



Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Discovering and Preserving Johnston History, for Tomorrow

JOHNSTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Summer 2023

From the President...

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the citizens of Johnston who visited the museum during the recent Kites on the Green event. We had a great turnout with many families visiting the museum to learn more about the rich history of Johnston. I also want to encourage the members of the Johnston Station Historical Society to help us build awareness with the community about the museum and all of the great artifacts, class pictures, historical displays, etc. that are housed in the museum. We look forward to continuing to open the museum in conjunction with city events held at the museum and hope to see even more citizens visit the museum at the next event.

Thank you for your support and your assistance in building awareness about the Johnston Station Historical Society.

A.J. Simpson,

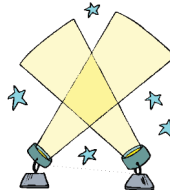
President



New Addition to Museum...

A number of Johnston High School students have dressed up as the dragon mascot since it was created in 1946. One of the most recent is Matthew Mickles, who also serves as the JSHS student advisory Board member and uses his volunteer time to maintain and improve the gardens around the Simpson house and windmill.

When a new mascot costume was recently purchased by the Johnston schools, Matthew was able to get the replaced costume donated to JSHS. The dragon shown below wandering around the 1902 Simpson House Museum is looking forward to greeting you when you next visit the museum.



Spotlight on Amy Thuelen JSHS Summer Intern By John Brown

Amy Thuelen started on Monday, May 15 and will work part-time through mid-August. She is busy scanning all non-copyrighted photos and documents that have not already been scanned. The summer interns in 2021 and 2022 updated the 2008 museum inventory spreadsheet to reflect item locations, new items and items no longer in the JSHS collection. That spreadsheet now has 2401 archives spreadsheet items (329 objects, 674 photos, 1013 documents and 385 library items). All of that inventory information, along with object photos, scanned photos and scanned documents, is being placed in PastPerfect Online. We have been able to use many of the object photos taken by the 2008 summer intern, who also created the initial 2008 inventory spreadsheet.



We plan to turn on public read only access to the updated archive inventory, photos and scans in PastPerfect Online this fall. Anyone would then be able to go to the JSHS website home page, select the archives access page and then click the link to see that information. The Johnston Library website would also direct users interested in Johnston history to those online archives.

Thank you to the State Historical Society of Iowa, Inc., Prairie Meadows Community Betterment grant program and John & Michele Brown for their grants that have supported this project.

2023 Green Days Queen

This event was once again a huge success. Started as the Johnston Fun Fest in 1984, this annual event has been held at various Johnston locations. It has been held at Terra Park since 2019. It was named "Green Days" in 1997, when Johnston was the home to the largest group of award-winning retail nurseries and greenhouses in Iowa.

The 2023 Green Days queen was Mary Jane Paez. Mary Jane has served Johnston in many ways, including as a city council person and as JSHS President for many years. She is currently a JSHS board member, and is a valued member of that group.



History of Johnston Presentations Sept 17, Oct 15 and Nov 12, 2023

Have you heard that Johnston has no history? Perhaps even you have had those thoughts. This Fall, the Johnston Historical Society, in partnership with the Johnston Library, will give a series of presentations beginning about the topography, geology, and ecology of the area; glacier receding; and creation of the Des Moines River. This program will be on Sunday, September 17th at the Library from 1:30 to 2:30.

On October 15th, we will cover Johnston in the 20th Century. Topics include Hyperion Field and Motor Club; Camp Dodge; The Inter-Urban; School consolidation; Henry Wallace and Pioneer Seed Company; Ben Dewey and the Johnston Lions Club; the Incorporation of Johnston; Saylorville Dam; and Green Meadows. This will be from 1:30 to 2:30.

The final presentation in the series will be November 12 from 1:30 to 2:30. The subject will be the growth and accomplishments of the city.

Johnston Partnership Pie & Ice Cream Social

Sunday, August 27 – 2:00 to 4:00

Enjoy pie, ice cream and relaxing music at the Simpson barn and a 1902 Simpson House Museum tour. Get tickets at <https://givebutter.com/Y1vtFc> All proceeds go to the Johnston Partnership Benevolence fund.

1902 Simpson House Video

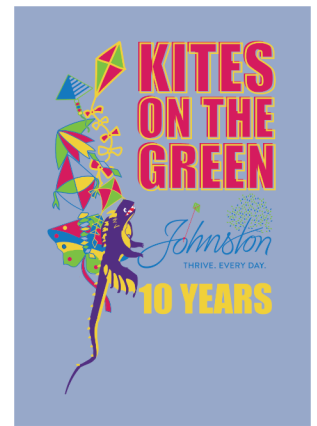
A short video tour of the house can be viewed on the State Local History network site at:

<https://www.facebook.com/lowaHistory/videos/925822240920506/>

2023 Kites on the Green Open House

This family-fun event was held on the Johnston Commons from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors enjoyed giant show kite displays, kite fighting, free kite building, bol racing, live music, an inflatable obstacle course, climbing the Iowa National Guard climbing wall, learning about stormwater best management practices, visiting with Johnston Police and Fire, drawing with sidewalk chalk and visiting the 1902 Simpson House museum.

Thanks to the group of seven JSHS volunteers who worked shifts as tour guides during the 7-hour event and helped over 200 visitors learn more about local history.



Johnston High School Class of 1963

Some class members recently met at the Simpson House to plan their 2023 60th reunion



The Simpson Barn

Mary Jane Paez

In 1994, when the Johnston Historical Society was first chartered, the main mission was to preserve, protect, and display. We couldn't begin to imagine what all that could lead to. We couldn't begin to imagine how long it would take to be able to begin our mission. We were so excited when Society members, LaVerne and Shirley Simpson offered to donate their home to become a museum. With the excitement of getting a beautiful 1902 six bedroom house, we boldly asked the Simpsons if we could also have the barn. The answer was "yes", and they also threw in the windmill. The bubble almost burst when we found out that we would have to find a mover for a house, barn, windmill ...and a place to put them! The Simpsons gave us a deadline of a year and a half to move everything and to leave the land pristine.

Finding a location for the structures was not an easy task. The house was in good condition, but the barn was not so good. The land west of the library was open. We decided to have a visit with the city. We invited Jim Sanders, the City Administrator to come see our vision of what could be



done. He was shown the house first with its beautiful woodwork and spacious rooms. Next, we showed him

the barn. The door was hanging from one hinge.



There was an aroma of eau de raccoon. Access to the loft was by a 2 x 4 ladder.

Although the loft was knee-deep with dusty hay and old newspapers, the beauty of the arched ceiling caught his eye. With lengthy negotiations, the house, barn, and windmill would be moved to Johnston Commons, just west of the Library. The house would be a historical museum. The barn would become the property of the city after all amenities were installed. The city would provide utilities for the museum. Grass and snow would be taken care of by the city. The city gave us a deadline of four years to complete the barn before it was turned over to the city.

There was a lot of preparation needed for getting the structures ready to be moved. Fundraising was a top priority. With the help of Society member donations, corporate donations, and discounts on services and materials, the dream became a reality. The moving day for the structures was June 25, 2002. The key to the barn was turned over to the city on January 3, 2005, less than four years after the move.

The Simpson Barn has become a popular venue to rent for weddings, parties, and other events.



Simpson Barn plaza commemorative bricks opportunity



The Patio on the East side of the Barn contains our Commemorative Bricks. Have a Brick engraved as a memorial or a commemoration of a loved one, a family, or a high school class. The \$150 cost pays the cost of the commemorative brick engraving, shipping and a small benefit to JSHS. Note that minimum order requirements and charges may cause an engraved brick order to be delayed until those minimums are met.



Call for volunteers

Sunday, August 6, 6:00 to 8:00

1902 Simpson House Open House

All are invited to the annual Sundaes in the Park social on Sunday, August 6, starting at 6 p.m. The event will be held at the Johnston Commons, between the Johnston Public Library and the Historical Museum and Barn. The event is free and open to the public. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs/blankets as they check out city vehicles, visit the 1902 Simpson House museum, organization booths, listen to music, and enjoy free ice cream!

Volunteers are needed to be hosts at the 1902 Simpson House Museum from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Volunteers will be given a short guide that explains everything they need to know. Please contact JSHS if you can volunteer.

Obituaries

Obituaries are compiled by Nancy Budrevich. If you know of others, please contact JSHS. Contact information on this page.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Death date</u>	<u>Class of</u>
Cheryl Ann Lathrop	4-16-2023	1972
Richard G Cox	5-12-2023	1950
Dennis Storey	5-18-2023	1963
Daryl DeSart Jr	5-18-2023	1981
Don Spaw (School Employee)	4-13-2023	
Gary Battles (Teacher)	4-18-2023	
Helen Billings (Teacher/Resident)	4-23-2023	
Robert L. Grahl (JSHS Member)	3-4-2023	1949



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 Website: JohnstonIowaHistorical.org
 Visit our website for new developments

Also see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzEi2UBPRog> for a presentation on the relocation and the restoration of the Simpson House and barn in 2001-2008.

Disability Access reminder

The 1902 Simpson House Museum and windmill grounds include broad sidewalks and curb ramps so that they are readily accessible from the adjacent public parking lot. The front and side porch and the first-floor public exhibit rooms are also readily accessible from those sidewalks, using ramps, the wide front doorway, and the open nature of those first-floor exhibit rooms. Also, even though the addition of lifts or elevators to allow similar readily accessible access to the second floor would threaten or destroy the significance of the 1902 Simpson House Museum, JSHS has a video review of the second floor exhibits available for viewing on the first floor and tour guides can also provide additional details and answer questions. Also, in many cases, selected smaller items displayed on the second floor could be temporarily brought down to the first floor for viewing.



Also, as noted above, public access to most JSHS collection photos and documents will soon be available online.

JSHS invites persons with disabilities and disability organizations to assist us in making any appropriate additional improvements to this public access.

Board Members and Officers

Board Members and Officers

Board members: Tom Leffler, Al Tokheim. A.J. Simpson, Mary Jane Paez and Larry Modole.

Student Advisory member: Matthew Mickles

Officers:

- A.J. Simpson President
 - Tom Leffler Vice President
 - John Brown Secretary & Archivist
 - Al Tokheim ... Treasurer & Information Technology
- Please contact us if you are interested in serving as a Board member or officer or want to nominate a Board member.