



JOHNSTON Historical SOCIETY
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NEWSLETTER

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TIME & 4:00 P.M. July 24, 1996
PLACE Crown Point Conference Room off Pioneer Parkway.
PROGRAM Patty Wallerstedt, Fern Michael, and Bob Thomas will give us a report on the various cemeteries in Johnston.

DUES

Dues are due by June 1, 1996. On the mailing label, if your label says "Exp 5-96". We have not received your dues. In the September issue of the newsletter we will send an accompanying membership list. If we do not have your dues by that time, your name will not appear on the list.

PIONEER WOMEN

(excerpted from L.F. Andrews, Pioneers of Polk Co., IA)

Pioneer women did not build houses, business blocks, churches, and schoolhouses, make laws, and lay the foundation of civic government. They were the home-builders and the molders of child life.

It was the mother who bore and cared for the babies, cared for the house, looked after the garden, milked the cows, and made the butter, dressed the fowls, gathered and preserved the wild fruit, did the family knitting and sewing, fried out the fat for and dipped the candles, helped in the fields, and did the thousands of things a good mother finds to do from four o'clock in the morning until night hours, when all others of the family are in bed asleep.

Their first experience was a log cabin, often one room, which was parlor, living-room, bedroom, and kitchen, with oiled paper windows, puncheon floor (logs cut length-wise in half with the round side down and the flat side up), and the walls so well ventilated the stars could be seen through the

openings. For water, a hole in the ground, without wall or curb, or a far-off creek or river.

Cooking was done by fireplaces of rude construction. For breadmaking and biscuit, an iron skillet heated over coals on the hearth, the dough put in, a heated cover placed over the skillet and covered with live coals. A Dutch oven was sometimes used, with the open front, and set before the fire. Coffee was boiled in a vessel on coals drawn out on the hearth. Meats and vegetables were cooked in iron pots and kettles. Corn bread was usually cooked on hot pone-cake boards. Corn bread, pork, and rye coffee were the staple foods. Sometimes there was no flour nor corn meal; mills were far away, roads impassable, rivers flooded and unfordable. Meal could be had only by pounding up the corn, or "jinting" it, which consisted of turning a carpenter's plane bottom up and shaving off the corn from the cob. Families went to bed hungry when "father was delayed in getting home from the mill.

GEORGE BEEBE

George Beebe, who started the well-known "Beebe Settlement" (Probably Polk City), a few miles north (of Fort Des Moines #2), build a cabin in 1846. There was no chinking between the logs, and the wolves would come in the night and stick their noses through the cracks, badly frightening Mrs. Beebe and the children when her husband was absent. In the Summer time, snakes would crawl into the cabin, only to be discovered by the terrified shrieks of a little tot, or when turning down the bedclothes to lay him away to sleep. Prairie fires in the Fall would sweep around the cabin, the flames leaping high in the air, threatening destruction of everything in their path, the mother and children watching with terror lest it sweep away their home. Often the flour was scarce, and the primitive mills, just starting, had no appliances for bolting (Random House - bolt to sift through a cloth or sieve) it. Mrs. Beebe contrived one by using a box, on one side of which she fastened some coarse woven cloth, in which was put the flour, and the box shaken back and forth on slats laid on stools or chairs.

SOME OLD STAGE COACH DRIVERS

The Marvin House was the first headquarters of the Western Stage Company located between Court and Walnut on Third street. **A.T. Johnson**, was the stage agent.

Some of the old stage boys were: George Butts, Aaron Stein, Winslow Billinger, John S. Maqill, C.F. Chester, Fred. Kromer, E.M. Morseman.