ahead:

Our next meeting is scheduled for
Wednesday, October 22, at 4:00 pm
At the Simpson house.

November meeting: Sunday, November 23 at
4:00 pm. Location: to be announced.

August Meeting:

Members met at the Simpson House, on a scorching hot August afternoon; seated on folding chairs, we filled up on cold drinks, and discussed progress on house and barn renovations.

Mary Davis, a member of the Johnston Pool Committee, presented her view on the possibility and advisability of the City of Johnston taking over and renovating the Camp Dodge Pool.

The historic pool is, at present, slated to be filled in and planted as a garden by the Iowa National Guard.

The controversy as to what the City should do about providing a pool or aquatic facility for Johnston residents, and

From the President

Incredible things happened on 9-11.

No, not THE 9-11-01, the 9-11-03. Thirty-five Pioneer employees, in accordance with United Way's Day of Caring, gave their time and talents to work on the house and barn. The world has changed a lot from THE 9-11, and more people are showing that they really care.

The work accomplished was amazing.

A list of some activities: volunteers primed half of one end of the barn, tore out house porch floor boards, mulched and weeded around the area, caulked all the sill plates, installed stair railings in the house basement and attic, removed old wallpaper, put down cement board in the back entry and half-bath in the house, put in new rope for window weights.

Also: power washed old barnboards for recycling, started on refinishing woodwork, created forms for fencepost columns on the barn patio, and mixed concrete for the columns. A rolloff dumpster was hauled in and filled in no time.

The many Pioneer volunteers were joined by Historical Society members who were kept very busy just trying to keep up. By noon, after a pizza party, the volunteers were ready to roll for another frenzy of work. A number of them suggested that they would like to return to keep working. We are so grateful for their incredible help, and we are energized by their enthusiasm.

We have also received help from people who have been sentenced by the courts for community service work. Among them have been some with drywall expertise and finish carpenters and framers, each of whom come as their schedule allows.

The high-powered power washer we borrowed has been put to good use, as we washed the loft ceiling and floors of the barn. Many decades of dirt were washed away and the loft looks like a cathedral now.

Pioneer Hi-Bred International has notified us that they will donate \$10,000 for our project. In addition we have received two anonymous donations totaling approximately \$25,000. This will be added to the RACI grant of \$6,000 that we

received, and the Community Betterment Grant of \$1,500. With these funds we will be able to work on the wiring, plumbing and heating, and air conditioning systems.

The walls in the ground level of the barn have been installed (concrete blocks around the staircases and steel studs for the other rooms). The deck is finished, and we are ready to start laying bricks for the patio. And we are still happy to receive orders for inscribed bricks.

High School students are also getting involved. One of the courses at Johnston High School has a community service requirement, and we are kept busy coordinating volunteers with jobs, and supplying equipment and materials needed.

It has been an exciting time! We would like to get the barn to the point where we can use it for a fund-raising event for the whole project.

Mary Jane Paez

Want to help? Call Bob Thomas: 277-3882



New Members

The Johnston Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Corrine Chase Crawford
Johnston, IA

Vivian Hunsiker Zimmerman
Johnston, IA

TWO "JOHN F. JOHNSTONS"

Historical Society members who go back to 1998 may remember a program and story in the July 1998 newsletter featuring a

John F. Johnston, a citizen of St. Charles, Iowa for whom the claim was made that he may have been the one for whom our community was named.

And if you will look at your July 2003 Newsletter, you will see the copy of an obituary of John F. Johnston who had been general agent of the Des Moines and Central Iowa Railway.

We recently obtained (courtesy of Ray Schlehs) a copy of a newspaper obituary for the John F. Johnston of St. Charles, from a local paper. As we compare information in both accounts, we are convinced that the second John F. Johnston, of Des Moines, who died in Des Moines on February 14, 1939, is the Johnston of "Johnston's Station" where he was agent for the Inter-urban RR. The area was later known as "Johnston Station", and finally "Johnston".

The J.F. Johnston from St. Charles, who died in 1937, age 84, had been a prominent citizen in that community; he had been a livestock dealer and founded a bank. But he did not give his name to the City of Johnston.



CONTRIBUTIONS

To our House and Barn renovation:

Many thanks to the following

Dragoons: (\$10,000 to 24,000)

Anonymous

Pioneer Hi-Bred International
Johnston, Iowa

Want to help with renovation of the House and Barn? Call Bob Tomas at 277-3882

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Olmstead
Vista, CA
In loving memory of Gloria Thomas

Ferne Michael
Windsor Heights, IA
In memory of Weldon Kingsbury

SEPTEMBER 11: A DAY OF CARING

Thanks to Kathy Wallerstedt, who promoted our project, a program of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, in cooperation with United Way, benefited our house and barn.

On September 11, Pioneer employees were encouraged to give to their local communities in volunteer activities, and some 35 people chose to help out at the house and barn.

Bob Thomas and Kathy organized jobs to be done, and as volunteers arrived Mary Jane Paez, Bob Thomas, Garland Seibert, and Bob Finney put them to work on :

- Constructing forms for concrete posts on barn patio
- Painting east barn wall
- Scraping woodwork in the house
- Mulching and weeding trees and garden
- Removing porch floor, and uncovering the cylindrical porch pillars
- Power-washing barn doors, metal frames and other items needing a clean-up

The results, as Mary Jane says, are amazing

In addition, to helping organize the work, Kathy arranged a lunch for the volunteers – pizza, relishes, cookies and brownies as well as drinks.



Bricks

Brick orders have been received from:

Jonathan Duvick Des Moines, IA	CHARLES & HELEN HENDRICK
Francine & Ron Canfield Johnston, IA	RON & FRANCINE CANFIELD
Sandy Reier Clive, IA	JOHN AND LOIS REIER
Brian & Krista Kielty Johnston, IA	B * K * E * A THE KIELTYS '03
Barbara Snedden Johnston, IA	LESLIE AKEHURST DAVID AKEHURST
Vivian Zimmerman Johnston, IA	STEVEN/ROLLIN LAURA/AMY HUNSIKER BERNICE SCOTT VIVIAN HUNSIKER ZIMMERMAN

To order a brick, see form on page 5.



In Memoriam

Weldon Kingsbury

Weldon Kingsbury died at the age of 83 on June 4, 2003 at his home south of Ames. He graduated from Milford Township high school and attended Iowa State University, at that time Iowa State College.

He married Mavis Cunningham, a graduate of Johnston High School, and together they farmed. Weldon especially enjoyed raising Landrace hogs, Shetland Ponies and Saddle horses. They often sold for more than his fat cattle.

Mavis says she was the bookkeeper, and gained her skills from Miss Hankammer at Johnston High, and Grammar, learned under

Mrs. Bernice Scott stood her in good stead when she attended Drake.

His wife, Mavis, four children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren survive Weldon. The JSHS extends sympathy to his family and friends.



1930's Johnston Athletes

Ferne Michael is looking for a few good newspaper clippings and photos concerning Johnston girls' basketball.

In the mid- 1930's the Johnston Consolidated school was blessed with some fine girls' basketball players, as well as a fine coach. In 1934 the team took third place in the state tournament, and a member of that team, Geneva Horner was elected tournament queen.

Again, in 1935, the team went to the tournament, but lost in the first round. Team members Mary Hawkins and Luellen Erickson were both queen candidates, and Mary was elected tournament queen.

Ferne Michael is interested in documenting these events, and is looking for good copies of photos and news articles that appeared in Des Moines papers as well as other photos of the teams which might be out there.

One story in particular that she wants to find featured the queen candidates.

Those of you who were a part of Johnston history at that time, and who have saved clippings and photos are asked to get in touch with Ferne at: 7214 Riete, Windsor Heights, IA 50311, Ph. (515) 279-5885.

Coal Mines in Johnston Area History

Documents recently given to the Historical Society by Pat Stall of Johnston, one of them a mining lease, tell the story of a coal mine in Polk County.

The Des Moines area is dotted with abandoned coal mines, unseen under the surface, and many of them have posed problems due to collapse of the land above into the mined area. Many of our Johnston folk are aware that mines were located along Merle Hay Road, and in Urbandale.

A mine known as Norwood-White Coal Mine No. 8 was located on the farm owned by Pat Stall's father Thomas J. Smith, in Jefferson Township, (Section 28) north of 70th Avenue, and east of Grimes, along what is now 100th Street.

Thomas Smith and his wife Mary leased their farm for coal mining in 1921, for a period of 20 years. It was actively mined until 1943. The underground works, shaped something like a dumb-bell, extended to 770 acres.

Pat herself remembers that, as a child on the farm, she went into the mine, and relates that it was not a pleasant experience.

Evelyn (Temple) Carlson, in her memoir about Herrold, the town and school writes that, as she recalls attending the Herrold School, "I can still hear the creaking of the snow that the runners of the bobsled made. That was a signal for me to hurry and sharpen my pencil so I could wave at Dad as he was delivering a load of props harvested from our woods to Coal Mine #8 which was west and south of Herrold."

"This coal mine employed many men from Herrold. They would walk home past the school with the lights on top of their caps. They were always covered with coal dust from head to toe." (See Sept. 2000 Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 5).

Currently, the former Smith farm, as well as Coal Mine #8, is occupied by subdivision homes in Polk County along 100th street, and by Camp Dodge.

Thanks to Patricia Stall for her documents. (Information on Des Moines area coal mines can be found in a publication by the DNR, Dec. 1989 *Abandoned Underground Coal Mines*)



Commemorative Brick Order Form:

Century-old brick from the foundation of the Simpson House

Engraved Brick \$85.each Make checks payable to the Johnston Historical Society

Please fill in the name(s) to be engraved (a maximum of 14 characters per line for two lines)

Make a copy of this form if you are ordering more than one brick

Remember: spaces between names count as a character!

Send to: Johnston Historical Society,
P.O. Box 109, Johnston, IA 50131