

JOHNSTON (STATION) HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS
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6161 Northglenn Drive – Johnston Commons Park

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JSHS is a 501(C) (3) organization

Treasurer: *Robert Thomas*

Vice President: *Keith Westbrook*

Secretary: *Marlys Seibert*

President's Message

This year we will be celebrating the sixteenth anniversary of the chartering of the Johnston Historical Society. There was no way to envision that we would be where we are today with a beautiful museum that has become an integral part of the community.

Another milestone this year is the fortieth anniversary of the incorporation of Johnston as a city. The city is planning events for later in the year. Again, we've come a long way.

Speaking of anniversaries, the Johnston School District is already making plans for their hundredth anniversary in 2014. I think that the Johnston School District was the second in the county to form, after Des Moines. We can all be very proud of what it has become.

Having the museum scheduled to be open on a daily basis from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. has worked very well. We have the place open on the second Sunday of each month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Even with our winter weather, there have been visitors interested in Johnston's history. We have had new members as a result. Once the weather improves we are anticipating more visitors. It has also been good to get volunteers better acquainted with the museum and its exhibits.

In the January newsletter, we asked for anyone interested to donate money towards a flagpole for the museum. Barton Schlenker contacted us and has offered to get the job done. We thank him for his generosity. The City Parks Department will install the pole just as they have done with the three cemetery flagpoles.

We are working on the Johnston pictorial history book and have designated some possible chapters. We have thought to include: pioneer families, the stage coach era, Hyperion Field Club, the Inter-Urban, Camp Dodge, Johnston families, Johnston School District, Merle Hay and Merle Hay Road, Johnston Lions Club, Fruitland Brennan Improvement League, Pioneer Hi-Bred, City incorporation, new developments, achievements, businesses. We are open to any other suggestions. If you have any pictures and/or stories to share, let us know. We will scan the pictures and return them immediately. We need your support on this project. Books can be reserved by phone at 953 4822 – ext. 301 at a pre-publication price of \$29.95.

Welcome to New Members:

Marie Hutcheson of Grimes
Jim and Martha Schaer of Johnston, IA
Walter F. Eichhorn of Johnston, IA
Nicholas W. Eichhorn of Broomfield, CO

HAPPY 101ST BIRTHDAY TO ETHEL CONN – JHS 1926; JSHS Member

USA Healthcare/Rehab Room#325
4616 NW 84th Street Urbandale, IA 50322

**** Shirley Adams wishes to thank the following people for their generous help for the Open House hours: Linda Hyde, Bev Christofferson, Pat Tharp, Martha Schaer, Virginia McGinn, Dick Hyde, Keith Westbrook, Dick Tarlton, and Bob Thomas all share those duties with Shirley. THANK YOU, ALL!**

OTTO'S CONOCO STATION

One of the older businesses of Johnston Station was Otto's Conoco. Thanksgiving Day, 1922, was opening day. The station was opened by Arlie V. Otto, later run by his son, Don, who took over in 1937. For the first thirty-four years they sold Deep Rock products, switching to Conoco in 1956. At the time of it's opening, there was only one other station in existence and that was the DX station owned by Paul Alley. Arlie & Lenore had been farming near Herrold. They moved a house to a spot behind the station where they lived until moving to a house on NW 61st Avenue. Arlie became postmaster at Johnston Station.

FROM: "Annals of Polk Co and City of Des Moines" by Porter. Des Moines Public Library:

In 1851 Jefferson Township was created out of that part of Madison Township that lay west of the Des Moines River. It embraced in it the fertile country along the Beaver valley, where had been formed one of the earliest settlements of the county. Here was the area then known as the *McClain settlement*. Among the early settlers were John and Jacob D. McClain, Nathan Andrews, W.H. McHenry, The Hunts, William F. Ayers, Thomas Murray, David Hartman, Nathaniel Campbell, Jack Tempele and others. The first township trustees were Samuel Hunt, William Hartway and W.F. Ayers. W.S. Prouty was Clerk, and J.D. McClain was the Assessor.

In 1857 William Frazier and Nathan Andrews laid out a town about one mile southwest of the river and gave it the name of Andrews. Quite a little village was built with store, shops, and so on. This was for years frequently called '*Dogtown*'. This slang name was not given because of the number of dogs therein, though there were always enough of them. It was given because of the prominence of a man named Doggett in the early history of the town. But Andrews continues to survive, while the once ambitious town of Lovington, located in 1854 at the mouth of the Beaver Creek, has long since disappeared save in old county records and the memories of early settlers.

IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE

Johnston, Iowa February 19, 1924

"The Fruitland and Brennan Improvement League held a Valentine party at the home of George Grayson on Tuesday evening, February 12. The president, Mr. Rosenfield, appointed committees and the members discussed the upkeep of Fruitland Drive. After the business meeting, valentine games were played".

For information on early settlers of the Johnston Station area stop by the Simpson House Museum at 6161 Northglenn Drive, just west of the Johnston Public Library. There are numerous volumes of family histories. Photos and displays add to the interest of your visit. Also, check the web site noted in the heading of this Newsletter. YOUR family story - as it is today - is a valuable part of our Historical Society Museum. Today is tomorrow's history and it is important to preserve written histories, photographs (old ones, but new ones also!). Instilling in the younger generation the value of their 'roots' is important to their whole being.

Brick Orders are still being taken. While new bricks have been recently put in place, there is still plenty of room on the patio for you to place that special 'brick' to honor someone special - that someone special might be You!! \$85 per brick - fourteen spaces, two lines.

Huntsville, Iowa

On 21 February 1854 Huntsville is laid out in Jefferson Township, Polk County, Iowa. The town was named by Ezekiel Hunt who came to Iowa in September, 1846 from Flemingburg, Fleming County, Kentucky. Ezekiel was born 3 June 1797 to Rueben and Nancy (Deaton) Hunt. Rueben was a farmer and Methodist minister, as was his father before him, John Hunt, Sr. (John Sr. was being a chaplain during the Revolutionary War to the Virginia Militia). Ezekial married Mary Johnson (also born in Kentucky) on 22 December 1800. Their twelve children were all born in Kentucky: Benjamin J., Zachariah, Samuel, Daniel, James, John, Doctor Franklin, Jeremiah, Elizabeth A., Elvina, Spencer Robin (great grandfather to Ferne Bice Michael) and Nancy.

When Ezekiel and family came from Kentucky they traveled by way of Randolph County, Indiana, where many family members lived. Huntsville, Indiana, is adjacent to Wayne County where the Thomas Murray family lived until moving to Polk County, Iowa. Both the Hunt and the Murray families lived in the Johnston/Camp Dodge area. Three of the Murray children later married into the Hunt family.

As the family scattered across the United States they would name the settlements "Huntsville". These families traveled in covered wagons to Iowa, crossing the Mississippi River at Keokuk and following the trail through old Fort Des Moines, on the east side of the Des Moines River, camping at Thompson's Bend, near Union Park. The next day they crossed the Des Moines River at the Mose Lawson Ford, making the trip in approximately three weeks from Indiana. The Hunt land holdings extended into four townships: Webster, Jefferson, Crocker, and Madison. The area was about 1 1/2 miles west of the Des Moines River. Five of their sons were grown. They soon built a log cabin. Ezekiel had twenty-five cents when he arrived in Iowa. The Pottawattamie Indians had camped on the land during the winter and had burned over the land. They raised corn, selling it for twenty-five cents a bushel. They also found a ready market for their maple sugar in Des Moines.

Ezekiel was a farmer, ran a saw mill and was engaged in rail making. Huntsville had a blacksmith shop run by Jeremiah Hunt; a grocery store run by Clyde Hunt, Jeremiah's son. There was also a post office. The family donated land where a Methodist Episcopal church was started, including a cemetery. They also helped build a school on land owned by C.H. Wigton. Being one of the first settlers in Polk County they recounted many hardships and trials that they necessarily had to endure. Those hardships would be almost unendurable today. They came when the inhabitants were very few and far apart, but resided in this area the rest of their lives. They stood the brunt of pioneer life and largely helped develop the resources of the new country. Ezekial and Mary are buried in the Hunt Burial Grounds which later was re-named Ridgedale Cemetery. Many of their children,

grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great, great grandchildren are also buried in Ridgedale Cemetery.

-Thank you to Ferne Bice Michael (Mrs. Lloyd) for contributing this information. Lloyd and Ferne are pictured below with Verlyn Larson, who re-furbished the carved hands in 2008.

SORRY

THE PHOTO WAS NOT AVAILABLE FOR USE ON THE WEBSITE!!



EZEKIEL HUNT
RIDGEDALE CEMETERY, JOHNSTON, IOWA



MARY (MRS. EZEKIEL) HUNT
RIDGEDALE CEMETERY, JOHNSTON, IOWA

It has been written that you must accept both the rain and the sun if you would have a rainbow. Our lives have weathered a lot of both and now we are fortunate to have you joining together to form the rainbow that bridges us to one another, to our families, and to our community. For this we thank you for being our member "volunteers" in all weather, rain or shine for yesterday, today, and tomorrow! We hope to have many of you join in to continue the project that has begun so well.