



JOHNSTON *Historical* SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

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TIME & 4:00 P.M. January 25, 1995
PLACE Johnston Middle School Room 213

PROGRAM Ray Schliehs has arranged for Ron Sims to tell us about the INTERURBAN RR thru Johnston.

NATIVE PRAIRIES IN IOWA

Dr Don Duvick speaker about Native Prairies last meeting told us that vegetation found by 1st settlers was established after the last glaciation about 12,000 yrs ago.

Beaver Creek was on the main bed of the Des Moines River. The last glacier blocked the Des Moines River (Beaver Creek) the water diverted into a creek bed to the east which scoured it out making a steep-sided valley i.e. Saylorville lake. Beaver creek persists in a valley too big for it.

1st settlers saw 95% tall grass prairie similar to Dr. Duvick's tract in his front yard on Beaver Ave. Forests were on watercourses: cottonwood-elm-sycamore (in flood plains). Hillsides and ridges were white-oak, hickory. On the high ground, hilltops often were savannas (park-like less dense forestation) consisting of widespaced bur oak and prairie grass/forbs.

Iowa was mainly tallgrass prairie--numerous species of grass--also rich in "forbs", such as sunflowers, compass plant, blazing-star, gentians, violets, orchids, lilies, phlox, strawberries, purple coneflower, roses, clover, vetch, primrose, and buttercup. 300 species common, 750 found in nearby Guthrie County.

Grasses typically are big bluestem, Indian grass and switch grass. In dry areas little bluestem & sideoats grama, wet areas slough grass.

Maintenance of prairies was by weather, animals and fire. Prairies began to appear (out of forests) in IN, thence more dominant in IL, tallgrass dominant in IA. Short grass prairie in NE.

In Johnston, the DM River valley was forested with cottonwood/elm, oak-hickory on slopes. The forest changed

to bur oak savannas as it came down the slopes to Beaver Creek valley. Probably the upper levels of Beaver Creek valley were prairie, the lower levels a swampy mixture of prairie and river bottom forest, flood plain was willow, cottonwood, & elm.

Duvick's restored prairie shows tallgrass, but is as yet deficient in forbs. Tallgrass tend to crowd out forbs in the artificial prairies. Maybe time and care will help to restore.

Seeds for prairies are now available commercially. Prairie remnants still are easy to find along old RR's. cemeteries & steep hillsides (never plowed).

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List of the prairies handed out at a lecture about the 8000 acre National Park (Walnut Creek Prairie) is enclosed. That restored prairie lies immediately SW of Prairie City, Iowa.

HARVESTING ICE

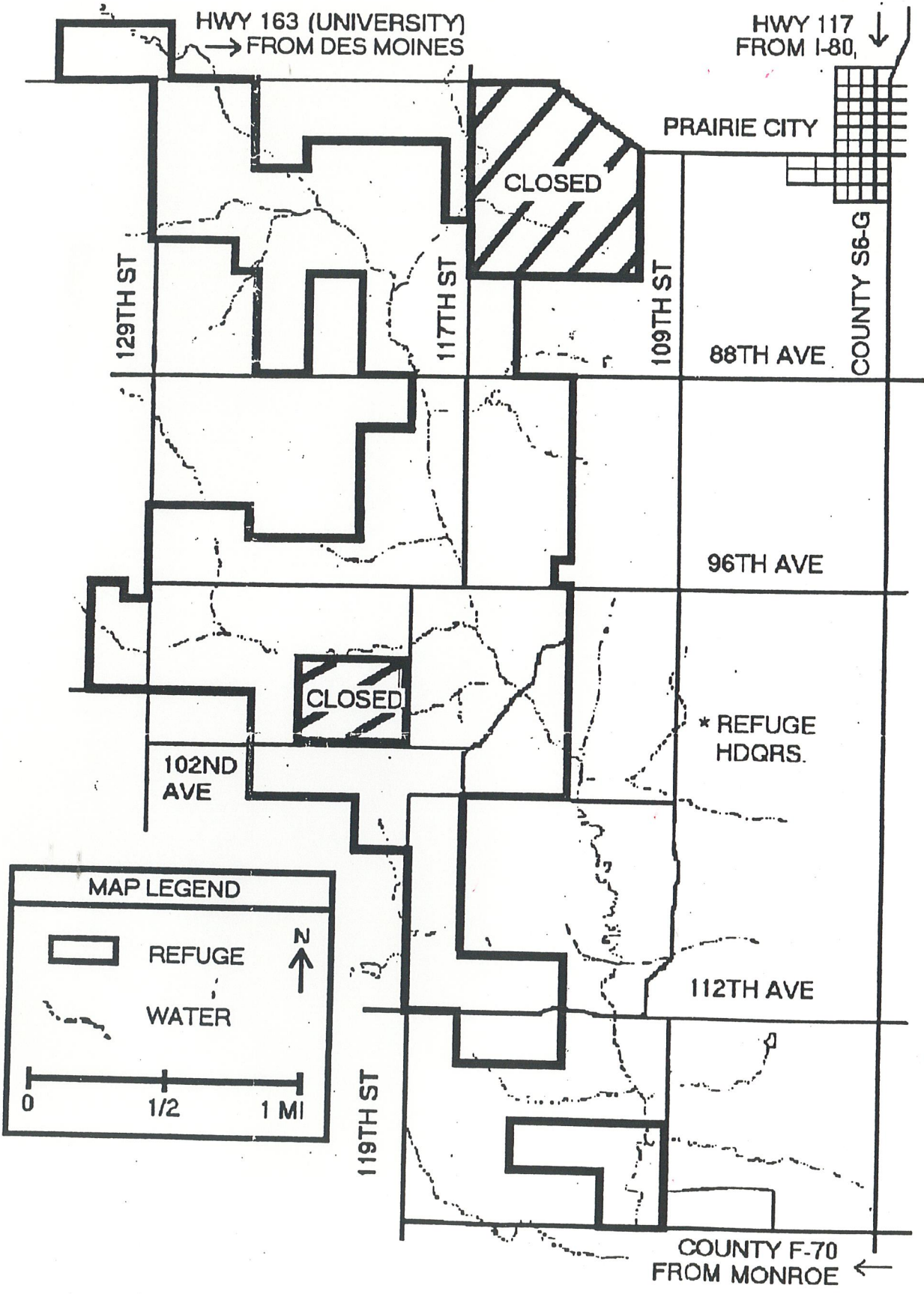
Ice was harvested in the DM River, hauled by bobsled to partially underground ice houses. Horses were full-shod and would pull a plow with the moldboards down to score the ice. Men with hand ice saws would saw the ice into blocks and load them on the bobsled. Horses were changed to the bobsled and my guess is they came up the bank at about where Lawson's ferry had formerly been. That site was later Bill Mertz's and afterward the north end of the soccer field.

Subjects we need to address, do you have others?????

PEDIGREE AND GENEALOGICAL CHARTS
SPECIFIC PLAN FOR ABSTRACT DAY AND EXPLANATION
SAWMILLS?
BRIDGES?
BUSINESSES?
CAMP DODGE?
CAMP DODGE MUSEUM? Bob Thomas
CAMP DODGE POOL Des Moines Park and Recreation
INTERURBAN RR Ron Sims
FERRYS
Y-HOME DUTCH WINDMILL
SCHOOLS
FLOOD OF '93
FLOODS
SYCAMORE PARK
DROWNINGS
GRAVEL PITS
HYPERION FIELD & GUN CLUB Dick Friese

LIST OF STATE PRAIRIE PRESERVES

PRAIRIE	COUNTY	SIZE (Acres)
Anderson Prairie	Emmet	200
Cayler Prairie	Dickinson	160
Cedar Hills Prairie	Black Hawk	90
Clay Prairie	Butler	3
Crossman Prairie	Howard	10
Dinesen Prairie	Shelby	20
Doolittle Prairie (Plover Tract)	Story	25
Five Ridge Prairie	Plymouth	789
Freda Haffner Kettlehole	Dickinson	110
Gitchie Manitou	Lyon	91
Hayden Prairie	Howard	239
Hoffman Prairie	Cerro Gordo	36
Kalsow Prairie	Pocahontas	160
Kish-ke-Kosh	Jasper	17
Liska-Stanek Prairie	Webster	20
Manikowski Prairie	Clinton	40
Marietta Sand Prairie	Marshall	20
Nestor Stiles Prairie	Cherokee	10
Rolling Thunder Prairie	Warren	123
Sheeder Prairie	Guthrie	25
Steele Prairie	Cherokee	200
Stinson Prairie	Kossuth	32
Turin Loess Hills (Cutler Tract)	Monona	30
Williams Prairie	Johnson	30



HWY 163 (UNIVERSITY)
→ FROM DES MOINES

HWY 117
↓ FROM I-80

PRAIRIE CITY

CLOSED

129TH ST

117TH ST

109TH ST

88TH AVE

COUNTY S6-G

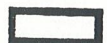
96TH AVE

CLOSED

102ND AVE

* REFUGE HDQRS.

MAP LEGEND



REFUGE



WATER



N



119TH ST

112TH AVE

COUNTY F-70
← FROM MONROE