

JOHNSTON (STATION) HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O.Box 109 Johnston, Iowa 50131
6161 Northglenn Drive - in Johnston Commons Park

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Happy New Year!

January 2006

President's Column

As I put away the Christmas decorations, I like to look through the cards that we received from family and friends and reread the letters telling of the year's accomplishments. With that in mind, I reread the newsletter from Jan. '05 and remembered where we were a year ago with the work on the house and barn. I also remember bringing visitors through the house at that time to see our progress. I thought at the time that the funny look in their eyes was that of admiration of all the work that had been done. Little did I know that the funny look was one of total disbelief that the project would ever be finished.

One of the visitors that we have had recently is Kathy Paul. She is a teacher with the District who works with high school students to compete in national history competitions. The Johnston team always scores very highly. We had contacted her because we wanted to work with students to acquaint them with Johnston's history. She was so pleased with her visit. She has so much enthusiasm. She is working with some high school students who agreed to interview a teacher, Mary Bramer, who recently retired after teaching in the system for 30 plus years. They will conduct an oral interview, videotape it, and probably transfer it to a DVD and include some pictures from the schools in which she taught, including Camp Dodge. Hopefully, they will want to do more. She also put us in contact with another teacher, Nancy McGill, who works with "talented and gifted" children. She has seven 2nd graders who wanted to discover and investigate the "Seven Wonders of Johnston". When she brought the children to the museum, they were "wonders" themselves. They will work on their discoveries and present them to their fellow Beaver Creek students. We will hear much more of this one. Mrs. Paul will also have some Summit School students come to the museum to study photos and artifacts.

Ferne Michael brought in her notebook with more than 400 Johnston obituaries to add to the research that Dick Tarlton is doing. If any of you have obituaries of family or friends that we could copy and add to the collection, we would be most appreciative. If we don't have it, we need it!

We have one student working on categorizing all our newspapers. There are so many interesting articles from past copies that we have on hand. It's a big job but one that needs to be done.

We also had a visit from two members of the Urbandale Historical Society. They were checking on the facilities for our upcoming February meeting. They were very pleased with what they saw and they want to spend more time looking through the displays.

The reoccurring theme of this column this time is that every visitor we have comes away with a new perspective of the history of Johnston. They either want to come back to learn more or they have more to add to the story. We are having open houses at the museum every second Sunday of each month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. We hope to see many more visitors. Mary Jane Paez,

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS: Richard and Ruth Larson of Iowa Falls, IA

We are pleased to add these bricks:

**The Wisecup Family: Merrill and Cheryl Wisecup
Jonnette L. Wisecup JHS 96
Kirk A. Wisecup JHS 99
Kent M. Wisecup JHS 2002
Kyle D. Wisecup JHS 2008**

In Remembrance:

.. Maude E. Gilbert LePera of West Des Moines. Age 91. Died on December 13, 2005. Maude was a graduate of JHS in 1932. She is survived by her daughter, Jackie, granddaughter Dincy, two great granddaughters, four great grandchildren, and her sister, Nancy Gilbert Carroll of Ankeny. (Parents: Jack and Eliz Gilbert, brothers Tom and Warren and husband Dominic predeceased Maude.)

Elizabeth A. "Betty" Otto died December 7, 2005 at her home in Johnston. Born April 25, 1924 in Grimes to Raymond and Ann (Clark) Comer, she was employed

with the U.S. Postal Service and retired as Johnston's Postmaster. Betty is survived by her children: Steven of Mason City, IA; Nora of Omaha, NE; Dianne of Des Moines, A; Nicholas of Urbandale, IA; Jeffrey of Woodward, IA; Gregory of Wheaton, Illinois. Also two sisters and eight grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Robert C. Otto, five brothers and two sisters.

Droga Vignovich aged 90, passed away Sunday, November 29, 2005. Droga, a member of the JHS class of 1932, was born January 1, 1915 in Norwoodville, IA. She was employed at Pitney Bowes as one of the first female regional managers, and was a former member of the Johnston City Council. She is survived by brothers Barney of Oklahoma, Radomir of California and Nickolas of Arizona.

Memorials and gifts from

Ferne & Lloyd Michael in memory of Droga Vignovich and of Betty Otto
Emma Jean Stilwell \$100 gift

Schedule of Meetings for the Year 2006

Sun January 22*Wed February 22****Sun March 26
Wed April 26*****Wed May 24*****Wed June 28
Sun July 23*****Wed August 23*****Sun Sept 24
Wed October 25****Sun Nov 26****No December meeting
Meetings are held at 4:00 p.m. Guests welcome.***

OPEN HOUSES ARE SCHEDULED FOR: Feb12; Mar12; Apr 9 & May 6***Each is from the hours of 2-4:00 p.m.

Note : *Jerry Gordon, Archivist, will be at the Simpson House on Tuesday mornings rather than on Tuesday afternoons.*

WHERE ARE THEY? We are looking for information on Johnston High School graduates and here are a few names we are beginning with:

Stanton Sorenson - class of 1955	John Mahon - class of 1954
Harold Longshore - class of 1955	Juanita Evans Hanson - class of 1948
Laurel Lamp - Class of 1946	

Barbara Leach - class of 1944) and her sister, Patricia Ann Leach class of 1945. These are just a very short list we are beginning with and any information on other graduates will be most appreciated. Our school room collection is growing by leaps and bounds because of shared resources and information.

THANKS to those of you who have already paid your membership dues for 2006. For those who need a reminder to pay, please check the address label and, if your name has '05 (or years prior to that behind it), you need to renew.

A Family membership is \$12 & Single Membership is \$10

All renewals and/or contributions or brick orders may be mailed to: Robert Thomas, Treasurer JSHS; P.O.Box 109 Johnston, Iowa 50131

AND WE THANK YOU!

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We recently received a communication from Merry McGlothlen Weston of Gainesville, Florida. Her sister, Christine McGlothlen is buried in Ridgedale Cemetery and she would like to know where the grave is located. There is no marker and she and her siblings would like to place one on the grave. She states it was a "funny shaped plot and there should be two empty plots and a small one beside it. She was a small child and the casket was very small. My mother is now deceased and said these plots were purchased by my grandfather, his name being Demoss Willard Rayburn. Any help you can give would be appreciated."

The three cemeteries, for years, were under the management of the township board of trustees. An unnamed trustee of many years ago became irritated when someone complained about his record keeping for the cemeteries. It was rumored that the trustee destroyed all the records. Later trustees had nothing to work with. The City of Johnston took over the cemeteries in the early '90's after "Chubb" Kinsey asked for something to be done about the deteriorating cemeteries. The city soon found that there were no records. The Johnston Historical Society members worked with city staff to try to recreate the records by taking a walking survey and noting tombstone names and dates. These data were compared to a survey that was done in the '30's as a WPA project. The final survey has been put on the internet at www.usgenweb.com under "Projects" and then "Tombstone Project". The City of Johnston, The Historical Society, and numerous classes of students have worked hard to keep this legacy of pioneer cemeteries. It is a shame when we hear from people about their ancestors and we don't know where to tell them to search. Can any of you contribute any information??

*******PROGRAM: SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2006*******

Russell Slauson will give his informative presentation on "Learning to Live Blind." Please come! 4:00 P.M. meeting and program.