

Newsletter

Volume VI No.4

Published Bi-Monthly

July 1999

President: Mary Jane Paez
Vice-Pres. & Program: Patty Wallerstedt
Secretary: Beulah Darling

Treasurer: Don Denman
Newsletter: Selma Duvick
Ray Schelihs

July Meeting

Sunday, July 25, 1999, 4:00 pm

Crown Point Meeting Room

Pot Luck Meal

Bring your table service and a dish to share.

Program: Special visit with Irene and Al Aulich on the occasion of their move from the community.

This will be a great opportunity to give our good wishes and farewell to fellow members, and long-time Johnston residents, Irene and Al.

(After the first week in August, the Aulich address will be: Irene and Al Aulich
6 Lincoln Lane, Northfield, MN 55057)



May Meeting

Members brought genealogical records, books, photos, etc. concerning families they are researching.

Ken Wallerstedt gave a documented report and a most interesting and detailed story of his search for his family origins in Sweden. His story told of a number of those fortunate and happy coincidences which seem to frequently happen in genealogical searching.



June Meeting Report:

Local attorney Ken Rittgers spoke to the meeting on wills, inheritance, probate procedure, trusts, and other concerns we have when deciding how to set up an estate plan.

Since Ken is a descendant of one of the earliest of Johnston's settlers, he also spoke about his family's history in this area, and related stories concerning his memories growing up in Johnston.

Business: Fern Michael will make arrangements for a booth at the Green Days Celebration. Ways and Means project: See President's column below.

The Praying Hands wood sculpture at Ridgedale Cemetery has been completed.

A stump left from last summer's June 29 storm was turned into a "Praying Hands" wood carving by Des Moines artist Jim Barnett.

The Flagpole at Valley View Cemetery was dedicated at a ceremony on Memorial Day, May 31st. (See story below)



GREEN DAYS

Our membership chair, Ferne Michael, saw to it that the Society had good representation at Johnston's Green Days, with a table set up in the Village Square Mall, with displays of Johnston history, photos, information on early settlers, etc.

Ferne was assisted by Joann Hubacek, Pat Wallerstedt, Lloyd Michael, Bob Thomas, Dolores Summy, Beulah Darling, Marie McPherran, and Mary Jane Paez.

We received five new memberships during Green Days. (see below)



Dedication at Valley View

On Memorial Day, May 31, 1999 at 9:00 a.m. members of the Iowa National Guard dedicated the new flag pole at Valley View Cemetery by raising the flag. The following Guard members participated: B.G. (Ret.) Al Rolfes, Maj. Allen Meyer, SFC Lino Bernal, SFC Lori Meyer.

Rolfes welcomed those present and thanked all who helped purchase the flag pole: Bunny Swanson, Johnston Lions Club, Urbandale-Johnston VFW. He also thanked the Johnston (Station) Historical Society for their help in initiating this project.

James Sanders, Johnston City Administrator, representing the city, also thanked participants who made the project possible, and reminded all to honor our veterans on this day.

Those present representing the Howard Swanson family were: Bunny Swanson, (wife of Howard Swanson, L.C. Andrew Swanson, Dan Swanson, Kathy Haines and Agnes Eklund. Also present were, representing the VFW , Gene Jacobs; the Johnston Lions Club, Ray Schleih; the Johnston Historical Society, Pat and Ken Wallerstedt, Lloyd and Ferne Michael, Bob Thomas and Ray Schleih.

The Valley View Cemetery was originally the Tom McClain private cemetery.

Ferne Michael.



From the President.....

For quite a while the Society has been wondering about what we should do as a Ways and Means project. At the June meeting the members agreed that they would have a garage sale in the fall. Since the meeting, the Society has received the approval of member Denny Ellwell, owner of Village Square, to hold the sale in the parking lots. The sale will be held on Saturday, October 2, in the same place that the Farmer's Market is held.

It was decided that spaces would be rented to vendors. The Society could reserve a spot where members could donate goodies to be sold. For that matter, members could also

rent a space. If they did REALLY well, they could decide if they would like to donate a percentage of their profit back to the Society. It would be up to the individual. It would be hoped that we could generate a lot of enthusiasm with this activity. We are fortunate that Mr. Elwell is so accommodating. More details will be forthcoming. This is something we will all work together on.

This summer seems like a good time to look through our homes and set up three piles. One pile would be things that maybe your kids or relatives might want. A second pile would be things that you would want to sell at the garage sale. The final pile would be "stuff" that you could donate to be sold at our Society tables. This sounds like a "win-win" deal. You get a cleaner house and the Society gets some income.

I forgot about one more pile. I know there are some memorabilia about Johnston out there, that you are inclined to donate to the Society. Whether you give it now or later, could you tell us what you have in mind. We can start warehousing it at Crown Point, but we need to know how much space is needed. Send me a note with your list. Also, remember that we are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Mary Jane Paez
(6165 Crabapple Lane, Johnston, IA 50131)



Looking Ahead.....

The Historical Society will meet on
Wednesday, August 25th, 1999, at 4:00 p.m.

at the Crown Point Meeting Room. Program to be announced.

Keep future meeting dates in mind, and on you calendar:

- August 25 (Wednesday).
- September 26 (Sunday)
- OCTOBER 2 Sat.--RUMMAGE SALE
- October 27 (Wednesday)
- November 28, (Sunday)
- December 23, (Wednesday)



Additions and Corrections

Add to the list of those who do telephoning for the JSHS: Ada Diefenderfer.

In our story about the School Bus poem on page 4, column two of the May Newsletter: Gladys Kuefner points out that the two Stemler children were Hazel and Pearl (not Earl).



Your Photos & Memorabilia.....

As Mary Jane noted in her column, the society, and its members would greatly appreciate receiving any photos and memorabilia-- or copies which you can donate. Ferne Michael, especially, would like you to get in touch with her if you have things relating to the pioneer Johnston families or, Johnston Schools, etc.

Anything received can be copied, and copies or originals would be placed in our archives.



Welcome to New Members !!

The following have recently joined the JSHS:
We welcome them!

Marsella Elliott

Johnston, IA

Paul Elliott

Scottsdale, AZ

(current address in Johnston)

Mrs. Alice Hinkley

Prairie City, IA

Marcia and Mike McPherran

Clive, IA

Jim and Kathy Saunders,

Johnston, IA

Patrick and Sua Lynn Woelfle

Johnston IA



Three Murray Sons: a Civil War Story

Johnston's "first settler", Ezekiel Hunt, came to the Johnston area in 1846 – at the time Iowa became a state – bringing with him his wife and 12 children. The family came originally from Kentucky and spent a brief time in Indiana, before moving on to Iowa. Later other settlers came from that part of Indiana to Iowa, encouraged, it is thought, to do so by Ezekiel Hunt.

One of these families was that of Thomas Murray II and his wife Sarah, with their 13 children. Also, most likely in the party were Sarah's parents, John and Mary Nicholson, Sarah's sister Jane and her husband Thomas Madison and children, and Larkin Murray, son of Thomas Murray and Sarah.

The Murray family came to Iowa in 1852, traveling in covered wagons from Indiana. They came first to Keokuk, Iowa, then traveled along the east bank of the Des Moines River, eventually camping near what is now Union Park in Des Moines.

They crossed the Des Moines river north of the city at what was later known as Mose Lawson's ford (located at the north end of the current soccer fields), and eventually settled on the east side of the ridge (now the route of N.W. Beaver Drive), near what is now Lincoln Cemetery. Four more children were born to the family in Polk County.

Three of the Thomas Murray children married children of Ezekiel Hunt; Susan Murray married Samuel Hunt; Nancy Murray married Jeremiah Hunt; William Murray married Drusilla Hunt.

When the Civil war broke out in April of 1861, three of the Murray sons enlisted in August and September of 1861, and became a part of the Tenth Regiment, Iowa Volunteer Infantry.

At the time, Andrew Murray was 18 years old, Thomas Murray was 20, and Larkin, the eldest son, was 30 years old. What is more, Larkin was married (to Barbara Roof) and had three small children.

The Tenth Iowa was serving as a part of the Union Army of the Mississippi by March of 1862, and, in May of 1863 engaged in the battle of Champion Hills, Mississippi which preceded the battle of Vicksburg. The unit lost nearly half of its men at Champion Hills.



Larkin Augustus Murray
(probably taken when he was in his '20s)
Photo courtesy of Fay Beck Hanson of West Des Moines, IA

Andrew Murray was wounded in the thigh on May 16th, in this engagement, and his brother Thomas was killed outright at Vicksburg on May 31, 1863. Andrew later died of his wound on May 22.

Larkin Murray survived; in May of 1863 he wrote to his family:
“ We had a fight at Champions’ Hill, about twenty miles from here. Andrew was wounded in the thigh. It is a tolerably bad wound, but not dangerous. He was behind me. I took him off

the field, layed him in an ambulance, then went back, got my gun, and went to work again.”

Later, the family received a letter from Lt. Hanna:

“Yesterday our company was sent out to occupy rifle pits near the enemy’s works. All went well till late in the afternoon, when Thomas Murray was hit by a ball from a rebel sharp-shooter. Your boys were the very best of soldiers, always ready and willing to do their duty, loved by every member of the company”.

On June 1st Larkin Murray wrote:

“I suppose you have heard of the death of Thomas and Andrew. I am left alone. Andrew died on the 22nd of May from the effect of wounds received on the 16th. I fear he died from want of care. We were obliged to follow up the Rebels, and the wounded were left almost to help themselves. Thomas was killed on the 31st of May, in the rifle-pits; shot by a rebel from their breastworks. The ball entered the top of his forehead just at the edge of the hair. He lived about five minutes.” (from “Brave Men Shouldered Their Muskets” by Roxana Currie)

Larkin Murray continued to serve with the Tenth Iowa at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in Tennessee in November of 1863. In November and December of 1864, Larkin Murray, in the Tenth Iowa , was a part of the march to the sea, from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia with General W. T. Sherman.. He was mustered out at Washington D.C. May 29, 1865, as a corporal.

Larkin Murray lived to return to his home in Iowa, and to celebrate with his wife their 60th wedding anniversary in August of 1912. He died at the home of his son in Des Moines, in July of 1920, at the age of 88.. His wife and 8 children survived him.

Many current Johnston residents are descended from this family of Thomas Murray II. Ferne Michael, who is a grand-niece of the Murray brothers, calculates that 26 members of the Johnston (Station) Historical Society can trace their ancestry back to Thomas Murray and his wife Sarah.

(Thanks to Ferne Michael for source material)

The Johnston (Station) Historical Society is an IRS 501 (c) (3) organization