



JOHNSTON Historical SOCIETY
(Station) PO BOX 109, Johnston, IA 50131-0109 Pres: Bob Otto
Secy-Treas Ray Schliebs

NEWSLETTER

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TIME & 4:00 P.M. August 23, 1995 City Hall,

PLACE City Hall, Community Room, 62nd and Merle Hay Rd. We need a good crowd, so bring a guest or prospective member.

PROGRAM Loren Horton, retiring Director of the Iowa State Historical Society will speak to us about "What to Look for in an Old Cemetery". Loren is dedicated to History in Iowa He is the Senior Historian at SHSI. He spoke on many subjects at the Iowa Heritage Expo '95.

FUTURE ISSUES, WE NEED YOUR HELP

This issue will be dedicated to Merle Hay Road, its establishment, name and history. Future issues will be dedicated, *among others suggested by you*, to Bridges in our vicinity including but not limited to; 72nd, Merle Hay, Beaver Rd, South of Herrold, West of Herrold, 70th Ave, and 62nd Ave (Panora Speedway) all crossing Beaver Creek and also the bridges crossing the Des Moines River to-wit: Corydon and Sycamore Park (Kempton Dr) 66th Ave. Any information or pictures would help us turn out a comprehensive newsletter.

Other subjects to which future issues will be dedicated to include Panora Speedway, which was old highway #7 from Des Moines to Omaha (a different route than U.S. #6); Sawmills; Ferries, and Beaver Rd also known as the Ft Dodge Rd, Sac City Rd and "The Ridge Rd", a part of which may have been Iowa #7, and #401.

MERLE HAY ROAD

Merle Hay Road (5800 West) is the dividing line between Ranges 24 and 25 West. The overpass (70th Ave) in the City of Johnston is the point where 4 townships meet. South of the overpass is Township 79 North and North of the overpass Township 80 North. Southwest of that point is Sec. 1 of Township 79 North, Range 25 West; Southeast of the point is Sec. 6 of Township 79 North, Range 24 West; Northwest of that point is Sec. 36 of Township 80 North, Range 5 West; and Northeast is Sec. 31 of

Township 80 North, Range 24 West all of the 5th Principal Meridian. University not only is a Base Line, it is also a Correction Line. The next correction line north is at about US Hwy #20 which runs through Cedar Falls, Webster City, Correctionville and Sioux City.

The History of Polk County (1880) states, "the Township Lines (i.e. Base Lines and Range Lines) of all townships in Polk County were run prior to 1847." The survey (of Section Lines) was run late in 1847, although Polk County was organized by the act of the Legislature of the Territory of Iowa approved on January 17, 1846.

Samuel Hiner seems to be the first land entry on what is now Merle Hay Road. He was granted the 160 acres on the NW corner of Merle Hay Rd and Meredith Dr. as follows: Township 79, Range 25 - Samuel Hiner, se qr, sec 13, Dec 4, 1848.

The townships (Sec. survey) surrounding the overpass on Merle Hay Rd were done between the dates stated by the person named:

Twp 79 Range 24: (SE) by S.W. Durham; commenced September 13 and finished September 27, 1847.

Twp 80 Range 24; (NE) by Joseph Morehead; commenced July 5 and finished July 16, 1847.

Twp 79 Range 25; (SW) by S.W. Durham; commenced September 25 and finished October 2, 1847.

Twp 80 Range 25; (NW) by Joseph Morehead; commenced August 25 and finished September 4, 1847

By 1916 Camp Dodge was already in use as a Training Area for the State Militia so roadways were somewhat established by that time. Tradition has it, that the Camp Dodge area was used for camping by the Army in the War between the States. It must be noted that there were battles between the North and South in the northernmost counties of Missouri, to-wit The Battle of Kirksville and the Battle of Vassar Hill (near Bible Grove and Memphis in Scotland County, MO.)

When Camp Dodge expansion became necessary after the declaration of World War I in April, 1917, the need for a hard surface road became very necessary. Many men and lots of material and equipment needed to be transported to and from Des Moines to Camp Dodge. From the water tank (1000 foot hill) to the intersection of Beaver with what is now Merle Hay Rd a decision had to be made by the State and Federal Governments as to the direction to go (continue on Beaver or to the highways leading west out of Des Moines by way of Merle Hay Rd.). A number of conditions that prevailed gave over to hard surfacing Merle Hay Rd. Beaver Ave was not hard surfaced until the mid 1950's.

Laying Monolithic Brick from Merle Hay and Hickman took place in 1917/1918. After the brick was hand laid the surface was hand rolled with a 700 pound roller. Many hours were needed to brick the road. One of our members Herb Kuefner was employed by the contractor to light and maintain lanterns while bridging Beaver Creek.

Merle Hay neither received the Congressional Medal of Honor nor the Distinguished Service Cross, however because of his service record the city of Des Moines in the 1920's decided to rename a street after him (58th Street).

Merle Hay a native of Glidden IA enlisted in the army on May 4, 1917. He was sent to Fort Bliss, TX and assigned to Company F, 16th Infantry. He traveled to the East Coast and embarked by ship for France. The troops arrived in France on June 27, 1917 and trained along side French veterans. On November 1, 1917 the troop traveled by truck

close to the front-line. The next day they took up positions in the trenches 500 yards from the German lines, and settled in for what they thought would be an uneventful night. A 3 A.M. the Germans opened an artillery barrage. The shelling concentrated on the American position, cutting them off from reinforcements. At this point 240 German infantrymen made their assault. After 15 minutes, the Germans withdrew, and help arrived for the beleaguered Americans. Seven Americans were wounded, 11 captured and three killed. The dead were Cpl. James Gresham, Pvt. Thomas Enright and Pvt. Merle D. Hay. Hay died from a bullet wound to the head. Merle Hay was the first of Iowa's sons and the first American to die in combat in World War I. He is buried in Bathelemont, France.

A dedication was set to dedicate the renamed road on Memorial Day, May 30, 1921. The Plaque reads:

In Memoriam
Merle Hay
The first Iowa soldier killed
in the World War
Born, Carroll, Iowa, July 30, 1896
Killed November 3, 1917 near
Bathelmont, France
on the first raid

The rock or boulder about 16 tons, was moved by heavy moving equipment to its present location (one of the highest points on the renamed road) from the J.N. Pressley farm tenanted by George Finley two miles West of Merle Hay and 62nd Ave. Craig Findley, a young boy(b, 4/13/1915) on his father's farm remembers seeing the project take place.

In the early days the Merle Hay Memorial had a turn out for cars, allowing people to stop and pay their respects. This vanished when the DOT mad Merle Hay Rd four-lane and designated it Iowa Highway #401. Now #401 and also the old #64 has been dropped.

The flag pole at the Memoriam was installed for the 1921 Memorial Day Ceremony and was and has been maintained by the V.F.W. Post #738.

The Merle Hay Monument was unveiled at 4 P.M. about 100 yards north of Aurora. which was at the time North of the Des Moines city limits. Some 200 people attended the ceremonies including Johnston Historical Society members Virginia Betz and Bessie Lundstrom Carlson. Many flowers covered the flag-draped Rock and after a volley of fire from a detachment of the 14th commanded by Captain B. Morrow and buglers sounded taps, Mrs. H.D. Hay, mother of Merle Hay unveiled the monument . A fly-by had to be delayed because of storms, but about an hour later George Thorne, former naval aviator, flew his Curtiss bi-plane from the White Field and strewed flowers from above.

At present the rock is most accessible from the Ground Round Restaurant's parking lot..

GENEALOGICAL NUMBERING SYSTEMS

There are standard numbering systems for both pedigrees(i.e. the ancestors of a specific individual) and genealogies(i.e. the descendant's of a specific individual). In this treatment of numbering systems(which may be continued to another newsletter because of its length) we cover the pedigree system, compiled genealogy systems and-expandible genealogy system numbering. The advantages-of adopting for your own use and for our

society one of the systems in widespread use are as follows: First, you don't have to explain your numbering system before others (genealogists and historians) can understand your work. Second, you create a good first impression by showing that you are familiar with the working tools used by experienced genealogists.

The Pedigree Numbering System

A pedigree lists ancestors, since the number of lines doubles in each generation, the system for numbering individual ancestors is simple. You (or the subject of the pedigree) are #1, your father is #2, your mother is #3, your paternal grandfather #4, your paternal grandmother #5, your mother's father #6, her mother #7 and so on. The pedigree numbering system is also known as the "Sosa-Stradonitz System".

The system owes its wide acceptance to both its simplicity and its usefulness. You can tell from it how people are related by the mathematical relationships between their numbers. Except for #1, every male ancestor has an even number, and every female an odd number. Every person's father is double the person's own number. A wife's number is one more than her husband's; a mother's is double that of her child plus one.

This system is commonly used world-wide, and is properly called the Sosa-Stradonitz system, for the Spanish genealogist Jerome de Sosa who first used it in 1676, and for Stephen Kekule von Stradonitz who popularized it in his 1896 *Ahnentafel* (Ancestor Table) *Atlas*. It is also sometimes called the Ahnentafel numbering system.

Most printed pedigree forms use this system, and the popular "five-generation" forms (the subject and four preceding generations have pre-printed numbers for 31 individuals provided for. They have a space to number each chart, and a notation "Person No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. ___ on chart No. ____." Lines 16 to 31 each have a notation "Continued on chart No. ____."

While a chart number combined with a person number, i.e. 3/29, is sufficient to keep your charts in good order, you will find it also helpful to place on each chart the full pedigree number for each person listed. This will let you use the number relationships to obtain other interesting information and it also helps avoid confusion in cross-referencing when the same person appears in several different ancestral lines in your pedigree -- usually on different charts, and sometimes in different generations.

If you're really into numbers, you can also use the pedigree numbering system to obtain additional interesting information. The number of any ancestor in the direct paternal (family name or agnatic) line is also equal to the number of ancestors in that generation. For example, your paternal grandfather's paternal grandfather - your great-great grandfather -- is #16, and you also have 15 other great-great-grandparents in that generation. His number, #16 is the 4th power of 2 (two multiplied by itself four times), showing that he belongs to the fourth generation preceding the "subject" of the pedigree.

To determine the generation of any individual, you simply find the highest power of 2 that does not exceed his or her pedigree number. For example, for ancestor #1517, the next lower power of 2 is 1024, or 2 to the 10th power, showing that 1517 is in the tenth generation back not including the subject. From the odd number, we know she is a female, and other relationships show she is the wife of #1516 and the mother of #758 in the ninth generation. (To be continued in subsequent issues with examples).