

Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Volume 17, Issue 6

Newsletter

November 2009

President's Column

The last two months have been productive. We have had two successful meetings, both with good turn-outs. An ice-cream and cake event was held in September and a chili and soup supper in October. Col. Bierl of the Camp Dodge Gold Star Museum spoke about their new facility.

There was some confusion as to when the Society dues are due. The Board has decided that anyone paying their dues after October 1st will be considered a paid member for the following year. Dues will now be due on a calendar year basis, meaning that they are due in January. If you paid your dues in June of 2009 and feel as if you have paid for half of 2010 then

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Bernice Scott

Mrs. Scott started teaching English at Johnston in 1928. She soon became the only principal at the school and served the school for 30 years, retiring in 1958. She also taught Latin, German, math and music. She was known for her strict and stern manner, but was beloved by her students. She earned a Bachelor's degree from Simpson College and did graduate work at Drake University. She passed away in 1975 at the age of 83. She was inducted into the Johnston Educator Hall of Fame in 2005.



instead of paying \$12.00 you can pay \$ 6.00 and will be considered paid for 2010. The Board also created a new business membership category with dues of \$30.00. The business member's logo will be displayed in the business room in the museum.

Condolences to Robert Thomas and family on the death of his wife Jean who died on Friday, October 23, 2009. Robert is a long time member and past treasurer of the Johnston Historical Society.

Dick Hyde
Board President



Van Dee's Ice Cream Shoppe

Van Dee's

Many things have changed in Johnston though the years, but the "Dairy Sweet" has remained the same. It is now called Van Dee's Ice Cream Shoppe and is owned by Carol Vander Linden and her husband Marc. According to Carol, "It's still the same old, hometown ice cream shop. It just doesn't change." Carol and Marc are the fifth owners of the store. They bought it in 1989. Next year will be their 21st season as the shop's owners. They now are employing the children of former employees. Little children will ask Carol, "Can I work with you when I get big?" The original Dairy Sweet was started in 1954 by Eva and Ralph Frazier. In the late 1950's it was sold to Keith and Dorothy Dunton. The Dunton's added on a side room with counter stools and also a room in back. They owned it for approximately 20 years. Carol has many interesting stories to tell about the shop's history. She recalls that the Interurban tracks used to run behind the store. The train engineer would blow the whistle signaling his approach way up the line. When the engine stopped behind the store, the ice cream was delivered to the cab. Van Dee's is now closed for the winter, but we will know that spring has arrived in Johnston when we once again see the OPEN sign.

Johnston's 40th Anniversary

Mayor Paula Dierenfeld acknowledged the city's rich history and dedicated the newly finished barn quilt. The four panel quilt was obtained through a BRAVO grant to the Johnston (Station) Historical Society. It hangs over the upper east entrance of the Simpson Barn. Cake was served at the event and the Johnston Station Jazz Band played. Over 50 people toured the Museum on that day.



A Sketch of Johnston History

The following information was compiled by volunteers of the Johnston Historical Society and read at the Johnston 40th Anniversary by Johnston Mayor Paula Dierenfeld

As the early pioneers moved west in the mid-1800's they established small homesteads in the Johnston area. One of these early settlers was Ezekiel Hunt. He established a saw mill on the north side of Beaver Drive near where Hawkeye Pallet is now. This area was called Beaver Creek settlement and later became the town of Huntsville. Huntsville consisted of a blacksmiths shop, grocery store and post office. In 1857 a stage coach line ran through the Johnston area. It was drawn by four horses and had room for four passengers. The stage coach stop in Johnston was at Beaver Drive and NW 66th Ave.

Following his service in the Civil War, Iowa General James Tuttle moved his family to Des Moines and began purchasing small parcels of property in this area. He purchased his first property in 1864 and continued to buy property in 1865 and 1866 until he owned over 1100 acres. The current boundaries of his land are Merle Hay Road to the east, Beaver Creek south and west, and as far north as the Library and Museum. In 1869 General Tuttle sold this land to Moses Robinson for \$35,000. This land was described as a "fine farm of well-improved land fenced with boards and rails." The 1870 federal census shows Moses living with his family and 19 farmhands. The farmhands were of diverse backgrounds with birthplaces in 6 states and 5 countries.

In 1888 school was held in two locations. Valley School was located one mile east of the present Lawson School and Ridgedale School was across from Hyperion. The Hyperion Field club was organized in 1900 as a social club. Later the golf course and clubhouse were added. The original clubhouse had sleeping quarters on the upper level so the gentlemen could enjoy a weekend in the county. In 1906 the interurban railway began operating between Des Moines and Perry. Johnston was established as a station on the line. The station was named for the station freight supervisor, John F. Johnston. The town of Johnston Station was now on the map.

Camp Dodge was established in 1909 and celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. It was named in honor of Major General Grenville M. Dodge who commanded Iowa volunteers during the Civil War. Camp Dodge served as a major training center during World War I. During this time it spanned 5000 acres, had 1400 buildings and a troop capacity of 42,000. In 1917 Merle Hay Road was constructed and was named in honor of the first Iowan killed in World War I. The road, constructed of brick, was used to transport men and goods to Camp Dodge.

In 1910 a gentlemen named Henry A. Wallace became interested in corn breeding. In 1926 he started a company for the purpose of breeding and producing hybrid seed and named it the Hi-Bred Corn Company. The company's first yield was 605 bushels resulting in a negative profit of \$ 1,300. Mr. Wallace went on to become United States Secretary of Agriculture and Vice President. The company he founded went on to become Pioneer Hi-Bred International with subsidiaries around the world.

In 1915 the Johnston Consolidated School District was formed, joining the rural school houses of the area together in one location. The first graduating class was the class of 1920 consisting of 6 students. In 1962 the school was expanded with the acquisition of the Herrold School and the name was changed to the Johnston Community School. The class of 1962 had 50 students.

The 1920's saw an expansion of business in the Johnston area. Robinette's and Otto's gas stations, Worthy Surber's barber shop and the post office were opened. During the 1940's Johnston's fire protection began The Lions Club was formed, and Hobart A. Ross gave land to the Y.M.C.A. boys home, now the

Youth Homes of Mid-America. In the late 1950's and early 1960's the complexion of Johnston was changed as two major Interstate Highways combined into Interstate 35/80 and ran just south of town. This development brought new business to the area as travelers stopped at the Merle Hay exit.

Johnston Schools

Horizon Elementary was selected as a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School. There were 314 selected across the United States. The schools were honored at an awards ceremony on November 3 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC.

Johnston Participates in Fire Safety Week

Kids of all ages from many schools and day cares in the City of Johnston participated in Fire Safety Week October 6th through the 9th. Kids were taught the importance of knowing how to exit a building or residence during a fire situation and having a fire exit plan in the family and in school. 911 was explained and the importance of knowing how to use it correctly. Also, students were taught how to properly perform stop, drop and roll. The JFD visited with over 1,000 kids this year.

Officer Spotlight with Sgt. Craig Porter

I started working for the Johnston Police Department in May of 1975. Previous to that I had been a police officer with the Urbandale Police Department from 1971 to 1974. After being a Military Policeman in the Army I thought that this might be a career for me. The job had plenty of variety as far as the work to be performed. It was a challenge to try to find solutions for the problems presented in those situations. It was rewarding when you could help someone and feel that you had actually made a difference. There are no routine calls; the variety of situations keeps things interesting. I like to try to help people. Sometimes it seems as if you are constantly dealing with the same people who break the law; it's during those times that you wonder if you will ever accomplish anything. I read a lot. Also, I have specialized training in detecting persons under the influence of drugs, which I received as a police officer, so I get to work with teachers and other school personnel to pass those skills on to them as well as

work with police officers all over the U.S in furtherance of their training. I like to exercise to keep in shape. I work in the yard at my house.

Johnston City News

The City of Johnston announced that William Vaughn will join the city staff as police chief, effective December 2009. He joins the Johnston staff with over 30 years of law enforcement experience. "I am pleased to hire someone with the qualities and experience that Bill Vaughn possesses. I feel he will continue to build on the progress the department has experienced over the past four years," stated Mayor Paula Dierenfeld as the announcement was made. Vaughn replaces Doug Nichols who will retire from the city December 18, 2009, after serving four and a half years as chief.

Polk County offers a congregate meal site for senior citizens in Johnston at Crown Point Community Center, 6300 Pioneer Parkway. The center is open from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday - Friday, and meals are served at 12:00 p.m. daily. The daily meals are offered to all senior citizens in the Johnston community. The meals offer an opportunity for socializing and friendship. Call 251-3707 to make reservations at least one day in advance. Transportation can also be arranged by calling 286-3679. In addition to daily meals, local senior citizens can participate in activities and other events coordinated at the center. Attend an event today!

Obituaries

Obituaries are compiled by Dick Tarlton. This is a known list of deaths that Dick could obtain. If anyone knows of others please let Dick know. Our address is 6161 Northglenn Dr. Johnston, IA 50131 or by email: JSHS@Q.COM or phone 515-331-0687. Over 700 Johnston School related obituaries are now on file at the museum.

Name	Class	Date-Of-Death
Florence Michael Roach	1938	9-1-09
Andrew "Pete" Surber	1939	9-9-09
Dona Ansley Bisher	1950	9-13-09
Ernest Homer Betz	1952	10-5-09
Edwin L. Bates	1961	7-11-09

Mark Your Calendars

November: The meeting will be Wednesday the 18th from 5PM until 7PM. We will tour the Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge and will have cake and ice cream after in the Barn. Meet at the museum just before 5PM.

December: The 13th we will have an open house during the afternoon from 12PM until 4PM.

January: We will hold our meeting at the Urbandale Historical Society Museum located at 4010 70th Avenue in Urbandale on Sunday the 17th at 2 PM.

Board of Director's Vacancies

There are currently two spots on the Board up for election. The Board appointed Jan Jensen, who will be running in the election, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Board member Shirley Adams. Dick Tarlton's 3 year term is up and he is not seeking reelection. Carla Johns has agreed to serve on the Board. You may also write in a candidate in the 3rd blank of the ballot

Board Member Election Ballot Due by January 1st 2010

Jan Jensen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carla Johns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write in	<input type="checkbox"/>

Send to the:
Johnston Historical Museum
6161 Northglenn Dr
Johnston, IA 50131

Patio Bricks

You still have the opportunity to have your name or the family name put on a brick and placed on the patio at the barn

Commemorative Brick Order Form

A maximum of 14 characters per line

The cost is \$ 85.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

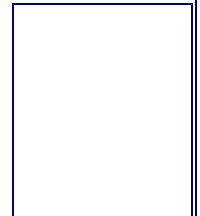
Phone (H): _____

Make Check payable to the Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Mail to Johnston Historical Society, 6161 Northglenn Dr. Johnston, Ia.

50131

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6161 Northglenn Dr
Johnston, IA 50131



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