

Newsletter

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September 1998

President: Mary Jane Paez
Vice-Pres. & Programs: Patty Wallerstedt
Secretary: Beulah Darling
Treasurer: Don Denman

Board: Irene Aulich, Judy Bogaard,
Mary Ann Roberts
Newsletter: Selma Duwick, Ray Schlehs

September Meeting

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

**PLACE: CROWN POINT MEETING ROOM
PIONEER PARKWAY, JOHNSTON**

Program:

We have invited **DICK PETERSON** to speak on the history of the National Men's Garden Club, and the Iowa Men's Garden Club whose headquarters are located in Johnston.

POT-LUCK/COVERED DISH: Bring your food and table service. As always, friends and family are welcome.

July meeting

Some forty members and guests gathered at Crown Point for a pot-luck meal and program. Out-of-town members included Raymond Orlich, of Downey, CA.

Judy Carlson, antique dealer from Afton Iowa gave commentary in a knowledgeable and entertaining way, and estimated the value of more than 20 items brought by members.

Items included glassware, china, old clocks, jewelry, toys, and some children's chairs.

Business Meeting:

Our by-laws require a monthly meeting, and so it was suggested that every other month the JSHS meet for a business and working session. Members will meet at 4:00 pm on August 26th at Crown Point.

Mary Jane Paez asked that members consider donating funds to the city for a "Plant your Family Tree" project. The intention is to help replace some of the many trees lost in the storm of June 29th. Trees will be planted on City property, and a record of family names of contributors will be kept at City Hall.

Management of the McDonald's Restaurant under construction on 86th Street has requested copies of photographs of historic Johnston to be used as part of the restaurant decor. Ferne Michael will undertake the collection of photos for this project.

August Meeting

Local members were called to invite them to a business meeting on August 24, as per the suggestion in the business meeting in July. There was a good attendance, with Patty Wallerstedt presiding. Items discussed were:

- Call for volunteers for committee assignments,
- The school project, as discussed below
- Bob Johnson will be working on our archives
- Report from the librarian, Francine Canfield, concerning possibilities for some space in the projected new library
- The House/headquarters search committee continues to "look for a home".
- The Historical Society will take part in the Johnston School Homecoming Parade on Sept. 24. Judy Bogaard will drive her convertible; theme: "Purple Reign"

FROM THE PRESIDENT:.....

Mary Jane Paez has been researching cemeteries, and is increasingly aware of the importance of the information they contain for those interested history and genealogy.

Soon, our four cemeteries, and the information we have gathered recently, will be put on the WEB in a project known as the Tombstone Transcription Project. They will be the first in Polk County to be on the Web.

For those members who are interested in researching cemeteries throughout the country, the address is:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~cemetery/>

More from Mary Jane on this next month!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Secretary Beulah Darling has confirmed scheduled meetings of JSHS at the Crown Point meeting room. The following are dates of meetings for the remainder of the year:

Sunday, Sept. 27, 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 29, 4:00 p.m.
Business meeting at Crown Point

Sunday, November 22, 4:00 p.m.
Pot Luck/Covered Dish Dinner at Crown Point

At this time no meeting is scheduled for December.

1999

Sunday, January 24, 4:00 p.m. at Crown Point

MARK YOUR CALENDARS.



Welcome to the following NEW MEMBERS!

Betty Baker,
Mitchellville, IA

Julene Boza
Chico, CA

Homer Hunt
Grand Rapids, MI

Richard Hunt
Boulder, CO

Alan & Terri Kinsey
West Des Moines, IA

Sula Lane
Grand Rapids, MN

Leota Myers
State Center, IA

Sue Raymond
Carlisle, IA

Aileen Reinertson
Madrid, IA

Virginia Silver
Altoona, IA

Marcella Young
Slater, IA

Ruth Wade
West Plains, MO

Evelyn Bachman
Ankeny, IA

Evelyn Carlson
West Des Moines, IA

Joni Weatherspoon
Salem, OR

Mrs. Robert Goodman
Des Moines, IA

John & Lois Reler
Johnston, IA

Fay Hanson
West Des Moines, IA



School Project

Members of JSMS met with Mrs. Sharon Mahoney, eighth grade teacher at the Johnston Middle

School to discuss possible cooperation in a pilot project, an elective class for Community Service Learning beginning with eighth grade students this year.

The object is to give students opportunity to work with a variety of groups, demonstrating possibilities for service to the local and other communities.

One project which they will take on is the collection and recording of stories of the severe storm which struck Johnston on June 29th. Other possibilities are cemetery clean-up, tutoring, and assisting with school and community mailings.

The dates of October 4 and 5 have been tentatively set for 23 students from the 8th grade to do general clean-up at Ridgedale Cemetery.

Mrs. Mahoney is looking for suggestions from members of the Johnston Community. Are there other projects connected with the history of the community in which these 8th graders might be involved?

The Changing Scene On Merle Hay Road

On August 12, the Weatherspoon-Noble house, a landmark on Merle Hay Road since 1941, was moved to a new location on 100th Street north and west of Johnston

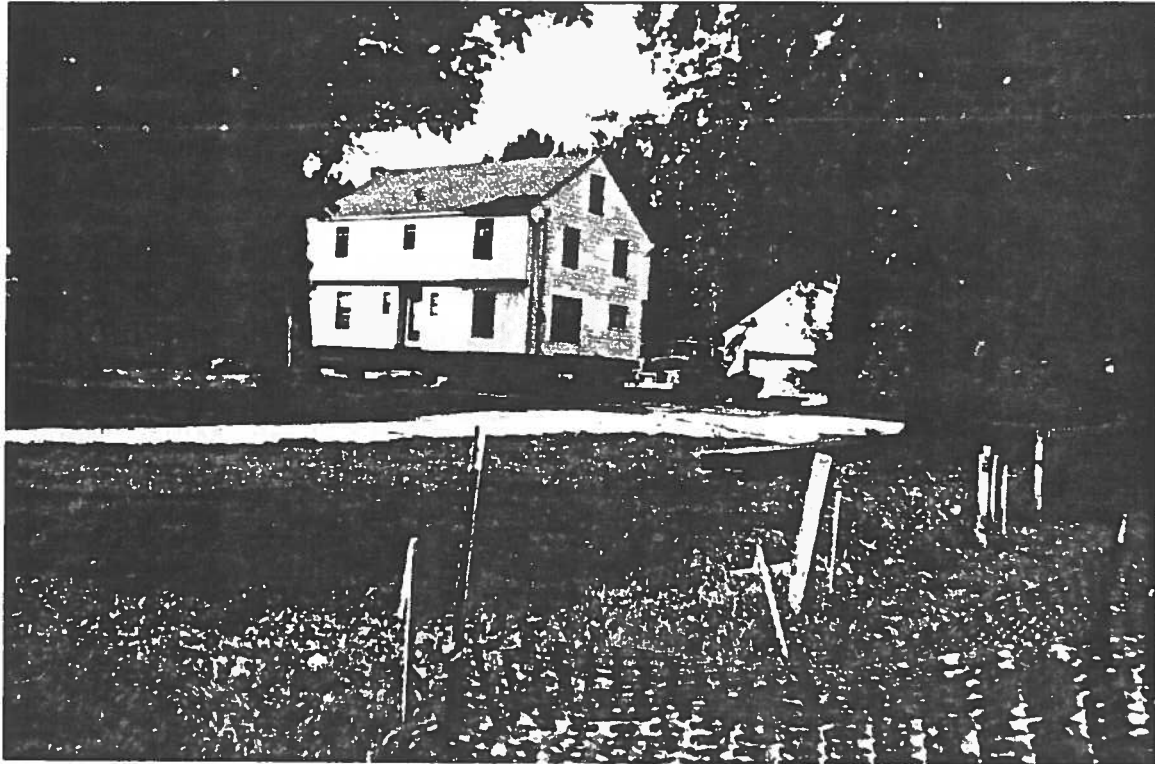
The two-story white frame house was built for the James Weatherspoon family, and was constructed by Charlie Steen, with help from his sons Royal and Lowell. Steen was a craftsman, and the house is noted for its fine workmanship.

Work on the home was begun in Sept. of 1940, and Margaret Weatherspoon

there until 1974, when the Stephen Noble family moved in.

The property was sold in 1996, and the house has been rented or has stood empty since.

Old maps show that land west of Merle Hay just north of Beaver Creek was a part of the Robinson Ranch.



The Weatherspoon House
On the Move: August 12, 1998

remembers that they considered contracting the digging of the foundation for a cost of \$25. They thought they might be able to do it for less, but then the workmen, who were digging with a team of horses and shovel, ran into some hard blue clay in one corner, and picks and considerable effort were required to complete the job.

The Weatherspoons moved into the home in the spring of 1941, and lived

The Robinsons came to this area after the Civil War, and ran a 1100 acre sheep ranch.

When the Weatherspoon house was being constructed, the Robinson residence was still standing, just to the south of the new home. It was a large stucco home, and Charlie Steen was given the job of tearing it down shortly after the Weatherspoons

moved in. An old newspaper dating 1865 was found in the walls.

Also on the property, to the south and west of the larger homes, was a small white frame house, probably meant to house hired help on the Robinson Ranch. That was demolished some years later, possibly at the time of the construction of the Habilitation Center.

(Thanks to Margaret Weatherspoon Patsy Noble, and Ray Schleih for help, photos, and information.)

News Notes:

The Johnston Lions Club has funded the purchase of classroom flags for the renovated Lawson School. The American Legion will buy the outdoor flag.

Record your stories!

Each one of us has a story to tell-- about our family, about our ancestors, about own experiences.

Several of our members have submitted their stories and brief family histories to the JSHS; the stories will be collected, and they will become a part of our archives. They will be valuable personal additions to our History of Johnston.

We want to encourage more of you to do the same. Send us your stories!!

The Many Lives of a Texaco Station

The building now occupied by Four Corners Feed, at 5919 N.W. 62nd, just west of Merle Hay Road is probably the oldest commercial building still in use in Johnston.

Originally built for the Texaco Oil Co., and most probably before 1927, it was constructed of brick, rectangular and with a high peaked gable roof typical of the oil stations of the time. There was an oil change pit immediately west of the building.

Dave and Leah Miller bought the property in about 1927. The Millers built a home behind the station which is now occupied by a Veterinary Clinic.

Dave Miller made some changes in the station; the peaked roof was removed, and a flat roof installed. And he added a frame structure to the rear of the original building which served as a service area for tire changes, oil changes, lubrication and repair.

In 1956 Al Aulich, who had at one time farmed with his parents in the Johnston vicinity, rented the station and continued the Texaco relationship

Aulich and his wife Irene bought the station in 1957 and continued selling gasoline and servicing autos. In addition, Al remembers repairing roller skates for patrons of the roller

rink located just west of the Johnston School.

In 1957 Irene Aulich felt the need for some more family income and, that same year, after convincing the Reed Ice Cream Company to wholesale their products to her, she opened "Irene's Ice Cream Shoppe", which occupied about 2/3 of the west end of the station. She put her sign over the west door.

Many of Irene's friends teased her about her use of the spelling "Shoppe"; nonetheless, the "Shoppe" proved to be a very popular gathering place, especially for the school children. The older students were permitted to leave the school campus during the noon hour, and many were the requests from youngsters in the lower grades to bring them a treat.

However, though business was good, when Irene examined her profits they were not good enough, and in the fall of 1959 "Irene's Ice Cream Shoppe" closed.

The Texaco station continued to operate until 1966, when Al Aulich opened an upholstery business in the building. He did re-upholstering for individuals, and for the railroad,

working on cushions for engines and cabooses.

When the city of Johnston became a reality in 1969, Aulich became City Clerk, and the station building became "City Hall". A pole building was constructed at the rear to house city equipment, and at one time, the small house at the back of the property, the former Miller residence, served as police station and police court.

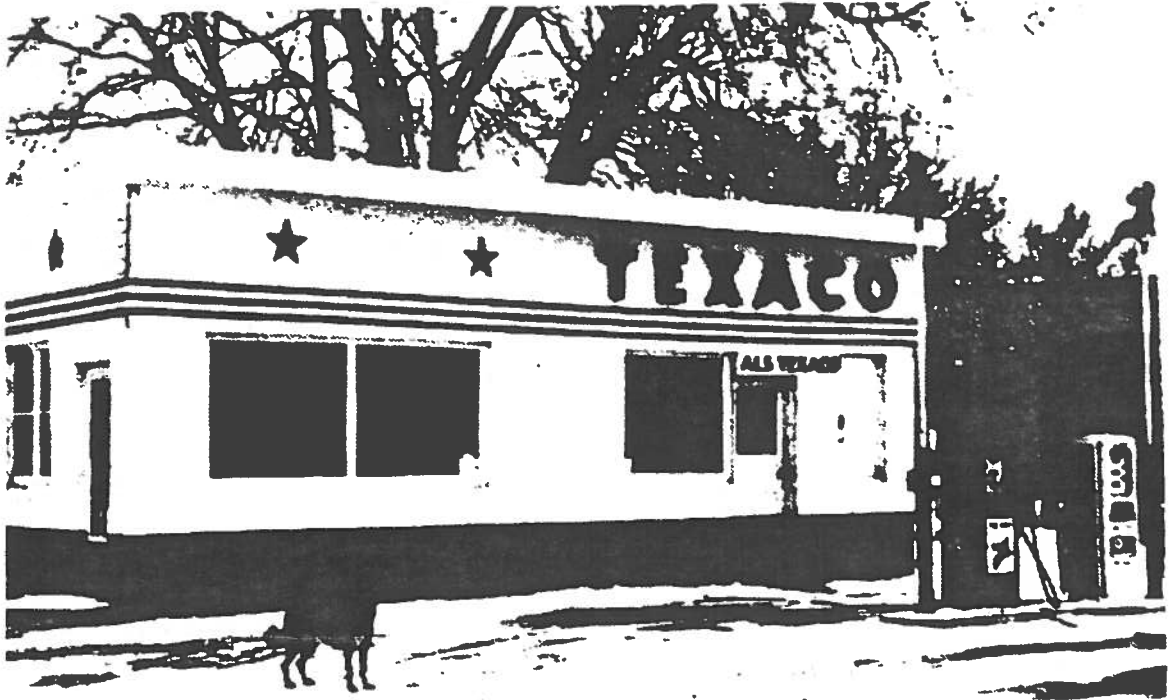
In 1974 the City Hall was moved to a location on Merle Hay Road, and Four Corners Feed, which had occupied the building at the corner of Merle Hay Road and N.W. 62nd. (the former Carter's store, and now site of the barber shop) moved to occupy the old station.

Subsequently that business has changed hands several times. The current owner is Kurt Greiman.

The building itself has been enlarged, capped with a gabled metal roof and large metal storage room to the rear.

But the basic Texaco station building, the rectangular brick structure, painted white, is still evident.

(Thanks to Irene and Al Aulich for information and photo.)



Al's Texaco Station : 1963



Four Corners Feed : 1998